

the magazine of the



LIBRARY OF VIRGINIA

# broadSIDE

2022 | NO. 1

*This is to certify that the Bee  
has done excellent service to me i*

## Your Humble Petitioner

### Legislative Petitions Gave Voice to Virginians

AN EXHIBITION OPEN THROUGH NOVEMBER 19, 2022

# broadSIDE

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**LIBRARY OF VIRGINIA**

**2022 | NO. 1**

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**broadSIDE** is funded by the Library of Virginia Foundation and other special funds.

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## THE INSIDE STORY

# 25th-Anniversary Celebration

*The Literary Awards gala returns to the Library this fall*

**T**his year marks the 25th anniversary of the Library of Virginia's Literary Awards program honoring Virginia writers and their contributions to the literary landscape of our state and nation. The Library launched the program in 1997 following the move to our current building, which offers wonderful public spaces for events highlighting the work of Virginia writers. The winners of the Literary Awards in fiction, nonfiction, and poetry are revealed each fall at a celebration gala held in the Library's grand atrium. It has been exciting over the past 25 years to see this event evolve from a fledgling idea into a not-to-be-missed tradition.

In 2013 the Library joined with the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts (VMFA) to create Art in Literature: The Mary Lynn Kotz Award for the best book in any genre focused on the visual arts. The Art in Literature award winner is the featured speaker at a special program held at the VMFA the evening before the main Literary Awards celebration.

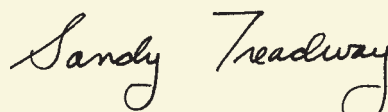
Regular attendees of the Literary Awards gala have experienced many unforgettable moments in the past 25 years and met writers whose work has enriched their lives and the lives of millions around the world—David Baldacci, John Grisham, William Styron, Tom Wolfe, Jan Karon, Barbara Kingsolver, Earl Hamner, and many more. They have been entranced by astoundingly gifted poets like Claudia Emerson, Rita Dove, Charles Wright, and Nikki Giovanni as they shared their craft and their genius. They have cheered as best-selling authors such as Margo Shetterly and Beth Macy, who have opened our eyes to hitherto hidden stories, paid tribute to libraries such as ours for making their pathbreaking works possible. Audiences smiled with joy when poet Lou Crabtree broke into song in accepting her award, and listened with awe as Lisa Russ Spaar delivered an eloquent tribute to Virginia poets using a carefully selected line from every nominated work of poetry.

The incomparable Adriana Trigiani, who has hosted the Literary Awards ceremony for the past 18 years, once reflected on why the awards are so special. "The Literary Awards are a celebration of Virginia's talent, determination, and vision," she stated. "Virginia authors are a special breed of talent. We are inspired by the most beautiful landscapes, intriguing stories, and sharply drawn characters that could only thrive in the place we call home."

After two years as a virtual experience, the 25th annual Literary Awards Celebration will be held in person again this October. **Please mark your calendar for Saturday, October 15, 2022, and make plans to meet this year's honorees and help us launch this wonderful event into its second quarter century.**

*Ticket information and the list of finalists for the 2022 awards will be announced in July. For information about nominated works or to nominate a book for next year's awards, please visit [www.lva.virginia.gov/public/litawards](http://www.lva.virginia.gov/public/litawards).*

Sincerely,



Sandra G. Treadway, Librarian of Virginia

**It has been exciting over the past 25 years to see this event evolve from a fledgling idea into a not-to-be-missed tradition.**

## ON THE COVER

When an enslaved man named James petitioned for his freedom in New Kent County, the affidavit he submitted included this portrait and a statement from the Marquis de Lafayette attesting that James had rendered "essential service" and deserved to be freed. The General Assembly passed an act emancipating James on January 1, 1787, who took the surname of Lafayette. Image courtesy of The Valentine.

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Welcome to the Library of Virginia, the state's oldest institution dedicated to the preservation of Virginia's history and culture. Our resources, exhibitions, and events attract nearly 100,000 visitors each year. Our collections, containing more than 130 million items, document and illustrate the lives of both famous Virginians and ordinary citizens.

#### FOLLOW US ON



Photograph © Ansel Olsen

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#### PARKING

Limited parking for Library visitors is available in the underground parking deck, accessible from either Eighth or Ninth Streets.

#### EXHIBITIONS

**Your Humble Petitioner**

Through November 19, 2022

**Matters of Scale**

April 27–June 30, 2022

Petersburg Public Library

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The Library provides relevant and useful educational material on Virginia's history, culture, and people to educators, students, and lifelong learners of any age.

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# Your Humble Petitioner

## Legislative Petitions Gave Voice to Virginians

Explore the personal stories contained within a unique collection

BY BARBARA C. BATSON

**Y**our Humble Petitioner, a free exhibition at the Library of Virginia running through November 19, 2022, reveals the poignant stories of Virginians from all walks of life that can be found in the Library's Legislative Petitions Collection. The collection contains a gold mine of historical information not available anywhere else.


Have you ever signed a petition? Today, we're familiar with signing petitions to voice concerns over topics such as redistricting or traffic control or any number of issues. But did you know that it's an ancient right—one that's enshrined in the First Amendment to the United States Constitution? Imagine having to explain to the House of Delegates why you want to divorce your spouse, change your name, or take other actions that affect your life. Virginians had to do just that for nearly a century. *Your Humble Petitioner* highlights petitions that

### EXHIBITION

Through November 19, 2022  
Exhibition Gallery & Lobby

#### WAR STORY

This October 11, 1776, petition seeks financial aid for Norfolk resident Mary Webley, whose leg was broken by a cannonball fired from a British warship in 1776. Her family was already struggling because her husband was unable to work after losing an arm years before the war. The petition was successful and she received £10, or about \$2,100 today. Detail from *The Burning of Norfolk* illustration, ca. 1880, artist unknown, from *Cassell's History of the United States*.



involved deeply personal issues such as divorce and requests by emancipated Black people to remain in the commonwealth, offering a glimpse into the realities of 18th- and 19th-century life.

The Legislative Petitions Collection at the Library of Virginia numbers approximately 25,000 petitions submitted to the General Assembly between 1776 and 1865, some presented by groups, but many more submitted by individuals. During the years between the American Revolution and the Civil War, Virginians submitted petitions to the General Assembly to bring local or personal issues to the attention of their legislators. The collection reveals how Virginians communicated their concerns on a wide range of topics, offering insights into popular opinion on matters both public and private. To obtain legal permission to operate a ferry, maintain a tavern, or stop hogs from running loose through a town, residents of the commonwealth were required to submit a petition into the House of Delegates to begin the process of acceptance or rejection. The right to petition was not restricted by class, race, or sex. Although they could not vote, women and Black Virginians, both enslaved and free, could petition the General Assembly.

The exhibition includes the story of James Lafayette (PICTURED ON THE COVER), who was enslaved in New Kent County but became a spy during the American Revolution, serving under the Marquis de Lafayette. In 1786, he successfully petitioned the General Assembly for his freedom. His petition describes his service: “That during the *continues on page 4*

Imagine having to explain  
to the House of Delegates  
why you want to divorce  
your spouse, change your  
name, or take other actions  
that affect your life.

#### THE HEBREW & ENGLISH LITERARY INSTITUTE

The first Jewish people arrived in Norfolk in 1787, but not until the 1840s was the Jewish community large enough to establish a synagogue (House of Jacob, 1848). On December 14, 1852, Jacob Umstadler and other Jewish residents of Norfolk petitioned (SHOWN AT LEFT) the General Assembly for permission to establish a school in which to teach their children Hebrew and German as well as Judaism. The Hebrew and English Literary Institute (SHOWN ABOVE) opened in 1853 and remained in operation until the late 1860s when the Virginia Constitution established a statewide school system. Photograph by Harry C. Mann.

#### LEGISLATIVE PETITIONS DIGITAL COLLECTION

[www.virginiamemory.com/collections/petitions](http://www.virginiamemory.com/collections/petitions)

The Library of Virginia's Legislative Petitions Digital Collection is a rich source of stories about ordinary Virginians and their lives. The collection is searchable by keyword, locality, and subject.

Barbara C. Batson is exhibitions coordinator at the Library.

*continued from page 3* time of his serving the Marquiss he often at the peril of his life found means to frequent the British Camp, by which means he kept open a channel of the most useful communications to the army of the state.”

Another featured petition shares the story of Norfolk resident Mary Webley, whose leg was broken by a cannonball fired from a British warship in 1776. She and her family were already struggling because her husband was unable to work after losing an arm years before the war. Webley’s petition to the General Assembly for aid described her situation: “She hath at present no Ways or Means to procure Shelter or acquire Subsistence for herself and miserable little children, her Husband and Self having had all their effects totally destroyed in the Flames of Norfolk.”

“We can relate to these petitions because they are deeply personal and often heartbreaking,” said Gregg Kimball, the Library’s director of Public Services and Outreach. “But they also brightly illuminate the big issues of the time such as the constraints on freedom, religious intolerance, and the relationship of citizens to the State. This combination makes them remarkable teaching tools.”

What was the process for petitioning the General Assembly? The petitioner submitted a petition to a delegate who then presented and read the petition to the House of Delegates. If not immediately rejected, the petition was referred to a committee who would recommend an action. If the committee deemed the petition acceptable, the delegates drew up a bill that had to pass three readings. In the first reading, the bill was accepted or rejected. At the second reading, delegates debated and amended the bill. If the bill passed the third reading, it then was sent to the Senate for approval or rejection. Both houses had to approve the bill for it to become law. The clerk of the House of Delegates endorsed the petition at each step until its final endorsement of accepted or rejected. ■

“We can relate to these petitions because they are deeply personal and often heartbreaking.”

#### THE COST OF BUSINESS

Conjoined twins known as Chang and Eng (1811–1874) traveled as entertainers and staged their show in venues in Virginia with an admission fee of twenty-five cents. In March 1832, they submitted a petition (SHOWN AT LEFT) to protest the imposition of a license on their traveling show with a fee of thirty dollars at every locality. The House of Delegates referred the petition to the Committee on Finance, which considered the brothers’ request “reasonable.” A majority of the delegates disagreed, however, because any change in the law required a floor vote, and the petition was rejected. Photograph courtesy of the Library of Congress.



# EXHIBITION-RELATED EVENTS

## GENEALOGY WORKSHOP

### Legislative Petitions

Friday, May 13, 2022 | 9:30 AM–12:00 PM | Conference Rooms

Cost: \$25 (\$20 for Library of Virginia members)

Registration required:

[yourhumblepetitioner-legislativepetitions.eventbrite.com](http://yourhumblepetitioner-legislativepetitions.eventbrite.com)

Petitions to the General Assembly were the primary catalyst for legislation in the commonwealth from 1776 until 1865. This workshop will explore how citizens interacted with the General Assembly through 1865. Ginny Dunn (Archives and Library Reference Services manager) and Dawn Tinnell (senior reference archivist) will discuss how you can mine legislative petitions to get a fuller picture of the lives of your ancestors. They will also provide guidance on how to search the Library's Legislative Petitions Digital Collection and published resources. A tour of the Library and the exhibition will follow the workshop. Contact Ashley Ramey Craig at [ashley.ramey@lva.virginia.gov](mailto:ashley.ramey@lva.virginia.gov) or 804.692.3001 for more information.

## A CONVERSATION WITH WARREN EUGENE MILTEER JR.

### Beyond Slavery's Shadow: Free People of Color in the South

Thursday, June 9, 2022 | 6:00–7:30 PM | Lecture Hall | Free

Please join us in person for a conversation with historian and author Warren Eugene Milteer Jr. on his new book, *Beyond Slavery's Shadow: Free People of Color in the South*, with Gregg Kimball, the Library of Virginia's director of Public Services and Outreach, and Vincent Brooks, senior local records archivist. On the eve of the Civil War, most people of color in the United States toiled in bondage. Yet nearly half a million of these individuals, including over 250,000 in the South, were free. In *Beyond Slavery's Shadow*, Milteer draws from a wide array of sources to demonstrate that from the colonial period through the Civil War, the growing influence of white supremacy and proslavery extremism created serious challenges for free persons living in the South. Nevertheless, in the face of attempts to deny them the most basic privileges and rights, free people of color defended their families and established organizations and businesses. Milteer used the Library's Local Records Collection in his research for the book. A book signing will follow the talk. For more information, contact Ashley Ramey Craig at [ashley.ramey@lva.virginia.gov](mailto:ashley.ramey@lva.virginia.gov) or 804.692.3001.

To the Honourable the Assembly of Virginia

Your Petitioner, <sup>Nancy</sup> begs leave to state that her late Master John A. Binns dec'd of the County of Loudoun who made several Wills in which as by his last Will & Testament left her as well as by his last Will & Testament left her she arrived to the Age of twenty five Years, & has arrived and she is the Mother of three Children whom she will always keep as close as she can at the top of life unless your Honourable body who pity to a Mother of the Colour of Sable hue who the feelings of an affectionate Mother towards her Pardon act allowing her to reside in the County. She is informed that under the existing Law will she will be compelled to leave the County. As to her Character she brings Gundry's Pass which vouch for her uniform good Conduct & Industry whilst a Slave. I trust that if allowed to stay with her children & place where she was raised, she will find a double inducement to prompt her to Industry and good behaviour - She begs leave to refer you to a Certificate of a few, I have thought it unnecessary to add more as some of them are well known to several of your Honourable body as also in the Senate In hopes & earnest expectation that you will take pity on your Petitioner's forlorn Situation if you will to allow her to reside within the Commonwealth she will ever say



## REQUESTING TO REMAIN IN VIRGINIA

A formerly enslaved woman named Nancy fell under the mandate of an 1806 law that required freedpeople to leave the state within one year. On December 6, 1815, in Loudoun County, she petitioned for permission to remain in Virginia with her three children. Although the House found the request to be "reasonable," no bill was presented to allow Nancy to remain in Virginia. Illustration by David Hunter Strother.

## HELP US SHARE VIRGINIA'S HISTORY

Your support helps the Library share the story of Virginia with the public through dynamic exhibitions, thought-provoking lectures, and collections-based workshops. Support our work by making a gift at [www.lva.virginia.gov/donate](http://www.lva.virginia.gov/donate).

# Groundbreaking African Americans Honored

In observance of Black History Month in February, the Library of Virginia and Dominion Energy honored five distinguished Virginians as the 2022 Strong Men & Women in Virginia History for their contributions to the commonwealth and the nation. Each generation of African Americans has built on the achievements of those who came before to lead the way to the future. The men and women featured here offer powerful examples of individuals who refused to be defined by their circumstances. Through education and advocacy, they demonstrate how African Americans have actively campaigned for better lives for themselves and their people. Biographies of honorees are displayed in an exhibition at the Library; featured on materials sent to schools, libraries, and museums across Virginia; and included on an educational website for teachers and students ([www.lva.virginia.gov/smw](http://www.lva.virginia.gov/smw)). Further information about distinguished African Americans from Virginia can be found in the *Dictionary of Virginia Biography* (Library of Virginia, 1998–2006).

[WWW.LVA.VIRGINIA.GOV/SMW](http://WWW.LVA.VIRGINIA.GOV/SMW)

## NOMINATIONS SOUGHT!

Is there an African American man or woman in your community who has made a positive difference in your region, the state, or the nation? If you're an educator, encourage your students to research and nominate someone for the 2023 slate of honorees for **Strong Men & Women in Virginia History**. Schools with winning nominations are eligible for cash prizes, free teacher workshops, and student programming. Members of the public are also encouraged to submit nominations but are not eligible for prizes. The deadline for submissions is June 19, 2022. Nominees can be either living or dead. Go to [www.lva.virginia.gov/smw](http://www.lva.virginia.gov/smw) to learn more about the process and to see a list of previous honorees.

### Samuel H. Clark

1885–1979  
Roanoke

#### LABOR LEADER

As a union president from the 1930s to the 1950s, Samuel H. Clark fought for the rights of African American railroad workers.

### Robert L. Dandridge

1947–  
Norfolk

#### BASKETBALL PLAYER

Hall-of-Fame basketball player Robert L. Dandridge uses his talents and experience to mentor youth in basketball clinics and education programs.

### Chri Cole

1964–  
William

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## 2022 Strong Men & Women in Virginia History

PRESENTED BY







## *A grandfather's World War I portrait inspires historical fiction*

Writer Barbara Diggs discovered the World War I portrait of her maternal grandfather, James Morton Moss, as well as his answers to a postwar questionnaire through the Library of Virginia's online exhibition *True Sons of Freedom* ([truesons.virginiamemory.com](https://truesons.virginiamemory.com)). The exhibition features photographs of African American soldiers from Virginia who fought overseas to defend freedoms they were denied at home. Part of the World War I History Commission Collection, the images were submitted by the veterans themselves with their responses to military service questionnaires created by the Virginia War History Commission in order to capture the scope of Virginians' participation in the war. This find inspired Diggs to create the short fiction piece shown below, *Granddaddy at War*, originally published as a "historical flash" in the online journal *FlashBack Fiction* ([flashbackfiction.com](https://flashbackfiction.com)).

# Finding Family

### FINDING PRIVATE MOSS

James Morton Moss, born July 25, 1887, in Callaville, Brunswick County, Virginia, held the rank of private in the infantry section of the National Army, stationed at Camp Lee, Virginia.

## GRANDDADDY AT WAR

My grandfather stands straight as the rifle he won't be allowed to touch. Trenches may be choked with corpses across the ocean, but a weapon in the hands of a Black man is no less disruptive to world order. Better for him not to know the sleek feel of power, become intoxicated by its kick and heft. In the battle for democracy, he is best armed with a shovel.

Never mind. My grandfather is perfectly willing to do whatever he can for his country. He is surprised to realize that he believes in the elusive promise of America; feels bound to the old red, white, and blue. Ever since the declaration of war, he has heard a faint crackling in the air, as if someone was burning stubble down the road. He'd pause in his tobacco field, sickle in mid-swing, to let the sound run through him. He likes the fire it sets in his blood, the way it fractures his vision.

*It's the sound of the world breaking open*, he tells my grandmother later, after walking the thirty miles to Petersburg to enlist. Look here: Already they have given him this fine olive uniform, taught him to

wrap his puttees smartly. Already they have promised to photograph him against a backdrop of grandeur. My grandmother turns away, catching her words between her teeth. But he reads them in the stiff line of her back: *You really think they gonna let you be a man?*

The sharp-jawed military photographer tells my grandfather to turn slightly and stand still. My grandfather does so. A shadow of distaste on the photographer's face bares its teeth at my grandfather but today it cannot touch him. My grandfather folds his arms and looks steadily into the camera lens as if staring down a rifle barrel. The crackling sounds; he knows this is his chance.

He will show the photographer. He will show the Germans. He will show everyone.

—Barbara Diggs

Barbara Diggs's fiction has appeared in numerous publications, including *Lunate Fiction*, *Ellipsis Zine*, *Reflex Fiction*, and *Spelk*, and was shortlisted for the 2021 Bath Flash Fiction Award.

## THE BACKSTORY

For many African Americans, much of our ancestral history is lost to time and circumstances. So we celebrate whenever a piece of the puzzle comes together. Back in 2018, my brother Keith realized how little he knew of our maternal grandfather, James Morton Moss. Granddaddy, born in 1887 in Brunswick County, Virginia, died when my brother was small and bef 20:Tf 0.03 T7Tf 0.030 1Tv

# Sketch of Libby Prison

February 15, 1894

## a closer look

### PRIVATE PAPERS COLLECTION

Serendipitous connections between historic materials sometimes influence our acquisitions choices at here at the Library of Virginia. This was the case with two recently acquired items related to Richmond's infamous Civil War prison, Libby Prison, which housed Union prisoners of war in overcrowded conditions in a former tobacco factory. In October 2020, the Library purchased a sketch drawn by Thomas E. Rose, colonel of the 77th Pennsylvania Infantry, depicting Libby Prison on February 9, 1864, the day Rose led 108 other imprisoned Union officers in a daring escape from their confinement (though Rose was recaptured). He drew the diagram for George E. Albee, who had been imprisoned at Libby Prison in August 1864. Although the diagram is undated, it appeared to have been made between 1889 and 1899, when the prison was torn down and reconstructed in Chicago as the Libby Prison War Museum.

The sketch was conserved here at the Library and digitized. While researching Rose during the cataloging process, a Library staff member discovered an item in a dealer's catalog listed as an 1894 letter from Thomas E. Rose discussing the Libby Prison sketch and written to someone he addresses as "dear Allen." The Library acquired the letter in November 2021. In it, Rose mentions "[t]his sketch I send you" and discusses the reconstructed Libby Prison in Chicago as well as the Libby Prison breakout. It seemed unlikely that Rose would draw two diagrams, and a closer look at the letter revealed that "Allen" was actually "Albee," the same Albee for whom Rose had drawn the diagram now in the Library's collection. The diagram and letter have now been reunited as the Thomas E. Rose letter and sketch of Libby Prison, February 15, 1894 (Accessions 53170 and 53463).

A closer look at the letter revealed that "Allen" was actually "Albee," the same Albee for whom Rose had drawn the diagram now in the Library's collection.

—Trenton Hizer, Senior Manuscripts Acquisition and Digital Archivist

#### JAILBREAK

This diagram of Richmond's Libby Prison drawn in 1894 by former Union officer Thomas E. Rose depicts the Civil War prison on February 9, 1864, the day he led 108 other Union prisoners in a daring escape from confinement. The sketch was conserved in the Library's in-house conservation lab.



## Lynn Rainville & Baron Schwartz

**D**r. Lynn Rainville and Baron Schwartz have been longtime advocates and supporters of the Library of Virginia's role as a trusted educational resource for students, researchers, and the public. They believe in the transformative nature of learning and being grounded in one's community history and sense of homeplace. Lynn is particularly enthusiastic about the Library's mission to help millions of people around the world understand and engage with Virginia's complex past on a national and local level.

As a public historian and higher education leader, Lynn has dedicated more than 20 years to researching ordinary Virginians doing extraordinary things in the past. She credits the Library's unique collections as an invaluable resource. "The Library is unrivaled in the scale and diversity of historic items related to Virginia's history and culture," said Lynn. "Its rich archive has helped academics discover new perspectives, and genealogists identify family connections."

Lynn and Baron also appreciate the Library's statewide presence. "We are lucky to live in a commonwealth with one of the best state libraries and archives in the nation," she said. "Even though we live in the Valley, we are able to access an abundance of online resources and livestreamed programming."

We hope you will join Lynn and Baron in their support of the Library of Virginia. It's easier than ever to make an annual gift or commit to monthly installments. Make your contribution online at [www.lva.virginia.gov/donate](http://www.lva.virginia.gov/donate) or by calling 804.692.3592.

Your support makes the Library of Virginia's work possible!

### LONGTIME LIBRARY SUPPORTERS

Dr. Lynn Rainville and Baron Schwartz support the Library's mission to help people around the world understand and engage with Virginia's complex past.

## HELP PRESERVE VIRGINIA'S HISTORY!

Establishing an acquisition or preservation fund is the perfect way to help the Library care for and expand its world-class collection. Contact Elaine McFadden, director of development, at 804.692.3592 or [elaine.mcfadden@lva.virginia.gov](mailto:elaine.mcfadden@lva.virginia.gov) to learn more.

# Mining the Manuscripts

## Library hosts Virginia Humanities Research Fellows

A partnership between the Library of Virginia and Virginia Humanities allows researchers to examine in-depth the Library's vast manuscript resources during their stay as scholars in residence. The Fellows present their findings and experiences with online or in-person talks at the Library, write blog posts, and engage with social media.

### Rachel Stephens

An associate professor of art history at the University of Alabama, Rachel Stephens is working on a project about white artists of the Civil War and postwar period in Richmond and their contribution to the visualizing of the “Lost Cause” in the decades following the war. She believes these artists and their circles were responding in part to Emancipation celebrations staged by African Americans immediately after the Union took Richmond.

#### What is one of the most notable things you’ve found in your research here at the Library?

**RS:** I came here hoping to establish the existence of a network of white artists in Richmond during and after the Civil War. I assumed many of them, such as William Ludwell Sheppard, John Adams Elder, and Edward Valentine, knew each other. What I found not only confirmed this, but underscored the idea that they were operating within significant structures of power in Richmond. Whether it was through memberships in clubs and civic organizations or through personal acquaintance with politicians and white “elites,” the artists not only used their work to advance white supremacist notions, but they were integral to advancing the Lost Cause myth. Everything I found at the Library confirmed these ideas. This extended from newspaper articles, to club minutes, to correspondence between artists. Particularly extraordinary were items such as William Ludwell Sheppard’s diaries and sketches and Moses Ezekiel’s correspondence. Perhaps my favorite find, though, was the State Art Collection. The artists’ works were purchased and collected at the state level, which reveals so clearly how intimately their ideologies merged with those at the state level.

#### What will you remember about your time here?

**RS:** Every staff member of the Library was extremely helpful and generous. This extended from the comfortable office I got to use to the expedient nature of receiving requested items. Every week staff members gathered to discuss the Fellows’ progress on their projects during Tuesday lunches. I came away amazed not only at the knowledge of the staff, but of their willingness to share their time so generously. Thanks especially to editor Mari Julienne for watching out for me in every step of this Fellowship!

#### VISUALIZING THE “LOST CAUSE”

Virginia Humanities Research Fellow **Rachel Stephens** (ABOVE) found resources for her project in artists’ correspondence, such as this letter from sculptor Moses Ezekiel, and in documentation of their membership in clubs and organizations.

## Meredith Henne Baker

Author and independent scholar Meredith Henne Baker is currently developing a book project entitled *Scenic Sisters: How Virginia's Garden Club Women Changed a State*. Her research is also contributing to a statewide multisite commemoration of the 90th anniversary of Black women's garden clubs in Virginia in 2022.

### What is one of the most notable things you've found in your research here at the Library?

**MHB:** I'm uncovering how Virginia's gardening women shaped the state in important ways that we haven't previously recognized. The Library of Virginia hadn't yet completed digitizing the *Southern Workman*, the monthly journal of the Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute (now Hampton University), which meant that I had to go through back issues the old-fashioned way—one page at a time! In journals from 1939 I uncovered two significant articles. The first was a report about the success of Black women's garden clubs in Virginia. It gave concrete evidence of the changes clubs had made not only to Virginia's physical landscape, but to the commonwealth's cultural landscape. These groups intentionally forged interracial partnerships with white women's garden clubs to undermine Jim Crow and improve their neighborhoods. The second article was a deeply personal profile of Asa Sims, a Hampton horticulturalist and nursery owner. The Negro Garden Clubs of Virginia were his passion, and for decades he nurtured club growth as carefully as he did his greenhouse cuttings. The writer describes Sims's mannerisms, whimsical teaching style, and ability to transform garden discards into beautiful arrangements. For a writer, finding this level of detail about a subject is archival gold.

Meredith Henne Baker will present a talk on her project at the Library during Historic Garden Week. See page 19 for details.

### What will you remember about your time here?

**MHB:** Working with staff members who are essentially walking libraries themselves was such a rich experience. Besides the perk of casually popping into staff offices to talk shop, the Fellows had a weekly meetup with Library staff to share research findings, bounce ideas around, and ask questions. After so many of us had been working solo through the last pandemic year, being part of a learning community was energizing.

I also treasure the ways I'm seeing history repeat itself. In 2022, gardening women will again gather to create something amazing and honor their own by commemorating the 90th anniversary of the Negro Garden Club of Virginia (later the Virginia State Federated Garden Clubs) in events hosted across the commonwealth.

#### CHANGING NATURE & CULTURE

Virginia Humanities Research Fellow **Meredith Henne Baker** (UPPER LEFT) found items in the Library's collections on women's garden clubs showing that they forged interracial partnerships.

## Rita Dove's latest book offers a *Playlist for the Apocalypse*

In honor of April as Poetry Month, we're spotlighting Pulitzer Prize winner and former U.S. Poet Laureate and Virginia Poet Laureate **Rita Dove**, who will read from her latest book, *Playlist for the Apocalypse*, in a free Weinstein Author Series talk at the Library on Thursday, July 28, 2022, at 6:00 PM. Dove, who lives in Charlottesville and teaches creative writing at the University of Virginia, received the Library of Virginia Literary Award for Poetry in 2017, as well as our Literary Lifetime Achievement Award in 2008. Here she shares one of the poems from her new book and answers questions about her work.

### Can you tell us about the origin of the title of your latest book, *Playlist for the Apocalypse*?

**Rita Dove:** Well, the obvious inspiration—if one can call it that—for the title was the pandemic. COVID-19 had just begun to take us all captive when I was refining this book, and we entered a kind of dystopian universe, veering towards a potential apocalypse; there was a distinct “before and after” taking hold of our minds. But the word apocalypse also means revelation, that which is revealed—any new and sudden knowledge which can change our perception of the world. Such change can be physical, as in war or disease, but it also could mean some discovery about yourself or your spirit, your culture, or your relationships. Change can be devastating or transformative—“What doesn't kill you makes you stronger.” So, as I hunkered down like the rest of the world and sheltered in place, I began thinking of the poems in the book less as my creations and more as my companions.

### This collection of poems draws from the past and the present. How does history inspire your creative process?

**RD:** What establishes itself as history depends on who's writing it. Those relegated to the sidelines feel the dichotomy between the Real and the Proclaimed acutely; ideally, they become adept at navigating these layered realities. The great African American intellectual W. E. B. Du Bois called it “double consciousness.” Both race and gender have afforded me this binocular vision; I can't help but see history from multiple points of view. Now, thanks to television and social media, we all can witness what's happening on the world stage pretty much instantaneously; but even though we're being told that the news is important, whatever is happening in our own life at that moment is also significant—to us, within our narrower boundaries. This is the juncture where my poetry enters; I'm fascinated to see what sparks fly when intimate human moments are juxtaposed against grand historical panoramas.

I have a quote above my desk by Percy Bysshe Shelley, the great English Romantic poet: “Poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the race.” What I think he means by that declaration—what I take from it as sustenance—is that poets act as both mirrors and lenses for society. By observing the world closely, poets hold a mirror up to the society in which they live; but by articulating the emotions aroused by their observation of the world, they also serve as lenses through which to observe what's happening in our lives—and therefore poets legislate, one could say, our spiritual and emotional drives and needs. I write to discover what I did not know, and sometimes what I'm afraid to know, about the human condition; that revelation may engender a deeper compassion or intensify the dread—there's the apocalypse again!—but the act of writing, of articulating the unsaid and unseen, is liberating.

#### AWARD-WINNING POET

Rita Dove accepts the Library of Virginia Literary Award for Poetry in 2017.

### Girls On the Town, 1946

[Elvira H. D., 1924–2019]

You love a red lip. The dimples are  
extra currency, though you take care to keep  
powder from caking those charmed valleys.

Mascara: check. Blush? Oh, yes.

And a hat is never wrong

except evenings in the clubs: there

a deeper ruby and smoldering eye

will do the trick, with tiny embellishments—

a ribbon or jewel, perhaps a flower—

if one is feeling especially flirty or sad.

Until Rosie fired up her rivets, flaunting

was a male prerogative; now, you and your girls

have lacquered up and pinned on your tailfeathers,

fit to sally forth and trample each plopped heart

quivering at the tips of your patent-leather

Mary Janes. This is the only power you hold onto,

ripped from the dreams none of you believe

are worth the telling. Instead of mumbling,

why not decorate? Even in dim light

how you glisten, sloe-eyed, your smile in flames.

—Rita Dove





## featured book

### *Malcolm and Me*

By Robin Farmer

Set against the backdrop of Watergate and the post-civil rights movement era, *Malcolm and Me* is a gritty yet graceful examination of the anguish teens experience when

their growing awareness of themselves and the world around them unravels their sense of security—a coming-of-age tale of truth-telling, faith, family, forgiveness, and social activism. SparkPress, November 2020, \$16.95

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## WHAT ARE YOU READING?

### DOUGLAS JACKSON

Founder, BOOK CITY★Roanoke, and Capacity Development Specialist, Virginia Department of Housing & Community Development

### *The Art of Gathering: How We Meet and Why It Matters*

By Priya Parker

At a time in which bringing people together is necessarily limited, *The Art of Gathering* is a reminder of why it's so important and how hosting groups can be done more effectively. A key aspect of my work at the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development is facilitating productive community conversations. I read *The Art of Gathering* with colleagues focused on the potential that comes from having a diverse group of voices involved in public processes. The book reinforced why it's important to carefully shape gatherings—from the venue and invitations to the tone established and questions framed. Locally, BOOK CITY★Roanoke has focused on the power of shared reading experiences to help us be better people and shape a stronger community. I've taken a few pages of notes from *The Art of Gathering*, and I can't wait to meet again with neighbors and partners to discuss how thoughtfully convening our community can make us stronger—and then to get to work doing it!

## UPCOMING WEINSTEIN SERIES EVENTS

[www.lva.virginia.gov/public/weinstein](http://www.lva.virginia.gov/public/weinstein)

April 14, 2022 | 6:00–7:30 PM

Free In-person Event

**KRISTEN GREEN**

*The Devil's Half Acre:*

*The Untold Story of How One Woman Liberated*

*the South's Most Notorious Slave Jail*

July 28, 2022 | 6:00–7:30 PM

Free In-person Event

**RITA DOVE**

*Playlist for the Apocalypse*

The Carole Weinstein Author Series supports the literary arts by bringing both new and well-known authors to the Library of Virginia through online or in-person events. Free and open to the public, the series focuses on Virginia authors and Virginia subjects across all genres.

# behind the scenes

## INSIDE THE ACQUISITIONS & ACCESS MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT

*Questions for Mary Clark, Director*

The Acquisitions and Access Management department is responsible for selecting, cataloging, and processing the printed materials in the Library. Our collection management coordinator scours publishers' catalogs, historical societies, and websites to select materials that meet our collection goals. He also manages the receipt of books donated to the Library. Our catalogers describe all the printed materials in the Library so that the public can use our online catalog to locate printed materials for research. Our processing department handles the care of our materials, such as constructing book covers, repairing damaged and aging materials, and preparing periodicals and paperback books to go to the bindery. We also manage the Federal Depository Library Program and the State Publications Depository Program, which provide the public free access to government publications. Acquisitions and Access Management director Mary Clark answers some questions below.

### COLLECTIONS CONNOISSEUR

Acquisitions and Access Management director **Mary Clark** leads the team that makes the Library's printed collections accessible to the public.

**How did you get into this line of work? What is your background?**

**Mary Clark:** I have worked in libraries since high school. My first library job was as a book shelver in Norfolk, then after college I worked as a library assistant in Roanoke. I received my master of science degree in library science from the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, and joined the staff of the Library of Virginia in 1988. Since coming to here, I've worked in reference, government documents, and now as head of Acquisitions and Access Management.

**What do you like about your job?**

**MC:** I enjoy the variety of activities I do every day. I like managing the budget, collaborating with my colleagues, working with talented

and dedicated catalogers and support staff, and helping to make our printed collections accessible for our users.

**How have the Library's collection goals changed over the last 10 or 20 years?**

**MC:** The biggest difference in our collection practices now is the lack of focus on general reference materials. This is the area where the internet has influenced and affected the needs of our users. Twenty years ago, a large portion of our book budget was spent on hard copy directories, guides, fact books, etc. Now the biggest slice of the budget is spent on online research databases, scholarly and popular works of history, and especially Virginia-related printed materials including newspapers, local history, and Virginia authors.

### What kinds of care do aging materials need?

**MC:** There are a variety of techniques for caring for aging and fragile books. Old, brittle, acidic paper is the most difficult to manage because there is little to do for it other than protecting it from further damage. Our practices include placing brittle books in a snug box, or placing the material between stiff acid-free boards and tying the boards together to protect the contents. For general wear and tear, we can mend pages, tighten book hinges, tip in missing pages, or rebind the material.

### Have you worked with any particularly memorable items?

**MC:** We are lucky to work with both new and historic publications, including maps, sheet music, and rare books. It's hard to pick one thing.

**I think people might be surprised by how much work it actually takes to put a book to the shelf.**

### Is there anything that would surprise people about the work that you and your staff do?

**MC:** I think people might be surprised by how much work it actually takes to put a book to the shelf. We spend a lot of time selecting the right materials for our collection. Once a book is ordered and received, our catalogers take great pride in accurately describing the books in catalog records so that our users can find them, which is especially important in a closed-stack library like ours. The last step is physical processing, where we apply call number labels and protective covers to the books so that they can have a long, happy life on the shelf. ■

### STAFF MEMBERS AT WORK

1. Documents and processing assistant **Florence Sauls** works with fragile historic materials. 2. Collection management coordinator **Michael Bingham** reviews online publishers' catalogs for potential acquisitions. 3. Serials acquisition technician **Maya Dynova** handles some bound materials. 4. Acquisitions specialist **Erica McCollum** works with recent gift acquisitions. The team also includes catalogers **Deanna Chavez**, **Dorothy Harrison**, **Carolyn Johnson**, and **Donna Pletcher**, who are not pictured.

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# calendar

## Spring Events

For the latest information, please follow us on social media and visit our Calendar of Events at [www.lva.virginia.gov/lvaevents](http://www.lva.virginia.gov/lvaevents).

ALL EVENTS ARE FREE UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED.

**Wednesdays: April 13, May 11 & June 8**

5:30–7:30 PM

### **VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY**

#### **Making History with LVA**

Place: Online

Registration required: [bit.ly/LVAvirtualvolunteer](http://bit.ly/LVAvirtualvolunteer)

Crowdsource with us! Volunteers will transcribe handwritten pages and historical newspapers by reading text and typing it into digital form. Join us for a virtual session to learn how you can help make historical documents more searchable and usable for researchers now and in the future. April's session will focus on "Virginia Untold: The African American Narrative." Contact Sonya Coleman for more information at [makinghistory@virginiamemory.com](mailto:makinghistory@virginiamemory.com) or call HandsOn Greater Richmond at 804.330.7400.

**Wednesdays: April 13, May 11 & June 8**

6:00–7:30 PM

### **BOOK CLUB**

#### **Literary Virginia Book Group**

Place: Online

Read and discuss the best of today's Virginia literature—including books by Library of Virginia Literary Award winners and finalists in fiction and nonfiction. On the second Wednesday evening of each month, join a virtual book group discussion. April's book is *The Other Madisons* by Bettye Kears. May's book is *Subtle Acts of Exclusion* by Tiffany Jana and Michael Baran. June's book is *The House in the Cerulean Sea* by TJ Klune. For more information, visit [lva.virginia.gov/public/literary\\_virginia\\_book\\_group](http://lva.virginia.gov/public/literary_virginia_book_group) or contact Nan Carmack at [nan.carmack@lva.virginia.gov](mailto:nan.carmack@lva.virginia.gov) or 804.692.3792.

**Thursday, April 14 | 6:00–7:30 PM**

### **WEINSTEIN AUTHOR SERIES: KRISTEN GREEN**

#### **The Devil's Half Acre: The Untold Story of How One Woman Liberated the South's Most Notorious Slave Jail**

Place: Lecture Hall or Online

Registration required:

[lva.virginia.gov/public/weinstein](http://lva.virginia.gov/public/weinstein)

Please join us in person for a talk by *New York Times* best-selling author and journalist Kristen Green on the inspiring true story of an enslaved woman who liberated an infamous slave jail and transformed it into one of the nation's first Historically Black Colleges and Universities. A book signing will follow the talk. This in-person event will also be livestreamed on our Facebook and YouTube pages. For more information, contact Dawn Greggs at 804.692.3813 or [dawn.greggs@lva.virginia.gov](mailto:dawn.greggs@lva.virginia.gov).

**Friday, April 15 | 10:00–11:00 AM**

### **VIRTUAL GENEALOGY WORKSHOP**

#### **Introduction to the 1950 Census**

Place: Online

Cost: \$15 (\$10 for Library members)

Registration required:

[introductiontothe1950census.eventbrite.com](http://introductiontothe1950census.eventbrite.com)

United States Census records can provide a framework for genealogical research. This workshop will illuminate the particulars of the 1950 census and suggest potential search strategies, tips for finding missing ancestors, and ways to mine the census for more information. Contact Ashley Ramey Craig at [ashley.ramey@lva.virginia.gov](mailto:ashley.ramey@lva.virginia.gov) or 804.692.3001 for more information.

**Tuesdays: April 19, May 17 & June 21**

6:00–7:30 PM

### **BOOK CLUB**

#### **Common Ground Virginia History Book Group**

Place: Online

Registration required: [lva.virginia.gov/public/virginia\\_history\\_book\\_group](http://lva.virginia.gov/public/virginia_history_book_group)

On the third Tuesday evening of each month, join a virtual book group discussion on compelling nonfiction books handpicked by Library staff members that explore Virginia history, society, and culture. April's book is *A Brave and Cunning Prince* by James Horn. May's book is *The Devil's Half Acre* by Kristen Green. June's book is *The Appalachian Trail* by Philip D'Anieri. For more information, contact Rebecca Schneider at [rebecca.schneider@lva.virginia.gov](mailto:rebecca.schneider@lva.virginia.gov) or 804.692.3550.

**Saturdays: April 23, May 21 & June 25**

12:00–2:00 PM

### **VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY**

#### **Making History with LVA**

Place: Conference Rooms

Registration required: [bit.ly/LVAvirtualvolunteer](http://bit.ly/LVAvirtualvolunteer)

Crowdsource with us! Volunteers will transcribe handwritten pages and historical newspapers by reading text and typing it into digital form. Join us for an in-person session to learn how you can help make historical documents more searchable and usable for researchers now and in the future. Contact Sonya Coleman for more information at [makinghistory@virginiamemory.com](mailto:makinghistory@virginiamemory.com) or call HandsOn Greater Richmond at 804.330.7400.

**Tuesday, April 26 | 12:00–1:00 PM**

### **BOOK TALK WITH GREGORY D. SMITHERS**

#### **Reclaiming Two-Spirits: Sexuality, Spiritual Renewal & Sovereignty in Native America**

Place: Conference Rooms

Join us in person as historian and author Gregory D. Smithers discusses his new book, *Reclaiming Two-Spirits: Sexuality, Spiritual Renewal & Sovereignty in Native America*. Before 1492, hundreds of



Indigenous communities across North America included people who identified as neither male nor female, but both. After European colonizers invaded Indian country, centuries of violence and systematic persecution followed, imperiling the existence of people who today call themselves Two-Spirits, an umbrella term denoting feminine and masculine qualities in one person. A book signing will follow the talk. For more information, contact Ashley Ramey Craig at [ashley.ramey@lva.virginia.gov](mailto:ashley.ramey@lva.virginia.gov) or 804.692.3001.

time to remember that ordinary people can plant meaningful seeds of change. A question-and-answer session will follow the talk. Contact Elizabeth Klaczynski at [elizabeth.klaczynski@lva.virginia.gov](mailto:elizabeth.klaczynski@lva.virginia.gov) or 804.692.3536 for more information.

**Thursday, April 28 | 12:00–1:00 PM**  
**VIRGINIA HUMANITIES RESEARCH FELLOW TALK**  
**Garden Clubs Make History: How Virginia's Gardening Women Changed a State**  
 Place: Lecture Hall

Join us in person for a talk by Meredith Henne Baker, who was a Virginia Humanities Research Fellow at the Library of Virginia last fall. Garden Week showcases garden club women's preservation and beautification work. But what about the little-known ways club members transformed Virginia? Baker shares new stories about club women who advocated for conservation laws, tackled hunger, and successfully challenged the injustices of segregation. There's no better

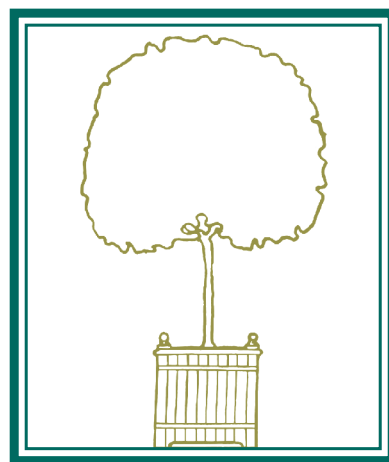
**Thursday, May 12 | 6:00–7:30 PM**  
**BOOK TALK WITH GERARD N. MAGLIOCCA**  
**Washington's Heir:**  
**The Life of Justice Bushrod Washington**  
 Place: Lecture Hall

Join us for a talk by author and professor of law Gerard N. Magliocca on the first published biography of Bushrod Washington, the nephew of Founding Father George Washington and an attorney and politician who served on the Supreme Court of the United States. The author uses Washington's journal to reveal new information on some of early America's landmark constitutional cases, as well as examining his inheritance of both Mount Vernon and of the enslaved people of the Washington family. A book signing will follow the talk. Preservation Virginia presents a pre-talk reception at the John Marshall House (behind the Library of Virginia) at 4:30 PM, which requires registration. Contact Elizabeth Klaczynski at [elizabeth.klaczynski@lva.virginia.gov](mailto:elizabeth.klaczynski@lva.virginia.gov) or 804.692.3536 for more information.

**Friday, May 13 | 9:30 AM–12:00 PM**  
**EXHIBITION EVENT**  
**Legislative Petitions Genealogy Workshop**  
 Place: Conference Rooms  
 See page 5 for details.

## Help Us Engage with Lovers of Literature, History, and Culture

Help us share our invaluable resources with the public through events, programs, workshops, and exhibitions. Support our work with an online donation at [www.lva.virginia.gov/donate](http://www.lva.virginia.gov/donate).



## MATTERS OF SCALE

CHARLES F. GILLETTE IN PETERSBURG

### OFF-SITE EXHIBITION

**April 27–June 30, 2022 | Free**  
 Petersburg Public Library  
 201 West Washington Street,  
 Petersburg, 23803

The Petersburg Garden Club, the Petersburg Public Library, and the Library of Virginia present *Matters of Scale: Charles F. Gillette in Petersburg*. From the 1920s through the 1960s, Gillette's name was synonymous with the best landscape design in the upper South. Although he is most remembered for his private estate work, Gillette's Petersburg designs serve as a microcosm of his broader career, encompassing residential, corporate, and large-scale educational projects. Drawn extensively from the Charles F. Gillette Papers at the Library of Virginia, the exhibition includes garden designs, photographs, and client correspondence.

# 800 exhibitions at east broad

**Through November 19, 2022**  
 Monday–Saturday  
 9:00 AM–5:00 PM  
 Exhibition Gallery & Lobby  
 Free  
 See page 2 for details.

# in circulation

## WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING AT THE LIBRARY

Find more images at [www.flickr.com/photos/lvaevents](https://www.flickr.com/photos/lvaevents) and follow us on Facebook.

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1. A group of spouses of state legislators posed for a portrait on the lobby stairs during their visit to the Library on February 17, 2022, where they toured Special Collections and the Exhibition Gallery. Photograph by Dan Currier.

2. Powhatan County middle school students visiting the Library to work on Virginia History Day projects toured our current exhibition, *Your Humble Petitioner*, on February 10, 2022, with education and programs specialist **Elizabeth Klaczynski** (CENTER).

3. FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: Director of development **Elaine McFadden** talked with **Patricia Bradby**, **Alex Moore**, and **Nathalia Artus** during a donor event at the Library on January 27, 2022.

4. **Dr. Gregory Samantha Rosenthal** discussed their book *Living Queer History: Remembrance and Belonging in a Southern City*, during a Carole Weinstein Author Series talk at the Library on February 24, 2022. Photograph by Dan Currier.

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# SUPPORT YOUR LIBRARY OF VIRGINIA

Though millions of people from across the country and around the world use the Library's collections for research, the Library is only partially funded by the Commonwealth of Virginia. The Library relies on individuals like you to help support its programs, collections, education activities, and outreach initiatives. **Become a member today to help us continue to share Virginia's history and literature with the world.** Membership is tax-deductible and offers many benefits. In gratitude for your support, the Library of Virginia Foundation extends the following benefits to all donors of \$100 or more:

- Priority seating at Library events
- One free Library workshop per year
- 10% discount at the Virginia Shop
- Discounted tickets to Library programs
- Invitations to members-only lectures and events
- One-year print subscription to *Broadside* magazine
- Recognition in the Library's annual list of donors on our lobby display

The best benefit of all? Ensuring the continued legacy of Virginia's history and culture.

*To learn more about the benefits of membership, contact Dawn Greggs at 804.692.3813.*

## SEMPER VIRGINIA SOCIETY

Make a significant investment to aid the Library in its mission to acquire, preserve, and promote access to unique collections of Virginia's history and literature. Donors whose annual giving totals \$1,000 or more become members of the Semper Virginia Society.

Join fellow donors at exclusive Semper Virginia programs, events, and travel opportunities. To learn more, please contact Elaine McFadden at 804.692.3592 or [elaine.mcfadden@lva.virginia.gov](mailto:elaine.mcfadden@lva.virginia.gov).

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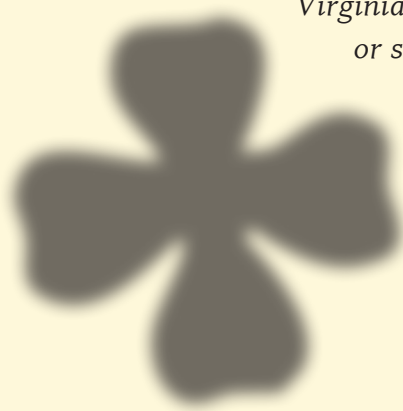
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*In honor of the season of growth, bring a little sparkle to your wardrobe with a dogwood brooch, or spruce up your space with a state bird garden flag or some native Virginia wildflowers.*

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