

Lemon Project Spring Symposium 2015
Theme: "Ghosts of Slavery: The Afterlives of Racial Bondage"
April 10 & 11, 2015

Friday, April 10th

7:30pm -10:00pm

Bruton Heights School, Lane Auditorium

301 1st Street Williamsburg, VA

Welcome

Jody L. Allen, Managing Director and Co-chair of the Lemon Project

Michael Halleran, Provost

"Riding in Cars with Black People and Other Newly Dangerous Acts: A Memoir of Vanishing Whiteness"

written & performed by Chad Goller-Sojourner

Followed by community discussion

Saturday, April 11th

College of William & Mary School of Education

301 Monticello Ave. Williamsburg, VA

8:30am – 9:30am

Check-in and Continental Breakfast

Matoaka Room

9:30am

Opening Remarks

Jody L. Allen

Introduction of Speakers

James Padilioni, American Studies Graduate Student

9:45am – 10:45am

Humanizing the Dehumanized: Addressing the Afterlives of Slavery on the Public Stage

Stephen Seals, Manager, Program Development, African American and Religion Interpretation, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation

Hope Wright, '97 Actor/Interpreter, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation

10:50am

Remarks

Taylor Reveley, President

11:00am -12:15am

Panel Sessions

Transforming Death & Trauma

Matoaka Room

-Jamie Warren, “They are Merely a Decaying and a Death’: Slavery, Death, and the Politics of History”

-Kay Wright Lewis, “Did Not I Tell You There Would Be War?” Transhistorical Memories of Trauma and Martyrdom after Nat Turner’s Insurrection”

-Whitney Fields, ‘15 “Among the Graves: Constructing Community, Resistance, and Freedom at the Grave”

Moderator: Hannah Rosen, Assistant Professor of History & American Studies, College of William & Mary

Slavery and the University

Dogwood A

-Alfred L. Brophy, “Proslavery Thought and the Southern College Students: Student Literary Society Debates, 1835-1861

-Allen Buansi, Antebellum UNC: Training Grounds for the Sons of Slaveholders and the Fathers of Jim Crow.

-Kelley Fanto Deetz, “Slavery and Shame at Jefferson’s University: Institutional Honesty and Community Engagement

Moderator: Patricia Lott, Assistant Professor of English & Africana Studies, College of William & Mary

The Limits of Freedom

Classroom 1056

-Helen Gibson, “Hog Stealing in Virginia’s Colonial Statutes: Racially Discriminatory Seeds of Felon Disenfranchisement Sown in the Colonial Capital”

-William Horne, “Labor and Political Alliances among the Uprooted in Post-emancipation West Feliciana Parish

Moderator: Susan A. Kern, Executive Director of Historic Campus

12:15pm – 1:00pm

Lunch

1:15pm – 2:30pm

Individual Presentations

Dogwood A

-Carol Hill, Burnell K. Irby, & Keith Irby, “I Have Certain Constitutional Rights: The Correspondence of Cornelia Whiting Burrell, 1935 -1986”

Moderator: TBA

Classroom 1056

Jacquelyn Y. McLendon, "Earth Matters: Reconstructing Discriminatory Ecocriticism"

Moderator: TBA

Matoaka Room

Brian Palmer & Erin Hollaway Palmer, "Make the Ground Talk: An Update on the Search for the Community of Magruder"

Moderator: R. Trent Vinson, Cummings Associate Professor of History

2:45pm – 3:45pm

Community Discussion Continued: Remembering Never to Forget: Memorializing those workers who were enslaved and exploited by the College

3:45pm

Wrap Up Matoaka Room

Leah Glenn, Lemon Project Co-Chair

7:00pm – 9:00pm

The Lemon Project- Spoken Word Event

Sadler Center Lodge 1

More About...

Riding in Cars with Black People & Other Newly Dangerous Acts: A Memoir in Vanishing Whiteness

PERFORMANCE SUMMARY:

Riding in Cars with Black People & Other Newly Dangerous Acts: A Memoir in Vanishing Whiteness is the groundbreaking and crushingly honest story of what happens when a black boy, raised by white parents, "ages out" of honorary white and suburban privilege and into a world where folklore, statistics, and conjecture deem him dangerous until proven otherwise. At times funny, biting and somber ***Riding in Cars...*** takes audiences on an intense and insightful journey, along the way unpacking race, privilege and policing like only a transracial adoptee can.

With playful humor and sharp observance ***Riding in Cars...*** continues to resonate with diverse audiences. Demonstrating how even the most painful experiences can be reclaimed, transformed, and accepted for what they are: the building blocks of our unique identities.

Brenden Kiley of the *Stranger* says "Growing up "white" ... and "becoming black" gives Goller-Sojourner a powerfully unique position to talk about the strange racial ruptures in our culture[as] he has lived on at least two sides of the many-sided divide and can describe its contours more accurately than most anyone."

The production originally debuted in April 2013, under the direction of BROWNBOX African-American Theater artistic director **Tyrone Brown**. Brown explains, "Chad's work is brilliant. He has this remarkable ability to transport the audience to a time and place showered in such vivid detail that you actually become a witness to his life. As a performer, Chad is so engaging that it's like you are the only other person in the room and he has personally invited you into his past to experience his life first hand."

“Ghosts of Slavery: The Afterlives of Racial Bondage”
Presentation Abstracts

Proslavery Thought and the Southern College Students: Student Literary Society Debates, 1835-1861 Alfred L. Brophy, Ph.D.; J.D. Professor of Law University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill "Proslavery Thought and Southern College Students: Student Literary Society Debates, 1835-1861" turns to the debate topics of the student literary societies, as a gauge of the topics of interest to students. It draws on the literary society records from UNC, Wake Forest, Washington College, and William and Mary to gauge what students' ideas towards economic development, immigration, war, duty, religion, and literature, and slavery. The debates reveal the increasing concern students have over the future security of slavery and their increasingly strenuous advocacy of slavery, such as support for re-opening the slave international slave trade, as they also reveal a robust spirit of enterprise and support for a separate southern nation. The debate topics serve as a gauge of the interests of students in the era before public opinion polls. They reflect the connections between the wealthy and well-educated and support for slavery and the market economy.

Antebellum UNC: Training Grounds for the Sons of Slaveholders and the Fathers of Jim Crow. Allen Buansi, third year law student, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill As Nat Turner evaded capture after leading a Virginia slave revolt in August 1831, the undergraduate students at the University of North Carolina decided to take matters into their own hands. These students would lobby the governor for arms to defend themselves against their “restless” slaves. Their letter illustrated the students' inextricable link to the institution of slavery. This paper is essentially a collective biography of the students who graduated from the University of North Carolina in 1854 and 1855, following a robust 1850 Census. This paper examines these students' courses of study, geographical origins within and outside of the state as well as the family and social backgrounds of a few notable graduates. Finally, this paper explores the students' careers following graduation. As the sons of slaveholders themselves, these students would go on to play critical roles in shaping North Carolina during the Civil War and Jim Crow era.

Slavery and Shame at Jefferson's University: Institutional Honesty and Community Engagement, Kelley Fanto Deetz, Ph.D. University of Virginia They call U.Va. “The Plantation.” The African American community in Charlottesville has a long and controversial relationship with the brick-lined ivory tower that occupies a central part of their city. There is no surprise that Thomas Jefferson's university is steeped in historical and contemporary racial politics. The University of Virginia was constructed and maintained by enslaved laborers. Jefferson's acclaimed brilliance in designing the cultural landscape of his university had an ulterior function. His adoration of classical design meshed with the politics of 19th-century racial slavery made his aesthetic choices the ideal stage to manipulate race and place in the public sphere. The ideological foundations of slavery coupled with a landscape built to control Black bodies continue to inform contemporary race relations. The President's Commission on Slavery and the University is addressing these tangled relationships as the ghosts of slavery are seen in almost every brick at the university. These bricks exclude, prevent, and intimidate by design, and they contain a shameful legacy of our collective past. The University of Virginia's nickname “The Plantation” speaks to almost 200 years of racial discourse. What has changed?

“Among the Graves: Constructing Community, Resistance, and Freedom on Nineteenth Century Plantation Burial Grounds” Whitney Fields, '15 History and American Studies, College of William and Mary

This paper examines the uses of plantation graves by enslaved people. Drawing on the Works Progress Administration “American Slave Narratives” and nineteenth century narratives written by formerly enslaved people, I identify the grave as a space of resistance where enslaved people formed community, deliberately resisted plantation owner demands, and reinterpreted the meaning of freedom. During funerals and burials, enslaved people established a distinct form of community and felt a “collective responsibility” to one another through their shared experience of enslavement. In instances where they were denied the ability to form community, they defied the attempted mastery of their time, space, and labor by conducting funerals and running away to cemeteries at the risk of facing severe punishment and death. This thesis also explores how enslaved people used the grave as a symbol to develop resistant and radical interpretations of freedom through death and escape.

“Hog Stealing in Virginia’s Colonial Statutes: Racially Discriminatory Seeds of Felon Disenfranchisement Sown in the Colonial Capital” Helen A. Gibson, M.A. University of Munich Virginia’s current practice of felon disenfranchisement is a specter of racial slavery that dates back to colonial-era statutes governing felony conviction and sentencing along racial lines. Conceived in Jamestown and Williamsburg, many early Virginia laws pertaining to felonies were designed to deter property ownership by both enslaved and non-slave Native and African Americans. A pattern of the criminalization of petty livestock theft, including hog stealing, and subsequent singling out of racial minorities for prosecution and conviction was established in Virginia as early as the seventeenth century. Discriminatory petty theft measures were later recalled and reinstated by advocates of racial apartheid and felon disenfranchisement in the post-bellum era. This paper argues that the practice of race-based criminal justice established by the colonial General Assembly continues to haunt Virginia today.

I Have Certain Constitutional Rights: The Correspondence of Cornelia Whiting Burrell, 1935-1986 Carol Hill, Educator and Family Genealogist; Burnell K. Irby, Educator and Family Genealogist; and Keith Irby, Educator and Family Genealogist Our project examines the correspondence of Cornelia Burrell over a fifty-one year span of time with local, state, and federal officials over family property that was taken through eminent domain. Mrs. Burrell was our mother, grandmother, and great grandmother. She was born in York County, Virginia and moved to Washington DC where she worked for the federal government. Mrs. Burrell was the executrix of her parents estates. These letters were found in her personal effects after her death by her grandchildren. These letters relate to the themes of –Black resistance/activism in response to racial oppression, the memory of events in the letters, and bodily and collective social traumas endured by those injured by racial slavery’s after life. The presentation will include the letters, photographs, news articles and memories of her granddaughter Mrs. Carol Hill, and the reading of passages from her letters.

“Labor and Political Alliances among the Uprooted in Post-emancipation West Feliciana Parish, Louisiana” William Horne, Ph.D. Candidate, The George Washington University The advance of Union armies into south Louisiana in the spring of 1862 inspired planters to forge alliances to maintain their control over plantation production just as their former slaves sought allies to protect their newly-won independence, a process that continued into Reconstruction. Employing Simone Weil’s concept of uprootedness, this social history explores the installation of freedom as a period of crisis during which interaction frequently disrupted the existing socioeconomic order, forcing rural Louisianans to reorder their relationships to one another and the land. Rather than viewing post-emancipation conflict as rooted strictly in race and class, the paper finds that the mechanisms of change during the Civil War and its aftermath were themselves disruptive and encouraged participants to construct new identities and communities from the ashes of the antebellum plantation system.

“Did Not I Tell You There Would Be War?”: Transhistorical Memories of Trauma and Martyrdom after Nat Turner’s Insurrection” Kay Wright Lewis, Ph.D. Assistant Professor of History, Norfolk State University Nat Turner’s organized insurrection in 1831 had serious ramifications for enslaved and free African Americans. His war against the institution of slavery was much like other insurrectionary attempts in that the simple objective was freedom from enslavement. Yet no other servile insurrection on American soil generated as much fear and retaliatory violence as did Turner’s. Turner challenged white manhood at its core. This paper argues that the trauma experienced during the aftermath of Turner’s insurrection affected many African Americans deeply. Clearly many of the enslaved did know about Turner’s actions and many revered him for what he attempted to do. Indeed, the memorialization of Turner as a martyr and folk hero is evident. The oral tradition of storytelling and Virginia’s robust participation in the internal slave trade helped to sustain Turner’s memory across the South. And these memories were passed on to future generations.

“Earth Matters: Reconstructing Discriminatory Ecocriticism” Jacquelyn Y. McLendon, Ph.D. Professor Emerita of English, College of William & Mary This essay argues that the valorized “wilderness” has led to misconceptions and misrepresentations regarding Black people’s interest in and involvement with nature writing and environmental issues, especially in the last several decades with the emergence of ecocriticism in the academy and widespread ecological crises. If a definition of ecocriticism is “the study of the relationship between literature and the environment *conducted in a spirit of commitment to environmental praxis*” [emphasis mine], then the exclusion of Blacks from this discourse takes on added significance as a debate not simply about literature or other works of art but about environmentalism and ecojustice. Through examining selected “texts” within a Black expressive tradition this essay challenges hegemonic paradigms and ideologies that continue to segregate Blacks from mainstream environmental and ecocritical concerns. These “texts” represent the voices of resistance—those who tell their own stories—and they give voice to those muted by systemized oppression, demonstrating a kinship with earth “matters” that is both metaphorical and material as well as traditional, a legacy owing to its African roots despite the “shadows of slavery.”

“Make the Ground Talk: An Update on the Search for the Community of Magruder” Brian Palmer & Erin Hollaway Palmer, University of Richmond & Documentary Film Producers We will present research we have conducted for the documentary *Make the Ground Talk* into Magruder, the predominantly African American Williamsburg-area community that was uprooted in 1942-43 to build Camp Peary. We will also share correspondence that relates to our request of U.S. government officials to preserve Old Orchard Cemetery and honor those interred there. The presentation will comprise photographs, documents, audio—archival and recent—and video, and will be framed by our narration. We look forward to an informal, substantive discussion after the presentation.

“They are Merely a Decaying and a Death’: Slavery, Death, and the Politics of History” Jamie Warren, Assistant Professor of History, Borough of Manhattan Community College (CUNY) In his work, *Slavery and Social Death*, Orlando Patterson argued that social death marked the essence of enslavement. Cut off from her own cultural roots and claims to the past, the slave was not only a person without a country, she was a living ghost without a history. Yet, more recently, historians have encouraged us to imagine death as a site where the enslaved articulated what it meant to be among the living, and indeed made “the social” their own. Joining this debate, this paper will examine how slaves and slaveholders used myriad concepts of postmortem inheritance to lay claims to a politics of history, and justify post-emancipation visions of social inclusion. While slaveholders invoked an abstracted, dying slave to link present power to an imagined past, at the cusp of emancipation many slaves pointed to the actual dead bodies of their own to articulate a more just vision of the future.