



# The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation

JOHN D. ROCKEFELLER, JR LIBRARY

WINTER 2020

NEWSLETTER

VOL. 2, NO. 3

## WOMEN OF THE RESTORATION

(continued from Fall 2019 issue)

Louise Fisher moved to Williamsburg in 1930 when her husband accepted a professorship at the College of William & Mary--arriving, so she said, with one truckload of furniture and two truckloads of flowers. Long an avid gardener, she became involved with flower arranging for Colonial Williamsburg when she became a hostess for the Raleigh Tavern, the first exhibition building opened in 1932. Fisher began providing flower arrangements for the Raleigh in order to give it a homey feel for visitors. By 1942, the job of arranging was sufficiently onerous, due to the number of open exhibition buildings, that Fisher became the first employee solely responsible for flower arrangement. As a result of her insistence on authenticity



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*Colonial Williamsburg floral manager Louise Fisher gathers cockscomb, c. 1950.*

## WOMEN OF THE RESTORATION

(continued)



***Mrs. Fisher and others at an "Autographing party" for "An Eighteenth-Century Garland." February 10, 1951.***

based on extensive research into eighteenth-century English and colonial gardening and flower arranging, Fisher developed what became popularly known as a Colonial Williamsburg style of flower arrangement. She used only flowers that could be identified in historical documents and prints or grew wild in the Williamsburg area. She arranged them only in authentic containers (delft flower bricks, the famous fingered posy holders, etc.) purchased both by her and by restoration interior designers. She relied on a looser, less formal style of flower arrangement than was dominating the floral world of the time. During the colder months of the year, she used flowers that she had dried over the previous months. At Christmas, she created natural decorations by using fruit and flowers inspired by old prints and the work of the Italian sculptor Della Robbia. She lectured widely to groups across the United States and in 1951 published a career-summarizing book titled *An Eighteenth-Century Garland: The Flower and Fruit Arrangements of Colonial Williamsburg*. Fisher's greatest contribution to the Restoration was to aid in the spread of the Colonial Williamsburg look to the American public as interest in the Colonial Revival exploded in interior decorating and gardening culture. In the Colonial Williamsburg of today, her influence can still be seen in the live and dried fruit and flower arrangements that so beautifully decorate the town at Christmas time as well as in the funny fingered posy holders still available for purchase in Colonial Williamsburg's stores.



## VOLUNTEER TEAM CELEBRATES SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS



***Front desk volunteers who assist with the black and white photograph collection box/folder list project hold up a sign indicating the total number of lists completed as of February 2020. Pictured are, left to right: Wayne Smith, Loretta Fetsko, Marcia Long, Nancy Marley, Becky Michaels, Hope Yelich, Dennis Branden, and Debbie Gurcsik.***

Since 2017, a dedicated team of volunteers who fill shifts at the Rockefeller Library's front desk, along with several more volunteers in Special Collections, have worked diligently on a massive project to complete box and folder inventories for the library's analog black and white photograph collection. The images encompass museum and library objects and exhibits, archaeological artifacts and excavations, architecture and architectural fragments, costumed interpretation and Historic Area programs, special events, distinguished visitors, and Colonial Williamsburg personnel. They range in date from the late 19th-century through the early 1990s and fill five hundred twenty-one boxes housed in an archival storage area on the library's top floor.

Each volunteer is assigned a box and prepares a detailed item level inventory list of the contents of each folder within the box. The lists are then copied into a database record and the database allows a staff member to search across multiple box inventories to locate all relevant photos on a topic. Printed lists within the folders also aid staff when looking through boxes and will eventually allow for easy digitization of portions of the collection, as they can be taken to the cold storage vault housed in Media Collections and used to guide retrieval of corresponding negatives. A future goal may also be to convert the lists to Encoded Archival Description (EAD) format and post them on the Virginia Heritage site with other finding aids for the library's collections.

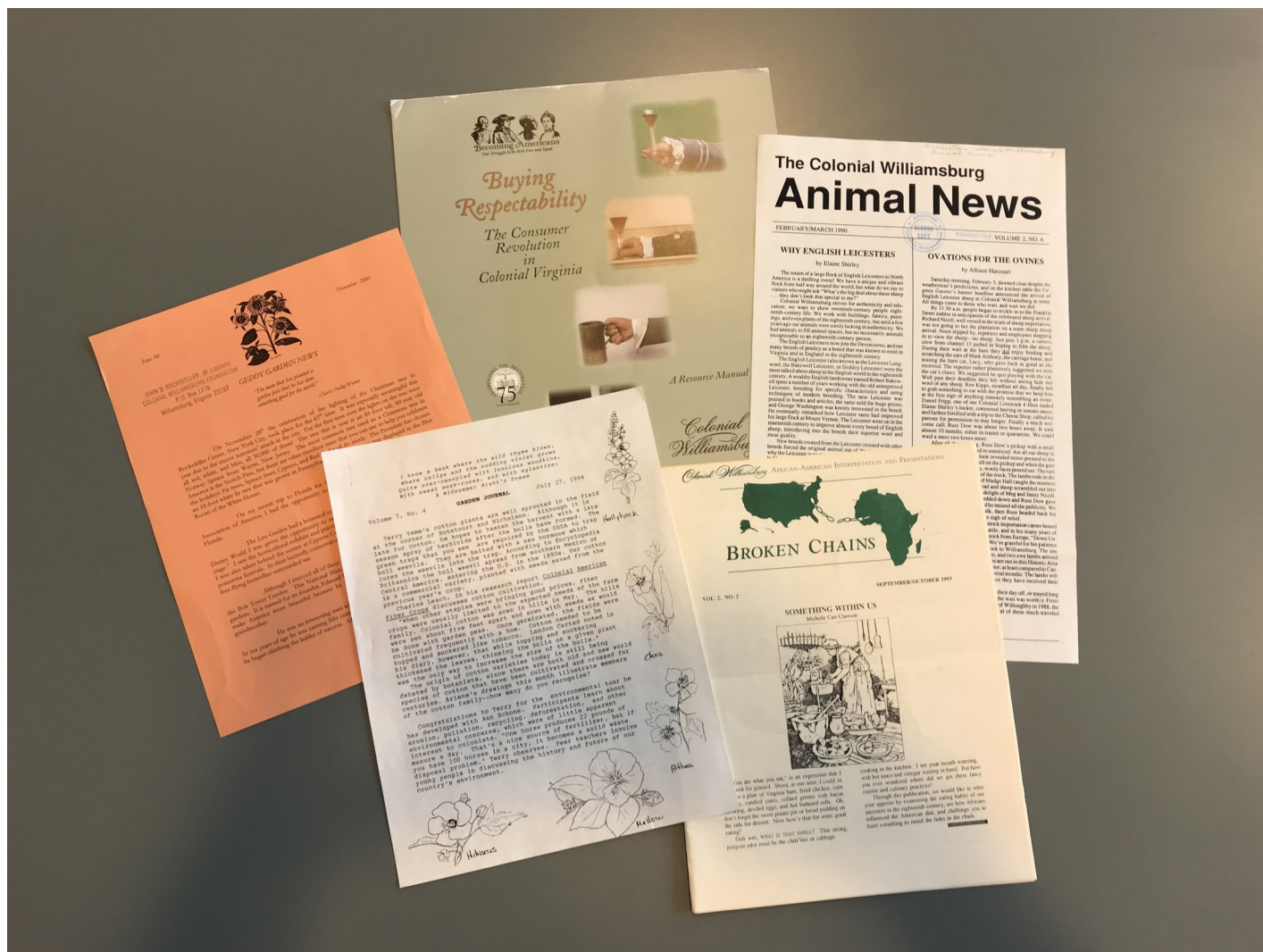
Each month the volunteer team completes an average of two to three boxes and an average of ninety-five folder lists. At the library's Twelfth Night Party, held to recognize volunteer contributions, they proudly celebrated the achievement of completing, as a team, a total of 2,447 box lists since beginning in 2017. The project is a testament to the progress that can be made with volunteer manpower and the Rockefeller Library truly appreciates their dedication and diligence.

## COLONIAL WILLIAMSBURG FOUNDATION PUBLICATIONS ONLINE

The library has started a project to digitize and make available online a variety of internal publications created by Colonial Williamsburg staff over the years. We have chosen to prioritize those that will be of the greatest research use to employees, namely the *Becoming Americans* interpretive series and the *Colonial Williamsburg Interpreter* and its associated publications created to answer questions for front line interpretive staff. Others chosen thus far are newsletters that contain a good deal of historical and/or departmental information that are interesting to both employees and fans of Colonial Williamsburg. Some of the newsletters seem to have been widely circulated both within and without Colonial Williamsburg (for example, AAIP's newsletter *Broken Chains*). Others like *The Drummer's Assistant* are quite rare; in fact library staff had to borrow hard copies of the publication from the Fife and Drum departmental library—they own the only set that could be located.

As you browse the collections, you will notice that the library did not always have a full set of the newsletters that were published. We welcome the donation of any issues that fill in gaps in our holdings; alternatively, we would be happy to borrow any in your possession to scan and return to you.

Digitizing publications will be an ongoing project and additional publications will be added to the site as time allows. Please explore these digitized publications at your leisure at the following link: <https://cwfpublishations.omeka.net/>



Colonial Williamsburg Foundation publications now available online.



## CHANGES FOR FELICITY

Over the past few months many have seen me behind the circulation desk and have asked, “What are you doing back there?” Well, I’ve moved! I started my journey as a server at Shield’s Tavern back in 2010. In 2016, I moved into a full-time American Indian Interpreter position. Now I find myself, in school, and at home within the echoing halls of the Rockefeller Library as a Library and Archival Assistant.

“What is that? What do you do?” I’ll spare you my job description and simply say that I help the librarians, archivists, and digital media staff with many time-consuming projects. Some days you’ll find me in the cold box filing negatives and slides. Other days you may see me processing a book binding order. Another day may be spent digitizing records for use by staff across the foundation. The tasks vary and the learning is endless.

I have recently received conservation and preservation training from Museums, Preservation, and Historic Resources colleagues Pam Young and Petrina Copes as our Rare Book collection is in need of protection. Our rare books will soon find themselves safe and snug within custom made enclosures. There are only a few hundred to make so this project may take a while.

I am also thankful to continue to have the opportunity to work with colleagues in the Historic Area. Carol Couture recently brought in a donation of Native American children’s books. This donation has matured from a small donation to a larger donation to a reassessment of some of the children’s books within our Janice McCoy Memorial Collection for Youth. Carol’s many years of teaching experience and knowledge are an invaluable addition to this project. Thank you, Carol!

When I am not learning on the job, I’m studying at home. I am currently enrolled in classes through the Colonial Williamsburg and Thomas Nelson Community College partnership. I hope to end my schooling

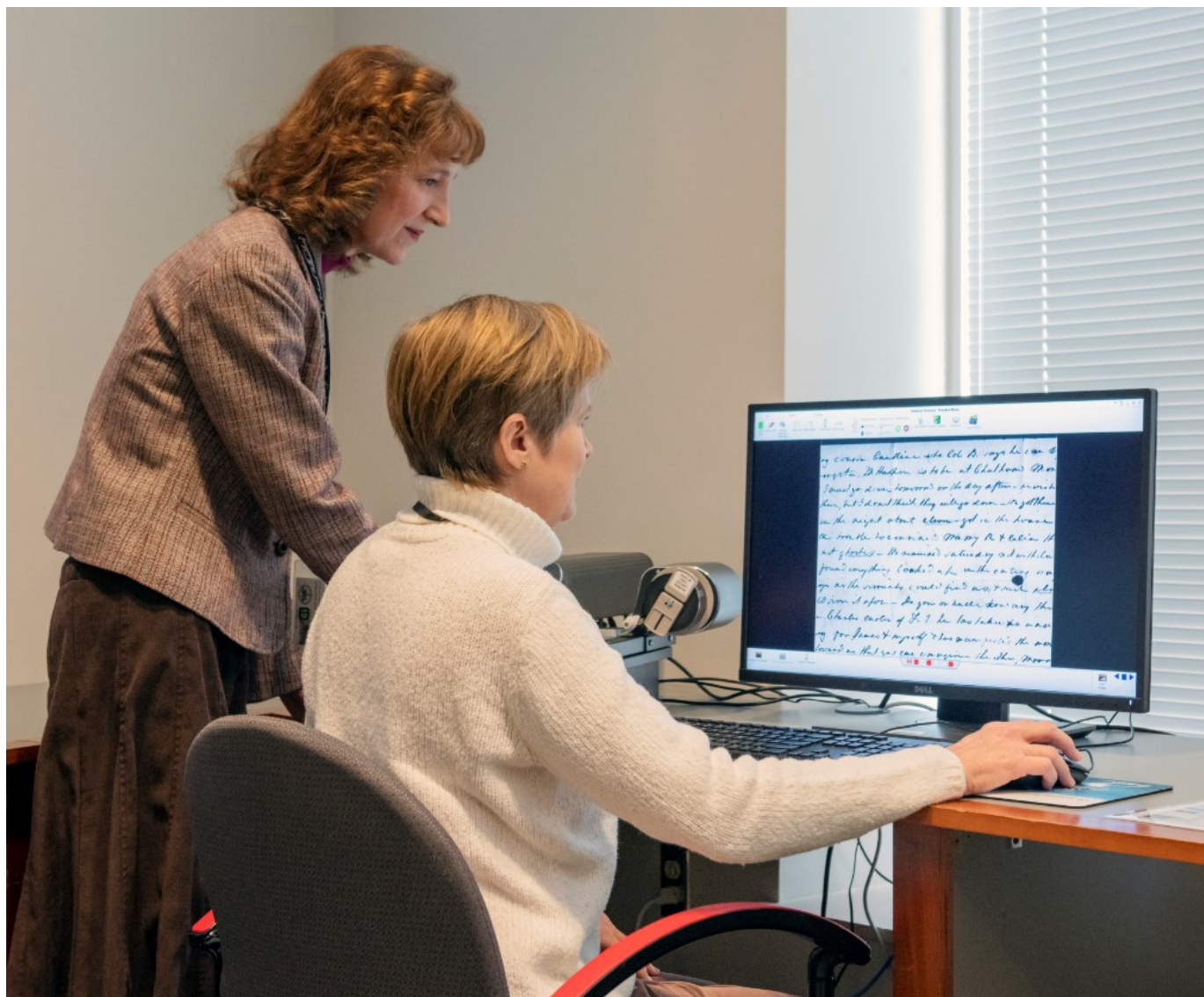


***Felicity Meza-Luna, in the Paper Conservation Lab, at work on a document from the Corporate Archives.***

journey with my Master’s in Library and Information Science. While I spend my days assisting the staff here, they are also helping me learn in the process. That’s what libraries are all about, learning.

So next time you see me behind the circulation desk, or zooming about in general, feel free to ask me for help. If I can’t help, someone else can and we’ll get to learn and help each other.

## MICROFILM ROOM



***Marianne Martin, Visual Resources Librarian, assists Amy Watson, Publications and Production Editor, in the operation of a digital microfilm reader.***

Visitors to the Library will notice that our microfilm research room has been newly remodeled and outfitted with two state-of-the-art digital microfilm scanners. The purchase of the units was made possible by a very generous donor and have allowed outdated microfilm units to be replaced.

Microfilm can be a daunting task for even the most experienced researcher. These powerful new tools make viewing microfilm a much easier process, allowing researchers to sharpen, resize, enlarge, and crop digital images on the fly. The units also help streamline the browsing and saving processes. The system's software allows images to be enhanced, making previously problematic images much more legible. Once created, images can be saved in various formats and sent to multiple locations including, email, OneDrive, Dropbox, or USB. If needed, images can also be sent to a nearby network printer.

The library maintains a rich and varied microfilm collection for the benefit of staff and visiting researchers. While most of this collection can be accessed through our online catalog (<https://research.history.org/library/>), some of the microfilm holdings have yet to be cataloged. Researchers are encouraged to contact the Library at 757-565-8510 or 757-220-7249 or email [rocklibrary@cwf.org](mailto:rocklibrary@cwf.org) for additional information.



## MICROFILM ROOM

(continued)



*Our much improved microfilm room gets more use than this image implies.*

### ROCKEFELLER LIBRARY and HISTORICAL RESEARCH ON FACEBOOK

The Rockefeller Library and Historical Research was recently added as a group on the official Colonial Williamsburg Facebook page. We are so excited to have a social media presence again! Our weekly posts will feature content from the Library's varied collections including recent acquisitions, exhibitions announcements and highlights, research resources and opportunities, and educational programming related to the Library's collections. We will also post about research from the Historical Research department in their subject specialty areas of Virginia in the American Revolution, slavery and unfree labor, women's history, gender and sexual diversity in the 18th century (LGBTQAI+), waiting men, digital history, 18th century law, and etiquette and deportment. There will also be recurring features like "Image of the Week" and "Rockefeller Recommendations." Want to be a member? Just go to <https://www.facebook.com/groups/RockefellerLibrary> or go to the official Colonial Williamsburg FB page and look for us under the 'groups' tab and ask to join our group. We'll see you online!



## BIRD'S EYE VIEW OF THE CAPITOL



*Drone photography of the Capitol's south façade captured by library volunteer Wayne Reynolds.*

Last June you may remember that Library volunteer photographer Wayne Reynolds photographed aerial views of the Governor's Palace with his drone. The resulting images were rich in blue sky and green vegetation. What a difference roughly half a year makes! This past January Wayne and I set out with his drone to photograph the Capitol and surrounding grounds. As we all know, weather in January is quite different than the weather in June – especially in Virginia. If there is no snow then there is definitely rain. Lots of rain. We shot the Capitol the day after a cold winter rain had soaked the area. While you can see how wet it is – the winter weather also removed all the leaves from the trees providing us with an unobstructed view of the building itself. Not only were we able to clearly capture all angles of the Capitol but also views west down Duke of Gloucester Street and aerial views of the William Finnie House and surrounding buildings on Francis Street. Wayne also managed to nab a selfie of us with Burke Humphries from the Security and Safety department. Burke is always with us on drone shoots to ensure the safety of guests, employees and buildings while the drone is flying. We're planning on reshooting the Capitol when the leaves begin to bud so we can compare winter with spring. Until then, however, we'll still keep Wayne's drone busy to provide us with even more bird's eye views of the Historic Area.



**BIRD'S EYE VIEW OF THE CAPITOL**

**(continued)**



***Drone photography of buildings along Francis Street, including Bassett Hall by library volunteer Wayne Reynolds.***



***The drone team: Burke Humphries, Wayne Reynolds, Tracey Gulden.  
Photograph by Wayne Reynolds.***



## NEW ACQUISITION: Q. WILSON HODGES PRE-RESTORATION PHOTO COLLECTION



*View looking west down Duke of Gloucester Street from the site of the Capitol, Williamsburg, Virginia, circa 1904-1905.*

The Visual Resources Collection, located within Special Collections, received a donation of twenty pre-restoration-era photographs of Williamsburg, Jamestown, and Yorktown thanks to the generosity of Susan Hodges Hilliard. Dating to circa 1904-1905 and possibly taken by or collected by Q. Wilson Hodges, a family member who attended the College of William & Mary and resided at the Theta Delta Chi fraternity house.

Among the photos documenting historic structures in Williamsburg are the Powder Magazine, the George Wythe House, Bruton Parish Church, the Wren Building, the Brafferton Building, and the President's House. A view looking west down Duke of Gloucester Street from the Capitol site shows the exposed foundations of the structure as excavated by the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities (APVA) after their acquisition of the property in 1897. The monument erected in 1904 to commemorate members of the House of Burgesses who formed associations against the importation of British goods is visible at the center of the photo.



## Q. WILSON HODGES PRE-RESTORATION PHOTO COLLECTION

(continued)

Another intriguing photograph captures the crenellated brick building next to the Thomas Everard House that served as a law office. It was torn down in the early 1950s when restoration work progressed to the Everard property. Located on the north side of the Everard House on Palace Green, the small outbuilding resembling a castle became a distinctive landmark when Misses Estelle and Cora Smith opened the house to boarders in the early twentieth century. The collection also includes images of the ruins of the church tower and Ambler House on Jamestown Island and Grace Episcopal Church and the Moore House in Yorktown.

The Rockefeller Library is always interested in obtaining photographs, slides, postcards, drawings, and albums relating to Williamsburg to augment its internal visual archives. Please contact us at [specoll@cwf.org](mailto:specoll@cwf.org) if you would like to discuss a possible donation.



*Thomas Everard Office, Williamsburg, Virginia, circa 1904-1905.*

## STATISTICALLY SPEAKING

# 2019 @ THE ROCK

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### CW PUBLICATIONS

digitized and available at <https://cwfpublishings.omeka.net/> including *Colonial Williamsburg Interpreter*; *Becoming Americans*; *Broken Chains*; *Drummer's Assistant*; *Geddy Garden News*; *Colonial Williamsburg Animal News*; *John D. Rockefeller, Jr. Library Newsletter*

12

### PRESENTATIONS

made by Library and Historical Research staff to external organizations, including 9 sessions of the hugely popular "The Evolution of Merchants Square" talk highlighting our vast photograph collections.

415

### IMAGES

from the Library's Visual Resources Collection uploaded and cataloged, creating 5 new collections available at <https://rocklib.omeka.net>

4,416

### CHECKOUTS

4,317 books  
99 A/V materials

866 items lent to William & Mary faculty and students

152 items lent through Interlibrary Loan

16,245

### VISITORS

to the Library, including staff, researchers, and guests. Many of our guests visited the Library as part of the 150 "Behind the Scenes at Bruton Heights" tours offered in 2019.

33,923

### ASSETS

added to "The Source," Colonial Williamsburg's digital asset system for Media Collections. 2019 also saw the launch of [Media Collections Online](#), a new offering that allows for purchase of the official photography of Colonial Williamsburg.



## 2019 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT GRANT AWARDEES

Christopher Hartman, Theatrical Performer

Presented an interpretation at the National Gathering for the Coalition of Historical Trekkers.

Aubrey Moog, Apprentice Weaver

One-Week Weaving Intensive at Marshfield School of Weaving.

Hunter Cridlin, Apprentice Masonry Trades

18th Century Architecture of Annapolis and the Eastern Shore with all four Brickmakers.

Bryan Austin, Nation Builder James Madison

Writing and storytelling workshops .

Michael Romero, Orientation/Sites Interpreter

Online Celestial Navigation Course and Certification.

Daniel Cross, Nation Builder young George Washington

Horseback Refresher Lessons, and tour of sites of George Washington's Fort Necessity and Braddock Campaigns of 1754 and 1755.

Amber Staker, Business Analyst

Subscription to Data Reporting Enhancement and Visualization learning resource.

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John Welch, Apprentice Shoemaker

Research Trip to New England Shoe Collections.

Tyler Wilson, Foodways Apprentice

Attendance at 2019 SEALHFAM Conference Historic Arkansas Museum in Little Rock, Arkansas.

Rebecca Starkins, Apprentice Milliner and Mantua-Maker

Clothing research trip in four northeastern museum collections.

Mary Carter, Nation Builder Aggy of Turkey Island

Attendance at the Association of African American Museums (AAAM) annual conference in Jackson, MS.

Elyse Bennett, Groups Interpreter

Attendance at 2019 SEALHFAM Conference Historic Arkansas Museum in Little Rock, Arkansas.

Katherine Tolson, Orientation Interpreter

Introduction to Woodcuts Class at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts by Dennis Winston.

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To learn how you can help or for assistance, please call 757-220-7249; 757-565-8510 or email us at [rocklibrary@cwf.org](mailto:rocklibrary@cwf.org).