A More Complete Picture of Virginia

BY DAVID BEARINGER

Virginia has taken an important step, one that recognizes the significance of Virginia Indian history and cultures—past and present—in the life of the Commonwealth.

The budget legislation passed by the General Assembly and signed by the Governor this spring includes funds to create a Virginia Indian Heritage Program. This program, to be established at the VFH, is based on a close partnership between the Virginia Foundation and the eight state-recognized tribes.

In part, the Heritage Program is designed to help redress centuries of historical omission, exclusion, and misrepresentation of Virginia Indians and their history, including the impact of laws that for a time denied even the existence of Indian people in the state.

Equally important is the program's focus on Virginia Indian people and communities in the present day.

Four hundred years after the founding of Jamestown, Virginia Indian cultures and communities retain their connection to the past. But they are also living and changing.

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A More Complete Picture of Virginia

Continued from cover

Initially, the Heritage Program will include:

- a website and database that builds on the important work done in creating the Virginia Indian Heritage Trail (see related article, page 3);
- institutes and related programs for teachers, some focusing on the development of new curriculum resources;
- grants to non-profit organizations, including the tribes, supporting educational programs on Virginia Indian history and culture;
- a broad range of exhibits, publications, oral histories, conferences, and other initiatives to be developed by the VFH and Heritage Program staff.

For more than three decades, the VFH has worked to help create the broadest possible portrait of the Commonwealth and a more complete representation of its complex history. Our work with Virginia Indian communities began twenty years ago, in 1987, with a grant to support the first conference of the eight state-recognized tribes (the Monacan were then in the final stages of the state-recognition process).

The histories of Virginia’s Indian communities (including those of Indian people living in Virginia who are not part of the eight officially recognized tribes) are significant in their own right. They are also irreplaceable tributaries in the larger story of Virginia. This was true decades, even centuries before 2007, and it will remain true long after the observance of 2007 is past.

Nevertheless, the establishment of the Virginia Indian Heritage Program during 2007, the 400th anniversary of the first permanent English colony in North America, is symbolic; and the timing is fortunate.

This program can build on the interest in Virginia Indian history and contemporary life that has grown as a result of the 2007 commemoration. But much more remains to be done.

The establishment of a permanent Virginia Indian Heritage Program creates a wealth of opportunities: to explore Virginia Indian history, to add Virginia Indian perspectives to the broader discussion of our shared past, and to allow all Virginians to experience the richness of contemporary Indian cultures.

We hope that twenty years from now, partly as a result of this program’s efforts, every Virginian will know something about the cultures of Indian peoples living in the state, and will have at least a basic knowledge of Virginia Indian history because it is no longer seen as marginal but solidly within the mainstream, where it has really been all along.

The VFH is grateful to the Governor and his staff, the Secretary of Natural Resources, the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, and members of the General Assembly for their support in the establishment of this program.
Encounter: Virginia Indians Today

VFH Radio Commissions Its First Five-part Series of Short Stories for Public Radio

BY LYDIA WILSON

Pocahontas. Powhatan. Opechancanough. The Jamestown 400th anniversary is drawing attention to the history of Virginia’s Indians. It is also serving as a reminder that Virginia Indians are not people of the past: that today, nearly four thousand Virginians are members of the Commonwealth’s eight state-recognized Indian tribes.

Each tribe’s membership may be relatively small, but their heritage is rich, and their contemporary challenges resonate in major issues affecting Virginia as a whole. Contemporary Virginia Indians want to maintain their tribal identities, even as they live in broader American society.

Their stories of history, tradition, community identity, and change are stories well worth telling. In January, VFH Radio staff and Karenne Wood (Monacan), who was then chairwoman of the Virginia Council on Indians, approached Virginia’s tribal leaders with the idea for a five-part radio series to explore the question of what it means to be an Indian in Virginia today. Tribal leaders offered their often passionate perspectives on the issues that they believe matter most to their people. The result is a five-part series that is a “first” for VFH radio programming.

In this series:

- Jesse Dukes, With Good Reason Associate Producer, talks with Chief Anne Richardson and other members of the Rappahanock Tribe about tribal identity during a practice of their traditional drum and dance groups.

- Martha Woodroof, feature reporter for WMRA in Harrisonburg, visits Amherst County’s Monacan tribe to hear how they teach the next generation what it means to be Monacan.

- Mike MacKenzie, a freelance reporter based in Richmond, hears from Chickahominy Chief Stephen Adkins about the impact of Virginia’s complex education history on his tribe today.

- Nancy King, With Good Reason Feature Producer, explores how the state determines what today’s public school children learn about the history of Virginia Indians and arguments for revising parts of the curriculum.

- Peter Solomon interviews Mattaponi chief Carl Custalow and his son Todd about how their traditional values are reflected in their partnership with the Commonwealth to repopulate the state’s rivers with shad.

After four months of work and research, the series began airing statewide May 7 – 11. The series reached over 47,000 public radio listeners during local segments on WCVE–Richmond, WHRV–Tidewater, WMRA–Harrisonburg, and WVTF–Roanoke and Southwest Virginia. The “We The People” initiative of the National Endowment for the Humanities provided the funds to make this series possible.

To suggest people, themes or stories for future Humanities Feature Bureau reports, contact Lydia Wilson at 434-924-6895 or lydiawilson@virginia.edu.
BY DAVID BEARINGER

Many Virginia teachers have expressed their interest in learning more about Virginia Indian history and cultures; and improving the teaching of Virginia Indian history has long been a goal of Virginia Indian tribal leaders and scholars.

In June, the VFH will offer the first of what we hope will be an extended series of annual teachers’ institutes focusing on Virginia Indian history and contemporary life. Twenty-five elementary, middle and high school teachers will meet in Charlottesville for five days (June 17-21) of intensive discussions.

This is the first statewide institute of its kind ever held in Virginia: the first to offer a curriculum designed by Virginia Indian leaders, and the first in which Virginia Indian chiefs and other tribal leaders make up the majority of the course faculty, supported by leading academic scholars.

Among other topics, the Institute will focus on

- Virginia Indian history and cultural traditions from the pre-contact era to the present day
- Current issues facing Virginia Indians, including cultural stereotypes, the role of museums and other non-Indian institutions in interpreting Indian history, questions of Indian identity and perceived “authenticity,” etc.
- Differing cultural perspectives on regional ecology and environmental issues.

Karenne Wood (Monacan), a doctoral student and Ford Fellow in linguistic anthropology, and Rhyannon Berkowitz (Creek), Ph.D. Fellow in cultural anthropology, both at the University of Virginia, will serve (respectively) as Lead Scholar and Assistant Lead Scholar.

Course faculty include:

Kenneth Adams, Chief of the Upper Mattaponi Tribe
G. Anne Richardson, Chief of the Rappahannock Tribe
Wayne Adkins, Assistant Chief of the Chickahominy Tribe
Powhatan Red Cloud-Owen, Member of the Chickahominy Tribal Council
Deanna Beacham (Weapomeoc), Program Specialist Virginia Council on Indians
Gabrielle Tayac (Piscataway), Historian at the National Museum of the American Indian
Jeffrey Hantman, Archaeologist and Associate Professor of Anthropology at the University of Virginia (authority on the Monacan and other Siouan peoples of Virginia’s Central Piedmont)
Kent Mountford, Senior Scientist with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the author of Closed Sea, From the Manasquat to the History of Barnegat Bay
Helen Rountree, Professor Emeritus of Anthropology at Old Dominion University who is generally recognized as the preeminent academic authority on the history and cultures of the Powhatan tribes.

The VFH is very pleased to be working with this distinguished group of scholars in an unprecedented program. We hope it will be the first of many similar programs, part of our long-term effort to support the teaching of Virginia Indian history, by providing teachers with accurate, balanced information and resources. Funding for this Institute was provided by the National Endowment for the Humanities through its “We The People” initiative.

A Sappony elder instructs a younger tribal member in quilting.
VFH Helps Celebrate Auden’s 100th Birthday

About a month before the book festival, Charlottesville was host to another spectacular literary celebration, W.H. Auden’s centenary, “All I Have Is a Voice” was coproduced by the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities’ Center for the Book, the National Endowment for the Arts, Poetry Daily and the Folger Shakespeare Library.

“It’s a wonderful thing to be able to celebrate W.H. Auden’s centenary in a church across the street from a great university, with musicians waiting in the wings. I think that Auden would have imagined no happier 100th birthday,” Dana Gioia, chairman of the NEA, told the crowd of 250 gathered at St. Paul’s Memorial Church on February 26. The program featured poems, commentary and music written by and devoted to the 20th century poet; remarks by Gioia, Charles Wright, Arthur Kirsch were followed by a cabaret number by Stephanie Nakasian featuring music by Benjamin Britten and Auden lyrics.

A second celebration took place the following evening at the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington, D.C.
VFH Hosts Eighth Annual “Roots” Seminar Exploring African Influence on the Americas

Beginning June 4, through July 13, the VFH will once again host “Roots: African Dimensions of the History and Cultures of the Americas Through the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade.”

This program was conceived in 1998 and first organized and conducted the following summer by Dr. Jerome Handler, then a VFH Senior Fellow and Professor Emeritus of Anthropology and Black American Studies at Southern Illinois University (see related article) and Dr. Joseph Miller, T. Cary Johnson Jr. Professor of History at the University of Virginia.

Since then, Professor Miller, one of the leading African Studies scholars in the United States, has offered the program seven more times. In alternate years, the Seminar is targeted to high school teachers and college and university faculty. All eight programs have been hosted by VFH and received funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities.

With a group of alumni now approaching 200 teachers and college faculty nationwide, the “Roots” Seminar has had an enormous impact on the teaching of African and African American history.

This year’s program, like its predecessors, blends historical, literary, and cultural perspectives, includes individual research and presentations by participants, and involves a superb guest faculty.

The “Roots” Seminar is rich in content, and evaluations of the course have been consistently at the highest levels. Many participants, including a number from Virginia, have said it is one of the highlights of their professional careers.

The consistent support from NEH and a pool of applicants that grows stronger every year speak to the long-term value of this undertaking, which advances the Foundation’s longstanding interests in African and African American history and culture while providing a unique opportunity for teachers and college faculty nationwide.

VFH Senior Scholar Jerry Handler
Working Without a Map

By David Bearinger

Jerry (Jerry) Handler likes working without a map. He’s an innovative scholar, impatient with labels, restrictive boundaries, icons, and sacred cows; a respected anthropologist (Ph.D., Brandeis) who has spent most of his career moving back and forth across the borders between cultural anthropology, archaeology, and history.

As a result, his work has made, and continues to make, important contributions in multiple fields, including Caribbean Studies, West Indian Slave Life, the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade, African American Social and Cultural History, and the early African Diaspora.

In his long, and unique, affiliation with the VFH, he’s also proven to be equally skilled—and dedicated—as an ambassador and a pioneer: a rare combination. And earlier this year, after almost a decade as Senior Fellow, he was named Senior Scholar at the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities: the first person to hold each of these titles.

Jerry came to the Foundation as a Fellow in 1995. Since then, his affiliation with the VFH has brought national and international visibility to our programs.

As a speaker and lecturer, he has appeared at scores of colleges, universities, and in public settings throughout Virginia, and nationwide—at Yale, U.C.L.A., Stanford, Princeton, Syracuse, and the Universities of Pennsylvania, Vermont, Arizona, and Connecticut to name just a few; as well as internationally at the University of the West Indies (Barbados), the Universities of Hull, Sussex, and Cambridge (England), and the University of Toronto.

Along the way, working with the historian Joe Miller, Jerry was instrumental in beginning what is probably the Foundation’s most important and influential long-term initiative serving teachers and college faculty—Roots: The African Influence on American Culture Through the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade (see sidebar at left).

This archive contains more than 1,200 images and is a resource for museums, authors and publishers, scholars, students and teachers at all levels, as well as documentary filmmakers, and many others.

The site is currently receiving more than 200,000 visitors annually from more than 150 countries, with approximately 4 million “page views”; and these numbers continue to grow.

Earlier this spring, the VFH published the second (revised and enlarged) edition of Freedmen of Barbados: Names and Notes for Genealogical and Family History Research by Jerome Handler, Ronald Hughes, Melanie Newton, Pedro L.V. Welch, and Ernest M. Wiltshire. This book contains information on more than 1,800 Barbadians identified as freedmen in documentary sources. Along with his Guide to Source Materials for the Study of Barbados History, 1627–1834 (also recently re-published), this book serves as “…a testament to the value of [Handler’s] work as a Caribbean studies scholar…”

I spoke with Jerry recently about his work.
DB: You grew up in the Bronx. What led you to want to study slave life in Barbados?

JH: I became involved in the Civil Rights movement as an undergraduate [at UCLA] in the 1950s, and this led to an interest in African Studies, which was then a relatively new field. In graduate school I became steeped in the anthropology of Africa; and this led in turn to an interest in colonial societies, the impact of Africa and Africans in the New World, and especially the descendents of people who were brought here as slaves. The Atlantic slave trade lasted about 350 years, and Barbados was an important slave colony in the British sugar empire. I had an opportunity, as a graduate student, to spend a summer in a village called Chalky Mount, in the highlands of Barbados, and returned there for a year collecting data for my Ph.D. dissertation.

DB: What was interesting about Chalky Mount?

JH: Most of the people worked on sugar plantations, and were descended from slaves. But they had a unique pottery tradition—using a hand-operated crank shaft instead of a kick-wheel. I spent many hours in the cane fields; and also did historical research in libraries, trying to find information about the origins of their pottery technology. I began to realize that what really interested me most was the period of slavery: who were the ancestors of the people living on Chalky Mount and how did they create new lives based on their African traditions while living under highly repressive conditions?

DB: Your career was evolving from anthropology toward the study of history....

JH: I would describe myself now as an historical anthropologist. But remember that we’re talking about a population that didn’t leave its own records. The records that do exist were created by the British. As an American scholar, I was looking at an alien population (transplanted Africans) through the eyes of another alien population (the British). Even though the documentary evidence might be scattered and fragmentary, archaeology can provide a “straight line” to the African population. My interest was—and still is—in how the archaeological data raises questions that the historical record doesn’t raise; and vice versa. It’s like a conversation...

DB: The cemetery you studied is now a National Historic Site in Barbados.

JH: Yes, the Newton Plantation Cemetery.

DB: Your research involved excavation of the site. Disturbing burial sites is a very sensitive issue now, in this country at least. Was there resistance to your work?

JH: No. But it would be more difficult today. At that time (this was the early 1970s), plantation burial sites were not considered sacred to the local people, and they still aren’t. The people in the villages, the people of African descent, for the most part, didn’t—many still don’t—feel a strong identification with Africa or with the people buried in the slave cemeteries. Today, there’s more of an emphasis on Africa in the secondary school curriculum; and of course, the whole field of archaeology has changed in its attitudes toward excavating burial sites.

DB: Tell me about your current research interests.

JH: I’m interested in the Middle Passage, the forced transportation of captive Africans across the Atlantic, especially what kinds of material goods and personal belongings slaves brought—or might have brought—with them to the Americas. What were people wearing? Were they stripped of their clothing and jewelry before they left Africa, or when they arrived?

DB: How can we know this?

JH: Images from the period is one way. But this is tricky. Let’s say you have an engraving of a slave market, or a ship’s hold. Was this based on a sketch made in situ by someone who was actually observing the scene? Or is it based on an artist’s imagination? These are different kinds of information. There are also the official records of the British Parliament, accounts by slave traders and other Europeans; and, occasionally, first hand accounts by Africans who survived the Middle Passage. And look: the Trans-Atlantic slave trade lasted from the early 1500s to the 1870s when Africans were still being brought into Cuba and Brazil. This is an enormous span of time; tens of thousands of voyages; millions of people. So it’s dangerous to make any categorical statements or generalizations about the “slave trade.”

DB: One last question. You’ve been involved with VFH now for more than a decade—as a Fellow, Affiliate Fellow, Senior Fellow, and now Senior Scholar. What kind of impact has this had on your work?

JH: It’s provided an encouraging, congenial, and supportive environment, enhanced considerably by the connection with UVa and its faculty and students. I am doing things here that I never dreamt I would have done when I retired from university teaching about 11 years ago.

**Violence and Survival Fellow David Niyonzima**

From Burundi—A Model for Postwar Reconciliation

This summer, the VFH Violence and Survival program will welcome David Niyonzima as a scholar in residence for one month. The VFH Board approved the invitation of scholars able to assist the VFH in developing or expanding its programs, and David comes equipped to offer a variety of insights to the Violence program. Dr. Niyonzima grew up in Burundi, a country south of and culturally similar to Rwanda. One of a few to survive an assault by government soldiers at his school, David resolved to work to prevent and treat the effects of violence, first by understanding it, and then by developing a program that could be implemented for very low cost all over Burundi. His work has become a model for much postwar reconciliation in Africa, and increasingly, elsewhere. Dr. Niyonzima developed an intercultural, interdisciplinary model of healing that uses story and history (the humanities), Western and Burundian understandings of trauma (science), action methods (the arts and therapy), and micro-enterprise (economics) to help those affected by violence to reconstruct meaningful and constructive lives. The keystone of his program is a network of “Listening Rooms” all over Burundi, where trained volunteers can listen to the first level of traumatic processing — victims telling what happened and developing a workable context for understanding it. Community based and respectful of Burundians’ own understandings of themselves, THARS, as it is known, is now building a school in Burundi that will teach the THARS (Trauma Healing and Reconciliation Services) method to volunteers and professionals all over the region, including Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. For more information on THARS, go to www.thars.org. We are able to bring Dr. Niyonzima here through the generosity of private donors to the VFH Violence and Survival program, and through the generous assistance and guidance of the Charlottesville Friends Meeting, who will provide housing, and who introduced Dr. Niyonzima to the VFH.
Imagine yourself on a warm evening in the late 1920s stepping through the garden gate. You overhear soft voices, not just any voices, but those of poets: James Weldon Johnson and Anne Bannister Spencer. They sip tea, hardly noticing the lavender and blue left by the setting sun as the sweet fragrance of beautiful spring flowers fill the air around them. The place is a sanctuary. The water-spouting head of Prince Ebo there is a gift from W. E. B. DuBois.

Would you not want to preserve and protect such a moment so that it could be celebrated with many generations to come? Museums have been created traditionally to do just that, to protect treasures and the heritage they represent so that they can be shared with future generations. Hampton University Museum is Virginia’s oldest African American museum; in 1978, the predecessor to the Association of African American Museums was formed to bring together a group of institutions, thus strengthening the commitment to address challenging issues and ensuring that such history was no longer ignored, omitted, or misinterpreted by scholars.

Faith and perseverance continue to be the driving forces for each of the museums that have emerged in Central and Southside Virginia. As reported in our last newsletter (VFH Views, Winter 07), the Network of African American Museums in Virginia (NAAMV) is designed to provide technical assistance, enhance cooperation, and enable collaboration as each reaches out to the community it serves as well as across the Commonwealth. The initiative, created in partnership with the VFH African American Heritage Program, involves six museums from Central Virginia.

The Legacy Museum of African American History was established in 1995 and moved to its current location in Lynchburg, 403 Monroe Street, in 1997. The museum collects, preserves, and stores historical artifacts, documents and memorabilia relating to the significant contributions of the African American community in Lynchburg and its environs. A leading example of a local African American history museum, Legacy has produced outstanding exhibitions on the education, businesses, and social movements in the Lynchburg area and were a principal organizing partner of the NAAMV initiative.

Also in Lynchburg, the Anne Spencer House and Garden is the only house museum in the network. The former home of the poet is located in the Pierce Street historic district. Its collections are designed to preserve and celebrate, through education and research, the literary, cultural, and social legacy of Anne Spencer.

The other five network members are housed in former African American school buildings. The Robert Russa Moton Museum in Farmville has a rich history in the Civil Rights Movement. Located in the former R.R. Moton High School, a National Historic Landmark, the museum was established in 1997. Its board is committed to the preservation and positive interpretation of the history of civil rights in education, specifically as it relates to Prince Edward County and the role its citizens played in integrating this country. The Museum also serves as a center for community groups to discuss issues of racial cooperation.

The Harrison Museum of African American Culture is located on the ground floor of Harrison School, the first public high school built in 1916 for African American students in Roanoke. Designated a Virginia Historic Landmark, the museum researches, preserves and interprets the achievements of African Americans, specifically in Southwestern Virginia.

Among the newer network members is the L. E. Coleman Museum in Halifax, located at 3011 Mountain Road. Established in 2005, it is dedicated to promoting artistic excellence that primarily reflects the culture of African Americans of Halifax County.

The Carver-Price Legacy Museum in Appomattox is the newest museum in the Network, and it is an out growth of the work of the Carver-Price alumni association. The school building is part of the Civil Rights and Education Heritage Trail and is located on business route 460.

To learn more about these institutions and other African American sites that preserve and interpret the Virginia African American experience, go to the newly
VFH Bids Farewell to Two Outgoing Board Members and Welcomes Three More

Both Elaine Carter (Blacksburg) and Lydia Peale (Palmyra) were close friends and ardent supporters of VFH before joining the Board in 2000, and both were enthusiastic Board members. They are already missed. Joining the Board in 2007 are Jo Ann Hofheimer (Virginia Beach), Cassandra Newby-Alexander (Chesapeake), and Robin Traywick Williams (Crozier).

Pablo Julian Davis is leaving VFH after nearly four years as Program Director of the South Atlantic Humanities Center. Pablo and his family move in July to Memphis, Tennessee, where his wife, Elizabeth Marcela Pettinaroli, will teach Colonial Latin American literature and Spanish language in the Modern Languages Department of Rhodes College. Pablo will serve as Executive Director of Latino Memphis, a community non-profit, and plans to join the local music scene. Of his time with the VFH, Pablo says, “For me, it has been like a candy store to a little boy. People here are committed to bringing the humanities to a wide public audience. It’s not just a job—it’s a cause, and that makes it an inspiring place to be.” The South Atlantic Humanities Center continues as a VFH partnership with the University of Virginia and Virginia Tech.

Matthew Gaventa describes his new position as Media Editor for Encyclopedia Virginia as coordinator of “a really giant scavenger hunt.” For each encyclopedic entry, he scours archives for audio, video and images to supplement the text and then handles the legal and licensing issues necessary to republish the media. Since joining EV in February, Matthew has concentrated on building a foundation for this process through long-term agreements with important partners, such as the Virginia Historical Society. Matthew brings experience in graphic design and short film production to the Encyclopedia Virginia team. He graduated from Georgetown University in 2001 with a B.A. in English, and from the University of Iowa in 2005 with an M.A. in Film Studies. Matthew can be reached at mgaventa@virginia.edu or 434-924-3777.

Jeanne Nicholson Siler became Program Associate for Grants in January following more than ten years of involvement with the VFH. Jeanne has volunteered consistently for the Book Festival and in 2005-2006 served as Project Historian for the VFH’s FAHI Project, interviewing Martinsville’s Fayette Street community about life before integration. She spent many hours in the living rooms and on the porches of Martinsville, documenting an African American history that had never before been written down. “For a journalist used to daily deadlines, it was a luxury,” she says of the long-term nature of the project. Jeanne served several years as a general assignment reporter for Charlottesville’s Daily Progress, before working as a freelance editor for many organizations. Jeanne is married to Nic Siler, and together they have two daughters: Natalie, 23, and Ginger, 20. She received an M.A. in anthropology from the University of Virginia in 2003. Jeanne can be reached at jsiler@virginia.edu or 434-243-5522.

VFH Bids Farewell to Two Outgoing Board Members and Welcomes Three More

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Jo Ann Hofheimer is an author, free-lance writer, and master gardener. She earned B.S. and M.A. degrees from Old Dominion University. Among her publications is Annie Wood: A Portrait (1997). Jo Ann founded and co-owned J. M. Prince Books, a bookstore in Norfolk. She is a member of the board of the WHRO Foundation, a mentor at Seatack Elementary School, and former President of the Irene Leache Memorial Foundation at the Chrysler Museum of Art. Jo Ann has been a member of the boards of the Virginia Beach Library Foundation, the Norfolk Forum, the Norfolk Society of Arts, the Fred Heutte Foundation, and the Ohef Sholom Temple, among others. She was on the board of the Virginia Center for the Book before it relocated to VFH.

Cassandra Newby-Alexander is Associate Professor of History at Norfolk State University, where she has taught since 1992. Previously, she was a secondary teacher in Norfolk Public Schools. Cassandra earned a B.A. degree from the University of Virginia and a Ph.D. degree from the College of William and Mary. She is the author of numerous publications and the director of the web-based “Race, Time, and Place: African Americans in Tidewater Virginia.” Cassandra serves on the WHRO Community Advisory Board and the WHRO Foundation Board. In addition, she serves on the boards of the Historical Commission of the Supreme Court of Virginia, the Norfolk Sister City Association, and the African American-Jewish Coalition and is a member of Multicultural Committee for the Norfolk Convention and Visitors Bureau.

Robin Traywick Williams is a former Commissioner and Chairman of the Virginia Racing Commission, Chief of Staff and Legislative Liaison for Virginia Lt. Governor John Hager, and an editor, reporter, writer, and legislative assistant. She earned A.B. and M.A. degrees from Hollins University. Robin writes a weekly column, “Bush Hogs and Other Swine,” for the Goochland Courier and is the author of Chivalry, Thy Name is Bubba (2000), a collection of her newspaper and magazine articles. Robin is a Founding Member of the Board of the Bank of Goochland (Virginia) and a Director of TransCommunity Financial Corporation.

We look forward to working with these new members in the years ahead.

The VFH Board of Directors meets four times a year. Nominations, including self-nomination, are welcome anytime.
when Walter Jackson packed up his files and traveled north from Chapel Hill, North Carolina to set up a temporary working space on the second-floor of the VFH in the early fall of 2002, the associate history professor thought he would spend his fellowship working on a collection of essays. As a VFH Fellow, he would have a semester to focus on research and writing, away from the demands of teaching at North Carolina State University. However, one of the essays grabbed his attention and became the focus for a new book.

Now nearing completion, *Intoxicating Honesty: Gunnar and Alva Myrdal in Sweden and America* is Jackson’s joint biography of the Swedish couple, both of whom became Nobel Prize winners, but in separate years for different awards. “I’m focused on the period 1919 to 1945 for the first volume, which took a great surge forward when I was at the Foundation. I probably wrote 100 to 150 pages,” said the former Fellow with interests in U.S. history, civil rights, and other issues of race, culture and the South.

Jackson notes how the Myrdals’ own writings on American racial inequality and other social tensions from the middle of the 1900s, coupled with “an unbelievably detailed record of their correspondence” only recently made available, has given historians “an extraordinary window on the 20th century.” Jackson participated twice in the VFH Fellowship Program, first in 1993, and again for a second fall semester in 2002.

“As a Fellow you have the privacy needed to write, but you also meet very interesting people—just being in the same building with people involved with folk life programs, making films, and the Book Festival. You talk with these people over coffee and at receptions. It doesn’t eat up your research time, doesn’t divert you, but it puts Fellows in contact with other people and feeds the dialogue between scholars and the humanities. That just doesn’t happen at all humanities centers.”

“The interdisciplinary contact is very valuable,” he added. “It allows you to see how your work is received by the greater community.”

“There’s a particular intimacy there that’s really very memorable...[VFH President] Rob [Vaughan] is interested in the work I do in civil rights—he participates intellectually in discussions in ways that might not be expected of an administrator, and has introduced me to people on the board and UVA faculty members.”

Jackson, a native of Tennessee, earned his undergraduate degree from a North Carolina school (Duke University) and his Ph.D. in Massachusetts (from Harvard) but cheerfully admits “the Virginia Foundation is my favorite charity.” He donates to the VFH “because I’m an alum. I give an unrestricted gift because I’m not only interested in just the Fellowships,” and adds that he began with $25 and tries to increase the amount of his gift each year.

Jackson notes that the connections he made as a Fellow helped him organize a recent conference at Shaw University commemorating the founding of SNCC, the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee. Continuing to receive the *VFH Views* helps him stay in touch with friends in Charlottesville, and reinforces his appreciation for public history.

Jackson was recently appointed to the Fulbright Distinguished Chair in American Studies at Uppsala University in Sweden for the 2007-08 academic year. He, his wife Rachida—a humanities professor at Shaw University in Raleigh—and their daughter Sarah will leave July 1.

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*We at the VFH are grateful for the Jacksons’ ongoing financial support and the camaraderie he has brought to the Fellowship program.*
Planned Giving:  
Groundwork for the Future

Travelers in Virginia are certain to see historic buildings containing centuries-old cornerstones planned by our forefathers who envisioned many of the buildings we still enjoy today. These cornerstones were placed by believers who seized the future and believed in the value of these important buildings. These founders had vision and imagination, and recognized the importance of laying the groundwork for the future.

Like these builders of a bygone era, donors to the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities can also lay the groundwork for the next generation of new ideas and initiatives. By making a planned gift today, a VFH donor can ensure that a program that he or she is passionate about will continue to thrive. Through a planned gift, a benefactor can create a vision that will live on.

One type of planned gift is a charitable gift annuity, which may be established with a small investment ($5,000 minimum). It can be funded with either appreciated securities or cash. The donor receives an immediate income tax deduction and may also bypass or defer capital gains tax. In addition, a portion of the income may be tax-free.

The good news is that while deferred or planned gifts are providing benefits to future generations of Virginians, they may also provide significant advantages to you or your estate. Consult your tax attorney or financial planner for ways to reduce tax liability or increase income through planned gifts.

For more information on charitable gift annuities and other types of planned gifts, contact Sheryl Hayes at 434-924-3296 or by email at sheryl@virginia.edu.

Dear VFH friend,

In the aftermath of the horrific violence and loss suffered by members of the Virginia Tech family, we at the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities, like others, have again discovered in our own lives how much the humanities can offer those affected by tragedy—directly or indirectly.

We wanted to share some things many of us on the VFH staff have found to be sources of comfort and insight.

Poetry, reflections, images, and other materials that might be of help to you, your family, or people you know, can be found at www.virginiafoundation.org/VT.html

The VFH Violence and Survival program has served survivors in many different countries over the last ten years; perhaps much of the wisdom gathered through that program is relevant to this time as well.

Many materials online can also be had in hard copy at your request. Just send an email to the address below.

We welcome your suggestions of other, similar or different materials that you think could be helpful in the aftermath of this grievous loss—and to others who suffer violent loss in different circumstances. Please let us know your thoughts at violenceandsurvival@virginia.edu.

—From the staff of the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities