

# vfh **Views**

The Newsletter of the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities | Fall 2009

## Shaping Our Common Story

BY GAYLE HUNTER HAGLUND

**L**istening is nearly a lost art. We're all so busy, and for the most part, if we admit it, we've already made up our minds about much of the public agenda. Confrontation and sound bites are more the mode. After all, listening takes time and patience. To actively listen requires willingly suspending preconceptions in favor of anticipating new stories. And it requires a willingness to rethink one's presuppositions and honor the storyteller. Such listening can be transformative to both teller and hearer.

So why does this matter? Imagine for a moment the frustration of a Monacan Indian child as she learns the story of discovery in America. Between home and school, she is hearing two different versions. Her teacher knows there is more

*Digging for the stories of our shared past is the core of our work at the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities.*

to the story, of course, but may have inadequate materials with which to tell of nations of people who had been on this continent for thousands of years. Now with support from the Virginia Indian Heritage Program at the VFH, Virginia's standards of learning have been revised to tell a fuller story—a more complete account of America's history and all of her peoples. Our common story is more complicated than we might have thought, but also infinitely richer.

Today, it's not hard to imagine an economic life that is changing rapidly—but suppose many of the industries of your town and region have long since disappeared and opportunities are scarce. This has happened to many places in Virginia. Thanks to the VFH, the chance to reclaim and celebrate traditions is a reality. Opportunities to recreate vitality are incentivized through our regional initiatives and our grant funding.

Digging for the stories of our shared past is the core of our work at the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities. We know that our past is complicated and that there are many untold and not yet honored stories. Our work often starts simply by offering to hear and by structuring opportunity for deep digging.

In this issue of the *VFH Views*, you'll read about ways that people and groups throughout Virginia have found opportunities to tell their story or explore untold heritage through our grant program, our fellowships, Virginia Indian Heritage Program, Folklife Program, Center for the Book, and VFH Radio.

Don't underestimate how difficult it is to dig in, be noticed, and tell one's story. As board member and Chickahominy Tribal Chief Steve Adkins recently said, it can be a bit like *exhuming*. It is in the telling and hearing, though, that our common story is understood—and how a stronger future is shaped. And that's worth doing.



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# THE POWER TO *Transform*

BY DAVID BEARINGER

After more than 35 years of making grants to nonprofit organizations, we are more convinced than ever of the power even relatively modest grants have to transform the lives of individuals, organizations, communities, and the state as a whole. Here is a selection of the stories of how our efforts have helped shape the cultural landscape of Virginia.

## ▶▶ SOUTHWEST VIRGINIA: *A River of History*

By the mid-1980s, the VFH was more than 10 years old, but our record of programs in the southwestern corner of Virginia was still very limited. We had awarded only a few grants there, had worked with only a handful of the local nonprofit organizations, and were generally not well known in the region southwest of Roanoke. As a result we were receiving only a trickle of funding requests from a part of the state where the rivers of history and cultural tradition—the humanities—are wide and deep.

Our solution was to establish a regional council in Southwest Virginia (our second); and, one of the goals of this advisory group was to help encourage new grant requests. The result was a stream of successful grant proposals, some for projects that became models for other community programs statewide. Together, they created a history of collaboration, a network of scholars and humanities organizations—actually, a network of networks—that continues to expand down to the present day.

Early on, the Regional Council identified an almost universal need among small museums in Southwest Virginia, museums with strong and historically important collections but limited funding, usually with one or two paid employees—some relying entirely on volunteers—who had little or no formal training in the operation of a museum.

Through one of its member organizations, the Council received a grant for a “regional museums forum,” which brought together volunteers, staff, and board members from museums throughout Appalachian Virginia. They established an informal network for mutual support and provided intensive training with a “faculty” of seasoned museum professionals from throughout the state.

This program continued for several more years in Southwest Virginia and eventually became the statewide “Museums Fundamentals Forum” now offered once every three years by the Virginia Association of Museums—an illustration of the transformative effect even a relatively small grant

can have, not just on a single institution, or a single region, but the state as a whole.

Years later, VFH awarded funds to support production of a 5-disc CD set with liner notes documenting 30 years of music and storytelling performances at the annual Home Craft Days Festival in Big Stone Gap. It was our first major grant to support an audio CD project, and its success opened the door to funding other nationally distributed audio collections such as the highly acclaimed double CD, “Music of Coal,” and “Appalachia: Music from Home,” the companion CD to the PBS film series “Appalachia: A History of Mountains and People” (which VFH had also funded in its formative stage more than a decade before).

This same impulse led to a series of book publications on Southwest Virginia community histories, oral history projects, teachers’ institutes, local history conferences, and other events, all supported with grants from the VFH, reversing the cycle that had more or less defined our first decade in Appalachia and making Southwest Virginia a center of humanities activity and partnerships for the VFH ever since.

**1949 photo**

Courtesy of the Earl Palmer Collection at Virginia Tech



## ▶▶ AFRICAN AMERICAN HERITAGE: *Opening Doors*

**W**hen VFH was founded 35 years ago, African Americans were still mostly confined to the margins of Virginia's written histories, when they appeared there at all. With rare exceptions, the authoritative versions of Virginia's history moved quickly and furtively past the grim truths of slavery and Jim Crow segregation, sometimes covering the horrors in euphemism and generalities, but mostly just giving the entire subject a wide berth. And for the most part, this was also true of the ways local history was portrayed.

Creating the most complete picture possible of Virginia, telling its untold stories, and exploring the histories of African American and other minority communities have been among the central commitments of the VFH since the beginning of our work in 1974. Grants have been one of our principal instruments in helping to fulfill this commitment.

Over the past seven years, for example, the VFH has awarded grants to support a series of exhibits on the history of African Americans in the Lynchburg area, sponsored by the Legacy Museum. These exhibits have transformed our collective understanding of African American communities and the place of African American history within the larger story of Virginia, both at the local level and statewide.

In the process, Legacy has moved with remarkable speed into a position of leadership among Virginia's local history museums. Its exemplary work, supported at key points by the VFH, has led to other, larger grants from agencies such as the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Institute for Museum and Library Services.

In scores of instances such as this one, our relatively modest funding has had a major impact on the local community, the grantee institution, and the way history itself is understood. In other instances, our grants have helped to penetrate the walls built by segregation and racism and the distortions of history that have resulted, either through intention or neglect. Among our best:

▶ **A seminal grant supporting a landmark conference** on the legacies of the public school closings in Prince Edward County (sponsored by Hampden-Sydney College) spawned a decade of new research and dozens of related educational programs, and contributed to the creation of a new museum of Civil Rights history.

▶ **A grant supporting research on the history of African American hospitals** in Norfolk eventually led to a far more expansive, cutting-edge digital history project on African American communities in the Tidewater region, one that has since received major funding from the NEH and other sources.

▶ **A series of grants on the history of Christiansburg Institute** spotlighted one of the most prestigious and influential schools for African American children during the 100-year period from the end of the Civil War until the mid-1960s. By the early 1990s, only small remnants of the original school property remained. The school had been closed for almost three decades, and its magnificent history was in danger of being lost.

Momentum created in part by early VFH grant support for research, oral history collection, the creation of on-line and physical exhibits, and several publications helped Christiansburg Institute to obtain federal funding for renovation of the Edgar A. Long Building and take the first steps toward establishing a 21st century educational facility in keeping with the Institute's original mission.



**Christiansburg Institute**

Courtesy of the Digital Library and Archives, Virginia Tech

▶ **A pair of grants to support new book publications** documented African American history on the Eastern Shore. Although African Americans were living on Virginia's Eastern Shore within a few years after the founding of Jamestown, and even though deep veins of African American life had shaped and defined the Shore's history over nearly four centuries, in the year 2005 there were no more than a handful of published histories, in or out of print, that gave significant attention to these contributions. *Landmarks*, a book on African American historic sites (2007), and *Life for Me Ain't Been No Crystal Stair*, a collection of African American biographies (forthcoming), are already serving as a model for other communities statewide, who are seeking to document their own histories. Local interest generated by the publications has also led to the donation of scores of privately held documents and artifacts, an exhibit at the local historical society, new interest in historic site preservation, and a movement to create a museum of African American history on the Eastern Shore.

Each of these projects—and many others like them—opened doors that had long been closed, and each had far-reaching, sometimes unanticipated results.

## THE POWER TO *Transform*

Like many nonprofit organizations in Virginia, the VFH has been affected by the broader financial crisis.

But even in these difficult times, the VFH Board has reaffirmed the importance of grants to the fulfillment of our mission in Virginia. We remain committed to supporting other organizations in the work they do on behalf of the humanities, and to using our ability to make grants in ways that draw on and support the work of other VFH programs—creating synergies that serve an even broader public interest.

### ▶▶▶ CHANGING LIVES: *One Grant at a Time*

In some respects, almost every grant that makes important work possible, that engages new audiences, brings scholarship into the public realm, or looks in new ways at the history and cultural richness of Virginia is transformative. Over the past 35 years, VFH has awarded well over 2,500 grants, and choosing just a few examples to illustrate the power of grants to transform is a challenge, to say the least.

▶ **A small exhibit on regional textiles**, funded by VFH, leads its first-time curator down a path of research and scholarly achievement that eventually includes editing the textile section of the *Encyclopedia of Appalachia*, research fellowships in Ireland and Scotland (as well as at VFH), several books, and scores of other opportunities in a career the curator did not foresee when she applied for that first grant more than 20 years ago.

▶ **A planning grant to support a research project** on the Eastern Shore's environmental history leads to a long-term partnership between the local public library and the UVA Center for Digital History. This partnership in turn leads to the creation of a powerful, state-of-the-art on-line research tool that will, literally, transform scholarly and public understanding of the Shore's economic and social history, as well as of the changes in its landscape during the period from the 1870s through the 1930s.

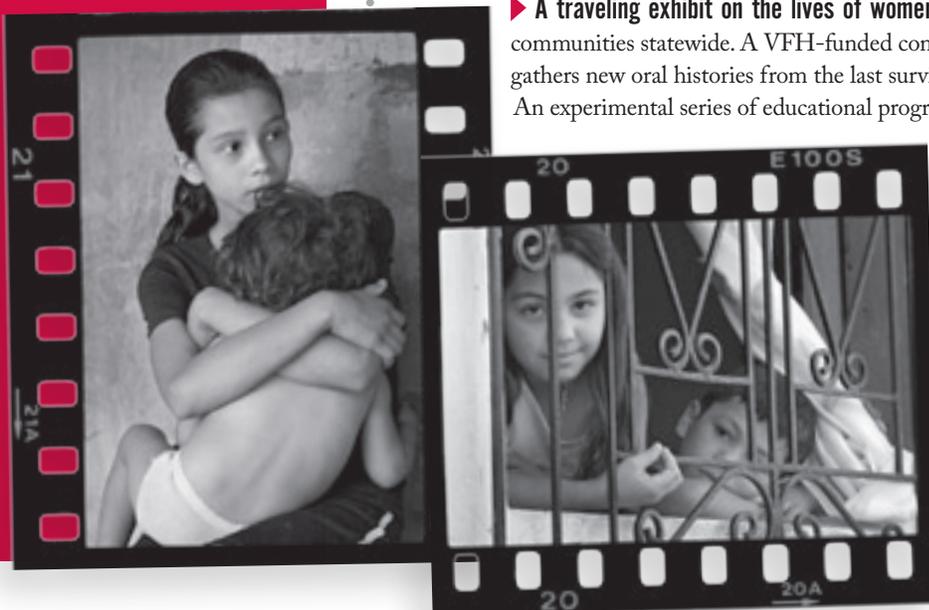
▶ **VFH funding helps to launch** the National Folk Festival in Richmond, and that same year, the Festival of Chinese Culture, also in Richmond. Both events have since become a permanent part of the City's cultural landscape. In the same way, VFH funding for the inaugural Furious Flower Poetry Festival at James Madison University has led to the publication of a landmark poetry collection and to the establishment of a permanent center for the study of African American poetry at JMU.

▶ **A VFH-funded oral history project** on the Northern Neck becomes the first step toward creation of the Steamboat Era Museum in Irvington. Another oral history and photo-documentation project, focusing on women combat veterans of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, results in a powerful new exhibit, the first of its kind on this subject, one that moves its visitors representing every point on the political/ideological spectrum, veterans and non-veterans alike. Other results include a book (forthcoming from a major university press) and a documentary film-in-prospect.

▶ **A traveling exhibit on the lives of women** in El Salvador opens doors to Latino communities statewide. A VFH-funded conference on the 65th anniversary of D-Day gathers new oral histories from the last surviving veterans of the Normandy Invasion. An experimental series of educational programs on local history and culture, designed specifically for young adults with autism and other mental disabilities, creates a new approach to the humanities with the potential to transform both museum-based education and the lives of Virginians with special needs.

And the list goes on.

Photos by Peggy Harrison from the *We Have to Dream While Awake* book and exhibit on lives of women in El Salvador.



## ▶▶ VIRGINIA INDIANS: *Historic Partnership*

In 1987, VFH awarded grant funds to support a conference on the past, present, and future of Virginia's Native people. It was attended by the chiefs and other representatives of Virginia's eight state-recognized Indian tribes, academic scholars, and a general public audience. It was the first time that all eight of the tribes had gathered in one place to discuss common concerns.

Our involvement in that conference led to 20 years of work with the tribes and to the partnership that resulted in state funding to establish the Virginia Indian Heritage Program at VFH ([VirginiaIndianProgram.org](http://VirginiaIndianProgram.org)).

Along that 20-year road, VFH became, to the best of our knowledge, the first state humanities council to explicitly recognize tribal chiefs and other tradition-bearers as humanities

scholars whose authority is equal to that of university-based historians and anthropologists. That road also led us to award more than a dozen grants to tribal organizations in Virginia, including a grant to the Monacan Nation in support of its "Monacan Faces" project.

That project involved facial reconstruction based on the skeletal remains of a man and a woman who had lived more than 900 years ago in the Monacan Tribe's ancestral homeland. Their remains had been excavated by a prominent Virginian in the early 20th century and held in a variety of locations over the ensuing decades. Molds of the two skulls were taken, facial features added, and when the process was complete, tribal members expressed shock at how much these faces resembled contemporary Monacan people.

This was a deeply significant "homecoming" in several respects. Monacan identity was affirmed for members of the tribe who had lived, or whose parents and grandparents had lived, through the dark years of Virginia's Racial Integrity Laws, which denied the right of Indian people throughout the state to claim their Indian identity, at a time when official state policy held that there were no Indians left in Virginia.

The facial likenesses were placed on permanent display at the Tribal Museum in Amherst (VFH had also funded planning and exhibit development for the Museum). And in 1999, the skeletal remains, including the two skulls, were buried in an emotional ceremony at the Monacan ancestral cemetery, after almost a hundred years spent in cardboard boxes and museum archives.

**Sue Branham Elliott, Monacan Council member, displays her bead work.** Photo by KARENNE WOOD.



## ▶▶ SUPPORT FOR VIRGINIA'S UNFOLDING STORY

Virginia is a different state today than the one in which VFH was founded more than 35 years ago.

Its communities are different, as is our awareness of the state's complex history and its immense cultural diversity. The grants we make to other organizations can—and often do—transform the lives of individuals and communities, as well as our shared understanding of the past, and of issues in the present.

Over more than three decades, it has been our privilege to work in partnership with hundreds of organizations, large and small, helping to place the power of transformation within their reach. This commitment on the part of VFH has reshaped Virginia; and it continues to broaden, deepen, and enrich the understanding of Virginia's common story.

*Jeanne Siler contributed to this article.*

## Fall 2010 VFH Fellows



Fall 2009 resident VFH fellows (top to bottom) are **Mitchell S. Green**, NEH/Horace Goldsmith Distinguished Teaching Professor of Philosophy at UVA. His research project is *The Evolution of Language*. **Corinne T. Field**, an independent scholar from Charlottesville, has taught in UVA's Studies in Women and Gender program and is completing a book project, *Women's Rights and the Struggle for Equal Adulthood in America, 1792-1939*. **Eric G. Anderson**, Associate Professor of English at George Mason University, directs a new program in Native American and Indigenous Studies. His research project is *On Native Southern Ground*. **Hanadi Al-Samman** is a Woodrow Wilson Fellow and Assistant Professor in the Department of Middle Eastern and South Asian Languages and Cultures at UVA. Her topic is *Anxiety of Erasure: Trauma, Authorship, and the Diaspora in Arab Women's Poetics*. VFH Senior Fellow **William W. Freehling** is composing a collection of essays, *Disunion Revisited: Shorter Descriptions, Longer Perspectives*, and completing research on his next book, *Lincoln's Growth—and America's*. Maurie McInnis, Associate Professor and Director of American Studies in the UVA Department of Art, is completing her book *Slaves Waiting for Sale*, and **Theodore C. DeLaney**, Associate Professor and head of the History Department at Washington and Lee University, is writing his book on school desegregation in four Virginia counties: Augusta, Rockbridge, Botetourt, and Roanoke, titled *School Desegregation in Western Virginia and Southern Identity*.

## Center on Violence and Community: Listening and Telling About Violence

BY ROBERTA A. CULBERTSON

**L**istening. It's the hardest thing to do when it comes to understanding violence. The stories are so hard, so terrible they seem unbelievable. Things are no better for the survivor. As he lets the words go they burn and feel like violence themselves.

The VFH Center on Violence and Community understands this problem of listening and telling about violence. We offer a more neutral place to begin: the written word. Tinged with reason and shaped by structures of language, writing makes violence tolerable without sanitizing it.

In the silent pages of a book a survivor might find a friend or a witness removed in time and place but not in feeling. A committed reader might find some comprehension of it in pages to which she turns again and again.

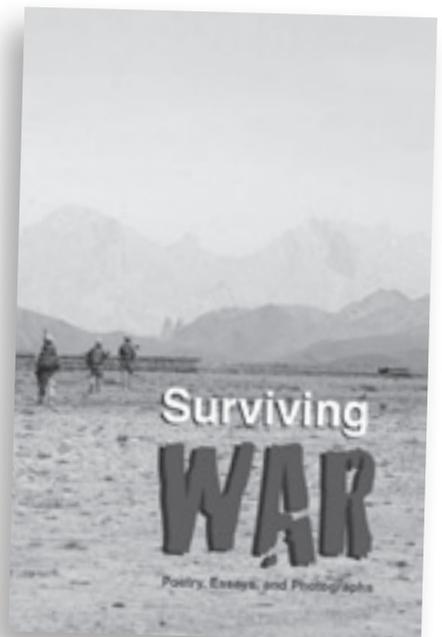
In this spirit, the Center on Violence and Community is rolling out three publications this winter. All will be "print on demand," drastically reducing printing expenses and increasing distribution.

First, the third issue of our popular *Tough Times Companion* will be rich with photographs, poems, essays, and ideas for survivors of many traumas from illness and loss to violence. *TTC* (as it is affectionately known) will be free to hospitals, prisons, shelters, and other organizations serving those facing "tough times."

Second, a book for veterans, *Surviving War*, will be released in December. Mostly a book of poetry by and for veterans, the book also offers humanities-based ideas about how to work with the long-term effects of violence.

Finally, a manual outlines how social workers, therapists, and others working with trauma survivors can use the humanities in their work. *Action Against Trauma: A Trainer's Manual* began as a VFH grant.

Watch our website for publication announcements and links to our latest resources and upcoming events, [virginiafoundation.org](http://virginiafoundation.org).



# Documents Compass

## Digital Humanities Resource Improves Access to the Founding Era

BY SUSAN H. PERDUE AND HOLLY C. SHULMAN

**D**ocuments Compass joined the VFH community only a little over a year ago, but we are already part of the transformational work that is so important to the Foundation. We are helping humanities scholars engage in the digital world and provide local, regional, national, and international communities access to important scholarship.

Documents Compass provides non-profit assistance for documentary editing projects in the field of history. It helps editors solve problems such as identifying sources of funding; transcribing historical documents, preparing them for electronic publication with encoding; and delivering them to the Internet in a variety of ways.

It emerged from the joint experience of Susan H. Perdue and Holly C. Shulman. Perdue is an experienced documentary editor in the field of history who has worked on the papers of James Madison, John Marshall, and Thomas Jefferson. She has long been convinced that these projects could benefit from technical innovation, and believes that electronic tools will enable scholars and editors to repackage and repurpose their traditional work. Shulman is the editor of a born-digital



documentary edition, *The Dolley Madison Digital Edition* and a Research Professor in the Department of History at the University of Virginia. Perdue and Shulman were joined by Susan Severtson, a former publishing executive.

Documents Compass has already received two major grants. The first is from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to create an electronic biographical dictionary/prosopography of people of the founding era. One goal is to gather all the biographies of the men and women who are identified in the papers of the Founding Fathers (and other sources) so that they can be easily retrieved as an aggregate source. Another goal is to take these biographies and through a search engine enable users to study those people as groups (whether a user is interested in studying men from Pennsylvania, wives of Virginia politicians, immigrants from France, or writers

from South Carolina, and so on). The final product will be of interest to scholars, students, lay people, and genealogists, alike.

The second grant is from the National Historic Publications and Records Commission to make the as-yet unpublished letters of the Founding Fathers freely available to anyone with Internet access anywhere in the world. In both cases we are making information globally accessible and facilitating research for the digital world. It is a great step toward the Foundation's goals of making Virginia history available to worldwide audiences, and placing Virginia history into a greater national context.

The editorial world is beginning to notice our efforts and take steps to work with us. We are reaching out to VFH fellows who want to think about digital publication. We have two smaller projects already underway, the papers of the South Carolina founder Eliza Lucas Pinckney and the letters of the 20th century modernist composer George Antheil. Documents Compass adds to the valuable work already being done by the *Encyclopedia Virginia* to help Virginians understand their past through new and soundly researched digital scholarship.

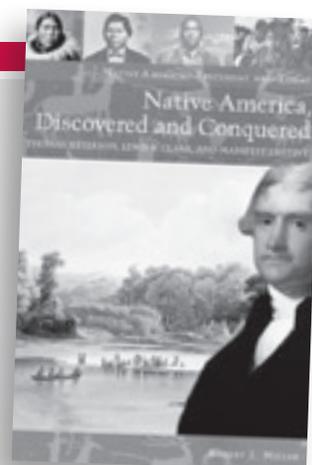
## Columbus Day "Discoveries"

BY KARENNE WOOD

**O**n Oct. 12, 2009, the Virginia Indian Heritage Program hosted Robert Miller (Eastern Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma), who spoke in Charlottesville on "American Indians: The Doctrine of Discovery and Thomas Jefferson." A professor at Lewis & Clark Law School in Portland, Miller explained how European countries have used the Doctrine to claim sovereign, commercial, and property rights over lands and indigenous peoples throughout the world. The Doctrine was developed in the 15<sup>th</sup> century by Spain, Portugal, and the Church, and adopted by France and England. It rests on the assumption that Christian rulers possessed a divine right to own and distribute lands and were obligated to "Christianize, colonize and civilize" other peoples worldwide. It resulted in the practice of explorers planting flags and crosses—not to give thanks for safe landing—but to claim rights and land title. This legal ceremony was enacted by John Cabot

along the Atlantic coastline in 1497, by Christopher Newport at Cape Henry in 1607, and by countless other European "discoverers." In 2007, Russia planted its flag on the North Pole's seabed in order to claim mineral rights under the Doctrine.

Jefferson's purposes in aiming Lewis and Clark at the Northwest in 1803, Miller noted, included not only gathering detailed notes about flora and fauna but also marking lands west of the Rockies, notifying tribes of their new status as dependents, and exploring the mouth of the Columbia River to claim its vast watershed for the U.S. The legal principles embodied in the Doctrine justified American "Manifest Destiny" and the removal of Indian nations. It remains the cornerstone of federal policy toward Native peoples and their lands in the U.S. and in Canada, Australia, and New Zealand.



# Folklife

## CREATING SPIRITUAL CONNECTIONS

BY TORI TALBOT

**M**usic festivals across the state and nation keep Jon Lohman, the director of the Folklife Program and the Virginia state folklorist, on the road from early spring until late autumn. So far this year, he has presented workshops, emceed concerts, produced stages, judged contests, curated exhibitions, and conducted interviews at Merlefest in Wilkesboro, North Carolina; the National Folk Festival in Butte, Montana; Floydfest in Floyd, Virginia; the American Folk Festival in Bangor, Maine; the Albert Hash Memorial Festival in Whiteside, Virginia; the Bristol Rhythm and Roots Festival in Bristol, Virginia/Tennessee; and at the Richmond Folk Festival in Richmond, Virginia.

Not only are these festivals a crucial way for the Folklife program to reach large and diverse audiences, but they gather together musicians from different places, traditions, and professional experiences in special informal workshops. The workshops are different from a concert or performance: musicians can interact with one another and with the audience often in intimate settings where they not only sing or play their music but also discuss their influences, inspirations, and methods.

This summer, the Folklife Program arranged a powerful workshop between the legendary bluegrass and gospel musician **Doyle Lawson**, his band **Quicksilver**, and the **Paschall Brothers**, an African American a cappella Tidewater gospel quartet. Before the evening's concert at the Blue Ridge Music Center near Galax, the Paschalls joined Lawson and his band in a small theatre for a workshop where both groups discussed their craft. Differences between urban southeastern Virginia and the mountains of Tennessee and Virginia receded as both



All photos by Skip Rowland.

ABOVE: **Reverend Frank Newsome**, Old Regular Baptist singer from Haysi, VA, performing "Beulah Land."

LEFT: A rapt listener enjoys sacred sounds from the Virginia Folklife stage.

groups reflected on singing's place at the core of their identities. The workshop had created such an atmosphere of genuine exchange and mutual respect that later on in the night, the Paschalls joined Doyle Lawson and Quicksilver on stage for an unrehearsed and spontaneous performance of "Amazing Grace." The audience gave them a standing ovation.

Similarly, a workshop at the Bristol Rhythm and Roots Festival in September enabled the audience to see Old Regular Baptist singing not as a curiosity but as a vibrant art form. Lohman emceed a workshop between Reverend **Frank Newsome** of Haysi, Virginia, and Grammy-award winning Nashville songwriter **Jim Lauderdale**. After Newsome had described the baptisms he performs in the McClure River—sometimes in the dead of winter which requires him to break ice—Lauderdale spontaneously composed a breathtaking song using Frank's own words. "Take me down to the river," Lauderdale sang, as tears streamed down his face. It was an astonishing moment for Lauderdale, Newsome, and the audience.

In continuing to celebrate the artistry that comes from spiritual settings, in October, the Folklife Program curated a section of the Richmond Folk Festival known as the Virginia Folklife Area. "Sacred Sounds – Sacred Spaces" highlighted many of the arts that arise from worship and spiritual settings in Virginia. The area showcased the range of the sacred arts that have thrived in the Commonwealth, from a variety of religions, denominations, and spiritual communities including Ethiopian Orthodox Singing, Jewish Liturgical Song, and Persian Spiritual Music. One of the most popular aspects of the festival was a fashion show of African American church hats, which drew an overflow crowd who cheered the elegantly dressed women strutting down the aisles in their own regal "crowns."

Nearly 160,000 people attended the festival, and witnessed the extraordinary talents of Virginia's traditional musicians and artists.

See videos, slideshows and more at [VirginiaFolklife.org](http://VirginiaFolklife.org)



A church "crown" wearer displays "hattitude" under the Virginia Folklife tent.

# UNTOLD VIRGINIA STORIES

## Folklife FieldNotes

BY LYDIA WILSON



Visit one of the festivals that Virginia Folklife Program Director Jon Lohman coordinates and you'll leave with all five of your senses fully engaged. You might taste a fried apple pie, smell Brunswick Stew's salty and sweet perfume, see the brilliant and symbolic colors of a Guatemalan alfombra—or rice and sawdust carpet, feel the rough surface of hand-pressed brick being custom shaped or hear the indescribable energy created by 20 brass musicians shouting songs of praise.

Because sound is one of these five elemental ways that we experience and express ourselves in the world, audio recordings have played a prominent role in Lohman's eight years of work to document and present the lives and stories of Virginia's traditional artists, musicians, and craftspeople.

Public radio listeners around the Commonwealth will hear our folklorist present and interpret selections from his rich archive of interviews and oral histories as part of a monthly series called "Folklife FieldNotes" that launched this fall. The pieces will air on Virginia's major market public radio stations and are also available by podcast at [FolklifeFieldNotes.org](http://FolklifeFieldNotes.org).

Folklife FieldNotes builds on VFH Radio's Humanities Feature Bureau and its rapport with Virginia's NPR affiliates. Bureau editor Lydia Wilson has identified how the VFH's deep roots in communities and excellence in radio production complement stations' programming needs.

Many recent studies have shown that public radio listeners highly value stories about their local community that are produced to the same quality standards as national content. The Folklife FieldNotes series shares the stories of tradition-bearers among us in our own rapidly changing communities.

The debut piece contrasts two recordings of **Spencer Moore**, a retired tobacco farmer who has memorized hundreds of traditional dance tunes for guitar. This lively piece of music plays a main character in this particular story, by allowing the listener to imagine participating in one of the old-time community dances at which "The Old Jimmy Sutton" would be played.

The second FieldNote features an oral history excerpt that captures **Flory Jagoda's** memories of escaping the Holocaust as a young child. Her observations about the role of her preferred instrument, the accordion, during this harrowing time of her life are powerful and insightful.

Folklife FieldNotes presents the stories of remarkable Virginians to a new audience. But the philosophical impact of what *is missing* from the pieces is an achievement, as well. Absent is the notion that traditional culture is dying from contamination by modern life. Each FieldNote reflects Jon Lohman's approach to documentation, one that asks *why* people continue to practice traditional arts when new methods are readily available, as well as *how* they do their work. This approach probes Virginia's rich traditions for the meanings they hold for their contemporary artists, inviting listeners to experience and learn more about our common story along the way.



Spencer Moore jamming at the 2003 Virginia Folklife Apprenticeship Showcase.



Flory Jagoda, circa 1948.

"Folklife FieldNotes" probes Virginia's rich traditions for the meanings they hold for their contemporary artists, inviting listeners to experience and learn more about our common story along the way.

MARCH 17-21, 2010

VIRGINIA  
FESTIVAL  
OF THE  
BOOK



vfh Virginia Foundation  
for the Humanities

CHARLOTTESVILLE, VA

# Sweet Sixteen Full of Literary Treats for Virginia Festival of the Book

BY KEVIN MCFADDEN

The 16<sup>th</sup> Annual (“Sweet Sixteen”) Virginia Festival of the Book will be packed with talent once again March 17-21, 2010. Most events are free and open to the public. Tickets for select events, including the signature luncheons, business breakfast, and reception, are still available (see below).

Featured authors will include 2009 Pulitzer Prize-winner **Elizabeth Strout** (*Olive Kitteridge*), Pulitzer Prize-winning *New York Times* journalist and author **Rick Bragg** (*The Most They Ever Had; All Over But the Shoutin’*), poet **Nikki Giovanni** (*Bicycles: Love Poems*), novelists **Lee Smith** (*Mrs. Darcy Meets the Blue-Eyed Stranger*), **Alice Randall** (*Rebel Yell* and *The Wind Done Gone*), and **Sonny Brewer** (*The Poet of Tolstoy Park*).

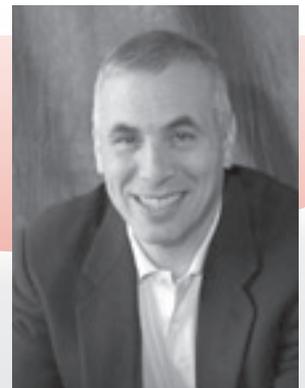
Nonfiction lovers will enjoy authors **Matthew Crawford** (*Shop Class as Soulcraft: An Inquiry into the Value of Work*), **Jackie Gingrich Cushman** (*The Five Principles for a Successful Life*), **E. Ethelbert Miller** (*The Fifth Inning*), **Warren St. John** (*Outcasts United*), and **James Gordon** (*Unstuck: Your Guide to the Seven-Stage Journey Out of Depression*).

Authors of notable works of history and cultural studies include **Patricia Sullivan** (*Lift Every Voice: The NAACP and the Making of the Civil Rights Movement*), **David Taylor** (*Soul of a People: The WPA Uncovers Depression America*), **Jennifer Burns** (*Goddess of the Market: Ayn Rand and the American Right*), and **Brian Balogh** (*A Government Out of Sight: The Mystery of National Authority in the Nineteenth Century*).

Distinguished poets **Kim Addonizio** (*My Dreams Out in the Street*), **Kevin Young** (*Dear Darkness*), **John Casteen** (*Free Union*), and **Major Jackson** (*Hoops*) will also read and share their work.

Go online to [VABook.org](http://VABook.org) for more details. See you at the Festival!

## Ticketed Events Still Available



### Authors Reception (\$35)

Saturday March 20 • 6 PM

This is your chance to rub elbows with some of your favorite authors. “CitySpace” (Charlottesville Community Design Center) is on the second story of the Market Street Parking Garage overlooking the east end of the Charlottesville Downtown Mall.

### Festival Luncheon with Michael Malone (\$50)

Thursday March 18th • 11:45 AM

Malone is the author of *Four Corners of the Sky: A Novel* and seven other novels, collections of short stories and two nonfiction works, winner of an Edgar, an O. Henry, and an Emmy for his work as head writer in the 1990s for the daytime drama *One Life to Live*.

### Crime Wave Luncheon with Julia Spencer-Fleming (\$50)

Saturday March 20 • Noon

Spencer-Fleming is an Agatha award nominee and author of seven mysteries, including the most recent *One Was a Soldier*.

### Business Breakfast with Michael Gelb (\$30 or \$350/table)

Wednesday March 17 • 7:30 AM

Gelb, the author of *How to Think Like Leonardo da Vinci*, will speak on “Thinking Creatively In Tough Times.” A pioneer on creative thinking, accelerated learning, and innovative leadership, he is a Batten Fellow at the UVA Darden School.

# VFH Welcomes Four New Board Members



**Scott Colley** is Interim President of Lees-McRae College in Banner Elk, NC. He has extensive experience in higher education administration, including strategic planning, capital fund management, and alumni relations.

A graduate of Randolph-Macon College in Virginia, Dr. Colley earned his MA and PhD from the University of Chicago. He served as President of Berry College in Rome, GA, from 1998 to 2006, leading a successful \$100 million campaign. Prior to serving at Berry College, Dr. Colley was Provost and Dean of the Faculty at Hampden-Sydney College, and he taught at Vanderbilt University for 20 years.

He has published dozens of articles and reviews, is the editor or co-editor of two Shakespeare editions, and has written books on 17th-century playwright John Marston and Shakespeare's Richard III. Dr. Colley shares his time between Banner Elk, NC, and Keswick, VA.



**Joanne V. Gabbin** is Executive Director and Founder of the Furious Flower Poetry Center, and a professor of English at James Madison University. She is author of *Sterling A. Brown: Building the Black Aesthetic Tradition*, editor of *Furious Flower: A Revolution in African American Poetry* and

*The Furious Flowering of African American Poetry*, and executive producer of the *Furious Flower* video and DVD series. A dedicated teacher and scholar, she has received numerous awards for excellence in teaching and scholarship. In 2005 she was inducted into the International Literary Hall of Fame for Writers of African Descent.

Professor Gabbin is also founder and organizer of the Wintergreen Women Writers' Collective, owner of the 150 Franklin Street Gallery in Harrisonburg, and author of the children's book *I Bet She Called Me Sugar Plum*. She served on the VFH Board from 1996 to 2002, was board chair from 2000 to 2002, and has also been a grantee and project director.



**Oliver W. Hill, Jr.**, is Professor and Chair of the Department of Psychology at Virginia State University in Petersburg, VA. He earned his MA and PhD in psychology at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI, and a BA in Comparative History from Howard University. His

research areas include, among others, cognitive factors in mathematics performance, religiosity and health outcomes and beliefs, and time perception. Dr. Hill has published or edited numerous articles and essays on those topics, and also teaches courses on meditation and yoga around the country.



**B. Thomas Mansbach**

practices law with the Washington office of Russin & Vecchi LLP, where he focuses on international financial transactions. Previously, Mr. Mansbach had spent 6 years at the Washington office of Dewey Ballantine, and 26 years at the Overseas Private

Investment Corporation (OPIC). He has worked on the financial arrangements for a large number of major projects worldwide, many involving energy and natural resources.

In addition to the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities, Mr. Mansbach serves on the Boards of Trustees for the Foundation for the Children's Hospital of the National Capital Area, the Phillips Collections, and Arena Stage. Mr. Mansbach received his BA from Yale College and his LLB from the Harvard Law School. He is a member of both the Virginia and the District of Columbia bars. Mr. Mansbach grew up in Norfolk, and shares his time between homes in Washington, DC, and Madison County, VA.

## Next Board Meetings:

**December 10-11, 2009**

**March 4-5, 2010**



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# Richmond Folk Festival

The Richmond Folk Festival on October 9–11 drew an estimated 160,000 attendees, many of whom found their way to the Virginia Folklife Stage and Demonstration area, curated by Virginia State Folklorist and VFH Folklife Program Director Jon Lohman.

See videos, slideshows and more at  
**VirginiaFolklife.org**

Charlottesville blues guitarist Corey Harris  
and an Afro-Latin group perform during the Festival.  
Photos by Skip Rowland.

