

**Bray School Lab:
Annotated Bibliography on the Williamsburg Bray School**

Books and Book Chapters

Van Horne, John C. "The Education of African Americans in Benjamin Franklin's Philadelphia." In *The Good Education of Youth: World of Learning in the Age of Franklin*, edited by John H. Pollack. Oak Knoll Press: University of Pennsylvania Libraries, 2009. 73-99.

Article comparing post-Revolution Bray Schools across colonies. This work highlights the influence of the Philadelphia Bray School on post-Revolution literacy and education for African Americans in Pennsylvania.

Van Horne, John C., and Associates of Dr. Bray (Organization). *Religious Philanthropy and Colonial Slavery: The American Correspondence of the Associates of Dr. Bray, 1717-1777*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986.

Comprehensive, well-cited anthology of the correspondence to and from the Bray Associates in Colonial America. Includes extensive colonial correspondence between 1723 and 1777.

Journal Articles

Bly, Antonio T. "In Pursuit of Letters: A History of the Bray Schools for Enslaved Children in Colonial Virginia." *History of Education Quarterly* 51, no. 4 (2011): 429–59.

Article on the Williamsburg Bray School, with specific focus on Black literacy and perspectives on literacy in the history of African Americans. Some information on Ann Wager and the Bray School students has been updated since this article. Provides a close textual reading of primary sources.

Bly, Antonio T. "'Reed through the Bybell': Slave Education in Early Virginia." *Book History* 16 (2013): 1–33.

Article on writing in Colonial Virginia, looking at literacy not only from the perspective of the dominant white society, but also African and African Americans in eighteenth century Virginia. Comprehensive statistics and citations on Black literacy and the Anglican Church.

Meyers, Terry L. "Benjamin Franklin, the College of William and Mary, and the Williamsburg Bray School." *Anglican and Episcopal History* 79, no. 4 (2010): 368–93.

Compelling article on Benjamin Franklin's involvement in the formation of The Williamsburg Bray School. There is now additional information on Ann Wager and Bray School students since the time of publication.

Research Reports

Allen, Jody, et al. "Report of the First Eight Years." *The Lemon Project*, 2019.

<https://www.wm.edu/sites/lemonproject/documents/the-lemon-project-report.pdf>

This report details work that the Lemon Project completed and goals for future study of enslavement at William & Mary. It also includes a rich collection of sources about slavery at William & Mary and a brief history of enslaved individuals at the college. In relation to the Bray School, this document details initiatives that the Lemon Project wants to undertake or has undertaken to recognize its place in Williamsburg's history and the history of William & Mary.

Lounsbury, Carl et al. "Dudley Digges House aka Bray School and Brown Hall Annex: Room-by-Room Inventory of the Building Fabric." College of William & Mary. 2021.

<https://www.wm.edu/as/niahd/documents/dudley-digges-house-room-by-room-inventory-of-building-fabric-2021.pdf>

This research report was created by Professor Lounsbury's HIST 410 History of Vernacular Architecture class and includes a brief history of the Digges House, home of the Bray School, as well as an architectural study of the building.

Rowe, Linda H. "A History of Black Education and Bruton Heights School." Series Report 0373. Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Library Research Report Series. The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation. 1997.

<https://research.colonialwilliamsburg.org/DigitalLibrary/view/index.cfm?doc=ResearchReports%5CRR0373.xml&highlight=negro#p3>.

This report provides a comprehensive overview of African American education in Williamsburg, using school board meeting minutes since 1870, with a focus on the Bruton Heights School. Along with post-Civil war education and the James City County Training School, it discusses the building and funding of Bruton Heights, its curricula, and segregation.

Newspaper Articles and Press Releases

The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation. "Colonial Williamsburg, William & Mary Identify Structure of the 18th-Century Bray School for Enslaved and Free Black Children." February 25, 2021.

https://media.colonialwilliamsburg.org/media/documents/Bray_School_Release_2_25_Final_Final.pdf.

This press release provides a succinct summary of the findings that led Colonial Williamsburg to identify the Bray School building and a brief discussion of the school's function. It also includes future plans for the Bray School building and research directions.

Cramer, Maria. "University Finds 18th-Century Schoolhouse Where Black Children Learned to Read." *The New York Times*, February 26, 2021.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/02/26/us/william-mary-bray-school-northam.html>.

This article discusses how the Bray School was identified. It also includes information about how enslaved students may have used their education, referencing a few of the Bray School students.

Heim, Joe. "At William & Mary, a School for Free and Enslaved Black Children Is Rediscovered." *The Washington Post*, February 25, 2021, sec. Education.

https://www.washingtonpost.com/education/bray-school-william-mary/2021/02/24/d7888cc8-76c8-11eb-948d-19472e683521_story.html.

This article provides a brief description of the history of the Bray School and the Bray-Digges house. It also discusses challenges in interpreting the Bray School, considering how education can both provide freedom and enforce systems of oppression.

Theses and Dissertations

Trovato, Valerie Scura. "Slate Pencils?: Education of Free and Enslaved African American Children at the Bray School, Williamsburg, VA, 1760-1774." M.A. Thesis, The College of William & Mary, 2016.

This thesis examines critical questions about the Williamsburg Bray School during the eighteenth century. Although some research has been updated since the thesis's publication, it provides insight into ongoing investigation about the Bray School during the mid-2010s.

Oast, Jennifer. "Educating Eighteenth-Century Black Children: The Bray Schools." M.A. Thesis, The College of William & Mary, 2000.

This thesis provides comprehensive scholarship on multiple Bray schools in British North America. in current scholarship. Although some research has been updated since the thesis's publication, it provides insight into ongoing investigation about the Bray Schools during the early 2000s.

Library Collections

Bray Papers, Special Collections Research Center, Swem Library, College of William and Mary. November 2017.

Photostats of letters to and from Bray Associates in Virginia, minute meetings pertaining to Colonial Virginia, and catalogues of books sent to correspondents of the Bray Associates in Tidewater Virginia.

Oral Histories

Williams, Jacqueline Bridgeforth, Omiyemi Green, and Amy Quark. "The Villiage Initiative." The Village (WJCC). Accessed April 27, 2022. <https://www.villagewjcc.org/local-black-history>.

This project looks at oral histories, primary documents, and other material related to Black community voices of the greater Williamsburg-James City County area. The Initiative is also creating resources for K-12 teachers to teach local Black histories in their classrooms.

Williamsburg Documentary Project:

A collection of material, mostly oral histories, that relates to Williamsburg's recent history. Highlighted are a few oral history interviews about African American experiences within

Williamsburg schools. This source is accessible on William & Mary's campus through Special Collections.

- I. Gee, Madeline. 1998. Madeline Gee Oral History conducted on 10.30.98. Interview by Austin Middleton. College of William and Mary. <https://digitalarchive.wm.edu/xmlui/handle/10288/13343>.
Oral history interview with an African American teacher who worked at both Bruton Heights and James Blair schools. She was part of the integration of James Blair and discusses her experiences as a home economics and science teacher, as well as her work in food service at various schools.
- II. Halcomb, Inell, James Payne, Marie Sheppard, Hattie Thomas, and Martha Washington. 1999. James City County Training School (JCCTS) Story Circle on 2.11.99. College of William and Mary. <https://digitalarchive.wm.edu/xmlui/handle/10288/2240>.
Oral history interview with a group of graduates from the James City County Training School. They discuss daily student life and special events, as well as interactions with the neighboring Matthew Whaley school.
- III. Watson, Barbara. 2011. Barbara Watson Oral History on 4.14.11 Interview by Ginger Nealon. College of William and Mary. <https://digitalarchive.wm.edu/xmlui/handle/10288/13831>.
Oral history interview describing her experiences as a daughter of a teacher and a mother and grandmother of students in the Williamsburg Public School system. This includes information about the administration of the school and parent involvement in events, as well as the "Minority Achievement Coordinator" position.

Podcasts and Media Interviews

Covart, Liz, et. al. "Episode 331: Discovery of the Williamsburg Bray School - Ben Franklin's World." Accessed June 21, 2022. <https://benfranklinworld.com/episode-331-discovery-of-the-williamsburg-bray-school/>.

This interview between Liz Covart, Ron Hurst, Maureen Elgersman Lee, and Nicole Brown highlights current scholarship on the Williamsburg Bray School, the Associates of Dr. Bray, and the restoration of the Bray-Digges building.

Hunter, Harmony. "The Past Revealed: Archaeology at the Bray School." Past & Present Podcasts: Colonial Williamsburg. Accessed December 30, 2013. <https://podcast.history.org/2013/12/30/the-past-revealed-archaeology-at-the-bray-school/>.

This podcast discusses archaeological findings at the site of the Bray School and how artifacts may help to illuminate the curriculum of the Bray School.

Kelly, Mary Louise. "Discovery Of Schoolhouse for Black Children Now Offers a History Lesson." *All Things Considered*, NPR. Accessed March 6, 2021. <https://www.npr.org/2021/03/03/973355524/discovery-of-schoolhouse-for-black-children-now-offers-a-history-lesson>.

This article provides a brief description of the Bray School's discovery as well as its history, including the educational curriculum. It also mentions the ways that the Bray School may be interpreted to the public.

Weblinks

The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation. "Williamsburg Bray School," 2021.

<https://www.colonialwilliamsburg.org/learn/research-and-education/architectural-research/williamsburg-bray-school-initiative/?from=home>.

A collection of articles and updates related to the Bray School and Colonial Williamsburg's recent research. Features information about Ann Wager and the partnership with William & Mary.

Bly, Antonio T. "Slave Literacy and Education in Virginia." *Encyclopedia Virginia*, June 24, 2019.

https://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/Slave_Literacy_and_Education_in_Virginia#start_entry.

Similar materials to Bly's work "In Pursuit of Letters." Useful digital gateway to other articles on African American history written for *Encyclopedia Virginia*.