



# The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation

JOHN D. ROCKEFELLER, JR LIBRARY

SUMMER 2018

NEWSLETTER

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Welcome to the inaugural issue of the John D. Rockefeller Jr. Library Newsletter. The newsletter seeks to build a sense of community among those who care for, contribute to, and use the unique historical resources in our collection. The newsletter will feature recent acquisitions and highlight exhibitions, publications, websites, and educational programming related to the Library's collections.

## CORPORATE ARCHIVES WELCOMES ITS FIRST RESEARCHER AT THE ROCK

On May 30, Corporate Archives staff welcomed their first researcher since moving the collection to the John D. Rockefeller Jr. Library. Katherine Ainslie, Stewardship Writer with Colonial Williamsburg's Development team, visited the new reading room location to review the "Boxwood Book," a 1920s-era volume produced by then-landscape designer Arthur Shurcliff. The book documents Shurcliff's design plans for the boxwood plants that were purchased from locations throughout the Southeast United States. The book contains plans, photographs, and descriptions of the plants — both in their native setting and for their planned planting locations within the Historic Area.

The Corporate Archives relocation from the Goodwin Building in June was made possible by a \$227,914 Museums for America-Collections Stewardship grant from The Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) and support from a generous private donor. The project provided for the purchase and installation of high-density compact shelving, development of a box management system, and the move of the corporate archives collection and staff offices to the Library.

The Corporate Archives, which serves as the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation's corporate memory, was created in 1945 to document the administrative, business, and legal history of the Restoration and the Foundation.

"Thanks to IMLS funding and the support of our donor, we were able to move the corporate archives to an environment at the Library much more suitable for long-term records



**Archivist Donna Cooke and Katherine Ainslie (Development) examine the Boxwood book.**

preservation and the move will also vastly improve our ability to provide quality reference services," said Library Director Carl Childs. "We are enormously grateful for IMLS and donor support for this exciting and worthwhile project."

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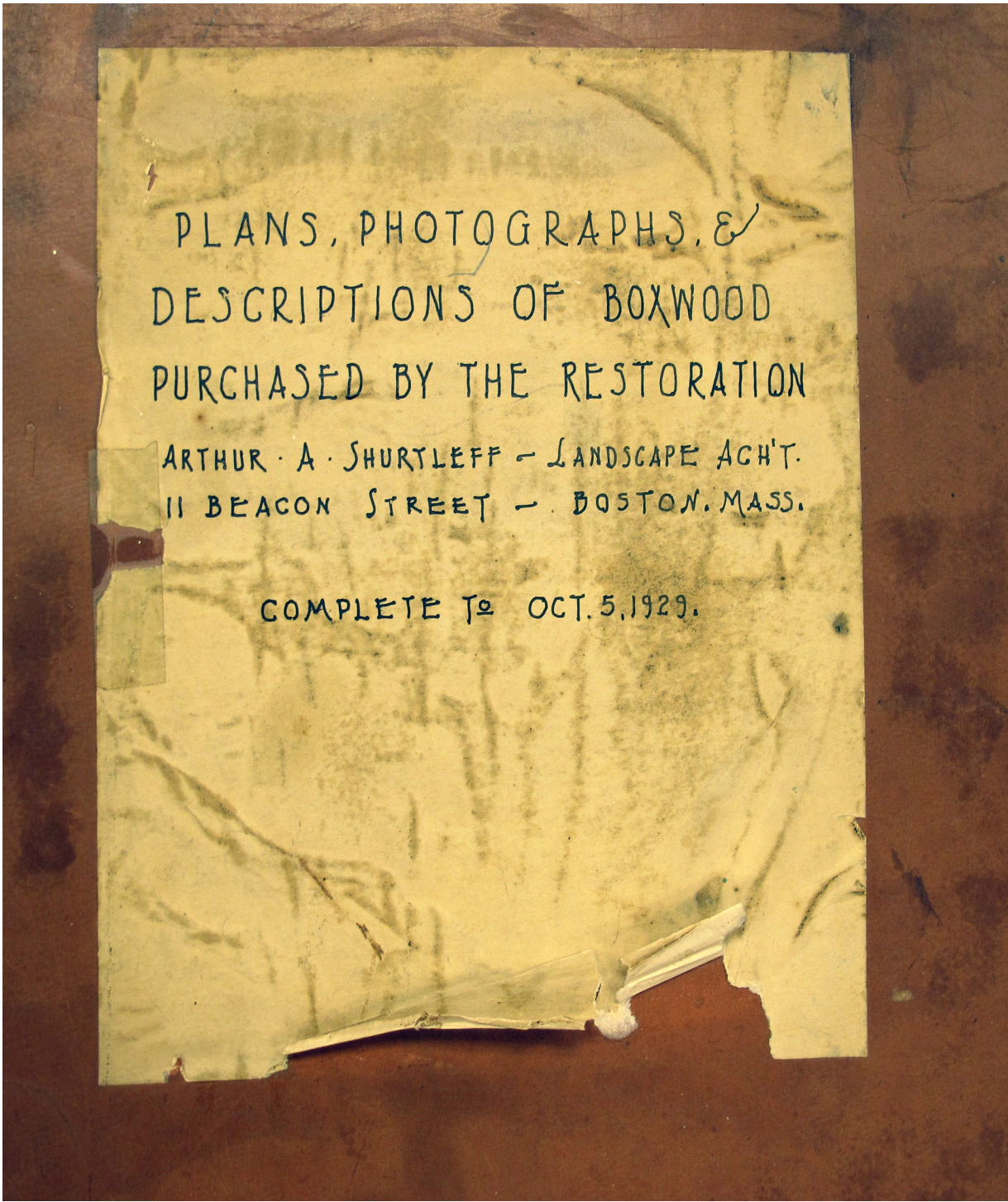
## EVERARD HOUSE EXHIBIT

"Celebrating Three Hundred Years at the Everard House," an exhibit to accompany the observance of the three hundredth anniversary of the Thomas Everard House, opened recently at the John D. Rockefeller Jr. Library. Visitors and Colonial Williamsburg staff can learn more about the house's history, residents, architectural restoration, and educational programs via a variety of objects from the Library's collections, including manuscripts, corporate documents, photographs, and drawings. (continued on page 2)



EVERARD HOUSE EXHIBIT (continued)

Selected museum objects complement the archival treasures and illustrate the important role played by architectural preservation and investigation in maintaining and interpreting the Everard site. Highlights include original letters written by Thomas Everard, letters, postcards, and photos relating to later residents, brochures and photos from the official opening in 1952, and notebooks, drawings, and even paint and dendrochronological samples documenting the house's restoration.



The cover and title of the "Boxwood Book."



Items documenting the Everard House in the period before it was restored to its 18th-century appearance.

Image by Wayne Reynolds.



## RESEARCH NOTES

Nicole Brown is a Colonial Williamsburg interpreter who portrays 18th-century Williamsburg resident Ann Wager. Her portrayal is thoroughly grounded in the research she conducts at the John D. Rockefeller Jr. Library. Below she discusses her portrayal and the role the Library plays in her research.



*Character interpreter Nicole Brown portrays Nation Builder Ann Wager on the breezeway of the Robert Carter House, March 1, 2018.*

Many of these books, such as John Van Horne's seminal work *Religious Philanthropy and Colonial Slavery*, are currently out of print and would not be readily available to me without the Rockefeller Library. Similarly, the research files held in the Library's Lektriever system is carefully catalogued with specific material on individuals who lived in Williamsburg by my predecessors at the Foundation. This system has made it infinitely easier to quickly find material on individuals such as Ann Wager.

The library's electronic subscriptions to key eighteenth century databases should also not be overlooked. While it took me several months to cross-reference international sources, I have finally compiled a list of every single book that was used at the Williamsburg Bray School in 1760. This would simply have been impossible without our Library's subscription to the Eighteenth Century Collections Online (ECCO). Our compilation of local court and parish records has also been invaluable in discovering more about Ann's life prior to her work at the Williamsburg Bray School.

I could go on for pages about all the resources I use at the Rockefeller Library, but this essay would then become a tome when I merely wish to write a few paragraphs. Simply put, I will always be appreciative for the time, care, and effort of our library staff. Without their work and dedication, I could not portray Ann Wager or accomplish any successful interpretive work at The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation. It is a blessing and a privilege to have colleagues at the Library who make my work come alive.

### A FOND FAREWELL

Rockefeller Library volunteer Joann Baker (*see photo on page 4*) has left the Library after thirty-two years of dedicated service. In those years, she contributed to every aspect of the library's operations. Recently, she reached a significant milestone surpassing 6,000 hours of volunteer work for Colonial Williamsburg. As one of the first group of volunteers selected to work at the newly consolidated Foundation Library at the Boundary Street Office Building in January 1986, Joann initially worked for Public Services Librarian Susan Berg as a shelver and

Working as an interpreter requires dedicated time to research and compile information. This is especially true as a character interpreter, where it is my privilege to portray Ann Wager as part of the Nation Builder Unit. It is absolutely necessary that I have the most reliable resources and tools available to research Mrs. Wager in order to make her come alive; this has been made possible only through the research collections of the John D. Rockefeller Jr. Library.

When I began my research, Ann Wager's life and work were a jumble of limited facts and possible theories. However, Rockefeller Library staff have enabled me to tackle the perceived historical limitations surrounding this individual. The plethora of books that have enabled me to study the Associates of Dr. Bray, the last major institution Mrs. Wager worked for in her life, have been critical in uncovering her perceptions on education, religion, and slavery.

### A FOND FAREWELL (continued)

stacks maintenance assistant. Next she moved to Technical Services, where she helped Technical Services Librarian Mary Haskell to put jackets and spine labels on books.

When the Library and its collections moved to the Bruton Heights complex in 1997, Joann transitioned to working with George Yetter and Gail Greve in Special Collections, where she logged many hours of data entry work with the architectural drawings and Virginia Gazette index. Finally, after a short period working with Inge Flester in library administration, Joann began working on box and folder lists, box labels, and other typing and data entry tasks for the Visual Resources Collection. Between 2005 and 2018, Joann has completed many significant projects, including production of 367 box labels for a large collection of vintage prints relating to the initial restoration work at Williamsburg from the late 1920s-1930s.

A dedicated and loyal supporter of Colonial Williamsburg, Joann also shared her talents at the Visitor's Center as a volunteer at the "May I Help You?" desk, where she worked a weekly shift between 1988 and 1992. She even occasionally contributed her time as a volunteer on call. Joann and her husband, Bob, have kindly made donations to support the purchase of archival supplies and conservation treatments for objects in Special Collections. They both believe in the educational mission of the Library and have seen firsthand the impact it has had upon museum staff and the general public over the years. When asked whether she would encourage others to volunteer at the library, she replies "Give it a try. If I hadn't enjoyed it, I wouldn't have stayed so long."





*Joann Baker receiving her 30 year pin from Colonial Williamsburg President Mitchell Reiss in 2016.*

**PLUGGED IN: THE ELECTRONIC FRONT**

	<p><a href="#">Letter to Mrs Nicholas at Williamsburg, Virginia from her sister, S Fairfax</a></p>	<p>9 Sep 1775</p>	<p>CO 5/40 Part 1</p>
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As more libraries and archives digitize their collections, online access to primary sources gives researchers the next-best thing to viewing these materials in person. The John D. Rockefeller Jr. Library maintains many subscriptions to digital collections that focus on the colonial and Revolutionary periods, providing Colonial Williamsburg’s historians and interpreters with instant access to 18th century books and newspapers; papers of the country’s Founders; legislative and executive documents of the newly-formed government; and a variety of primary sources related to special topics such as the slave trade and plantation life.

Recently, the Foundation funded the addition of an exciting new database to the Library’s collection. Covering the period 1606-1822, Colonial America consists of 1,450 volumes of British Colonial Office files held at the National Archives in London. This trove of largely manuscript material includes letters, court records, diaries, maps and building plans, military documents, petitions, shipping lists, and more – all illuminating the political, economic, military, cultural and social life of the period. Like the Library’s other electronic resources,

Colonial America is available at any computer connected to the CWF network through a link on the library’s website.

Colonial America contains numerous items relating to 18th-century Williamsburg including a letter from Sally (Cary) Fairfax in Yorkshire to her sister, Anne (Cary) Nicholas in Williamsburg, dated September 9, 1775. The letter reads in part: “Yr pathetick description of Yr town, and my Brother Nicholas, and three of Yr Sons bearing Arms, is to Me descriptive of all the horrors of the approaching War; God of His mercy protect and deliver them. I hope it is not Treason to Pray for my Friends; the last Weeks Papers contain’d a Proclamation declaring it treason to aid, abet, or corrispond with the Rebellious Americans, so you see what I venture when I write to you.”

Retrieved 7/20/18 from Colonial America, Module 3: The American Revolution Volume CO 5/40 Part I (Secretary of State: Intercepted letters to and from American colonists, 1773-1776).

The *John D. Rockefeller Jr. Library Newsletter* is a publication of Colonial Williamsburg’s John D. Rockefeller Jr. Library.

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