Less than fifty years ago, in 1970, only one in every 100 people living in Virginia had been born outside the United States. In 2012, the figure was one in nine.

Current estimates place the number of foreign-born Virginians at just under one million, out of a total population of 8.26 million, and nearly half of these new residents of the state are between the ages of 25 and 44—prime years for work as well as childbearing.

In recent months, the surge of unaccompanied, undocumented children entering the United States from Central America has received widespread publicity and sparked intense public debate. We don’t yet know the full impact of this particular immigrant stream on Virginia, but we do know that among the children of adult immigrants in Virginia, including documented as well as undocumented migrants, 96 percent today are U.S. citizens. In 2014, in Arlington County alone, 6,755 public school students spoke a language at home other than English, and two-thirds of these were born in the U.S. to immigrant parents.

The implications of these statistics and the changes they foretell are profound. This is true especially in a state like Virginia where large numbers of new immigrants continue to be drawn by work opportunities, good public schools, proximity to the nation’s capital, and in many cases, by the presence of already well-established communities from their countries of origin.

The impact of Virginia’s changing demographics can already be felt across the state: in large cities and rural areas, in public education, in electoral politics and local economies, and in a social fabric that has long been held together in part by a sense of shared history, as difficult and complex as that.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2
**The Changing Face of Virginia**

**IMMIGRATION AND THE HUMANITIES**

CONTINUED FROM COVER

History has sometimes been.

The portrait of Virginia is changing fast. It becomes more complicated almost by the day, growing richer and more diverse and at the same time challenging to an older, simpler understanding of what it means to be a Virginian.

This challenge carries within it an opportunity—many opportunities, in fact. And the humanities have much to contribute as we—all Virginians, whether our roots in the state go back ten thousand years, ten generations, or ten weeks—travel this new road together, creating the map as we go.

An article in the Spring 2007 edition of this newsletter (VFH Views) acknowledged the Foundation’s responsibility—and our intention—to continue work that would help create the broadest possible “portrait” of Virginia and a more complete representation of the state’s complex, sometimes glorious, sometimes painful and inglorious past.

The occasion for the article was the establishment of the Virginia Indian Heritage Program at VFH, an unprecedented partnership between a non-Native organization and the state’s (then) eight state-recognized tribes.

Our work with the Virginia tribes began in 1987 and that work continues, set within the context of our broader commitment to a full, unblinking engagement with Virginia’s history and an equally ambitious effort to understand the state and its communities in the present day.

Prior to 2007 and until fairly recently, the majority of VFH program energy and resources focused on the “braid” of three cultures—European, African/African American, and Indian—that had defined Virginia and shaped its identity from the early 17th century until deep into the 20th.

Within the interplay of these three cultural strands the weight of the Virginia story seemed to rest; for many years the threads of Virginia’s history as we knew it supported this view.

But it’s also true that our work was never confined within this three-part story. A grant almost twenty years ago supported a documentary film on the building of a Lao Buddhist temple near Manassas. Our work with refugee communities in the 1990s led to a groundbreaking series of programs in the field of violence and survival. Early Folklife apprenticeships in Mexican folkloric and Indian Kathak dance, and many other programs—some of them grant-funded, others initiated by VFH staff—stand as evidence that the commitment to exploring the cultural diversity of Virginia and the lives of immigrants and immigrant communities in the Commonwealth has always been there.

But in 21st century Virginia, the “weight of history” is now matched by the weight of the present, and by the need to recognize and help Virginians—all Virginians—understand and come to terms with the complex identity of the state today. We share a past that reaches into the lives of all Virginians, even those who are newly arrived. We also share a future full of the diversity of cultures and cultural perspective that has come to define the experience of living in Virginia in 2014.

Immigration has been part of the Virginia story since the day the Jamestown colonists arrived, followed by waves of English and then German and Scots-Irish settlers.

Over more than 200 years, millions of enslaved Africans were forced to immigrate to the Americas through the transatlantic slave trade; as a consequence, many people of African origin—enslaved as well as free men and women—also became part of Virginia.

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, coal companies based in New York and Philadelphia actively recruited men from Poland, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia to work in the mines of central Appalachia, including Southwest Virginia where many of their descendants still live.

In the early 1900s, the vast majority of foreign-born Virginians were from Europe—from Germany, Ireland, England, Russia, and Scotland, primarily. But the picture has changed dramatically since then. Today, 42 percent of new immigrants to the Old Dominion are from Asia, 35 percent are from Latin America, 10 percent are from Africa, and only 10 percent are from Europe.

Currently, El Salvador, India, Mexico, the Philippines, and Korea top the list of countries-of-origin for immigrants to Virginia as a whole, although other nationalities may predominate in specific regions. Nationwide,
How will we—as immigrant and native-born Virginians—learn to speak to each other across language and cultural barriers?

The picture is varied and complicated, the demographics surprising and sometimes hard to predict.

For example, 68 percent of all foreign-born Virginians live in Northern Virginia where they comprise 23 percent of the region’s total population. But in Southwest Virginia, the figure is less than 4 percent.

While the largest percentage of immigrants living in Virginia today are from Asian countries, Hispanics are by far the fastest-growing group among the so-called “new Virginians.”

To illustrate: between April 2010 and July 2013, the Hispanic population grew by 10 percent or more in twenty-nine Virginia counties and cities; in July 2013 Hispanic residents comprised 40 percent of the total population in twelve Virginia cities and counties, including places like Arlington (15.6 percent), Manassas City (16.2 percent), but also Galax (18.1 percent), Harrisonburg (18.2 percent), and Winchester (15.9 percent).

What does all this mean for Virginia, and what challenges and opportunities does it present for the humanities and the work of VFH? How is VFH responding?

The beginning of the answer to these questions lies at the core of VFH’s mission, which is service to the state, and in the three prongs of that mission-of-service: to understand the past, confront important issues in the present, and help shape a promising future for all Virginians.

VFH takes no position with regard to federal or state immigration policies. Our interest is in using the humanities to help Virginians—all Virginians—better understand the state and the world they live in. Every program that VFH sponsors, initiates, or supports is offered with this purpose in mind.

So as the cultural fabric of Virginia diversifies, how do we make sure that new Virginians will identify themselves strongly with their new home, becoming full participants in the life of the Commonwealth? How will they come to understand and appreciate the complex history of Virginia and its past that isn’t past but still shapes Virginia in the present?

What tools will help them understand the sometimes uneasy balance between individual rights and between rights and responsibilities in a democratic society? Or how the freedoms and the (relative) prosperity that many Virginians enjoy today were purchased and by whom?

Simply put, how will these new residents come to see themselves as part of Virginia? What will being a Virginian mean to them? Will they be able to successfully blend their dual identities—as a Guatemalan, a Cambodian, or a Sudanese and a Virginian? Can they hold onto the traditions they’ve brought with them while acquiring others?

As for the rest of us, what tools exist—what tools or opportunities can be created—that will help us better understand and appreciate the lives of these new Virginians, both in the places they’ve come from and their new homes here? How can we know and understand, find ways to experience and honor the beliefs and traditions, the hopes and aspirations they bring with them? The values that define their communities?

How will we—as immigrant and native-born Virginians—learn to speak to each other across language and cultural barriers? How will we live and work together within a heterogeneous community where the cultural differences and our different ways of understanding the world can be profound?

Alongside these questions, there are others too: questions about work and employment, access to education, housing, and community services. But as important

CONTINUED ON PAGE 7
A CHANGING VIRGINIA

FOR FORTY YEARS, VFH grants and programs have supported the work of communities to tell their stories all over the Commonwealth. An effort is underway to document some of the most outstanding projects that have illustrated that legacy; we call it “40 Years, 40 Stories.” Half of these stories are now online, with another half still to come over the rest of our anniversary year.

Here you’ll find a sample of the stories that highlight a changing Virginia. Go online to find a story near you: VirginiaHumanities.org/40-years-40-stories

The Old Belt Enters a New Era
GRANTS / SOUTH BOSTON

Halifax and Pittsylvania counties lie at the heart of Virginia’s Old Belt tobacco-growing region. Danville is—or was—it’s epicenter. For more than a century, beginning in the mid-1800s, millions of pounds of some of the highest-grade cigarette tobacco in the world was grown by farmers in this region and sold through an auction system that supported a thriving local economy, scores of farming families, and a distinctive fabric of local traditions and ways of life.

But by the 1990s, the fabric of tobacco culture in the Old Belt was beginning to unravel. Demand for tobacco in the United States was in steep decline, global markets were changing, and tobacco farming was being sustained by a federal system of price-supports and acreage allotments that had been in place since the Great Depression. In 1999, Jim Crawford, a Roanoke-based cultural geographer, began work on a documentary film he hoped would capture this way of life as it was disappearing. The film would eventually reach millions of viewers.

The film closes with original music, composed by Crawford, blending an auction chant with the sound of marimbas. Just a few minutes earlier, the essence of what’s happened in the Old Belt is captured in footage of a modern tobacco auction. There is no auctioneer, no chant; the room is quiet except for the sound of footsteps, as buyers walk the rows of bales placing their bids on handheld electronic devices.

A Conversation with Kärenne Wood

“Grew up knowing I was Indian, and that was a pretty nebulous identity,” says Kärenne Wood, a member of the Monacan Indian Nation and director of the Virginia Indian Heritage Program. “I think by and large we have neglected the Native people’s story and the more recent story of immigration to the United States by people who are often indigenous.”

As a poet and linguistic anthropologist, Wood recognizes the nuances of and implicit messages in everyday language and the
Asian Communities in Virginia

Grants and Fellowship Programs / Dulles

The 1970 U.S. Census reported 16,103 Asians in Virginia; by 1980 there were 66,209; in 2013 the figure neared half a million. Roberta Culbertson, a twenty-three-year staffer at VFH, remembered this shift in the 1980s:

“When I came to the VFH, right in the middle of all this new and growing refugee resettlement growth in Virginia, I had discovered that most people did not have a clue as to what was happening and who was coming to dinner. The new demographics of Virginia were creating confusion, loss, pain, grief, and culture shock on both sides. It was clear to teachers, police, mental health workers, and others serving Virginians that the change could go very badly unless native-born Virginians had the opportunity to see the new Virginians as people, as ancient cultural traditions seeking to find a place here just as our ancestors had done.”

Culbertson recalled VFH sponsoring conferences on Asians in Virginia, developing workshops to accommodate non-English speakers in hospital settings, and participating in a major grant to Virginia libraries from NEH on immigrant literature from past to present. Culbertson also worked closely with the VFH Fellowship program and many scholars whose work examined migrations related to violence.

Mexican Folk Dancer Connects Through Movement

Virginia Folklife Program / Arlington

Mexican Americans are among the fastest growing ethnic populations in Virginia, and the community practices a rich and distinct set of cultural traditions. A pioneer of Mexican culture in Virginia is Laura Ortiz, a Mexican folk dancer who founded the Los Quetzales Mexican Dance Ensemble in Arlington. Ortiz participated as a master artist in the Apprenticeship Program in 2005–2006 with her then-fifteen-year-old daughter, Ariel Hobza-Ortiz. Ortiz spoke to us about Mexican folk dance, her experience with the program and the challenges of teaching traditional folkloric dance in a displaced community.

VFH: How is folk dance different in Mexico than it is in Virginia?

Ortiz: Dance is part of the curriculum in the schools in Mexico and most universities have a professional dance company. These traditions are alive and passed on from generation to generation. A lot of musicians learn through apprenticeships in the family, their relatives playing outside their home after a long day’s work. They just sit down on the porch and take their guitars out. That’s how they relax. The children learn these dances because they are breathing it and watching it. When we do our productions in Virginia we try to recreate the environment of Mexico so people can remember what it was like, but we don’t have many of the same resources so we have to work a little bit harder. I try to talk to my daughter and my students about where these dances come from so that they can relate and have some point of reference.

National Treasures Among Us

Full Story on Page 8

inextricable ties between historic narrative and cultural identity. Wood: “We spend a lot of time developing resources that are accessible to teachers. We also work with the Virginia Department of Education, which has a really extensive website called Virginia’s First People. We’ve been through all of that language and developed our own guide for teachers, which is available on our website (VirginiaHumanities.org/virginia-indian-program). We also organize VINSHE, the Virginia Indian Nations Summit on Higher Education, which brings tribal representatives together to talk about issues of shared concern, curriculum development, and how to increase student enrollment.”

VFH supported the first known meeting of all Virginia’s recognized tribes in Williamsburg in 1987.
THE HUMAN COMPUTERS PROJECT
“Get the Girl to Check the Numbers…”

BY DAVID BEARINGER

It’s February 18, 1962. Project Mercury is in full swing. The United States and the Soviet Union are locked in a high-stakes “race for space.” Two successful sub-orbital flights the previous year have narrowed the gap, but the U.S. is still trailing behind.

Nine months earlier, President Kennedy delivered an address to Congress, in which he said the nation should commit itself to landing a man on the Moon “before this decade is out.” Now the attention of the entire country, and indeed the world, is focused on the launch site at Cape Canaveral, and on astronaut John Glenn as he prepares to make mankind’s first orbit of the Earth.

The launch has been scrubbed five times before because of weather and equipment failures; the pressure building on NASA is extreme. Electronic computers were in use by then; but as he made himself ready, Glenn asked for one more safeguard before he reached into the unknown.

“Get the girl to check the numbers,” he said. “If she says they’re good, I’m ready to go…”

The “girl” was Katherine Johnson, an African American mathematician, then 43 years old and assigned to the Space Task Group. She was one of hundreds of “human computers,” nearly all of them women, who performed the complex calculations, using Friden adding machines and slide rules that ensured the success of America’s space program in its earliest days.

This spring, VFH awarded a grant to the Hampton Roads Chapter of the Association for the Study of African American Life and History to support the first phase of a long-term project that will document and make accessible the stories of these women—black and white—who served as “human computers” at NASA and its predecessor agency, the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics (NACA).

The story begins in 1935 when NACA’s Langley research lab in Hampton, Virginia hired five female math graduates to support its flight research operations. The women read the measurements from aircraft flown in wind tunnels and test flights, analyzed the data, and did the painstaking work that helped predict and optimize flight performance.

Their success led to more and more women being hired as the scope of NACA’s research expanded, and by the beginning of World War II female mathematicians were already playing key—although still largely invisible—roles in the development of faster, safer aircraft. In 1941 President Roosevelt signed an executive order desegregating America’s defense industry, and by 1943 Langley had established a separate computing pool of African American mathematicians recruited from historically black colleges.

These “colored computers,” as they were called, did the same work as their white counterparts but in a separate office, using separate rest rooms and lunch rooms. Both groups worked at Langley, and they reported up through the same chain-of-command, but an oral history project conducted in the 1990s revealed that, in the early days, some of the “white computers” had no idea that a separate pool of African American workers even existed.

For many years, the VFH has placed a high priority on the untold stories of Virginia. It’s fair to say that these women played a critical role in the success of the nation’s space program and in the development of aeronautical research generally. And yet this piece of American—and
This year we celebrate an important milestone in the history of the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities: our fortieth anniversary.

In these four decades, VFH has grown immensely from a modest but auspicious beginning. At its start in 1974 the Foundation had but a single full-time staff member, Rob Vaughan, who then and now serves as VFH President. Today VFH has 42 full-time employees, four of whom have worked with the Foundation for more than 25 years each.

In the beginning programs consisted primarily of grant-funded projects, until 1980, with the founding of a media resource center and in 1984, the addition of academic fellowships. In the 30 years since then, VFH has added eleven major programs for a current total of thirteen, including favorites like the Virginia Festival of the Book; With Good Reason; BackStory with the American History Guys; Encyclopedia Virginia; Digital Editing and Publications; and African American, Virginia Indian, and Folklife programming.

This growth is only one measure of the Foundation’s success. We are most proud of the ever-growing impact VFH’s programs have on all areas of the Commonwealth as well as the nation. For this growth and success, we must thank our remarkable community of donors. Your support has made all of this possible, and we invite you to continue to join us as we move into our fifth decade and beyond.

VFH • 40 YEARS BY THE NUMBERS

1 Individual charged in 1974 with establishing the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities (and he’s still Our Fearless Leader)
2 Staff members at VFH today
91 Master and Apprentice pairings working together to preserve Virginia’s cultural traditions
336 Fellows, several receiving multiple awards
342 Sites profiled in the African-American Heritage Site database
1,144 Weeks With Good Reason Radio has highlighted the achievements of Virginia’s colleges and universities
3,000 Grants awarded to organizations in every county and city in the Commonwealth
15,000 Virginia children who have written to their favorite author through Letters About Literature
300,000 Virginia fourth graders who benefit annually from revised standards of learning with improved early history content vetted by Virginia Indians
348,000 Total attendance at Virginia Festival of the Book events (including 117,000 schoolchildren)
2,798,000 Site visits at EncyclopediaVirginia.org
4,800,000 iTunes downloads of BackStory with the American History Guys, including visitors from Africa, Israel and Australia

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From Africa to Appalachia: Cheick Hamala Diabate, a Griot from Mali, came together with bluegrass musicians Sammy Shelor (left) and Danny Knicey (right) for a series of workshops examining the African roots of the American banjo. PHOTO BY PAT JARRETT
One might say that the humanities and Oliver Hill Jr. go hand-in-hand. A lifelong student of history, Hill made history himself as one of the first African American students at his Richmond high school in the early 1960s. The son of one of the leading attorneys defending Virginia’s school integration during Massive Resistance, he understood his own historical context at a very young age. As a student at Howard University, he encountered first-hand the lessons that came from studying African history.

“Up to that point, my only knowledge of Africa consisted of what I saw in Tarzan movies,” said Hill, who majored in history. Hill also took a deep interest in classical Greek and Indian philosophy. To this day, he credits his courses in philosophy and human consciousness with setting him on his career path in psychology.

In 2009, Governor Tim Kaine appointed Oliver Hill Jr. to the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities Board of Directors. When asked to select his favorite VFH program after five years, Hill paused.

“I was initially impressed with the depth of programming at VFH but the Virginia Indian Heritage Program really woke my own ignorance about that part of our history,” VFH’s programming focus on Violence and Community was another one of Hill’s favorites because it fostered the idea that the humanities have the ability to heal. Hill also noted the important unifying potential of the humanities: “While there seem to be disconnects between emotion, memory, and thought, the humanities are a way of reintegrating those through creative expression.”

Currently Chair of the Psychology Department at Virginia State University, Hill incorporates the humanities into his research and classwork whenever possible. Recently, he included *With Good Reason*, the VFH radio program, in a significant National Science Foundation grant for his research on education in STEM—or science, technology, engineering, and math. The goal of this collaboration is to reach an audience beyond medical journal readers. Policy makers not familiar with the latest scientific findings, for example, might listen to *With Good Reason*. The WGR series of STEM episodes, which won an Edward R. Murrow award, included national education figures speaking on behalf of STEM and emphasized for Hill the value of using radio as a national communication tool for his research, solidifying his desire to continue the partnership with radio programming.

Hill finds the traditional distinctions between science and the humanities to be counterintuitive. On the contrary, “Scientists need to be humanists...they need to write, read, express themselves, and understand the human condition. Even in terms of brain development, much of the processing that develops from learning the humanities can be applied to learning the sciences, like critical thinking. If you look at some of the greatest scientists, they were all very creative thinkers. Einstein, for example, would always do thought experiments, which was a vivid use of imagination in developing his theories.”

Hill noted that the hallmark of a good scientist is an inquisitive mind, an interest in the bigger picture, and the ability to ask broader questions. “The impact VFH has made has been mirrored in Virginia. We’ve now started to embrace the state’s whole history, including slavery and the civil rights struggle. Those things are healing the fabric of our society.”

This needs to happen with the rest of the country. VFH can take a lot of credit for how progressive Virginia has been in telling the whole story.”

Hill has devoted his life to that kind of education. Noting the 60 years since the *Brown v. Board* decision, Hill emphasizes the continuing need for higher quality schools and better integration processes. “The next step in healing the vestiges of the racial divide in this country has to do with education. Reparations are difficult but one thing this country could do is make sure that every child has access to a quality education.”

“Teachers are the key variable. Back in the days when children were taught in tarpaper shacks, the teachers were top notch so there was still some good learning in those horrible conditions. Teaching should be one of the most prestigious professions in the country and the best paid.”

Hill is also involved with the Richmond Peace Education Center and serves on the board of the Center for Contemplative Mind and Society, an organization that attempts to bring contemplative practices to higher education classrooms. In his spare time, Hill teaches yoga and meditation at retreats across the world and considers his contemplative life to be yet one more connection to the humanities.

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**Scientists Need to be Humanists Too**

*A Profile of Oliver Hill Jr.*
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VFH Annual Report / 2013-14

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AUDITED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION
AS OF JUNE 30, 2013

ASSETS
CURRENT ASSETS
Cash and cash equivalents $ 3,067,756
Investments 2,819,188
Prepaid expenses 50,140
Total current assets $ 5,937,084
FIXED ASSETS
Leasehold improvements $ 26,627
Equipment:
Media equipment 215,073
Furniture and office equipment 130,376
Computers and software 299,852
Other equipment 12,043
Subtotal $ 683,971
Less accumulated depreciation (585,118)
Total fixed assets $ 98,853
OTHER ASSETS
Investments—permanently restricted endowment $ 431,976
Total assets $ 6,467,913
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS
CURRENT LIABILITIES
Accounts payable $ 14,305
Accrued expenses 173,359
Grants payable 105,740
Deferred revenue 1,395,828
Current portion of long-term liabilities 23,852
Total current liabilities $ 1,713,084
LONG TERM LIABILITIES
Compensated absences, net of current portion $ 214,672
Total liabilities $ 1,927,756
NET ASSETS
Unrestricted $ 2,849,474
Temporarily restricted 1,258,707
Permanently restricted 431,976
Total net assets $ 4,540,157
Total liabilities and net assets $ 6,467,913

2013-2014 Revenue Sources
$77 Million*

2013-2014 Expenses
$5.5 Million

* Includes restricted and unrestricted carry forward funds, and deferred income for FY14.

Figures for FY14 are unaudited.
Virginia—history is almost entirely unknown.

That’s about to change. Project director Margot Shetterley who has been researching this history for the past three years is also the author of the forthcoming book, *Hidden Figures: The Untold Story of the African American Women Who Helped the United States Win the Space Race* (Spring, 2016; William Morrow/Harper Collins).

The project VFH has supported involves collection of oral histories, new research, and creation of a website and blog linking information on the female mathematicians (biographies and interviews), the history of the U.S. space program, the Civil Rights Movement, the Cold War, and the space-race with accessible, easy-to-read information on aeronautics, early spacecraft and computers, and the tools the “human computers” used to perform their tasks.

It’s a blending of humanities and STEM disciplines with the potential to create an exemplary digital history platform and a widely-used resource accessible to students, teachers, researchers, and a broad public audience.

An impressive team of scholars is involved, including Shetterley; Duchess Harris, a professor of American studies who has written on the subjects of race and feminism; and Christine Darden, an engineer and former director of NASA’s Aero Performing Program Management Office. Darden joined the agency’s computing pool in 1967, was the first African American promoted into the Senior Executive Service at NASA, and is now a leading advocate for STEM education in Virginia.

The NASA-Langley Cultural Resources Office is an active supporter of the project and an important source of primary resource materials. Other partners include the Hampton History Museum, which is curating an exhibit on the history of the Human Computers, scheduled to open this fall.

As one of the original Mercury 7 astronauts, John Glenn was a pioneer, an American hero and icon who came to represent the ideal of “the best and the brightest” and the can-do spirit of what Walter Lippman called *The American Century*. Partly for that reason, his simple request—“Get the girl to check the numbers…”—speaks volumes.

As a supporter of this effort to tell the stories of Katherine Johnson and the other Human Computers, VFH is fulfilling commitments we made long ago: to honor the contributions of women to Virginia and the nation, to help bring to light the untold stories of Virginia, and to explore the links between science, technology, and the humanities.

The Human Computers project does all three.

As these seemingly more practical questions are, the questions about community, history, identity and tradition—the humanities questions—may be even more fundamental to the shaping of a promising future that, in many ways, has already arrived.

For that reason the commitment we made forty years ago and reaffirmed in 2007—to create the most complete portrait of Virginia—continues undiminished and this is also why the work seems more important now than ever before.

Over a three-year period beginning in 2009, VFH awarded a series of grants to support photo-documentation of the Columbia Pike neighborhood in Arlington, one of the most ethnically diverse, immigrant-rich zip-codes in the country. Results include physical and web-based exhibits, community programs exploring this diversity, and a book to be published in 2015 and distributed by the University of Virginia Press.

In early November VFH and Arlington County Public Schools will jointly present the third in a series of content academies for teachers, this time on the history of Latino immigration in the United States (see VFH Views, Spring 2014), along with a related community event in which local residents will discuss the experience of immigration in Northern Virginia.

VFH has also launched a long-term, statewide initiative to explore the nature of family, community, tradition, culture, and identity in Virginia through the lens of food. Initially, the project will result in a web-archive of filmed interviews with Virginians of all ages and backgrounds. More than half the participants in the launch event this past August were first-generation immigrants to Virginia.

The Virginia Folklife Program meanwhile continues its efforts to document and honor, not just the traditions that have long been associated with Virginia, but also those that are recently arrived. These include master-apprenticeship programs in Guatemalan “Alfombra” carpet-making, Ethiopian liturgical singing, Mongolian traditional mask-making, and Mexican mole sauce-making from the state of Aguascalientes, to name just a few examples.

These and other VFH programs open doors to a new understanding of Virginia and the world, to the experience of immigration, and the building of a stronger Commonwealth. New partnerships with immigrant communities are emerging across the state. Current members of the VFH board of directors bring the perspectives of immigration/migration from Iraq, Bolivia, and Vietnam.

The face of Virginia is changing. A new chapter in the history of the state is being written. The humanities are essential in the work that lies ahead, and the mission and long-term commitments of VFH are closely aligned with the task.
John Jackson was born February 25, 1924, in Rappahannock County. His father was a tenant farmer on what had been a plantation prior to the Civil War. Jackson and his thirteen brothers and sisters grew up helping out on the farm.

At age four, Jackson began to play guitar on his father’s flat-top instrument, teaching himself by practicing and listening to the music of Blind Lemon Jefferson, Blind Blake, and Blind Boy Fuller. In addition, he listened to the recordings of Jimmie Rodgers and Ernest Tubb, as well as a wide range of gospel, ragtime, and country hymns.

After moving to Fairfax, Jackson worked as a butler, chauffeur, philosopher, humanitarian, Civil War historian, and gravedigger. Charles Perdue—a folklorist who helped initiate the Virginia Folklife Program at VFH—heard Jackson sing in a Rappahannock gas station, and soon introduced him to audiences at folk festivals throughout the country.

Jackson became a master and innovator of the Piedmont style blues, known for its distinctive guitar finger-picking method, where the thumb plays the rhythmic bass-line and one or two fingers pluck out the melody of the song.

Over the years, Jackson toured widely across the United States and abroad, making numerous recordings, playing his distinctive Piedmont guitar blues, and also performing on the banjo. In 1986, he was honored by the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) as a National Heritage Fellow, the highest honor the U.S. government bestows upon a traditional artist. In 1989, he joined the Piedmont Blues Guitarist Tour and was recorded by Garry Barrow, then-director of the Virginia Folklife Program.

“Like many all over the world who met John, I felt I came to share a genuine friendship with him,” Barrow recalled. “When I visited with him once after the tour, we sat around the kitchen with a guitar and John showed me some riffs of a Blind Blake tune that had long eluded me, but that John had mastered effortlessly. I was floored by the elegant simplicity of it, and felt like John had just casually given away a priceless trade secret.”

The guitarist Jamal Millner was involved with the tour as sound engineer: “I learned so much about music, history, and culture from John. He was always willing to help those of us expressing interest in what he had already mastered. I am still working on his version of Blind Blake’s West Coast Blues ... maybe I’ll get it in a few more years.”

VFH has had an increasing role as “kingmaker” when it comes to the NEA’s highest honor. The current Folklife director Jon Lohman has successfully nominated six National Heritage Fellows from the Commonwealth.

“There have been few states in the nation that have yielded as many National Heritage Fellows as Virginia,” Lohman reported. Thirteen Virginians have received the award over the years:

- Ralph Stanley (1984) Appalachian banjo player/singer
- John Jackson (1986) Piedmont Blues songster/guitarist
- Jim & Jesse McReynolds (1997) Bluegrass musicians
- Flory Jagoda (2002) Sephardic musician/composer
- Mac Wiseman (2008) Bluegrass musician
- Mike Seeger (2009) Musician, cultural scholar, advocate
- Frank Newsome (2011) Old Regular Baptist singer
- The Paschall Brothers (2012) Tidewater gospel quartet
- The Holmes Brothers (2014) Blues/gospel musicians

In fact, the 2012 Richmond Folk Festival celebrated the list to date at the Virginia Folklife stage, hosted by Lohman, with performances and tributes. And the most recent addition to that list—the Holmes Brothers—are picking up right where Jackson left off.

“Obviously, this speaks to the incredible richness and variety of folk traditions and masters from our state, but I also hope that the advocacy and work of organizations like ours and many others throughout Virginia have played a small part in this level of national recognition,” Lohman said.

“These artists, as well as others waiting in the nomination pool, are true national treasures, and it has been a blessing to have known and worked with them over the years.”
The Curious Case of Floyd County

BY BRENDAN WOLFE

One hundred and fifty years ago something strange happened in Floyd County. Not that you’ll see much sign of it there in the mountains. The county’s three historical highway markers are silent on the subject, and a statue of a Confederate soldier stands proudly in front of the court house.

And yet in November of 1864 a regiment of Virginia reserves, commanded by the imposingly tall General John Echols, marched into Floyd with instructions to put down an uprising of deserters and Unionists.

Affairs in Floyd had been going bad for awhile. At the start of the war, the county was dominated by what historians now call “conditional Unionists” — they were all for the Union on the condition that nobody messed with slavery. Slave owners were a tiny minority in Floyd (116 out of a white population of 7,745) but they held an outsized share of the economic and political power. And when Virginia seceded, Floyd went with her. But loyalties, even to the new Confederacy, are bound to fray under the strain of war. A people whom Jefferson Davis had declared to be “united in heart” in 1861 were hungry by 1862, or at least they were in Floyd County.

Speculation in moonshine gobbled up the county’s wheat crops. Combined with other wartime shortages, this caused a real crisis. In 1862 a local magistrate complained to the governor of citizens being short of food and forced to go barefoot. He further warned that if their families weren’t properly cared for, then the soldiers out in the field “will desert their posts.” By 1864, a slow trickle of deserters had become a flood.

They abandoned their posts not because they feared battle, although who could have blamed them? That summer saw real slaughter at the Wilderness, Spotsylvania Court House, Cold Harbor, and in the trenches surrounding Petersburg and Atlanta. No, instead, they worried about their families.

According to the historian Rand Dotson, the typical Floyd County deserter was twenty-six years old and married, and was as likely to have children as not. What happened on the home front was of keen interest to soldiers. In 1864, they began to hear stories of family members who were still hungry and, therefore, fed up with the Confederate government. Without their patriotic encouragement, it was hard to face the cannon.

So they came home, hiding out in the hills and avoiding the state and federal governments’ best efforts to capture them. Using tunnels to move between hideouts and the farms of supporters, they began to lash out at the authorities. Some deserters even joined a Unionist group originally formed in North Carolina — the Heroes of America, also known as the Red Strings (after their means of identifying themselves).

General Echols and his Virginia Reserves found it impossible to completely stamp out this activity when they entered the county in 1864. And when Jefferson Davis asked the Confederate Congress to suspend the writ of habeas corpus in Floyd, the Congress refused.

Historians disagree on how much of an outlier Floyd County was, but as we celebrate the Sesquicentennial, it’s worth remembering that Virginia — like the rest of the country — suffered its share of divisions. Its white and black populations were at odds, of course; it had two competing state governments; and in the last year of the war Unionists had the run of Floyd County.

Maybe there should be two statues in front of the courthouse.

In the mountains of Southwest Virginia, a civil war within the Civil War broke out.

Unionism in Virginia during the Civil War: EncyclopediaVirginia.org/Unionism_in_Virginia_During_the_Civil_War
ore than a dozen people take the wheel in Earl Swift’s fifth book, Auto Biography, but the star is a ’57 Chevrolet Townsman wagon. Auto Biography, published in May 2014 by Harper Collins, tells the story of the car and its many owners. A journalist in Norfolk for twenty-two years, a Fulbright fellow, and a PEN finalist, Swift is currently a residential fellow at VFH.

VFH: Why the Townsman—not your typical nonfiction hero—and why this story?

ES: Well, the ’57 Chevy is possibly the most recognizable and beloved car to ever roll off an assembly line. It’s a paean to jet-age optimism, and the wagon, in particular, embodies the new suburban ideal that was just gelling in America’s collective consciousness in the mid-fifties; this was a status symbol, the SUV of its day, because it advertised that its owner enjoyed the good life—a stylish new rambler in a clean, safe neighborhood, picture windows, backyard grill.

The people who’ve owned this wagon each have a different relationship to the cultural center that the car represented in the showroom...so they turn out to be a pretty good cross-section of America in the latter half of the twentieth century.

VFH: This is a complex plot, with lots of characters. Who is your favorite character and why?

ES: It was pretty clear from the start that I could not expect the reader to keep track of, let alone care about, thirteen major human characters, so I did not treat them as equals. I picked one as the story’s main driver; the “biography” of the title refers to his as much as to the Chevy’s.

His name is Tommy Arney. In many ways he’s a rough customer—he has a fourth-grade education, used to own a chain of go-go bars, and has pounded the daylights out of a goodly percentage of the Norfolk population over the past forty years. But he’s no dummy, and he’s utterly charming, and he’s the product of a restoration every bit as ambitious as the one he’s now attempting on the car.

VFH: How would you describe the world you’re writing about?

ES: Having been immersed in Arney’s world since late 2009, I have to say that I relish my time with him and his ragtag crew. If they’re unpolished, it’s not because they’re not smart. They’re sharp, canny, uproariously funny, good company in general. And there’s a straightforward, apolitical calculus to their relationships: Treat them with respect, and you can expect the same in return. Treat them badly, and it’s going to turn out a really crappy day.

VFH: What’s next?

ES: I have a couple of projects in mind, one of which is a narrative history set in Georgia in the teens and twenties; it’s one of those forgotten tales that’s so dramatic and moving that it shocks me it isn’t common knowledge.

Whatever I tackle next, I’d like to do it here. Charlottesville has put its hooks in me.

VFH: Why the Townsman—not your typical nonfiction hero—and why this story?

ES: Well, the ’57 Chevy is possibly the most recognizable and beloved car to ever roll off an assembly line. It’s a paean to jet-age optimism, and the wagon, in particular, embodies the new suburban ideal that was just gelling in America’s collective consciousness in the mid-fifties; this was a status symbol, the SUV of its day, because it advertised that its owner enjoyed the good life—a stylish new rambler in a clean, safe neighborhood, picture windows, backyard grill.

The people who’ve owned this wagon each have a different relationship to the cultural center that the car represented in the showroom...so they turn out to be a pretty good cross-section of America in the latter half of the twentieth century.

VFH: This is a complex plot, with lots of characters. Who is your favorite character and why?

ES: It was pretty clear from the start that I could not expect the reader to keep track of, let alone care about, thirteen major human characters, so I did not treat them as equals. I picked one as the story’s main driver; the “biography” of the title refers to his as much as to the Chevy’s.

His name is Tommy Arney. In many ways he’s a rough customer—he has a fourth-grade education, used to own a chain of go-go bars, and has pounded the daylights out of a goodly percentage of the Norfolk population over the past forty years. But he’s no dummy, and he’s utterly charming, and he’s the product of a restoration every bit as ambitious as the one he’s now attempting on the car.

VFH: How would you describe the world you’re writing about?

ES: Having been immersed in Arney’s world since late 2009, I have to say that I relish my time with him and his ragtag crew. If they’re unpolished, it’s not because they’re not smart. They’re sharp, canny, uproariously funny, good company in general. And there’s a straightforward, apolitical calculus to their relationships: Treat them with respect, and you can expect the same in return. Treat them badly, and it’s going to turn out a really crappy day.

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For the complete version of this interview, see virginiahumanities.org/2013/04/the-life-of-a-57-chevy

Swift is the author of Journey on the James: Three Weeks Through the Heart of Virginia (University of Virginia Press, 2001), the story of a great American river and the largely untold history that has unfolded in and around it; Where They Lay: Searching for America’s Lost Soldiers (Houghton Mifflin, 2003), for which he accompanied an Army archaeological team into the jungles of Laos in search of a helicopter crew shot down thirty years before; and a 2007 collection of his stories, The Tangierman’s Lament.

His last book, The Big Roads: The Untold Story of the Engineers, Visionaries and Trailblazers Who Created the American Superhighways was released by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt to widespread critical acclaim in 2011, and was reissued in paperback last year.
VFH WELCOMES New Staff Members

KELLY JONES is an associate producer at BackStory. She recently produced a story for the BBC about gun suicide in America. Jones went to graduate school in Canada, where she produced Pioneer Radio and taught undergrads to podcast instead of writing papers. She won a 2013 Third Coast Festival Short Docs award for a three-minute piece about the traditional Canadian dish, poutine.

EMILY GADEK is a digital producer at BackStory. A graduate of Northwestern’s Medill School of Journalism, she has worked in the newsrooms of Chicago’s WBEZ and San Francisco’s KALW. Her work has also been featured in the Chicago Tribune, DAME Magazine, and the legal podcast Life of the Law, as well as her own independently produced podcast, Footnote. A California native, Gadek worked most recently for The Annenberg Retreat at Sunnylands near Palm Springs, California.

MAGGIE GUGGENHEIMER is the assistant to the president and communications officer. She was previously research and planning consultant for Piedmont Council for the Arts, which she led as executive director from 2007-2012. At PCA, she spearheaded the region’s first Arts & Economic Prosperity study and Create Charlottesville/Albermarle cultural plan. A Lynchburg native, Guggenheimer holds a BA in art history from UVA, and an MA in arts administration from Columbia University, where her research focused on museums.

TRANSITIONS After fourteen months as assistant producer at BackStory, EMILY CHARNOCK headed back to her native UK, where she takes up a three-year post-doctoral fellowship at Cambridge University, while continuing special research for the show.

Four New Members Join VFH Board of Directors

Jo Ann Hofheimer is a returning board member. She is the founding president of Buy Fresh Buy Local, Hampton Roads and the founding partner of Prince Books in Norfolk. She has a BS in psychology and an MA in humanities from Old Dominion University. Hofheimer is an active Master Gardener and sometime writer, including the weekly newsletter for Old Beach Farmers Market. She is past president of the Norfolk Forum and the Irene Leache Memorial, and has served on the boards of Norfolk Academy, WHRO, the Virginia Beach Library Foundation, and Old Beach Farmers Market.

Betsy Barton has spent her career in education, teaching in Chesterfield County and York County. In 2002, she began work as a history and social science specialist at the Virginia Department of Education where she creates resources that impact elementary history and social science teaching and student achievement. In addition to the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities, Barton serves on the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Commission of the Virginia General Assembly, as well as on the Virginia Bicentennial of the American War of 1812 Commission. Born and raised in Norfolk, she now lives with her family in Midlothian.

Binh The Nguyen, MD is assistant professor of radiology at the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences, operated by the U.S. federal government to prepare graduates for service in the medical corps. Previous appointments were at the Johns Hopkins Medical Institutions, the University of Pennsylvania Medical Center, and the Walter Reed Army Medical Center. Nguyen serves on the Virginia Asian Advisory Board, addressing equality in government contracting and equal access in health care services; the Virginia Radiation Advisory Board; the Fairfax County Library Foundation Board; and the Fairfax County Commission on Women. She is an advocate for military men’s and women’s families, and for civil and human rights. Nguyen lives in McLean with her family.

Wayne Adkins of New Kent is first assistant chief of the Chickahominy Tribe. He is a long-time member of the Chickahominy Tribal Dancers, has been active in teaching history and dance to younger tribal members, and helped prepare and present a Virginia intertribal dance program in England in 2006. Wayne is currently a member of the Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation Museum and Programs Advisory Council, the Henricus Historical Park Foundation Board of Trustees, and the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail Advisory Council. Wayne obtained his BS in electrical engineering from UVA and retired after a 32-year career in Richmond industry.

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VFH GRANTS DEADLINES

VFH Open Grant applications are considered in two grant cycles per year, with these deadlines:

**OCTOBER 15**
Draft proposals submitted by October 5 • decisions in early December

**APRIL 15**
Draft proposals submitted by April 5 • decisions in early June

Discretionary Grant applications may be submitted at any time throughout the year. For full application guidelines, please see VirginiaHumanities.org/grants.

BOARD NOMINATIONS

The VFH Board Nominating Committee welcomes nominations, specifically individuals who are broadly representative of the citizens of Virginia, including all geographic regions of the Commonwealth, and the various civic, ethnic, and minority group interests. The committee strives to sustain a balance among scholars in the humanities, civic and business leaders, and the general public. Nominations are coordinated by the Office of the President. Please send any suggestions nguggenheimer@virginia.edu.

Virginia Foundation for the Humanities
2014-2015 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Teachers Visit Historic Site, Newly Open in Northern Virginia

Educators visited the site of the new Alexandria Contrabands and Freedmen Cemetery Memorial while participating in statewide tours of fourteen sites significant to Virginia’s African American history. The “Think Historically. Act Locally” teacher tour participants traveled around the Commonwealth during two multi-day tours in July sponsored by VFH African American Programs.

The memorial commemorates the burial place of hundreds of African Americans who died in Alexandria while seeking refuge and escape from bondage during the Civil War. The dedication of the memorial was held on September 6 at the excavated cemetery site and park at South Washington and Church Street. For more information, visit alexandriava.gov/FreedmenMemorial.