

MV MUSEUM INC. 1923

EXHIBITIONS & PROGRAM GUIDE



MISSION

The Martha's Vineyard Museum inspires all people to discover, explore, and strengthen their connections to this Island and its diverse heritage.

OUR COLLECTION

We are a historical and cultural museum that collects art, artifacts, oral histories, documents, and photographs that help tell the stories of Martha's Vineyard from time immemorial to the present. We strive to provide a framework for understanding the past in order to create a better future.

FROM 1923 TO NOW

Last year marked the 100th anniversary of our founding, when a dedicated group of Islanders came together in the hope of preserving our rich history and culture. Over the past century we have collected countless memories, shared fascinating stories, and made significant progress in diversifying our collections. With your support, we have become a vital resource for our community, providing a view into the past and a vision for the future. Join us this year to experience our exhibits, engage with our programs, and continue our mission together.

VISIT US

151 Lagoon Pond Road, Vineyard Haven, MA

HOURS

Open year-round
Tuesday – Sunday
Summer season 10AM – 5PM

ADMISSION

Members: **FREE**
Adults: \$18
Seniors: \$15
Children 7 – 17: \$5
Children 6 & Under: **FREE**
Islander rates available



All photos by Ray Ewing.



Ray Ewing

JANUARY – EARLY SEPTEMBER

Clifford

Our Big Red Dog

Clifford the Big Red Dog has been delighting readers for over 60 years. This exhibit invites children and adults alike to play, explore, and learn about Clifford and the man who brought him to life, Norman Bridwell, who called the Vineyard home for over four decades.



Ray Ewing



APRIL 2024 – MARCH 2025

Ferry Tales

Ferries — boats that travel an established route on a regular schedule — have linked the Vineyard to the mainland for over 300 years. Powered first by wind, then by steam, and now by diesel, they keep the Island supplied with the necessities of life. In this exhibit, learn about the ferries that have gotten us here through ship models, memorabilia, archival photographs, and a timeline that traces the history of ferry service to the Island.





EARLY JUNE – LATE SEPTEMBER

Sailing to Freedom

Maritime Dimensions
of the Underground Railroad

The Underground Railroad was not limited to land, but included a network of maritime routes along the Atlantic seaboard. This groundbreaking exhibition sheds light on how freedom was achieved by sea, including the waters around Martha's Vineyard.



New Bedford Whaling Museum



LATE JUNE – LATE AUGUST

Eisenstaedt's Martha's Vineyard

One of the most respected photojournalists of the 20th century, Alfred Eisenstaedt (1898–1995) captured countless iconic images, from a sailor kissing a nurse in Times Square to portraits of kings, dictators, and movie stars. His decades-long career with *Life* magazine took him all over the world, but he found time to return to the Island each summer for more than 50 years. This exhibition shares the story of Eisenstaedt's Martha's Vineyard through his own words, along with photographs and objects in the Museum's collection.



Elizabeth Cecil

LATE AUGUST – EARLY DECEMBER

Generations

Art and Identity *with the Widdiss Family*

Centered around an extraordinary wampum belt made by Aquinnah Wampanoag tribal elder Donald Widdiss, this exhibition explores three generations of Widdiss family artists. Featuring wampum art, pottery, personal stories, and more, we invite visitors to reflect on the broader themes of tradition, artistry, and cultural identity.



MID SEPTEMBER – JANUARY 2025

Human/Nature

Art and Conservation
on Martha's Vineyard

This exhibition invites visitors to explore the Island's sacred and protected open spaces, each with its own unique story to tell. Through the work of Island artists, visitors will be immersed in these landscapes and their histories, providing a deeper understanding of the Island's natural environment and the ongoing efforts to safeguard it.





Ray Ewing

TUESDAY NIGHTS
JUNE – AUGUST
5:30 – 7PM

Global Rhythms
Summer Concert Series

Celebrate the vibrant tapestry of global cultures present on our Island at the Museum’s weekly music event! Every Tuesday, immerse yourself in rich melodies and rhythms from around the world. We invite you to bring a picnic, cozy up on your blanket or lawn chair, and connect with the diverse heritage that makes our community special.



Ray Ewing

WEEKLY CLASSES
JULY 9 – AUGUST 9

Discovery Days

Let curiosity come to life as your child explores, experiments, and creates in a Discovery Days class this summer. The Museum Education team will lead children on a deep dive into a different topic each week, connecting learning and summer fun in memorable new ways.



Ray Ewing

WEDNESDAY
JULY 10
3 – 5PM

MVM Day
A Community Celebration

Join us for a day of fun and learning to celebrate the 101st anniversary of our founding! This family-friendly event will bring our collection to life with free access to all exhibits and special educational activities designed to engage and inspire. From scavenger hunts and crafts to music and special food offerings, there will be something for everyone to enjoy as we celebrate our birthday.



Ray Ewing

SATURDAY
AUGUST 3
6 – 9PM

Deco Dreams

Step back into the 1920s with Deco Dreams, a night where art deco elegance meets the joy of the jazz age. Don your finest art deco attire, enjoy signature cocktails, dance to lively music, and capture the moment in our photo booth. Plus, get exclusive after-hours access to our exhibits. Join us for a celebration of 1920s glamour and make some memories that last.

FRIDAY
AUGUST 23
10AM – 5PM

Nancy Luce Day

Celebrate the spirit of Nancy Luce, Martha’s Vineyard’s renowned “Chicken Lady,” at Nancy Luce Day! Ideal for families, our education team will host all-day drop-in activities including crafts, poetry writing, and interactive play. Plus, don’t miss the chance to dress up and snap your portrait in Nancy Luce style. It’s a day to explore the life and legacy of an extraordinary Islander through creativity and fun, perfect for children and adults alike.

FRIDAY

JUNE 21

2 – 3:30PM



Sailing to Freedom:

Recovering and Re-centering
the Maritime Dimension
of the Underground Railroad

Uncover the maritime pathways to freedom with Dr. Timothy Walker in this captivating presentation about the little-known stories of freedom-seeking by sea and the less-understood maritime side of the Underground Railroad. Dr. Walker will discuss the importance of enslaved African Americans' labor in southern ports, focusing on African American agency, and how individuals managed escapes from the South to safe harbor in northern cities such as Philadelphia, New York, New Bedford, and Boston.



MONDAY AFTERNOONS

JULY 8 – AUGUST 12

4PM WEEKLY

Tales of Edgartown

Lectures *in the* Legacy Gardens

Join us for a unique series of lectures held in the Legacy Gardens at the historic Cooke House. Each Monday we will host an hour of captivating talks that bring Edgartown's rich past to life. Every session will feature a new speaker, shedding light on a unique aspect of our Island's story. Enjoy light refreshments, connect with history, and relax in the picturesque setting.

THURSDAYS | AUGUST 22 – SEPTEMBER 26 | 5:30 – 7PM

Introduction to Martha's Vineyard History

If you've ever wanted to dig deep into the story of this Island with the help of an expert guide, this six-week lecture series, taught by MVM Research Librarian Bow Van Riper, is the perfect place to begin. From the seismic shifts of European arrival in the 1600s to the modern challenges of the 2020s, each week offers a unique lens on the Island's evolution. Engage with stories of revolution, prosperity, and transformation as you navigate through centuries of history.



SATURDAY

AUGUST 24

5PM

In Tune With The Earth

A Conversation with Linda Coombs

Aquinnah Wampanoag Elder Linda Coombs will talk about our relationship with the earth, traditional Wampanoag culture, and how they hold on to those concepts today in the midst of climate issues and other destructive activities affecting the world.

Linda is an author and historian from the Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah) and former program director of the Aquinnah Cultural Center. Her work aims to communicate accurate and appropriate representations of the history, cultures, and people of the Wampanoag and other Indigenous nations.



WEDNESDAY

SEPTEMBER 25

5:30 – 7PM

35 Years of Listening with Linsey Lee

For over 30 years, MVM's Oral History Curator Linsey Lee has been at the forefront of capturing the essence of the Island's community through her extensive interviews, acclaimed Vineyard Voices series, and work on Museum exhibits that showcase how every voice contributes to the rich tapestry of Island history. This evening will feature an in-depth interview, retrospective insights, and a chance for audience questions, highlighting Linsey's contribution to inclusive storytelling and the Museum's commitment to reflecting the full spectrum of Island life.



Cooke House and Legacy Gardens

Enjoy the ambiance of a beautiful historically-inspired landscape at the Cooke House and Legacy Gardens in Edgartown. The historic Cooke House, built in 1766, is open to visitors June through August as part of the Vineyard Preservation Trust's Historic Walking Tours. The Legacy Gardens are open dawn to dusk, year-round — a quiet spot to walk or picnic, just steps from downtown!



Edgartown Harbor Light and East Chop Light

The Martha's Vineyard Museum is privileged to be the steward of the Edgartown and East Chop lighthouses. Beyond their important functional role as an aid to navigation, these structures also offer visitors spectacular views. The lighthouses are open seasonally – visit our website for current hours.



Alison Shaw



Become a Member

Membership provides you with unique opportunities to enjoy the Museum's collections, exhibits, and events all while supporting our mission and the greater cultural community on Martha's Vineyard. Join today to take advantage of unlimited free admission, invitations to exclusive member events, discounts at the Museum gift shop, and much more. Join today in person or online!



First Light Cafe

Run by Aquila, the Cafe serves as a hub for locals and visitors alike, offering a delightful array of hot and cold beverages, freshly baked goods, pre-packaged grab-and-go options, and an enticing selection of light fare and specials.



Gift Shop

Find the perfect gift with our unique selection of books, apparel, jewelry, prints, toys, and Island-made specialty items. Every purchase directly supports our exhibitions and programming.



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All cover photos by Ray Ewing.