FALL 2017

Long Shadows of War
History & Reconciliation
Rob Looks Back
Annual Report
LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

It is with great enthusiasm and an open heart that I introduce myself to you as the new executive director of Virginia Foundation for the Humanities. If you have been a friend of VFH over the last decade you may have known me as director of digital initiatives and the creator of Encyclopedia Virginia. VFH is unlike any organization I’ve been associated with in my career. The quality of its programs and the passion and commitment of its staff are without parallel. My appointment, however, is bittersweet. It is with a heavy heart that we say goodbye to VFH’s founding director—my mentor and friend—Robert C. Vaughan III. I am honored and humbled to have received the VFH torch from him. As we look to the future, I invite you to join me as we write VFH’s next chapter together.

Our work is more important now than ever. The events of August 11–12 in Charlottesville have tested the spirit of our town, state, and nation. While it is clear that hatred has no place in the world, we still have crucial questions about what kind of future we want, not just as an organization but as individuals and as a society. What will it look like? How do we get there? To answer these questions, we need to take stock of the past in ways that will not always be comfortable. With you, VFH and its programs will continue to work for that future.

The humanities are fundamental to our democratic experiment in that they develop our minds to think about issues from multiple perspectives and foster the civil discourse necessary to build a stronger tomorrow. Yet somehow we tend to overlook and at times simply dismiss the importance of the humanities in our public life, considering them subjects belonging only to academic investigation. But we have all heard stories that affect what we believe, what we do, and maybe even transformed who we are. Storytelling is at the core of the humanities. It is through personal narratives and history that we can find ways to honor how we are different from one another and also connect to what we have in common.

In this edition of Views, you will discover a number of unique stories from individuals and communities across Virginia. A retrospective about Rob Vaughan looks at his original vision for VFH and how he created the largest state humanities council with the most diverse and dynamic set of programs in the nation. You will also learn about a unique cultural exchange that took place between our Virginia Folk Life Program and the residents of the small island of Cape Verde, off the coast of West Africa.

In a story on our peerless Virginia Festival of the Book, you will read about how we are bringing literature and books to schools and young audiences and inspiring them with stories so they can better understand themselves and others. History United, a partnership between VFH and the Danville Regional Foundation, is using the humanities to reconcile a divided community. In an essay about this work you will learn about the area’s struggles with racial justice and equity and how communities traditionally at odds with one another are working through this history together, in order to build a unified narrative for the future. These are just a few of the stories you will find in this issue, and everything you find in Views is just a sampling of the powerful work we do across the state.

Over the next year I will be touring different parts of Virginia to talk about our work and our vision for the future, and to explore ways VFH can support and build humanities programs across the Commonwealth. I relish the opportunity to speak with you and listen to you so that I can learn about the questions and issues that are important in your community. You, after all, are the reason we do this work. I look forward to meeting you and to discussing ways we can invest in our future together.

All the best,

MATTHEW GIBSON
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Fiddling in Fogo
Visit an island off the west coast of Africa with the Virginia Folklife Program.

Refuge in the Valley
A VFH grant is helping put a local face on the global refugee crisis.

Annual Report
VFH thanks its generous and loyal donors for their support in the 2016—2017 year.

Ready, Set, Type
The largest publicly accessible collection of movable type in Virginia is now available in a landmark specimen book.
Pete Bondi heard the shells falling in Saigon long before he heard anyone talk about evacuation.

He had left his apartment for an empty room near the airport—better for a speedy getaway. He had already watched thousands of South Vietnamese board U.S. warplanes bound for safety, far away from the shell-shocked city. Still, no one ever talked about abandoning Saigon.

But on April 24, 1975, the word finally came through—Saigon would be lost.

For Bondi, the long-awaited announcement was almost a relief. But 8,000 miles away in California, Bondi’s friend, a South Vietnamese naval supply officer named Manh Dinh, was in a panic.

He was stuck in Oakland, while his wife and children were trapped in Saigon.

With the North Vietnamese army speeding across the countryside and bombs raining down on the city, Dinh picked up the phone to call the one American in Saigon he was sure he could reach.

Dinh implored Bondi to get his family to safety aboard a departing U.S. Navy ship.

“I don’t speak Vietnamese, I [didn’t] know where they lived. It was the last thing in the world I wanted to do,” Bondi said. But he did it nonetheless. He hurried into town, loaded up his jeep with three generations of Dinh’s family, and made it out of Saigon on one of the last ships to leave.

Bondi and Dinh’s story is one of dozens collected by the team at With Good Reason as part of a new series commemorating the Vietnam War. Supported by a $180,000 grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the radio program is partnering with archives and scholars from across the country to bring these unheard stories to the airwaves.

Like, for example, the story of Sybil Stockdale, who together with Jane Denton and Helene Knapp formed the League of Families for POWs MIA in Southeast Asia. Forging unlikely alliances with antiwar activists, they smuggled notes to prisoners and helped ensure the return of POWs at the end of the war.

“The NEH grant allows us to create what we believe will be the only long-form documentary series featuring Vietnam veterans, tailor-made for public radio,” says With Good Reason producer and host Sarah McConnell. “This is one way we can help American veterans and our South Vietnamese allies in the conflict make sense of that agonizing period.”
The series will air on *With Good Reason*'s growing network of ninety-three public radio stations in thirty-four states, including every major public radio station in Virginia.

Episodes will focus on the personal stories of young veterans; women’s experiences in wartime; the contributions of African American, Latino, and Native American soldiers; and the lives of the Vietnamese displaced by the war, in addition to the complex role of class in the draft.

Historians including the University of California–Irvine’s Linda Trinh Võ and the University of Virginia’s Phyllis Leffler will probe the traumatic legacy of the war, and share the personal narratives of those who lived and fought their way through Vietnam.

“I think it’s one thing to read the story of the Vietnam War in a history book, and it’s just a very different thing to hear it from someone who lived through it,” says associate producer Allison Quantz. “To hear the music of the time and the sounds of the newscasts puts you in the story in a way that books just can’t do.”

Quantz says the series offers a chance to reevaluate the disputed legacy of the Vietnam War during a time of intense national interest.

“You can talk to experts, to people who fought there, to people who were at home watching the news about what was going on, and you will hear very different things,” says Quantz. “That’s why it’s important to gather these stories, because we, as Americans, are still trying to figure out the legacy of the Vietnam War.”

TO LEARN MORE about the Voices of Vietnam series from *With Good Reason*, visit *WithGoodReasonRadio.org/Vietnam*. 

*ABOVE* A marine stands watch in an observation tower as Lieutenant Commander McElroy, chaplain for the 3rd Battalion, 26th Marine Regiment, holds Mass on Hill 950. Photo courtesy of Department of Defense, U.S. National Archives.

Refuge in the Valley

Divert Suarez worked at a harbor in Santiago de Cuba, operating scales for trucks loading and unloading cargo ships. Haretton Sariol was a police officer. He was employed but still poor, with a salary that was too low to feed his family.

At odds with the Castro regime, Suarez was fired from his job. He tried to make the journey eighteen times by boat across the Straits of Florida to the United States. In 2006, he succeeded, traveling on a makeshift raft with Sariol and twenty-three other men and one woman, all hoping to gain the refugee status that was then freely offered to Cubans fleeing persecution or repression at home.

“We were looking for a better life for ourselves and our families. We came on a raft. It is a high risk, but when you have the hope to improve your life, that overshadows the fear…”

—Hariton Rodriguez Sariol

Suarez, Sariol, and another companion, Michel Cala, are now making new lives for themselves in Harrisonburg. Their story, and the stories of more than twenty-five other recent refugees—individuals and families—are documented in a VFH-supported photographic exhibit, Refuge in the Valley, sponsored by the Church World Service Immigration & Refugee Program (CWS).

CWS has resettled more than 3,500 refugees in the Harrisonburg area since 1988, helping to make Harrisonburg (pop. 52,478) one of the most ethnically and culturally diverse cities in Virginia. Today, the Harrisonburg-Rockingham County community includes refugees and immigrants from Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia, Burma, Colombia, Congo, Croatia, Cuba, El Salvador, Eritrea, Honduras, Iran, Iraq, Kazakhstan, Kosovo, Pakistan, Russia, Rwanda, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Syria, Sudan, Tajikistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, and Vietnam.

In 2015, the largest number of refugees to the region (76 percent) came from Iraq; 10 percent were from Ukraine. In 2016, 42 percent came from the Democratic Republic of Congo, 23 percent from Iraq, and another 11 percent from Syria. In the 2016 school year, students in Harrisonburg City Schools spoke forty-eight different languages at home and English became a minority language for the first time, spoken by less than 50 percent of public school families.

These changes reflect a process that is changing the face of Virginia. But the Harrisonburg region is exceptional, not just in the number of immigrants and refugees it has resettled compared to its size, but also in how, with relative ease, it has received these newcomers and accepted them into the community.

This may be in part because the northern Shenandoah Valley has long been a magnet for immigrants. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, large numbers of settlers—German, Scots-Irish, and others—migrated south along the Great Wagon Road (now the Interstate 81 corridor), and many of them settled in what is now Harrisonburg and Rockingham County.

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—Javed Iqbal
The process of immigration and arrival is never easy, and friction has increased in recent months along with the pitch of divisive rhetoric about immigration generally and the global refugee crisis in particular.

But the fact remains that Harrisonburg today is a multicultural city, and the work that VFH is supporting there is designed to help all members of the community better understand the personal stories of new refugees—how and why they left their homes, the history that sets these migration stories in context; the day-to-day challenges refugees face, and most of all, the talents, strengths, and traditions they bring with them into their new lives.

For this exhibit, local photographers Ernie Didot, Amelia Schmid, and Howard Zehr were recruited to create portraits of individuals and families from seven countries: Congo, Sudan, Iraq, Syria, Cuba, Pakistan, and the Central African Republic. Scholars from James Madison University worked with the photographers and CWS staff to offer background and historical context.

Jim Hershberger, CWS director, and Sarah Alice Coleman, CWS school liaison, contributed perspectives gained from many years of work with refugees in Harrisonburg and abroad. The result is a rare glimpse into the lives and struggles of refugees now living in Virginia.

“Many people have never had the chance to meet someone who practices Islam, or who has been a refugee. But those of us who work with refugees every day know that these are people who want to be a productive part of their community, who want to give something back.”

—Sarah Alice Coleman, Church World Service

As Virginia comes more and more to resemble a global community, new immigrants and refugees face the daunting task of creating new lives in a new place, learning new customs and a new language, often in the shadow of traumatic events and deep personal loss. At the same time, the communities receiving these new residents face their own challenges—of understanding and accepting different cultures, traditions, and religious beliefs. These, in turn, add up to challenges to familiar definitions of what it means to be an American, or a Virginian.

Refuge in the Valley puts a local, human face on a global story. And the conversations it seeks to create are meant to further strengthen the fabric of community in a part of Virginia that has been shaped and reshaped by immigration since the eighteenth century.

FOR MORE INFORMATION on VFH Grants, visit VirginiaHumanities.org/grants.

THANKS TO Sarah Alice Coleman and Jim Hershberger of CWS for their contributions to this article.

“I will always be thankful to this country because it gave me and my family an opportunity to live a better life.”

SALLY IMRAN
HEN WE arrived on the tiny Cape Verdean island of Fogo, the locals were still constructing a makeshift stage, welding together the frame and hammering salvaged plywood to its sides. Its name, the Portuguese word for “fire,” Fogo was the site of a volcano that last erupted in 2014, engulfing this isolated West African community in flame and lava.

I came here in the autumn of 2016 with Danny Knicely, a multi-instrumentalist from the Shenandoah Valley, and Cedric Watson, an Afro-Creole musician from Louisiana, as part of an exchange arranged by the Folklife Program at Virginia Foundation for the Humanities in partnership with the U.S. Embassy in Cape Verde. Over two weeks we met and performed with Cape Verdean musicians in local schools, public squares, community centers, artists’ colonies, and public parks. We also played at Pillory Square in Cidade Velha, the oldest Portuguese settlement on the islands, which became a major port in the transatlantic slave trade.

On November 5 we played a community concert on Fogo for the displaced residents along the caldera, or volcanic crater. The traditional music of this region is fiddle-based, making the musical collaborations between Americans and Cape Verdeans especially rich, not to mention a welcome respite for people struggling to rebuild. In fact, it was the first musical performance on Fogo since the eruption and, by all accounts, the first-ever performance by western musicians in the caldera.

“It was a happy celebration,” Knicely said of the all-night jam session, “but I was moved to tears as a Cape Verdean, who grew up in New England, translated a song being performed by the local Montrond family. The daughters sang of their sadness at no longer being able to live where their family has for generations.”

The parallels between the American and Cape Verdean traditions were striking. Morna, a nostalgic and longing singing style originating on the Cape Verdean island of Santiago, sounded hauntingly like Virginia’s mountain ballads. Listening to Fogo’s fiddle-based music you could imagine you’re sitting in the parking lot at the Galax Fiddlers Convention. And funana, an electrifying dance music, is deeply reminiscent of French Louisiana zydeco. The instruments are similar, too. The cavaquinho resembles a cross between a ukulele and a mandolin, while the ferrinho is played much like a French creole washboard.
In May 2017, Grammy Award–nominated Iraqi oud master and U.S. National Heritage Fellow Rahim AlHaj visited Harrisonburg for a two-day residency sponsored by the Virginia Folklife Program at VH1.

The oud is an ancient Middle Eastern stringed instrument that dates back at least 5,000 years. Its sounds would have been familiar to Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and Mohammad—just as they were familiar to members of the large Kurdish and Iraqi communities in the Harrisonburg area who were among the crowd for the May 18 concert at the Court Square Theatre.

While speaking at Spotswood Elementary and the Thomas Harrison and Skyline Middle Schools, AlHaj told the students that when he was in second grade, his teacher handed him an oud for the first time. The teacher taught him a chord which AlHaj played as instructed. The teacher watched, listened, and then refused to accept the instrument back. “You are a musician,” the teacher told him. “You take it. It belongs to you.”

Forced to leave Iraq in 1991 because of his opposition to the regime of Saddam Hussein, AlHaj lived in Jordan and Syria before moving to the United States as a political refugee in 2000. He is now a U.S. citizen living in New Mexico. His residency in Harrisonburg was part of VFH’s effort to use the traditional arts as a bridge to intercultural awareness and global exchange.

Such connections make sense. Cape Verde brought together cultures from across Africa, while slavery dispersed African styles across North and South America, mixed with European traditions. The largest Cape Verdean communities in the United States are in New England, but they also exist in Virginia. The Shout Band gospel tradition, played exclusively with brass instruments, is based in the United House of Prayer for All People, an East Coast congregation with a large number of churches in Hampton Roads and other parts of Virginia. It was founded by the Cape Verdean immigrant Manuel “Daddy Grace” da Graca early in the twentieth century.

There is nary a musical tradition in Virginia, be it blues or bluegrass, that is not the result of this kind of cultural mixing. For this and other reasons, Cape Verde was the perfect location to revisit such historical connections and to more deeply understand our own distinct folk traditions and, for that matter, what it means to be a Virginian.

TO LEARN MORE about the Virginia Folklife Program, visit VirginiaFolklife.org.
It’s not every day that a neuroscientist from Columbia University sits down to meet with students at Charlottesville High School and discuss what motivates his ongoing research in spite of failures along the way. Nor is it a common occurrence for an author and illustrator of children’s books to read her work to students at Mary Carr Greer Elementary School in both English and Spanish.

Yet both of these moments took place during the 2017 Virginia Festival of the Book. Dr. Stuart Firestein and author/illustrator Angela Dominguez were among the thirty-seven Festival speakers who visited local schools this past March. Hallways and classrooms across the region were abuzz in the days leading up to the 2017 Festival, as students eagerly awaited the chance to meet long-time favorites such as Tom Angleberger or public figures such as the civil rights and marriage equality activist Jim Obergefell.

Indeed, many Festival speakers look forward to the opportunity to engage with younger readers through school visits, regardless of the age level for which they write. Like Firestein—an American Association for the Advancement of Science fellow and an advisor for the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation’s program for the Public Understanding of Science—some speakers visit schools to discuss works of adult nonfiction, literary fiction, poetry, or even photography. Other speakers, such as Dominguez, a rising star in illustrated children’s book publishing, specialize in writing for teens or younger children.

Other 2017 Festival in-school speakers included the New Yorker writer David Denby; Marie Marquardt, co-chair of El Refugio, a nonprofit that serves detained immigrants and their families; Patricia Hruby Powell, winner of the Boston Globe–Horn Book Award; award-winning photographer Jeanine Michna-Bales; and best-selling science writer Dava Sobel.

Festival school visits range from small-group meetings with students in afterschool clubs such as the Waynesboro High School Gay Straight Alliance, to classroom visits with direct tie-ins to curriculum, to schoolwide assemblies designed to get students across multiple grades excited about reading.

In total, thirty-nine schools hosted author visits during the 2017 Festival, including ten of the thirteen Title I schools in Charlottesville and Albemarle County.

And of the more than 30,000 attendees at the 2017 Festival, more than one-third of those were students meeting with authors during in-school visits coordinated by Festival staff. Indeed, though school visits are only open to the students and teachers at each school, these programs are
an integral component of the Festival’s youth programming that provide increased depth and engagement with selected speakers’ work. Greer Elementary teacher Emma Peworchik says, “I was very pleased with the overall diversity of the authors who visited Greer. It reflected the diversity of our student population and it was invaluable for our students to see people like themselves as successful writers and illustrators.”

Each year, school representatives in the region are invited to select authors, illustrators, and publishing professionals to visit, based on student interests and curricular priorities. Selections are coordinated with the support of Festival staff, ensuring grade and subject matter appropriateness in addition to the accompanying logistical details that often prevent teachers or librarians from attempting to plan author visits without this sort of institutional support. As a result of this thoughtful and deliberate planning process, in 2017, 97 percent of participating school representatives responded to an anonymous post-Festival survey that they thought the in-school programs broadened or enriched their students’ thinking.

Clark Elementary School librarian Mary Craig says, “We thoroughly enjoyed each one of our author visits this year. The authors were all engaging and their books were wonderful. Our students benefit greatly from the visits. This is an opportunity that they would not have without support from the Festival of the Book.”

In fact, the 2017 Festival included the record-breaking achievement of almost 100 school visits. For 2018, the Festival staff is working with members of the youth committee and other teachers, librarians, and administrators to continue to increase the impact of these school visits. Together, they plan to create more extensive materials to contextualize the speakers’ work and prepare students in advance for the visits. Ultimately, these resources will help classroom teachers and librarians get more students excited about the Festival and, in turn, about reading and writing. Leah Cole from Peabody School notes that “it’s great to be able to show youth, especially those students interested in writing, what they can do with their ideas.”

TO LEARN MORE about the Virginia Festival of the Book, visit VaBook.org.
TORIES HAVE POWER. History has power. And the ways that history is represented through monuments and other memorials have the power to unite and to divide. Whose history is it? Who owns the past? If a flag or a statue or the name of a public building means one thing to one group of people and something else entirely to another, can these different views of the past be reconciled?

And what about events in the past, the stuff of history itself? Or the complicated stories of historical figures, such as Thomas Jefferson or Robert E. Lee? Different people see them in different ways, depending on how they understand their own heritage, their own place in history, and how they see themselves. In 2017, these questions have become more urgent than ever before. These differences have led to violent clashes, sadly with tragic outcomes. What role can the humanities play in bridging what divides us? Do the humanities have the power to heal?

In Danville, History United is confronting these questions head on. A multiyear partnership between the Danville Regional Foundation and VFH, History United is taking steps to use divisive history and divided perspectives on local history to create a new, more holistic sense of community.

Danville has a long history of tense race relations. Jim Crow segregation was deeply embedded in southern Virginia, but the civil rights movement took a firm hold there. On June 10, 1963, a day that became known as “Bloody Monday,” local police and a cadre of deputized white garbage workers attacked a group of mostly black protestors with fire hoses and clubs. Forty-seven people were injured, some of them seriously, leaving Danville and the surrounding community bitterly divided along racial lines.

The city was also the place where President Jefferson Davis fled after the fall of Richmond, briefly re-establishing his government there in what became
known as “the last capital of the Confederacy.” Today, a Confederate battle flag larger than the footprint of a small house flies along Route 29, just north of the city.

Both of these histories are part of Danville’s—and Virginia’s—inheritance. They coexist alongside one another. But until recently there has been no effort to create dialogue between them, much less promote the healing of old wounds that is needed before the region can move forward.

The challenge of creating a path forward has been complicated further by the decline of the textile and tobacco industries that sustained and in many ways defined the Danville region since the nineteenth century. The waning of these industries has left a community unified by its loss of economic stability in the present but still divided in its understanding of the past.

“Without an understanding of how different stories inform a common narrative, a community cannot clearly see itself or its past,” Ina Dixon, History United’s Founding Coordinator says. “This is the work of History United. Because what a community cannot see will continue to be the cause that harms and divides it.”

The work of History United is accomplished through programs such as an ongoing civil rights discussion series, community listening sessions, research and oral history interviews, documenting untold stories of the region’s historic sites, developing institutional capacity and a sense of shared purpose among local museums and historical societies, and offering local history-focused “Content Academies” for Danville-area teachers.

As a complement to the first of these Content Academies and on the evening before the fifty-fourth anniversary of Bloody Monday, historian Ed Ayres spoke to an audience of more than 125 people at High Street Baptist Church, where Martin Luther King Jr. appeared twice in 1963. In addressing “The Roots of Segregation,” he also spoke about heritage and how history is remembered. He pointed to two events that occurred in Danville within a year of one another: the founding in 1882 of what would become one of the largest textile manufacturers in the South, Dan River Mills; and the demise of a progressive biracial coalition known as the Readjuster Party after a street fight escalated and left four people in Danville dead in November 1883. In local memory, “The Mill” remains a potent symbol of the region’s bygone prosperity, while the so-called Danville riot shaped so much of the racial history that followed is almost entirely forgotten—a vital but missing piece of the Danville story.

The riot and Dan River Mills are bound together in Danville’s inheritance, just like Bloody Monday and the last capital of the Confederacy. They are threads in a complex, braided narrative, and the work of History United is to ensure that this narrative is not seen as one single, fragile strand that can be broken by the weight of other voices, but as the broader story of a community and its contradictions that includes pain and loss.

Increasingly, this nexus between the humanities and healing is making itself apparent in our work. In 2017, VFH will present a workshop on this topic—the Humanities and Divided History—at the national conference of state humanities councils in Boston. The program will address painful and divisive histories and how the humanities can help people see what they have in common.

“Many international conflicts are essentially conflicts over contradictory narratives—consider the Israeli-Palestinian or Northern Ireland conflicts,” says Mark Habeeb, a conference panelist and professor at Georgetown University’s School of Foreign Service. “Creating a common narrative—in which the conflict itself is viewed as a shared trauma—may provide the only path to reconciliation.”

Daryl Byler, another panelist, is the executive director of the Center for Justice & Peacebuilding at Eastern Mennonite University in Harrisonburg. “Stories retold across the generations are powerful tools for shaping our cultural, religious, and national identities—and for perpetuating conflicts,” he says. “It is only by listening deeply to another’s story that we see our own story in a new light and can begin to make space for an expanded and more inclusive narrative.”

The work of History United is an important step along this path. And what the rest of Virginia—and the nation—have to learn from Danville and the pioneering efforts there could point the way forward, toward healing and reconciliation, at a time when consensus about who we are as a people seems more elusive than ever before.

To LEARN MORE about History United, visit HistoryUnited.org.

Thanks to Ina Dixon, former project coordinator of History United, for her contributions to this article.
VFH supported these humanities projects between July 1, 2016, and June 30, 2017. To LEARN MORE about the Grants Program, visit VirginiaHumanities.org/Grants.

1. 1882 Foundation – The Chinese American Experience in History and Short Films: A Traveling Seminar
2. American Media Initiative – Only the Bridge Matters Now
3. APA/Preservation Virginia – Roseneal Film Screening
4. Blue Ridge Literacy – Rappahannock Valley Reads
5. Cape Charles Historical Society – Building a Community: Cape Charles Rosenwald School Exhibition
6. Center for Community & Family Development – Coming Full Circle: The Legacy of Frances Bibbins Latimer
7. Chesapeake County Public Library – Festival of the Women Word
8. Eastern Monroe University – Crossing the Line: Women of Anabaptist Traditions Encounter Borders and Boundaries
10. Edith Bolling Wilson Birthplace Museum – World War I: From Wytheville to the White House... and Abroad

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11. EVS Communications – Harvest of Empire: One-hour Film
12. Field Studies – The Hail Storm: John Dabney in Virginia
14. Historic Smithfield – Historic Smithfield Van Tour Series
15. Jefferson School African American Heritage Center – Presence of Race: Honor Film Project
16. Library of Virginia Foundation – Goodbye Bruce: The Music of Prohibition
17. Local Colors of Women VA – Local Colors Annual Festival: Celebrating Ethnic Diversity of Western VA
18. Louisa County Historical Society – Will the Stones Whisper Their Names?
19. Old Church Gallery, Ltd. – From the Front Porch to the Front Lines: Rural Virginia on a Threshold of Change
20. Red Dirt Productions – At the Common Table: People, Place and Food in the American South

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21. Richmond Jazz Society – Virginia Jazz: The Early Years
22. Riversviews Atrium – Public Humanities Cinema Project
23. Southern Documentary Fund – Appalachia in the Media
24. St. John’s Church Foundation – Educational Programming
25. Virginia Symphony Orchestra – Songs of Freedom
26. Virginia Wesleyan College – What’s at Stake?
27. William King Museum of Art – Art in Appalachia, Appalachia in the World
28. William King Museum of Art – Along the Great Road: Film Production
29. WTJU – Jazz Centennial: A Soundtrack

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30. VFH grants also supported research, script development, and pre-production of key Virginia stories.

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31. Red DIRT PRODUCTIONS
32. From the team who produced Appalachia: A History of Mountains and People, this feature-length documentary film will explore the interconnection of Native American, African, and European food traditions in the American South, connecting people across lines of race, religion, and class through the story of Southern food. VFH funds supported research, script development, and pre-production of key Virginia stories.

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33. RichmonD JAZZ SOCIETY
34. Richmond’s Valentine Museum will host a five-part public lecture series on American jazz, featuring scholars and descendants of jazz greats including Duke Ellington and Cab Calloway. The series will be presented in conjunction with a VFH-funded exhibit, “Jazz in Virginia,” highlighting Virginians who have made significant contributions to the development of jazz as an American art form.

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35. The Chinese American Experience in History and Short Films: A Traveling Seminar
36. 1882 FOUNDATION
37. Chinese have lived in the United States since the 1840s, but their presence and influence is often portrayed in stereotypes. This series of film screenings and discussion programs with accompanying lesson plans, designed for teachers and a wide public audience, will broaden public understanding of the history of Asian Americans, particularly Chinese Americans, in Virginia and the United States.

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38. World War I: From Wytheville to the White House... and Abroad
39. EDITH BOllING WILSON BIRTHPLACE MUSEUM
40. Wytheville native and former First Lady Edith Bolling Wilson served as a coordinator, advisor, and collaborator to her husband, President Woodrow Wilson, during World War I, advocating for economic conservation and aid efforts and supporting the American Red Cross. This inaugural exhibit and related public programs will focus on Mrs. Wilson’s life, historic contributions, and leadership.

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41. The Hail Storm: John Dabney in Virginia
42. FIELD STUDIO
43. This short documentary film will tell the story of John Dabney, a prominent African American chef and caterer who worked at the highest levels of Richmond society during the nineteenth century. Building his skills and reputation while still enslaved, Dabney ran two restaurants and used his earnings to purchase his wife’s freedom. After Emancipation, Dabney bought his own restaurant in downtown Richmond. The film will be presented to diverse audiences throughout Virginia.

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44. Facing It: The Poetry of Yusef Komunyakaa
45. FURIOUS FLOWER POETRY CENTER
46. The Furious Flower Poetry Center at James Madison University has helped bring the work of African American poets to national attention. This week-long series of lectures, readings, and discussions, designed for Virginia high school and college educators as well as the general public, focused on the work of Pulitzer Prize-winning poet Yusef Komunyakaa.

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47. From the Front Porch to the Front Lines: Rural Virginia on a Threshold of Change
48. OLD CHURCH GALLERY, LTD.
49. Over a nine-year period, The Room with Wongs Oral History Project collected the life stories of twenty-eight Floyd County residents who came of age during the Great Depression and World War II. The result is a trove of filmed oral history interviews, audio archives, and primary documents. VFH funding will help construct, promote, and facilitate public access to this valuable archive documenting a Virginia county still rooted in rural life.

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50. At the Common Table: People, Place and Food in the American South
51. RED DIRT PRODUCTIONS
52. From the team who produced Appalachia: A History of Mountains and People, this feature-length documentary film will explore the intersection of Native American, African, and European food traditions in the American South, connecting people across lines of race, religion, and class through the story of Southern food. VFH funds supported research, script development, and pre-production of key Virginia stories.

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53. Virginia Jazz: The Early Years – Lecture Series
54. RICHMOND JAZZ SOCIETY
55. Richmond’s Valentine Museum will host a five-part public lecture series on American jazz, featuring scholars and descendants of jazz greats including Duke Ellington and Cab Calloway. The series will be presented in conjunction with a VFH-funded exhibit, “Jazz in Virginia,” highlighting Virginians who have made significant contributions to the development of jazz as an American art form.
Ready, Set, Type

VABC Publishes Landmark Specimen Book

Above. These specimen pages of the Bodoni typeface are featured in Speaking in Faces. Photo by Stacey Evans.

Above. These specimen pages of Courier (left) and Garamond (right) typefaces are featured in Speaking in Faces. Photo by Stacey Evans.
VFH’s Virginia Arts of the Book Center (VABC) completed *Speaking in Faces*, a type specimen book, earlier this year. It’s the first publication of its kind for VABC.

The book showcases samples of each typeface in the Center’s collection of more than 375 cases and 133 distinct typefaces and styles—Virginia’s largest publicly accessible collection of movable type. It serves to document, inspire, and draw attention to the nuances of individual typefaces as well as the overall collection.

The book begins with an introduction to typography, designed by Lucas Czarnecki, edited by Kevin McFadden, and focused on the intrinsic metaphor of the face. “As the development of typography continues even today,” McFadden states in the introduction, “the winks, smirks, scowls, and nods of our nonverbal cues keep finding their ways to come through the visual elements.”

Throughout its 112 pages, the book embraces a variety of stylistic and aesthetic modes, reflecting the diverse typefaces. Each sample, or specimen, was typeset and printed by hand at the VABC over approximately eighteen months. During that time, additional typefaces (such as Canterbury and Greco Bold) were discovered within the collection.

In addition to straightforward samples of aligned characters on the page, artist specimens bring verve and personality to the pages of *Speaking in Faces*. These creative specimen pages feature the best-represented font families in the collection, playing with intricacies of individual characters and history of the type. For instance, Bodoni has a sense of refined restraint, and Gill Sans appears sleek. Lydian approaches calligraphic grace, while Univers is the height of utilitarian efficiency. Whimsical Kennerly is balanced by the sleek geometric sensibilities of Twentieth Century.

Originally inspired by the renowned book artist and former VABC member Johanna Drucker, *Speaking in Faces* was made possible through a Kickstarter campaign, a Virginia Commission for the Arts grant, and donor support.

More than fifty VABC members and local artists were involved in the typesetting, printing, and binding of the book. A VABC class in the summer of 2016 gave beginner book artists the chance to get involved as well, using the project as a hands-on examination to teach core skills and terminology. Additional typesetting and printing for *Speaking in Faces* took place during weekly work sessions during which community members were invited to lend a hand.

The project’s completion was celebrated during the 2017 Virginia Festival of the Book, when the first copies of the handmade book were unveiled. The book launch party in September celebrated the publication of a trade edition.

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**To Learn More or to Order a Copy of Speaking in Faces**, visit VirginiaBookArts.org.
Sitting in a sea of half-filled boxes as he packed up his office, Robert C. Vaughan III, the founder and retiring president of Virginia Foundation for the Humanities, was contemplative. Having already received a number of tributes—including from the floor of the Senate of Virginia and the House of Delegates—it would have been easy for Rob to just sit back and crow about his remarkable success. After all, from humble beginnings the organization blossomed under his tutelage to become the largest—at least three times the size of comparable institutions in bigger, more populous states—of the fifty-six state humanities councils located throughout the United States and its territories. Rob, as he is known to just about everyone, remains a star among his peers; thus, the head of the National Endowment for the Humanities traveled from Washington, D.C., to praise Rob at his retirement party.

The story of how a newly minted English PhD from the University of Virginia with little or no administrative experience started VFH is inspiring—and one that reveals a lot about his character. Out of the blue, Edgar F. Shannon Jr., then president of the University of Virginia, called him one day in 1974. Shannon was seeking someone to start a humanities council, and the chair of the English department had recommended Rob. Would he be willing to discuss the possibility? Though Rob’s ambition was to teach, he was intrigued. Curiosity, an unquenchable interest in people and ideas, and a big dose of courage led Rob to take on the challenge, while simultaneously teaching. (He managed to pull off this dual role for nearly thirty years, teaching variously in the university’s English department and at the Darden School of Business.)

Beginning as a two-person organization—Rob and an assistant in one room—VFH was then devoted entirely to dispensing grants. But Rob envisioned a broader mission, and over time the organization grew. Asked if he had a blueprint in mind or another entity as a model, Rob said, “Not at all.” He gave credit entirely to the people around him—board members who were always open to innovation and members of the staff, whom Rob pronounced as “genius.” “Lots of people have come to work here and done things that I didn’t imagine,” he said. “They did, and took off with it.” During our conversation, the only credit Rob would accept was acuity in hiring just the right sort of people—those “who had ideas.” Andrew Wyndham, who joined VFH in its infancy and eventually became the director of media programs, has since retired. He described Rob’s management style: “He respected the passions and abilities of staff and treated us as collaborators. He encouraged us to invent or adopt projects.” Rob saw his role as one of encouraging creative undertakings and giving his staff autonomy. “Opportunity for staff members is the key to the way I operate,” Rob insisted. Once programs got rolling, he backed off from micromanaging them, reasoning that “they’ll be better if I don’t stay in the way.”

Having trust in people is at the core of Rob’s personality. He sees the best in everyone, even if they disagree with him. When asked how he managed, year after year, to navigate the tricky waters of the General Assembly, he claimed it was “fun” because the senators and delegates would “light up” when he approached them. (On further questioning he admitted not everybody would brighten, but many of them did.) “Lots of them get VFH’s mission, he said, “and they’ve become benefactors and champions.”

Throughout his career, Rob was devoted to social and racial justice. It’s in his DNA. “I grew up in a family that didn’t seem to have racism as a basis for being in the South,” he said. His grandfather, the only dentist in Farmville, Virginia, took both whites and blacks as patients. “It didn’t matter to him what color they were,” he said. That probably didn’t sit very well with local segregationists, and when Farmville closed its schools for five years rather than integrate, both his grandparents openly opposed that policy of Massive Resistance, which defied the U.S. Supreme Court’s mandate to desegregate public schools. As a result, they were vilified and lost their best friends, the local newspaper editors.
Rob’s father also fought racism. After being appointed the minister of Petersburg’s historic Second Presbyterian Church—an all-white congregation in a rigidly segregated city—he did something that seemed unthinkable: he opened the church to African Americans. State Senator Jack Temple, a fierce advocate of Massive Resistance, was a member of the congregation and discussed matters of race with Rob’s father; there seemed to be no common ground. Yet when the first black couple entered the church, Temple walked back to greet them, and brought them up to his own pew. That event “transformed” Temple’s life, according to Rob. Once a staunch segregationist, he reversed course. That remarkable transformation may explain Rob’s commitment to—and optimism about—the power of dialogue, education, and civic engagement to raise understanding among all Virginians. From its inception, he wanted VFH to be, as he put it, an “open-minded and genuinely creative organization.” And it has paid off with a range and depth of programs—always evolving with the times—that are unsurpassed by any other humanities council. VFH boasts radio shows heard around the world, a digital encyclopedia using cutting-edge technology, a nationally renowned book festival, on-the-ground, innovative programming in the African American and Virginia Indian communities, folk life events organized in every nook and cranny of the state, an annual high-tech conference for web professionals, and a center offering lessons in the craft of making hand-printed books and fine art prints. Harkening to its original mission, VFH still dispenses grants for worthy projects, and it supports scholars in a fellowship program.

Rob thrived on all this variety, making every day different. “I would have gone nuts” doing the same things for decades, he said. But how did he make it look so easy? He hesitated before replying, “I don’t know if it’s been easy, but it’s been fun. I’ve just had a wonderful time, quite frankly.”

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Pastor Mary Onley, known as Mama-Girl, is a self-taught artist who was born and raised in Painter, on Virginia’s Eastern Shore, where she still lives. Her lyrical sculptures look like papier-mâché but are made without wire, consisting exclusively of newspaper, glue, and paint.

Mama-Girl was a Master Artist in the Virginia Folklife Apprenticeship Program, through which she apprenticed her son David Rogers in the 2016–2017 class.

The Virginia Folklife Apprenticeship Program pairs experienced Master Artists with gifted apprentices for one-on-one, nine-month learning experiences, ensuring that Virginia art forms are passed on in ways that are conscious of history and faithful to tradition.

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Photo Essay

ABOVE. Mama-Girl’s sculptures are made in a manner similar to papier-mâché, but without wire. They consist exclusively of newspaper, glue, and paint. Photo by Pat Jarrett.

ABOVE AND NEXT. The folk artist Mama-Girl says the inspiration for her work comes directly from the Holy Spirit. She has apprenticed her son David Rogers, teaching him technique and how to “clear his head” and find divine inspiration. Photos taken at her studio near Painter, on February 2, 2017. Photos by Pat Jarrett.
VFH donors are more than contributors, and donations to VFH are more than transactions. As active partners in our work, donors help VFH address challenging questions about the issues that matter most to our communities, bringing people together through the humanities.

We are grateful for the contributions of donors listed in this annual report and their essential role in our work. By helping Virginians understand each other and our diverse histories, the VFH programs they support help us honor our differences and celebrate the humanity we all share.

An investment in VFH is an investment in the future of the Commonwealth. We believe this work has never been more important than it is today, and we simply couldn’t do it without our donors.
ANNUAL FUND

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DISCOVER THE PAST, EXPLORE THE FUTURE

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We are grateful for significant ongoing support from the following federal, state, and local entities.

National Endowment for the Humanities
University of Virginia
Virginia Commission for the Arts
City of Charlottesville
County of Albemarle
National Endowment for the Arts

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The following organizations have made a gift of $3,000 or more to specific VFH programs. VFH is grateful for their support.

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EXPLORE THE PAST, DISCOVER THE FUTURE

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Each year VFH recognizes in-kind contributions from donors and friends who have hosted events, contributed artwork to the VABC Raucous Auction, provided goods and services for programs, and promoted VFH programming. Their contributions allow VFH to expand its reach throughout the Commonwealth by promoting VFH’s work, underwriting expenses, and helping to secure additional funding. VFH is grateful for the interest of these donors and their support of VFH’s mission.

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OPPOSITE Margot Lee Shetterly discusses her book Hidden Figures at the Paramount Theater during the Virginia Festival of the Book. Photo by Peter Hedlund.

ABOVE Dancers at a Cambodian New Year celebration on April 16, 2017, wear costumes made by Virginia Folklife Master Artist Sochietah Ung and his apprentice Lena Ouk. Photo by Pat Jarrett.
In Memory of His Father
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Continued on page 49.
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The following supporters have made gifts or pledges to The Vaughan Fund for Strategic Initiatives in honor of founding VFH president Rob Vaughan and in support of a new era at VFH. VFH appreciates their commitment to our shared goal of ensuring a thriving future for the Foundation.

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ABOVE: Peter Hedlund, director of Encyclopedia Virginia, carries a Google Trekker—a 360-degree camera rig—to Tangier Island to capture imagery of the island for Google Street View. Photo by Matthew Gibson.
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