

Museum Gallery Openings

November 3, 2023

What a night! On November 3rd, we re-opened our new exhibition galleries with a huge party. A large and enthusiastic crowd enjoyed a reception and music while getting a first look at all the new displays staff spent the last two years creating. In the main gallery, guests toured new themes centered around Manassas history from pre-European contact to 20th century, learned about the impact local residents had on our history, and saw objects and images from the collection that are on public view for the first time. In the temporary gallery, we unveiled *50 Years in 50 Objects: A Community Curated Exhibition*. This display features the efforts of 50 guest curators who researched and wrote labels for the artifacts on display. This is the first time we invited the community into the process of creating an exhibit from start to finish and the results are fantastic!



Carol Merchant Kirby, daughter of donor Mae Merchant, takes a moment at the podium to recognize museum guests.

Courtesy of Don Flory



Joann S.M. Bagnerise, one of the lead donors to the museum renovation, poses with Kisha Wilson-Sogunro during the reception.

Courtesy of Don Flory


In addition to the new museum galleries, we formally opened two new community spaces within the museum – Mae Merchant Hall and the Joann S.M. Bagnerise Family History and Education Center. Guest speakers included Adam Scher, the Lisa and Bill Moore Vice President for Collections and Exhibitions at the Virginia Museum of History and Culture, former Manassas Museum Directors Doug Harvey and Scott Harris, and Museum supporter John Payne. Speaking to the gifts that made this renovation and expansion project possible, former Museum Director Scott Harris spoke about the charitable trust established by the Merchant Family saying, “When this transformational gift was announced in July, 1988, Mrs. Merchant’s act of generosity

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was her latest and greatest gesture during many years of support and involvement.” We could not agree more.

For those of you that could not make it out that night, we hope you can come by and visit us soon. We can't wait to share our new exhibits with you! 



Speakers

Top Left: Adam Scher, the Vice President for Collections and Exhibitions at the Virginia Museum of History and Culture, Richmond, was our keynote speaker.

Bottom Left: Doug Harvey, Consultant at Douglas Harvey Museum & Historic Preservation Services

Bottom Center: John Payne, Retired (former Historic Resources Board Member)

Bottom Right: Scott Harris, Director of University Museums for the University of Mary Washington

Courtesy of Don Flory



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Manassas Museum Associates Board

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Curator's Corner

by Mary Helen Dellinger

As we close out 2023, I am taking a moment to pause and reflect on all we have accomplished in the past year – moving back into our new building, welcoming new staff members and saying goodbye to others, helping celebrate the City's 150th anniversary, acquiring new objects for the collection, making improvements to Liberia and Annaburg, and of course, the new exhibits that opened on November 3rd. We accomplished a lot!

50 Years in 50 Objects: A Community Curated Exhibition

I am particularly proud of the *50 Years in 50 Objects: A Community Curated Exhibition* that is on view in our temporary gallery. For this show, we invited the community into the process of creating the exhibit, asking people to choose one object from the collection, research it, and write the label. When I proposed this idea last year for our premier show, I wasn't sure if it would work the way I envisioned. And it didn't – it turned out better than I anticipated. We had no problem getting enough people to participate. In fact, we had a rather long waiting

list of potential guest curators. The objects chosen to represent 50 years of the museum




The new long-term exhibition gallery, designed by Capital Museum Services, offers changing stories on Manassas history as well as several interactive components to engage visitors on multiple levels.



Councilman Mark Wolfe enjoys the new exhibit, 50 Years in 50 Objects, A Community-Curated Exhibition in the new temporary gallery.

Courtesy of Don Flory

collecting local history represent the depth and diversity of our collection, and are all things that we have not used in exhibits before. We welcomed many newcomers into what it is the museum does. Many of our guest curators told me they learned new things about our history and how much fun they had working on this exhibit. Finally, I was glad to offer a first of its kind opportunity to our community, and now that I've seen how successful it can be, am eager to find ways to continue partnerships like this one.

If you have not yet seen *50 Years in 50 Objects*, there is plenty of time to visit. We plan on leaving this exhibit on view through the winter and possibly into the spring. So, come see us during the holiday season! We look forward to sharing our new exhibits with you. 




A PEEK AT PROGRAMS

www.manassasva.gov/leisure

by Rachel Goldberg

November 13th through November 22nd, more than 260 4th graders from Baldwin and Haydon Elementary schools visited the Manassas Museum for tours of our newly installed Native Legacy exhibit.

These interactive, hands-on museum visits brought to life concepts the students were learning at school and gave them the opportunity to see and experience early Native American life outside of the classroom.

At the Museum, students visited the Longhouse (yohakan) in our new Rohr gallery and discussed how members of the Patowomeck tribe used what they found in their environment in their daily lives and then compared and contrasted how Native Americans lived over 400 years ago to how we live today. The 4th graders also made their own Native-inspired pinch pots, and did an activity that got them thinking about what Native Americans needed from their environment in order to have food, clothing, and shelter. 



(left) In Mae Merchant Exhibit Hall students played a game to learn more about how Native Americans used the plants and animals they found in nature for food, clothing, and shelter.

(center) Students made pinch pots, a type of handmade pottery that Native Americans have been making for thousands of years.

(right) The interactive elements in the Native Legacy exhibit helped students understand how members of the Patowomeck tribe lived before European arrival in this area.



Notes

From the President's Desk

Hopefully by now you have taken the opportunity to visit the new exhibit galleries at the Museum. If you still haven't gone by, prepare to be amazed! The new spaces are completely transformed with engaging, diverse exhibits that share new stories from Manassas' history. These galleries are designed to change often, so you can enjoy the spaces now and in the future. The upcoming holidays are the perfect time to visit the museum to see not only the new exhibits but to check out Echoes, the Manassas Museum store. There's something for everyone on your list from grandparents to new babies!

Museum Currently Looking for Volunteers to Work Up Front Greeting Visitors

The Museum is currently looking for volunteers to work up front greeting visitors, helping guests get oriented, and answering questions. If you are interested in volunteering, contact Rachel Goldberg at rgoldberg@manassasva.gov.

Finally, the Museum Associates are excited to announce their annual holiday raffle. Tickets are \$5 each and can be purchased at the Museum store or from any Associate board member. We are raffling off a holiday stocking filled with goodies and gift cards donated by downtown merchants. The winner will be drawn on December 1st at the Museum after the Christmas tree lighting.

As we close out this momentous year, I send you my best wishes for a happy and joyous holiday to you and your entire family.



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED! ¡SE BUSCAN VOLUNTARIOS!

WE ARE CURRENTLY RECRUITING MUSEUM GREETERS TO HELP MAKE VISITORS FEEL WELCOME!

¡BUSCAMOS PERSONAS COMO RECEPCIONISTAS DEL MUSEO PARA AYUDAR A GUIAR A LOS VISITANTES Y DARLES LA BIENVENIDA!

The Manassas Museum is excited to reopen and we look forward to hosting visitors in our newly reimagined spaces!

¡El personal del Museo de Manassas está emocionado de volver a abrir el Museo más tarde este año y esperamos con entusiasmo recibir a los visitantes en nuestros espacios nuevamente imaginados!

For more information, email rgoldberg@manassasva.gov or call 703-257-8265

Para obtener más información, envíe un correo electrónico al rgoldberg@manassasva.gov o llame al 703-257-8265



Parks, Culture & Recreation Division
(División de Parques, Cultura y Recreación)
City of Manassas (Ciudad de Manassas)
www.manassasva.gov/volunteer



Pat Beuch, President



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ECHOES

Echoes, the Manassas Museum Store may be back in our “old” home, but you may not recognize us anymore! From new flooring to new brick slat wall



to new products, the store has certainly received a facelift.

We have all new Manassas products, Virginia themed items, and jewelry and

pottery from local artists. We’re the perfect stop for unique Christmas gifts!

Check out our selection in-store or online at manassasechoes.myshopify.com.



Virginia gift tins filled with treats such as chocolate covered pecans or cranstachio shortbread cookies (pictured top right and below that) an artist’s rendering of the Train Depot - in sticker format!

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