

more information about the house and Jackson's life. Recent additions to the self-guided tour allows more accessibility for visitors. A transcript of each video can be found below its corresponding video clip. Non-English speaking visitors can now use the *Google Translate* option or other apps to translate into their native language.

Hails and Farewells

The VMI Museum recognized the retirement of Betty Skillman, who served the museum as Store Manager and Supervisor of Visitor Services for over 20 years. Betty oversaw an era of major development and growth of the store. Betty will be enjoying her farm and animals in Rockbridge Baths.

Lisa French was hired as the new Assistant Store Manager and Supervisor of Visitor Services in August. Lisa and her husband Jon, VMI 1986, moved to Rockbridge County earlier this year from Alabama, after Jon's retirement from the US Air Force.

Assistant Site Director Pamela Kouame will be leaving the Jackson House Museum to become lead educator at San Jacinto State Battleground State Historic Site in La Porte, Texas. During her time at the Jackson House, Pam was a key contributor to the historic interpretation and research, adding much on-line content to the self-guided tour program.

A hardy hail to Lee Kipp, VMCW Physical Plant employee and his wife Lindsey on the arrival of their son, Lincoln Douglas Kipp—how's that for history!



Ed Kopsick, VMI 1980, recently doanted the VMI banner he flew outside his HQ in Kandahar. Accession# 2023.0024



VMI Rugby uniform, ca. 1970. Accession# 2023.0029.008 & .009

The VMI Museum System is one of 1,099 out of an estimated 33,000 museums in the United States currently professionally accredited by the American Alliance of Museums. The system consists of the VMI Museum (founded 1845), the Jackson House Museum (founded 1954) and the Virginia Museum of the Civil War, New Market Battlefield State Historical Park (founded 1964). Currently over 60,000 visitors attend the three museums collectively every year.

VMI Museum System Report to the Board of Visitors

September 11-12, 2023
 Col. Keith Gibson, Director



This well-loved VMI Brother Rat doll was owned by Elizabeth Randolph, daughter of Dr. Larry Mathews, VMI Class of 1939. A Brother Rat doll made an appearance in the 1938 movie "Brother Rat," which premiered during Dr. Mathews cadetship. The family-- and the doll-- had shared allegiance between both Lexington colleges. Accession # 2023.0028.004.



Members of the Virginia Museum of Fine Art exhibit team hang a painting from the VMI Museum collection in the Executive Mansion. Accession #1982.1053

The VMI Museum System staff transported two artifacts to be included in "The Art Experience at the Executive Mansion," in Richmond, VA. First Lady Suzanne Youngkin stressed that the purpose of the exhibit is to highlight works from a mix of genres and mediums with particular focus on Virginia artists and themes.

Visitors to the mansion will see an 1806 Type 1 Virginia saber and scabbard (accession # 2010.0021.001) originally made by the Virginia Manufactory of Arms in Richmond. The Commonwealth had 1,000 of these sabers altered in 1859 and then sent to the arsenal at the Virginia Military Institute.

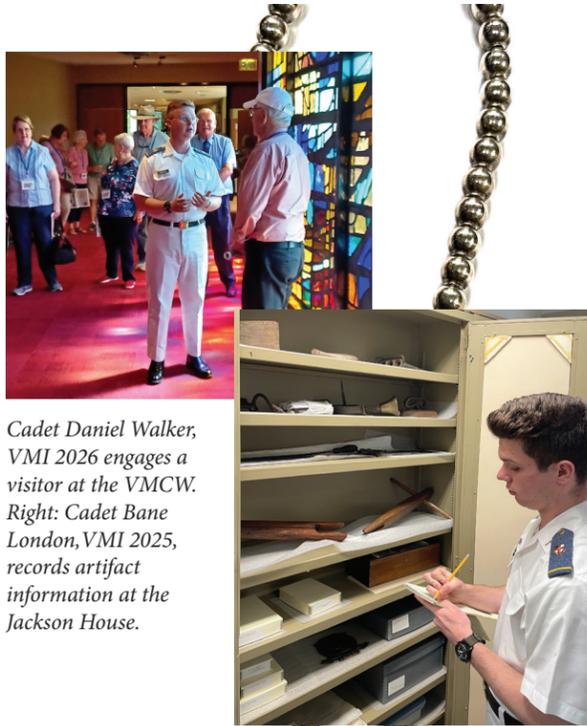
Also on display is a painting based on the official seal of Virginia depicting 'Virtue' triumphing over 'Tyranny,' but with VMI Barracks and House Mountain in the background. The painting was commissioned in 1855 by the Cadet Dialectic Society and was painted by Lewis Clover, an itinerant artist and Episcopal minister.

The VMI Museum was invited to participate in the exhibit by the Art Experience Committee Citizens Advisory Council co-chaired by Judy Boland, wife of former BOV President Bill Boland, VMI Class of 1973.

Cadet Engagement

Cadet Bane London, VMI 2025, has returned to the Jackson House this fall. Thanks in part to his spring semester assisting with curatorial duties at the Jackson House Museum, London secured a prestigious summer internship as a curatorial intern at the National Museum of the Marine Corps.

Cadet Daniel Walker, VMI 2026, completed his ten-week program as the Scholar-in-Residence at the Virginia Museum of the Civil War (VMCW). Always in his cadet uniform, Walker conducted guided tours of the battlefield and museum, in addition to assisting staff in various tasks and departments.



Cadet Daniel Walker, VMI 2026 engages a visitor at the VMCW. Right: Cadet Bane London, VMI 2025, records artifact information at the Jackson House.



BJ Conway, VMI 1955, presented this Ring Figure pendant to his date in 1953. (Accession # 2023.0034.002.)

Cadet Grace Wagner, VMI 2024, served as the Cadet-in-Charge of summer cadet-led Post Tours. Wagner trained and lead a team of eight cadets, including Caitria Catania, VMI 2025, Alyssa Donnelly, VMI 2026, Joyce Ellis, VMI 2024, Joseph Heffron, VMI 2024, Riley Malone, VMI 2025, Delilah Martindale, VMI 2025, Zachary Sturm, VMI 2024, Kate Taylor, VMI 2024. This important and popular program has been offered by the VMI Museum for over 20 years.

The VMI Museum welcomed summer intern Sophie Levengood, a rising Clark University sophomore double-majoring in Art History and History. Sophie conducted archival research this summer on the 117 plaques in Memorial Garden. Her research will allow us to generate a searchable database which will be located on the VMI Museum web page. Visitors will be able to access biographies of each of the fallen. Sophie also assisted with the accessioning of artifacts into the collection.

Recent Accessions. A *VMI Brother Rat Doll* with vintage *W&L and VMI buttons* was donated by Elizabeth Randolph, daughter of Dr. Larry Mathews, VMI 1939, as well as Mathews' early *Rat ring, a miniature class ring worn by his wife Evelyn*, and his *1939 Bomb staff watch fob*.

A *VMI banner* flown proudly at the Kandahar Airfield in Afghanistan on the tenth anniversary of September 11, 2001, was donated by Ed Kopsick, VMI 1980. Accession # 2023.0024.

A large collection of well-preserved VMI memorabilia and uniforms came in this summer from Richard Sedwick, VMI 1971, including an *original VMI Rugby Team uniform*. Accession # 2023.0029.008 & .009.

VMI Art Collection on Exhibit in Quarters One. As one of the final steps in completing the renovation of the Superintendent's quarters, the VMI Museum selected works from the permanent collection to display in the Superintendent's Quarters. Several original paintings capture the theme of recognizing our host communities, Lexington and Rockbridge County. Regional watercolorist Maxine Foster and oil paintings by 19th century landscape and portrait artist William D. Washington can be seen throughout the house. VMI commissioned a special painting of Natural Bridge by noted artist Bruce MacDonald, VMI professor of business marketing and graphics.

Scholarship. VMI Museum staff assisted Jessica Landau, PhD., a professor from the M.A. Program in the Humanities & Art History, University of Chicago, with research for her article *Proximity, Wholeness, and Animality: The Case of Little Sorrel's Repatriation* featured in the August 2023 issue of **Curator: The Museum Journal**.

Jackson House Site Director, Grace Moyer, participated in two on-camera interviews this summer. On June 9 Moyer met with Dmitri Vershinin with *Voice of America News Network* to do a segment on Jackson's personality and his life in Lexington.



Two-dozen Model Ts puttered into the Virginia Museum of the Civil War in May.

On July 27, Moyer met with Chris Small from Abe's America LLC to participate in a series focusing on historic sites related to the life and times of Abraham Lincoln.

Col. Gibson visited with museum colleagues at Ft. Liberty, NC, on August 25. He met with staff at the 82nd Airborne Museum, The John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Museum and the 82nd Airborne and Special Ops Museum. Col. Gibson discussed museum exhibit techniques in military museums and trends in programming opportunities.

Events. Over two dozen vintage Model Ts puttered into the Virginia Museum of the Civil War (VMCW) parking lot on May 16. The owners are members of the Model T Ford Club International.

On May 6 historian and author Sarah Bierle, former VMCW museum employee, was the speaker at the Shenandoah Valley VMI Alumni Chapter Dinner held in the VMCW.

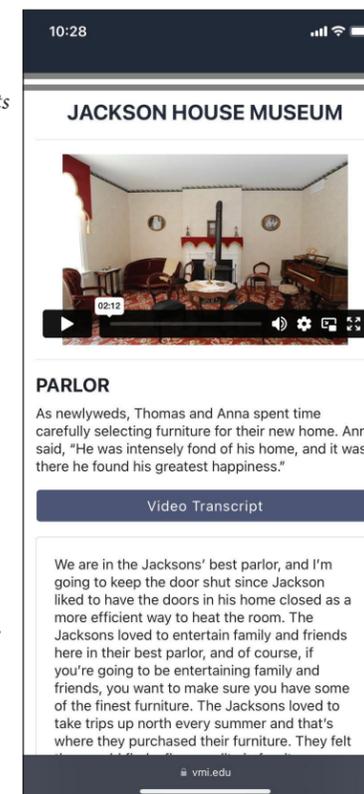
Assistant Site Director, VMCW, Sarah Hebert addressed the Shenandoah Valley Civil War Round Table summer meeting.

The VMCW/NMBSHP hosted BG Clark's summer staff retreat. Several members of the FAS staff received a thorough "behind the scenes" tour of the museum, battlefield and farmhouse. The highlight of the day was a period mid-19th century lunch. The meal was prepared and served by the New Market staff and volunteers under a tent canopy near the Bushong farmhouse.

This summer the Jackson House staff participated as an exhibitor in two community events: Celebrate Rockbridge (July 22) and the Rockbridge Community Festival (August 26).



Above: Apple Day returns to Lexington this month. The popular event highlights crafts games and activities of the 19th century.



An expanded content version of the Jackson House self-guided tour will launch on October first.

For the first time since the end of the COVID Pandemic, the VMCW held a very successful the Civil War Day Camp to school age children from the Shenandoah Valley. Sarah Hebert coordinated the event.

The VMI Museum System participated in matriculation on August 19. Staff welcomed many parents and new cadets encouraging them to learn more about the heritage in which they were entering by visiting our three museums. (We also gave out candy.)

On Saturday, September 30, the Jackson House Museum will once again host *Apple Day*, a street festival in front of the Jackson House. This is the first year for the event since COVID. Apple Day has been an annual tradition at the Jackson House for almost 40 years. The event focuses on crafts, games, and activities appropriate to the mid-19th Century. Visitation to the event usually ranges from 500-700 people. All activities are free to the public.

This fall the Jackson House Museum will roll out an on-line expansion to the popular self-guided tour. New content will include information about the plants and practices in the kitchen garden, what's upstairs, as well as



Artist Bruce McDonald (right) at work on a large rendition of Natural Bridge for the Superintendent's House. The finished work is seen above. Accession# 2023.0033.

