

W&M BRAY SCHOOL LAB

*Uncovering, documenting, preserving,
and sharing broadly the history and
legacies of the Williamsburg Bray School
(1760 - 1774) and its students.*



wm.edu/braylab

The William & Mary Bray School Lab is a key component of the Williamsburg Bray School Initiative, a ground-breaking and innovative partnership between William & Mary and The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation with the shared goal of uncovering, documenting, preserving, and disseminating the history and legacies of the Williamsburg Bray School and its students. As we reconstruct the Williamsburg Bray School's history, we aspire to transform traditional accounts of America's history into a multi-layered story that centers Black legacy at the heart of U.S. democracy.

The Williamsburg Bray School (1760 - 1774):

- Was founded by the Associates of Dr. Bray, a London-based Anglican charity whose mission included educating Black children in its British Colonies.
- Delivered a pro-slavery education emphasizing Christian morality and utility while also teaching reading, spelling, sewing, and knitting.
- Likely taught 300 to 400 children – boys and girls; enslaved and free – from 3 to 10 years of age.
- Had just one teacher, Ann Wager, during the school's 14 years of operation.
- Has a dynamic Descendant Community with deep roots in the Williamsburg area and beyond.

The William & Mary Bray School Lab:

- Invites descendants, students, faculty, staff, alumni, and others to explore Williamsburg Bray School history and the broader landscape of education in Virginia.
- Has a robust, growing body of research and engagement opportunities in areas including genealogy, oral history, blog writing, digital projects, and more.
- Has produced a dynamic, collaborative book: *The Williamsburg Bray School: A History Through Records, Reflections, and Rediscovery* (Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, 2024).
- Is a unit of W&M's Strategic Cultural Partnerships, led by Ann Marie Stock.

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