Letter from the Executive Director

Sometimes we hear someone say something that’s hard to forget. I experienced such a moment at the 2018 Virginia Festival of the Book. At one of the headliner events, the lively Nathan Englander recounted his experiences living in Israel during the peace process years of the 1990s and how that time gave him a window into Palestinian and Israeli relations. He spoke about his dashed hopes for peace, not because the two sides could not come to an agreement on issues, but because the two sides lived by different truths in utterly divergent worlds. In the Q&A that followed, an audience member asked what Englander thought about the current political landscape here in the United States. He said Americans, too, are divided by different truths. When asked what we could do to break down these barriers, he said simply, “Buckets, and buckets, of empathy.”

The humanities are at the very center of meaning making; for ourselves, our communities, our nation. In pursuit of things like knowledge and truth, the humanities explore ideas, stories, and beliefs. The humanities feed our curiosity, helping us better understand the perspectives and assumptions of others and, perhaps of greater importance, to question our own. In a word, the humanities cultivate empathy, the very thing Englander suggests might save us from ourselves. Despite all this, we hear and read about a crisis in the humanities. In higher education this takes the form of, among other things, a decline in the number of philosophy and English majors. Outside those walls, however, where people are fighting (sometimes literally) over national identity and meaning, the stakes are higher. We see conflicts over “whose” history is taught in schools and how we create or remove monuments to our past. The humanities can help us reframe these issues. Instead of asking “whose” history is taught, maybe we can look at how our collective and inclusive histories are taught so that future generations understand our past with honesty, without shame or alienation. Maybe this reframing can help us see more clearly what the United States is, both the good and the bad, and imagine what it can become.

In this issue of Views, you will read how our Encyclopedia Virginia is examining its previously published Virginia Indian content alongside tribal authors and consultants to center the voices and perspectives of the Native people who lived that history and are actively shaping the future of Virginia. Another story looks at the cross-programmatic work of With Good Reason and the Virginia Festival of the Book as they coordinated programming for a national initiative called “Why It Matters: Civic and Electoral Participation.” With this initiative, we explored the history of voter suppression, Black women’s suffrage, and civil rights for the formerly incarcerated. You will also find in this issue a profile of Earl White, a globally renowned fiddler and authority on Black traditions in Appalachian and old-time music; a story about the historic Pine Grove School in Cumberland County being added to the 2021 National Trust for Historic Preservation list of America’s Eleven Most Endangered Historic Places; and a look back at Book Arts’ 25th anniversary, which took place in 2020. You’ll read about how we are settling into our new office and public humanities center at Dairy Central, which we finally moved into in May 2021, and what we hope the space will enable us to do. And finally, thanks to Congress and the passage of the American Rescue Plan in March 2021, you’ll learn how we were able to award over $900,000 in grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities to support the robust recovery of museums, libraries, historic sites, and other cultural nonprofits impacted by the pandemic in Virginia.

I’ll end this letter where I started, reflecting on a nation divided by at least two “truths,” and the need for more empathy to imagine a different truth and narrative altogether. This work doesn’t just matter, it is critical. And with your support over the last year, we’ve been able to remain a vital resource for the Commonwealth by creating and supporting programs and content that help us question ourselves and better understand one another.

With gratitude,

Matthew Gibson
Executive Director
VIRGINIA TRIBAL COMMUNITIES TELL THEIR OWN STORIES IN Encyclopedia Virginia

Encyclopedia Virginia works with Virginia’s Indian tribes to create a cutting-edge resource.

Plowing Ahead

A rural Virginia heritage and environmental justice campaign goes national.

The Earl of Indian Valley

Exploring the Black Influence on Old-Time Music with Earl White

Now Open

Introducing Virginia Humanities’ New Public Humanities Center

SLOW TECHNOLOGY FOR A Frenzied Age

Celebrating 25 years of Book Arts
In the 2020 edition of Views, we introduced you to Muriel Branch and told you about her fight to protect the historic Pine Grove School and an adjoining African American burial ground from a proposed 1,200-acre mega-landfill in rural Cumberland County. In 2021 the National Trust for Historic Preservation declared Pine Grove one of America’s Eleven Most Endangered Historic Places in response to this threat. Pine Grove joins a list that, in recent years, has included George Washington’s Mount Vernon plantation and Richmond’s Shockoe Bottom African Burial Ground.

“As a farm girl growing up in the Pine Grove community in the 1940s and 1950s, I observed my dad plowing ‘new ground’ each spring,” says Branch, president of the Agee Miller Mayo Dungy (AMMD) Pine Grove Project. “That spring ritual meant that he had to agitate the ground, tear through roots and earth in order to plant a new crop. In much the same way, members and allies of AMMD Pine Grove Project have become plowers, agitating for racial, social and environmental justice and equity in the preservation of Black historic resources.”

The campaign to protect this Middle James River community is emblematic of the challenges facing nineteenth-century, Black freedpeople-founded, rural communities across Virginia. Shrouded by oral history, these historic settlements are often undocumented by officials. Decades of discriminatory under-investment have now made these communities prime targets for harmful development. Places like Pine Grove—a largely rural landscape imbued with deep cultural significance—also challenge mainstream distinctions between historic sites and environmental protection. For many communities, especially rural ones, cultural heritage and the natural environment are one and the same.

Virginia Humanities and partner organizations like Preservation Virginia and the Southern Environmental Law Center are part of a growing coalition committed to helping document and share the story of Pine Grove. “The greatest economic resource in rural communities, besides hardworking, talented people, is our cultural and natural heritage,” says Justin Reid, Virginia Humanities’ director of Community Initiatives and manager of the Virginia General Assembly African American Cultural Resources Task Force. “Projects like the Cumberland County landfill threaten future economic opportunities and investments that promote sustainable development and cultural place-keeping.”

The work at Pine Grove is not done yet, says Branch. “Being placed on the National Trust’s Eleven Most Endangered Historic Places list has given AMMD Pine Grove Project a larger plow with which to agitate, unearth and tear up the status quo in order to plant equity—to confront where toxic industries are placed and who gets to tell our stories.”
In Virginia, a growing cultural rights movement is reshaping how historical sites of slavery are stewarded and preserved. At heritage sites across the Commonwealth, including Historic Jamestowne, James Monroe’s Highland, Robert E. Lee’s Arlington House, and the Executive Mansion, descendants of enslaved Virginians are leading major initiatives that reimagine and reinterpret these Black ancestral places. On Juneteenth 2021, the independent Montpelier Descendants Committee made history by becoming the first group of descendants to achieve equal governing authority over a major national historic site.

With such important strides occurring at nonprofit- and government-run heritage sites, it’s easy to forget that the vast majority of slavery-related historical sites are privately owned and inaccessible to the public. As preservation architect and founder of Saving Slave Houses Jobie Hill points out, “It’s equally important for Black descendants to have a say in how these private, lesser-known ancestral spaces are preserved and interpreted.” The inaugural Virginia Black Public History Institute is exploring this very issue.

The 2021 pilot summer institute, entitled The Descendants Workshop seeks to promote equitable preservation and co-stewardship of Black ancestral sites statewide by equipping descendant communities with cutting-edge scholarship, tools and resources, and a national support network. Directed by Hill, and co-hosted by Saving Slave Houses, Virginia Humanities, and the Virginia General Assembly African American Cultural Resources Task Force, the 2021 institute includes twelve weeks of collaborative place- and project-based learning and co-research by a multigenerational group of slavery descendants from five Virginia historical sites, along with student research assistants from Norfolk State University, the University of Virginia, and Virginia State University.

The Virginia Black Public History Institute is unique among the many summer institutes, field schools, and student internships that are ubiquitous at colleges and universities across the country. Few other programs offer intergenerational and transdisciplinary experiences for independent family researchers, undergraduates, and academic scholar-practitioners, says Hill. None are entirely led by slavery descendant participants and public history professionals.

“There are many types of scholars and experts of history and tradition whose knowledge and experience is vital to disrupting entrenched, limited cultural narratives,” Hill says. The Virginia Black Public History Institute intentionally and directly challenges false hierarchies of human value and knowledge by centering and uplifting the embodied expertise of Black cultural rights-holders.

The institute was made possible by a gift from an anonymous donor and a grant from the African American Cultural Heritage Action Fund of the National Trust for Historic Preservation with support from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. Additional sponsors include TowneBank, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the UVA John L. Nau III Center for Civil War History.
VIRGINIA TRIBAL COMMUNITIES TELL THEIR OWN STORIES IN

Encyclopedia Virginia

By Caitlin Newman
The question of how Indigenous stories are told—and by whom—is part of a long-overdue reckoning with the mainstream historical narrative in Virginia. From the removal of Confederate statues that promoted the Lost Cause ideology along Richmond’s Monument Avenue to the University of Virginia’s removal of statues celebrating George Rogers Clark’s destruction of Native American towns and that depicted Lewis and Clark’s invaluable Lemhi Shoshone interpreter Sacagawea in a submissive pose, space is now being created for a fuller understanding of history.

For Encyclopedia Virginia (EV), Virginia Humanities’ free online resource about the history and culture of the Commonwealth, this reckoning echoed recurring staff discussions: Who are the Native American towns and that depicted Lewis and Clark’s invaluable Lemhi Shoshone interpreter Sacagawea in a submissive pose, space is now being created for a fuller understanding of history.

The first substantial entries on Virginia Indian history were published in EV between 2008 and 2012 as part of a larger section on Virginia’s precolonial and colonial history. The entries reflected scholarly consensus at the time but were largely the work of one writer; Virginia tribal communities were not involved in developing the entries. A smaller group of entries focused on nine of Virginia’s eleven federally recognized tribes, but these too favored one writer; Virginia tribal communities were not involved in developing the entries. A smaller group of entries focused on nine of Virginia’s eleven federally recognized tribes, but these too favored perspectives, and considerable knowledge of Virginia history and culture in a new and revised set of articles. One entry at a time, tribal members are affirming the truth of Native life in Virginia—past and present.

One entry at a time, tribal members are affirming the truth of Native life in Virginia—past and present. The majority of those surveyed, however, were open to working with communities to rectify this. Driven by these questions, EV staff is working with members of the Virginia Indian community to project their voices, perspectives, and considerable knowledge of Virginia history and culture in a new and revised set of articles. One entry at a time, tribal members are affirming the truth of Native life in Virginia—past and present.

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Community engagement is hard work. And it’s slow work. There’s a reason for that,” says Lisa Bergstrom, Kenah’s director of cultural heritage and client development. “How do you communicate effectively with people who have not been heard? Why should they trust me, this white woman who wants to talk to them about something?” she asked. “There has to be trust-building before somebody’s going to want to participate in your project. They have to see that this has a benefit for them.”

In recent years, it became evident that EV’s approach was working with members of the Virginia Indian community to project their voices, perspectives, and considerable knowledge of Virginia history and culture in a new and revised set of articles. One entry at a time, tribal members are affirming the truth of Native life in Virginia—past and present.

At Kenah’s recommendation, EV staff began their outreach to Virginia’s recognized tribes with a brief survey to assess whether EV was an effective resource for the Virginia Indian community, whether existing content accurately reflected tribal histories, and what they might like to see from EV in the future. The feedback was humbling but generous. About half of respondents were familiar with the resource, but 75 percent had never used it. Respondents were divided as to whether their own tribal communities were accurately reflected—some tribes, like the Nottoway Indian Tribe of Virginia, were hardly mentioned at all. Many spoke about how Native Americans and their stories are erased, misrepresented, or misappropriated in K–12 education and cultural heritage tourism. The majority of those surveyed, however, were open to working with EV as paid contributors to remedy this.

Driven by this input, Kenah helped EV staff design a long-term approach to content development that

The Nottoway Tribal Center is located on ancestral lands in Capron, Virginia. Photo by: Pat Jarrett/Virginia Humanities

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Kenah’s executive director Ashley Spivey, who is a member of the Pamunkey Indian Tribe, grew up with a positive collaborative model between a tribal community and non-Native colleagues: her grandfather, Warren Cook, led a joint initiative with archaeologist Errett Callahan to establish the Pamunkey Indian Museum and Cultural Center in King William in 1980. “I got to see a collaborative effort, but one that was very much driven by and told from a Native perspective,” she says. But as Spivey pursued an academic career, earning her doctorate in anthropology from the College of William and Mary, she found that model was an exception. “The academy isn’t exactly a service industry,” she notes. “Sometimes outsiders come in without considering how to support tribal communities or to increase tribal sovereignty.”
prioritizes tribal collaboration. The plan includes revising existing entries to incorporate Native voices and perspectives, diversifying media to include more contemporary images of Native culture, and increasing the visibility of Virginia Indians on the EV homepage. While EV plans to work with interested tribes to create entries about the roles Virginia Indians played in all eras, it is prioritizing entries that provide overviews of recognized tribes and recent tribal history. All entries will be written by tribal members or by scholars with a record of positive collaboration with tribal communities.

With a blend of public and private funding, EV and Kenah are putting this new model into practice. In January 2021, they engaged members of the Nottoway Indian Tribe of Virginia as paid consultants to develop an entry on their history and culture. The editorial process began with a listening session, during which Spivey guided the four participating tribal members through a discussion of their past and present and ensured that multiple perspectives were considered. “The collaboration process was comfortable,” said Lynette Allston, chief of the Nottoway (Allston is also a Virginia Humanities board member). “Everyone involved was respectful, thoughtful, and attentive to listening. We were able to share our ideas and the direction of what we wanted to say about our history, based on original unaltered documents, oral history, and our perspective,” she says.

A shared vision quickly emerged. For Nottoway tribal member Rick Kelly, who cowrote the entry with André L. Williams, writing for EV was not only an opportunity to share a more accurate, nuanced history of the Nottoway, but also a chance to emphasize the cultural values that are fundamental to their tribal identity. He compares Nottoway culture to an iceberg, with the tribe’s public-facing culture, like its traditional regalia, dances, and songs, as the tip, and its core values existing below the surface. “The things that you don’t see—and that are far greater and far more important—are the things like our passion for education, our closeness to the land, or how we feel about our family members and our elders,” he says. The group also brainstormed images, audio, video, and primary documents that would support tribal perspectives on tribal history. Beth Roach, a tribal councilperson, public historian, and environmentalist, is working with Hedlund to create a 360-degree virtual tour of the Nottoway River in the traditional territory of the historic Nottoway tribe, overlaid with her audio narration. Another new media object—and a first for EV—is a story quilt made by tribal member Denise Walters. “Great Town Imagined” reinterprets surveyor William Byrd’s description of approaching the Nottoway Great Town in 1728. In her quilt, Walters depicts the Nottoway Great Town in summer, at the time of the green corn ceremony, and, unlike Byrd, treats its community members as individuals, each with a distinct and specific life. “I imagined a village alive with people, traditions, stories, songs, dances, and hopes for the future,” writes Walters in a short essay that accompanies the quilt. “It is the people, ekwehę·we, that make the village.”

EV’s entry on the Nottoway Indian Tribe of Virginia will be published in 2022, and its partnership with the tribe is just getting started. For Williams, there is much to share. “It is our time now as Indigenous people of the Commonwealth to set the record straight and tell our own histories,” he says. “We have made considerable contributions to the Commonwealth, and I believe our stories should be told to let non-Indigenous people know that we are not extinct.”

For her part, Spivey is excited to be shaping another positive example of tribal collaboration. “EV and Virginia Humanities have been a really great example of an institution that takes this seriously and understands the investment and the patience that’s needed in doing that type of work with tribal communities,” she says. Allston agrees. “It shows growth. It’s what should be happening right now—this evolution, embracing information and people and giving a complete story,” she says. “Finally.”

Chief Lynette Allston of the Nottoway Tribe’s a member of Virginia Humanities’ board of directors. Photo by Pat Jarrett/Virginia Humanities

Great Town Imagined

Nottoway story quilter Denise Walters, pictured here, made the quilt “Great Town Imagined.” Photo by Pat Jarrett/Virginia Humanities

Learn more about Virginia’s history on EV’s recently redesigned website at EncyclopediaVirginia.org.
Virginia Humanities supported these humanities projects between July 1, 2020, and June 30, 2021.

To LEARN MORE about the Grants Program, visit VirginiaHumanities.org/Grants.

1. AMC Inc. The Book of Life: A Handmade Book by Studio FUSE in support of AMC Inc.'s Galen of Ballston Apartment Community.
2. AMPO Pine Grove Project Partners in Philanthropy. The Legacy of Black Communities and Rosewood Schools.
7. CitizenLink Cultural Alliance Before the Lighthouse.
10. Encore Stage & Studio Flip the Script.
12. Fairfield Foundation Walter Reed’s Birthplace in Gloucester: Re-examining Interpretive Messages at an Iconic Local Site.
13. Fluvanna County Arts Council Re:constructed. The Rebuilding of African – American Communities Through Faith and Education.
15. Hampton Roads Educational Telecommunications Association, Inc. DBA WHRD The Secret War Of Willis Hodges Festival.
18. James Madison University Groundwork. The Legacy of Pixel and Editor Hak Mathlab.
21. Louisa County Historical Society African American Community History Projects.
23. Patrick Henry Memorial Foundation Quarter Place Project - Creating and digitizing equitable educational materials that challenge all visitors to reflect on the realities of slavery.
24. Pocahontas Rehmed Storytellers Film Festival PRPF Storytelling Institute Film Project Fifth Annual 2021 Pocahontas Rehmed Film Festival.
29. Red Dirt Productions All At The Common Table: Multimedia Outreach Plan for Virginia.
30. Richmond HI African American History at Richmond HI.
34. Suffolk Partnership for a Healthy Community Rural Matters.
35. The John Mitchell Jr. Program for History, Justice and Race Research toward development of a digital exhibit on the life and career of journalist John Mitchell, Jr., longtime editor of the Richmond Planet and one of the country’s leading anti-lynching advocates during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This exhibit will focus on Mitchell’s work in Virginia and in particular his collaboration with Frederick Douglass and Dr. B. Wells.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING CORPORATION & STUDIO PAUSE (Arlington)

Storytelling is an essential human need, critical to survival and resiliency, and a counterweight to the isolation imposed during the Covid-19 pandemic. Two Arlington-based organizations—an affordable housing advocate and a community-centered art studio—are working as partners to create a handmade book documenting the impact of the year 2020 through personal stories, poems, articles, and essays written in multiple languages. Copies will be distributed free to every household in Gates of Ballston, a 465-units affordable housing complex where Studio Pause is located. Its residents are mainly immigrants and refugees from Central America, Ethiopia/Eritrea, and a variety of Arabic-speaking countries.

SEMILLA CULTURAL (Fredericksburg)

“Semilla” is the Spanish word for seed, and this grant supports a series of panel discussions, workshops, and interpretive performances on the history of Puerto Rican Bomba, its ties to Africa, and its continuing evolution as a musical genre. Bomba is a music and dance tradition practiced by the enslaved people of Puerto Rico that has also taken root in New York City, South Florida, and—surprisingly—in Fredericksburg, Virginia, where Semilla Cultural is based. Organized under the title “The Banyan Tree of the Americas: Music Evolution in the African Diaspora,” the series is designed as a “starting point” for conversations about race and colonialism; this grant is the first we have awarded focusing explicitly on Puerto Rican history and culture.

RAPPAHANNOCK TRIBE OF VIRGINIA (Indian Neck)

The Rappahannock people have lived along the river that bears their name for thousands of years. They were here when the English arrived, and they held fast to their identity and history, even when Virginia was officially denying both. This grant supports the development of physical and virtual exhibits, research, and other activities in conjunction with the 100th anniversary of the Tribe’s incorporation, in 1921, which was also when Chief George Nelson first petitioned Congress to recognize the Rappahannock’s civil and sovereign rights. The exhibits explore Chief Nelson’s life and work, the impact of the Racial Integrity Acts of 1924; and the stories of three Rappahannock military veterans who challenged suppression of their Native identity during World War II.

LIBRARY OF VIRGINIA (Richmond)

Virginia’s current state Constitution is its seventh. On July 1, 1971, it replaced its regressive Jim Crow-era predecessor from 1902, and adoption of the new version was a major step forward for all Virginians. This grant supports the expansion of the Library of Virginia’s annual Brown Teachers’ Institute—focusing on Virginia’s constitutional history—to include in-person programs in Richmond, Abingdon, and Hampton Roads and a virtual program offered to K-12 teachers statewide. These events in turn were part of the state’s larger observance of the 1971 Constitution’s 50th anniversary, exploring the changes that have happened since 1971 and how the current version does and does not prepare Virginia for new challenges and opportunities to come.

BIRTHPLACE OF COUNTRY MUSIC MUSEUM (Bristol)

This grant supports planning, interviews, photography, and graphic design for an exhibit on Women in Old-Time Music, past and present. The exhibit highlights the challenges women have faced in a traditionally male-dominated genre of American music and the ways they have innovated and pushed its boundaries—and continue to do so. It includes the voices of women performers and scholars, whose perspectives add depth and currency to a story that reaches back to the 1923 Bristol Recording Sessions, known as the “big bang” of American country music. Even then, although male performers dominated the Sessions, it’s hard to imagine their impact without the voices of Virginians Sarah and Maybelle Carter.
One of the crown jewels at Virginia Humanities, the Book Arts studio at the Virginia Center for the Book, just celebrated its twenty-fifth year. Over the course of its existence, the studio has hand-printed inventive drawings, broadsides, collaborative books, cards, woodcuts, linoleum prints, and all manner of typesetting projects; at the same time the work has helped untold numbers of people see—and feel—the power of words and imagery.

The heart of the studio is “slow technology,” as Johanna Drucker called it. An internationally renowned artist, writer, and bookmaker, Drucker was an influential early member of the small, independent organization that began its work in the bowels of...
the McGuffey Arts Center in downtown Charlottesville. It was an inexpensive space in which to operate enormous nineteenth- and twentieth-century printing machines—marvels of gears, moveable parts, and cranks—that were being retired by the University of Virginia’s printing office after changes in printing technology and the computer revolution had made the equipment obsolete. Faster was better, but something profound was lost.

Josef Beery, a founding member of the studio and a well-known graphic designer in Charlottesville since 1983, found digital technology boring by the mid-90s. He missed his old drawing tools and the feeling of making a handmade object, so he attended the Penland School of Craft in the North Carolina mountains to learn old printing techniques. His first instructor was Amos Paul Kennedy Jr., a Black artist who would have a lasting impact on Beery—and on the Book Arts studio decades later. Reflecting on his introduction to the printing process Beery says, “My life was so changed by just working with my hands and being with other people working with their hands.” To pursue this newfound interest and “enraptured with letterpress,” Beery thought he might have to move to North Carolina to continue his study of old printing techniques, some of which dated to the mid-fifteenth century and the creation of the Gutenberg Bible. As luck would have it, he found others in Charlottesville who shared his passion.

Perhaps not surprisingly, others steeped in modern technology found their way to the hand-crafted book program. Among them: Calvin Otto, a retired industrialist in the printing industry, who also co-founded the Virginia Festival of the Book, and Kristin Adolphson, a graphic and web designer from New York who was looking for something “more tactile” than digital technology. Garrett Queen, the current director of the Book Arts studio, worked in an old print shop as a kid and knew the workings of letterpress printing machinery; but after college he managed large-scale production of books and magazines. Early on, he began designing computer-based page layout systems for his company to speed production, including one system that could generate 1,700 original newspaper pages in a seventy-two-hour production cycle. (Asked how many he could produce with letterpress printing, he laughed and said, “one, if we’re lucky.”) Early member Frank Riccio, a professional illustrator who worked for publications like Gourmet and Sports Illustrated, served on coordinating committees that helped decide on themes for collaborative annual projects.

An indefatigable artist, Riccio kept illustrated minutes of the meetings, sketching group members mid-discussion. Some years after his death, the Virginia Center for the Book established the Frank Riccio Artist-in-Residence fund to support an annual visiting book artist.

In 2019 Josef Beery’s old mentor, Amos Paul Kennedy Jr., became the first Riccio resident artist. Kennedy worked with community members and students ranging from kindergarten to university age. He graced Charlottesville with exhibits, workshops, and nearly 10,000 letterpress posters with thought-provoking messages and aphorisms collected from local residents. In light of the still-traumatizing racist events that had unfolded in Charlottesville in August 2017, Kennedy’s program, entitled “Finding Wisdom,” was a healing moment, and his residency a huge success.

The Book Arts studio’s current location at the Jefferson School City Center has enhanced the program’s ability to devise more public-facing activities in the future—to engage and take advantage of the diverse voices and skills in the community.

In celebration of the studio’s anniversary, member artist Kristin Keimu Adolphson was commissioned to create a commemorative print honoring its quarter-century in the practice of the art and craft of bookmaking—and creating a community dedicated to the delights of slow technology. The print is available for purchase at the Virginia Center for the Book’s online store.

To learn more about the Book Arts studio, sign up for a class, or purchase a print, visit VaBookCenter.org.
Beginning in the fall of 2020, our With Good Reason (WGR) radio show and Virginia Festival of the Book teamed up for a project emphasizing historical and contemporary challenges to voting in America. Funding for the project—which celebrated authors, poets, and historians addressing issues related to voting rights and voter suppression, civic participation for previously incarcerated people, and Black women's suffrage—was provided by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation’s national initiative, “Why It Matters: Civic and Electoral Participation.” The WGR and Festival of the Book collaboration, also called “Why It Matters,” included three WGR episodes produced for radio and podcast and three related online conversations hosted by the Virginia Festival of the Book, with some of the authors who were interviewed for the WGR series.

In February 2021, in the second of the three online conversations, poet and lawyer Reginald Dwayne Betts, who was recently named a MacArthur Fellow, discussed his latest collection, Felon, with poet and lawyer Amy Woolard. Through these poems, Betts tells the story of a man confronting post-incarceration life, struggling to reenter a society that doesn’t welcome him with open arms. Betts himself served nine years in prison, after which he went back to school, started a family, and ultimately was accepted to and graduated from Yale Law School. Reflecting on the event, Woolard says, “I’m so thankful for the Virginia Festival of the Book for hosting this important conversation: being able to hear and understand how poems are situated within the ecosystem of our lived experiences and the lived experiences of others helps to create the conditions for all measure of change—personal, political, community, environmental. Dwayne’s generosity guided our audience on a more deeply illuminated path towards our shared humanity.”

More than 900 attendees took part in the three online conversations which were presented with community partners Charlottesville NOW, The Equity Center at UVA, Legal Aid Justice Center, Maryland Humanities, and the UVA Democracy Initiative.

Videos and transcripts of the conversations are available at VaBook.org. WGR episodes can be heard on WithGoodReasonRadio.org.

SUSTAINING THE HUMANITIES THROUGH THE AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN

In 2021, Virginia Humanities awarded more than $950k in grants to more than eighty cultural nonprofit organizations across Virginia. The funds were provided as part of the National Endowment for the Humanities’ (NEH) Sustaining the Humanities Through the American Rescue Plan (SHARP) program. Funding the arts and humanities sector helps stimulate a vital piece of Virginia’s economy. According to the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, it employs 128,856 people in Virginia and contributes $17.9 billion to Virginia’s economy. That’s more than the agricultural sector ($17 billion) and almost as much as the construction industry ($22.4 billion).

The SHARP grants, like the CARES Act grants of 2020, are helping libraries, museums, historic sites, and other cultural nonprofits retain staff, pay rent, and fund programming during the COVID-19 pandemic. “When we heard we were receiving the SHARP grant from Virginia Humanities, it gave us hope that we’d be able to continue our mission of preserving the rich history and legacy of Augusta Military Academy,” said Douglas W. Pennock, project director at the Augusta Military Academy Museum. “This grant will allow us to keep our doors open, upgrade our tools for documenting and preserving our vast collection of artifacts, and present those artifacts to the world beyond our physical museum.”

We are grateful to the NEH, NEH acting chair Adam Wolfson, and to the members of Congress for including humanities organizations in the American Rescue Plan. It builds on a legacy of bipartisan support for the humanities that goes back to the founding of the NEH in 1965 and the creation of the network of state humanities councils in the 1970s.

To learn more about our grant opportunities visit VirginiaHumanities.org/grants.
The Earl of Indian Valley

EXPLORING THE BLACK INFLUENCE ON OLD-TIME MUSIC WITH EARL WHITE

By Pat Jarrett
“Ring the dinner bell,” Earl White instructed me quietly as he worked a griddle full of breakfast sausage. I grabbed the iron triangle and let out the call for breakfast. It was the Saturday morning of the eighth annual Fiddlers’ Jam at Big Indian Farm, in Floyd County’s Indian Valley. White told me I had to ring the bell three times so that the sound of the clanging triangle would reach the campers almost half a mile away down at the creek bottom.

I hung up the triangle and looked behind me at the scores of musicians who had lined up for breakfast. I started to worry that White didn’t cook enough sausage. “Health is wealth,” is their motto at his music gatherings, he told me. A big part of that is local, well-prepared food for all the musicians that White and Adrienne Davis host at Big Indian Farm. The Fiddlers’ Jam has been drawing hundreds to White and Davis’s farm for the last eight years. It’s known as a place to get together with friends, eat food and jam. It has a good reputation among those who are invited.

Building on the spirit of Fiddler’s Jam, White held the first Big Indian Music Camp this past June. “We’re all brothers and sisters,” said White, “and we’re human and we can all sit at the same table.” This is true for the common food but also the formally informal style of teaching he and the instructors employ at the old-time music camp.

By day, instructors Danny Knicely, Mark Schatz, Vic Furtado, and Eli Wildman lead intensive sessions with students. The teachers and students camp together, eat meals together and jam together in the evenings. The students are given opportunities to learn by participation. It’s part of Earl’s vision for instruction. “We can sit around and perform, but why not bring these people into it and develop that level of comfort?” asked Earl.

White and Davis moved here from California in 2016, in part to realize a dream he had back when he was touring the world with the Green Grass Cloggers of creating some sort of “old folks’ home” for the aging dancers. White founded the clogging group along with the late Dudley Culp while they were studying at East Carolina University in the 1970s.

Culp first saw clogging at the Union Grove Fiddlers’ Convention in the spring of 1971. He learned some basic steps from Evelyn Smith Farmer from Fries, Virginia, that he took back with him to his housemates in Greenville. White said they started off having jams
around the house with no music, just dancing, a laughable situation for almost any dancer practicing this style.

It was a chance meeting at the Galax Old Fiddlers’ Convention that led White to befriend Tommy Jarrell, an old-time musician who was awarded the National Endowment for the Arts’ National Heritage Fellowship in 1982 from the Round Peak community of North Carolina. According to White, it was an “instant marriage between the Green Grass Cloggers and old-time music.” The Green Grass Cloggers danced all over the world, sharing stages with acts like Jefferson Airplane, Seals and Crofts, and Alice Cooper. This meeting with Jarrell also influenced White, who grew up in New Jersey and first recognized his love of mountain music from a Mountain Dew radio jingle.

Often, Black old-time fiddlers are seen as a relic. White said he read somewhere that North Carolina’s Joe Thompson was the last Black old-time fiddler. “What does that make me then?” he mused.

White met Thompson backstage at a concert once, and when Thompson laid eyes on him, White said the older fiddler looked like he’d “seen a ghost.” He told White that he didn’t know there were any other living Black fiddlers on the planet.

Another time while performing with the Green Grass Cloggers, White had a conversation with the man credited with inventing the bluegrass genre, Bill Monroe. He told White that he had reminded him of a fiddler he used to perform with. Monroe never mentioned a name, but Earl thought about it and realized that he probably reminded Monroe of another Black fiddler, Arnold Schultz. Schultz was the innovator of a particular thumb-style of playing guitar and was responsible for getting Monroe his first paying gig, said White. But, like many museum displays and textbook images, the Black musician was not named by Monroe that day. This erasure of Black influence and performance in the old-time and bluegrass communities mirrors the erasure of the African roots of the banjo through minstrelsy in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

According to White, the erasure of Black influence from mainstream American music has caused some Black folks to develop an aversion to this music. At one point Earl was busking on the streets of Santa Cruz, California, with his wife and son when a Black couple approached on the sidewalk. “They were an older couple, and as they were approaching it appeared to me that they were deliberately looking away or looking down.” They passed the musicians and avoided contact. White finished the song and caught up with them to ask about avoiding the music.

“It reminded them of a time way back in their past,” said White, “so to hear it at present times brought back these memories and these were memories they were casting aside.”

The truth, says White, is that old-time music belongs to Black people as much as it belongs to white people. “Old-time music is not a Black music, it’s not a white music. The downfall is that a lot of the Black community have had no representation or have not been given credit for the music.”

On the last morning of White’s camp, he was spreading out sheets of paper from a yellow legal pad with song names written on them with the key signature noted. Once, he tried to write down all the songs he knew by heart, but stopped at around 500, the list far from complete. His repository makes up the repertoire that’s drawn upon every night at camp, when White leads jams that last into the wee hours of the morning. This is part of the curriculum, White’s formally informal style of passing along songs by ear.
Instructor Eli Wildman of the old-time group The Wildmans said that this style of instruction has worked for him in the past. “A big part of how I learn is playing with these people, jamming,” said Wildman. “Earl (White), he’s pulling out a tune we’ve never heard before. The whole time we’re jamming we’re learning from him.”

Wildman’s bandmate and 2019 Steve Martin Banjo Prize winner Vic Furtado says that he appreciates the “cool funky tunes that are kind of rare” that White brings to the jams. They’ve been working together since White met them at the Junior Appalachian Musicians program, a nonprofit afterschool music program for grades four through eight that works with more than fifty schools in Virginia, North Carolina, and South Carolina. Furtado remembers White handing him a thumb drive containing around a hundred field recordings for Furtado to learn.

After the sun set one evening the students and instructors paused for chocolate cookies that Davis had brought from the bakery, still warm from the oven. The break gave students time to ask specific questions and instructors opportunities to crack some pretty bad jokes. This was the informal education in action, and I assume it was similar to how White and Jarrell met at the Galax Old Fiddlers’ Convention. After all, this music is community-based, and there’s no community without connections like this.
ASIAN AMERICAN AND PACIFIC ISLANDER

Recommended Reading

For the past several years, our With Good Reason staff have gathered a list of summer reading recommendations from guests based at public universities around Virginia. This year, we asked for books written by Asian American and Pacific Islander writers and the reading list that emerged is diverse, broad, and exciting!

SYLVIA CHONG
Professor of English at the University of Virginia

Minor Feelings: An Asian American Reckoning
by Cathy Park Hong

Crying in H-Mart: A Memoir
by Michelle Zauner

The Best We Could Do: An Illustrated Memoir
by Thi Bui

LUISA A. IGLORIA
Virginia Poet Laureate and Professor of English at Old Dominion University

I Was Their American Dream: A Graphic Memoir
by Malaka Gharab

Hello, Universe by Erin Entrada Kelley

World of Wonders: In Praise of Fireflies, Whale Sharks, and Other Astonishments
by Aimee Nezhukumatathil
illustrated by Fumi Nakamura

SPENCER TRICKER
Assistant Professor of English at Longwood University

Mrs. Spring Fragrance
by Sui Sin Far

Bone
by Fae Myenne Ng

We Are the Ocean: Selected Works
by Epeli Hau’ofa

WENDY SHANG
Author of The Great Wall of Lucy Wu, Not Your All-American Girl, and The Rice in the Pot Goes Round and Round

Wishes
by Muon Thi Van
illustrated by Victo Ngai

Spring Moon
by Betta Bao Lord

ALEX PURGUSSANAN
Assistant Professor of English and Filipino Culture at Northern Virginia Community College

America is in the Hearts
by Carlos Bulosan

America is Not the Heart
by Elaine Castillo

JUANITA GILES
Executive Director and Co-founder of the Virginia Children’s Book Festival

Almost American Girl: An Illustrated Memoir
by Robin Ha

Alvin Ho: Allergic to Girls, School, and Other Scary Things
by Lenore Look
illustrated by LeUyen Pham

MORE RECOMMENDED READING

GREAT READS:
Books for young readers featured in the National Book Festival

Your Mama by NoNieqa Ramos, a Virginia-based author and educator. Heartwarming and richly imagined, Your Mama is a picture book that twists an old joke into a point of pride.

ROUTE 1 READS:
Literary works related to Centers for the Book along the East Coast

White Blood: A Lyric of Virginia by Kiki Petrosino, an award-winning professor of poetry at the University of Virginia and former Virginia Humanities Fellow. In White Blood, she digs into her genealogical and intellectual roots, contemplating the knotty legacies of slavery and discrimination in the Upper South.

Learn more about the Virginia Center for the Book at VaBookCenter.org.
Stepping out from the elevator into the new Virginia Humanities Center, it is immediately clear that there is more to this place than just a sleek, new office. The new headquarters represents a bold step into the future for this forty-seven-year-old public institution. It is a future in which Virginia Humanities is a more accessible organization and one where the staff is able to collaborate in ways that were not possible before.

The large, open reception area has a front desk tucked in one corner, with a modern meeting room, known as the Mansbach Conference Room, behind it. Beyond the reception desk are two lounge areas. On the left, the Vaughan Reading Library with upholstered seating creates cozy conversational areas. On the right, the Lemon Lounge provides a place for public events, staff lunches, and impromptu meetings. These spaces share a common wall of elegant, built-in storage featuring books and artifacts from throughout the organization’s history.

Moving Virginia Humanities away from its previous home at the colonially inspired Boars Head in...
The new space has quietly come back to life in community and gallery spaces. Despite a plethora of parking, center, meeting areas of various sizes, break areas, Matthew Gibson of the former office. Staff was transitions from working at home over the last year recent months as the staff of Virginia Humanities just made the organization’s home more accessible to the community; it also has given the organization a boost of inspiration. “Despite a plethora of parking, we just weren’t accessible” says executive director Matthew Gibson of the former office. Staff was previously split into offices on various floors, with no gathering places other than conference rooms, making it harder for chance collaborations to happen in hallways. The new office, spread out over an entire floor of the Dairy Central building, contains offices for forty employees, the new Claude Moore Media Center, meeting areas of various sizes, break areas, and community and gallery spaces.

The new space has quietly come back to life in recent months as the staff of Virginia Humanities transitions from working at home over the last year to coming back together in their new office. The large open space that serves as the lobby, Vaughan Library, and Lemon Lounge branches off to three hallways or “streets.” The central corridor, which the staff refers to as “Main Street,” has meeting spaces and a few private offices with translucent walls and doors, allowing for a more modern collaborative feel. A modular hanging system in the hallway creates a rotating gallery where exhibits can be displayed. At the western end of central corridor is the Claude Moore Media Center, outfitted with new equipment to produce the With Good Reason radio show and podcast. To the south is the more functional support wing, containing a large kitchen ready to host events with built-in upholstered banquettes for seating, as well as restrooms and storage. On the northernmost side is the main corridor of workspaces. A wall of large windows on one side provides abundant natural light to the row of open cubicles. Floating glass panels at the top of each cubicle act as partitions, while also retaining an open, airy, light-filled feel. The glass partitions were added late in the design process as a necessary precaution amidst rising concerns about the COVID-19 pandemic. Other changes were made with staff safety in mind, including changing the orientation of the desks from a back-to-back arrangement to one that creates more separation between workstations. Breaking up the rows of desks are built-in seating areas and “huddle rooms” for small meetings. Interior transoms help transfer light to the more interior streets set back from the main corridor. Throughout the space, tall open ceilings and a unified color scheme featuring warm wood tones, grays, and blues help the spaces to flow, while creating a backdrop for the work to be done here.

Located in Charlottesville’s 10th & Page neighborhood, a historically Black neighborhood that is home to displaced residents of the Vinegar Hill neighborhood after the city razed it in 1964, the new Dairy Central building in part of a mixed-use development that features a food hall, retail spaces, offices and residential apartments. The architects kept the original Monticello Dairy building façade, and built a contemporary addition to the rear on the original footprint of the compound.

As a public humanities organization, Virginia Humanities helps bridge the divide between communities, aspiring to share the stories of the lived experiences of all Virginians. The new location, accessible by public transit, centrally located to Charlottesville’s Downtown and the University of Virginia in addition to the 10th & Page neighborhood, is seen by many staff members as opening them up to deepening partnerships with local organizations and helping to reimagine their programs and what they can offer to a quickly gentrifying traditionally Black neighborhood. One recent example is the publication of a children’s book, A Promise to Grow, by local author Marc Boston and illustrated by Ariel Mendez, published in partnership with City of Promise. The story follows the adventures of a boy who dreams about his future and does good deeds in the neighborhood. It includes a history of Vinegar Hill crafted in a way that children can understand. Virginia Humanities’ staff hopes their new location and the partnerships they are building will inspire more projects like this.

And the ideas are certainly flowing. Justin Reid, director of Community Initiatives, who prefers to be behind the scenes in supporting good work in the community, sees more opportunities to partner with local residents. The organization’s internship program is one example of the inspiration the new
location has brought—historically, the program was unpaid, limiting the opportunities to those who had the means for a volunteer internship. This led to a strong reliance on University of Virginia students. Now Virginia Humanities is committed to paying all its interns, opening up the program to those who previously couldn’t afford such an opportunity, including high school students from the surrounding neighborhood. Reid hopes to develop long-term relationships with these students, offering them year-round opportunities beginning with spending their summers as interns, continuing that relationship as they explore their post-secondary education, ending up with jobs with either Virginia Humanities or some of their sister organizations across the state. Ideally, Reid said he hopes to see these interns “dream up what programs they want to see while we play a supportive role” in making those dreams a reality.

The new location is also inspiring the organization to find new ways to learn and grow, reaching younger audiences and making resources available in new ways. Reid hopes the new location will offer more opportunities to partner with existing programs at Charlottesville’s Jefferson School African American Heritage Center, as well as City of Promise, while also taking up a role in the ongoing crisis of affordable housing and gentrification in Charlottesville. “We’re not a housing advocacy agency but a cultural organization concerned with human connection. We can enter the conversation on housing from a cultural standpoint, as cultural displacement and gentrification are often entwined,” he says.

One project already underway is a new story-telling initiative being developed in the Claude Moore studios that is helping the residents of the 10th & Page neighborhood tell their stories and preserve their history. The project was funded by a $100k grant from the Ford Foundation and a $30k grant from the Charles Fund. Other oral history project collaborations are also in the works, with the organization using its national platform to ensure voices that haven’t been amplified in the past are being heard.

The excitement for the new space and the energy it has brought the organization is palpable and infectious among the staff. Sarah McConnell, executive producer of With Good Reason, bubbles with enthusiasm for the new space, describing it as “both beautiful and spacious inside and out with room to breathe.” This sentiment was repeated in conversations with staff as they settled into the new environment—that the location, having been intentionally designed to be a community gathering space, was a very much welcome change from their last venue. Reid points out the public aspect is critical to the very mission of Virginia Humanities—being accessible is key to the idea exchange necessary behind the work they do. In finding its new home, Virginia Humanities didn’t just get a new office space that was more accessible to the community—it also found new inspiration to better fulfill its mission of being a truly public humanities organization.
Virginia Humanities thanks the individuals, foundations, and corporations whose generous contributions and involvement sustain our work throughout the commonwealth.

With your support, we are able to amplify the narratives, traditions, and ideas that bring meaning and connection to our lives. Your investment ensures that we can continue to create high-quality, dynamic programming with wide-reaching engagement.

This year, we opened a new public humanities center in Charlottesville and expanded our online programs to help Virginians stay engaged and connected during the COVID-19 health crisis. We held our first-ever National Folk Festival in Salisbury, Maryland.

Linda Lay of Springfield Exit performs at the 2021 National Folk Festival in Salisbury, Maryland. Photo by Pat Jarrett/Virginia Humanities

Virginia Humanities acknowledges the following benefactors who provided critical financial support between July 1, 2020, and June 30, 2021. Their investments help create programs and opportunities for all Virginians to share their stories and learn about each others’ experiences so we can explore our differences and connect through what we have in common.

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Linda Lay of Springfield Exit performs at the 2021 National Folk Festival in Salisbury, Maryland. Photo by Pat Jarrett/Virginia Humanities

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"CFA Institute builds a culture that values inclusion and belonging by developing awareness and building skills that change behavior. We support Virginia Humanities’ Festival of the Book because the organization, and event, embrace difference in a format that is respectful, engaging, and relatable to our workforce and community."

-Mike Murphy, Director, Inclusion & Community Programs

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**In Memoriam**

The Board and Staff of Virginia Humanities remember with gratitude the following partners who passed away during the year. Their heartfelt contributions helped to shape our organization, develop new programs, and provide enthusiastic support for our work.

**FLORY JAGODA**

In 2021, we said goodbye to Flory Jagoda, master Sephardic Jewish singer, musician and composer, known as the “Keeper of the Flame” of the Sephardic Music tradition. Jagoda received the National Heritage Fellowship in 2002. It’s the highest honor the United States bestows on a traditional artist. Jagoda’s memories and music live on in anyone who saw her perform, but especially in her Virginia Folklife Program apprentices, Aviva Chernick and Susan Gaeta as well as Gaeta’s apprentice Gina Sobel. The Flory Jagoda Sephardic Music Fund was established in 2005 in her honor.

**RON HEINEMANN**

Dr. Ron Heinemann, a dear friend and former Board member of Virginia Humanities, passed away in November 2020. Heinemann was Professor Emeritus of History at Hampden-Sydney College and was instrumental in establishing our Encyclopedia Virginia. Heinemann contributed ten entries to the encyclopedia and connected many organizations in Farmville and Prince Edward County to our grants program.

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Left: Flory Jagoda performs with her accordion at the 2014 Virginia Folklife Apprenticeship Showcase. Photo by Pat Jarrett/Virginia Humanities

Right: Photo courtesy of the Farmville Herald
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There are few better resources for Virginia history and biography than Encyclopedia Virginia. Hardly a day passes where I do not use it in my work at Historic Christ Church. Its breadth, clear and concise writing, and integration of primary documents and images make it an invaluable research tool and a place to engage with the people, places, and stories of the Old Dominion.”

-Robert Teagle, Executive Director, Foundation for Historic Christ Church
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Literary Leaders is an annual giving circle connecting Virginia Festival of the Book donors of $2500 or more; it supports the vitality of Festival programming each year, including author visits to K-12 schools.

2020-21 LITERARY LEADERS:
Anonymous
Antoinette Brewster and Benjamin Brewster
City of Charlottesville
The Joseph and Robert Cornell Memorial Foundation
Dominion Energy Charitable Foundation
Betsy Greene and James Greene
Elsie Thompson and Mac Thompson
John Toms
Wells Fargo Foundation
Westminster–Canterbury Corporation

Frank Riccio Fund was established in 2018 to honor Virginia Center for the Book member artist and educator Frank Riccio; it supports an annual visiting book artist: the Frank Riccio Artist-in-Residence.

2020-21 RICCIO FUND DONORS:
Anonymous
Carol Buckner and Murray Buckner

Carol Troxell Fund was established in 2017 in memory of former New Dominion Bookshop owner Carol Troxell; it celebrates voracious reading and supports a solo featured author during the Virginia Festival of the Book.

2020-21 TROXELL FUND DONORS:
Elizabeth Fuller
Nancy O’Brien
Ms. Shamim Sisson and Dr. Jim Cooper

Endowed Funds

George A. and Frances Bibbins Latimer Fund was established by George Latimer in 2018 to honor his late wife, Eastern Shore native and prominent community historian Frances Bibbins Latimer; it supports grant projects that document, preserve and celebrate African American life in Virginia.

Rosel Schewel Fund was established by an anonymous donation in 2019 to honor the vision, leadership and achievements of Virginia Humanities’ longest-serving board member and Lynchburg-based educator, philanthropist and activist, Rosel Schewel; it aims to amplify the voices of, support the work of, and honor the achievements of women in Virginia.

Edna & Norman Freehling Fellowship was established by historian and Virginia Humanities Senior Fellow William W. Freehling in memory of his parents; it supports research and writing on the South Atlantic region, including the Caribbean South.

Emilia Galli Struppa Fellowship was created by Chapman University Chancellor and former Virginia Humanities board member Daniele Struppa in memory of his mother; it supports research and writing in history and literary studies.

Encyclopedia Virginia Endowment was established to support the ongoing financial needs of Encyclopedia Virginia; it was established by then-Board chairman Barbara J. Fried.

Virginia Center for the Book Endowment supports the Center’s book-related activities; it was established by donor Michael Jay Green.

Virginia Humanities Endowment was established to support the ongoing financial needs of Virginia Humanities.
MEET OUR NEW STAFF

Amidst all the changes that 2020-2021 brought, we were thrilled to welcome eight new staff members to our team. Since our opportunities to meet in-person have been so limited, we wanted to introduce you to them here.

Photography: Patricia Miller by J. Ellis; Cauline Yates by Sanjay Suchak, University Communications; Lauren Francis by Peter Hedlund. All other photos by Stephanie Gross.

Emma Ils, Director of Education
Emma Ils comes to Virginia Humanities from the Library of Virginia, where she spearheaded an initiative to research Asian Pacific Islander Desi American (APIIDA) history in the library’s collections and engaged with community members both across the state and nationally to highlight APIIDA experiences through programming and outreach.

Yahuef Medina, Associate Director, Community Initiatives
Yahuef Medina brings a wealth of experience on K-12 community engagement and juvenile justice. He has served as a specialist in both education and criminal justice and focuses primarily on creating and implementing programs that strategically address success and leadership in minoritized populations.

Patricia Miller, Editor, Encyclopaedia Virginia
Patricia Miller is an editor who worked for a number of Washington DC-based nonprofits and the author of Bringing Down the Colonel: A Sex Scandal of the Gilded Age and the “Powerless” Woman Who Took on Washington. Her work on the intersection of women and politics has appeared in The Atlantic, Salon, The Nation, The Huffington Post, Ms. magazine.

Eric Rivers, Director, Advancement
Prior to joining Virginia Humanities, Eric Rivers was the director of advancement for Den Bosco Cristo Rey in DC and Vice President for Advancement for St. Alexis School in Hassen, NY. He was born in Norfolk and studied Government at Georgetown University.

Lauren Francis, Associate Producer
Lauren Francis is a Virginia Press Association award-winning writer and Richmond native who is passionate about food justice and public history.

Megan Thomas, Corporate and Foundations Manager
After graduating with B.A. degrees in Economics and Theology from Boston College, Megan Thomas spent two years in West Africa as a Peace Corps Volunteer, building the capacity of a women’s co-operative and fostering a love of reading. Upon her return, first to the Midwest and now back to the east coast, she has built a career in nonprofit development, working with a variety of organizations.

Cauline Yates, Development
Brought raised in Charlottesville, Cauline Yates has worked with local teachers and students to educate them about local African American history. Cauline also served on UVA’s Memorial to the Enslaved Workers Committee where she worked on community engagement.

Jennifer Taylor, Development
Jennifer Taylor has worked for a variety of nonprofits focused on food security and child welfare. She has written about these issues extensively, and her work appears in numerous journals and a book titled, Changing the World One Backpack at a Time. As a freelance, she has written about other topics including gardens, local history, and high school sport. She earned a BA in English Language and Literature from the University of Virginia in 1981 and a MAAS in Humanities from Hollins University in 2009.

Yahuef Medina
Yahuef Medina is a member of the APIIDA community and brings a wealth of experience on K-12 community engagement and juvenile justice.

Patricia Miller
Patricia Miller is an editor and researcher who worked for a number of Washington DC-based nonprofits and the author of Bringing Down the Colonel: A Sex Scandal of the Gilded Age and the “Powerless” Woman Who Took on Washington.

Lauren Francis
Lauren Francis is a Virginia Press Association award-winning writer and Richmond native who is passionate about food justice and public history.

Megan Thomas
Megan Thomas brings a wealth of experience working with local schools and students to educate them about local African American history.

Jennifer Taylor
Jennifer Taylor has written extensively about issues such as food security and child welfare, and her work appears in numerous journals and a book titled, Changing the World One Backpack at a Time.

Cauline Yates
Cauline Yates is a writer and educator who has worked on the Memorial to the Enslaved Workers Committee.
WANT TO KEEP UP WITH VIRGINIA HUMANITIES?
- Visit VirginiaHumanities.org to sign up for our biweekly e-newsletter.
- Explore our program websites and extensive resources, starting at VirginiaHumanities.org.
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VIRGINIA HUMANITIES GRANTS DEADLINES
- **SUMMER GRANT CYCLE**
  Application Deadline: July 15
  Decisions by Mid-September
- **WINTER GRANT CYCLE**
  Application Deadline: January 15*
  Decisions by Mid-March
- **ROLLING GRANTS**
  Applications for Rolling Grants may be submitted at any time throughout the year.

For full application guidelines, please visit VirginiaHumanities.org/grants.

BOARD NOMINATIONS
The Virginia Humanities Nominating Committee welcomes suggested names for nomination, specifically individuals who, when brought together as a board, broadly represent the geographic regions and demographic makeup of today’s Virginia. 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 Director. Please send suggestions to rm3xa@virginia.org.

*The January 2022 deadline has been suspended and will resume in 2023. For more details visit VirginiaHumanities.org/grants.