

W&M THE LEMON PROJECT: A JOURNEY OF RECONCILIATION

14TH ANNUAL LEMON PROJECT SPRING SYMPOSIUM

Taking Our Time: Healing Through Black History, Family, and Communities

MARCH 22-23, 2024



This symposium will take place in person at William & Mary's School of Education (301 Monticello Avenue) and virtually over Zoom. The Friday evening performance will be at the Sadler Center's Commonwealth Auditorium at 200 Stadium Drive, and Saturday evening's event will be at Hearth: Memorial to the Enslaved at 115 Jamestown Road.

14TH ANNUAL LEMON PROJECT SPRING SYMPOSIUM

Friday, March 22

| | | |
|-------------------|--|---|
| 8:00 AM-4:00 PM | Registration Check-In | William & Mary School of Education, Concourse |
| 8:45 AM-8:55 AM | Welcome Dr. Jody Allen, Robert Francis Engs Director of the Lemon Project | School of Education, Matoaka Woods |
| 8:55 AM-9:00 AM | Remarks Wanjirũ G. Mbure, Ph.D., Associate Dean, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, Arts & Sciences | Matoaka Woods |
| 9:00 AM-9:15 AM | Break | |
| 9:15 AM-10:30 AM | 3 Concurrent Panels: | |
| PANEL 1: | Voices of Integration: Black Students from the Class of 1969 | Matoaka Woods |
| PANEL 2: | Education Stories of Twentieth Century Virginia | School of Education, Dogwood |
| PANEL 3: | Preserving Legacies: Memorialization and Commemoration (Hybrid) | School of Education, Holly |
| 10:30 PM-10:45 PM | Break | |
| 10:45 PM-12:00 PM | 3 Concurrent Panels: | |
| PANEL 4: | Designing for Racial Healing in Real Time: The Sewanee Praises Memorial Project | Matoaka Woods |
| PANEL 5: | The Guardian’s Legacies of Enslavement Programme: Atoning in the Present for Injustices of the Past (Virtual) | Dogwood |
| PANEL 6: | Resistance and Reclamation of Black Spaces | Holly |
| 12:00 PM-1:10 PM | Lunch | |
| PANEL 7: | From Brown to Green: Freedom of Choice and School Integration in Virginia; Firsthand Participants Tell Their Stories | Matoaka Woods |
| 1:10 PM-1:15 PM | Break | |
| 1:15 PM-2:30 PM | 3 Concurrent Panels: | |
| PANEL 8: | King Iron: Forging Identity Through the Untold Stories of the Iron Furnace Workers of Middle Tennessee (Hybrid) | Matoaka Woods |
| PANEL 9: | Reclamation through Data-Informed Methods for Studying Slavery and Beyond | Dogwood |
| PANEL 10: | Reparative Work and the East Marshall Street Well Project | Holly |
| 2:30 PM-2:45 PM | Break | |

Healing Through Black History, Family, and Communities

2:45 PM–4:00 PM

3 Concurrent Panels:

PANEL 11:

Using Public History such as Markers and Statues to Heal Communities of Color

Matoaka Woods

PANEL 12:

Taking Up Space and Finding Joy in Life, Culture, and Art

School of Education, Dogwood

PANEL 13:

Exploring Family Histories

School of Education, Holly

4:00 PM–4:15 PM

Break

4:15 PM–5:30 PM

3 Concurrent Panels:

PANEL 14:

Healing Ourselves: Black LGBTQ+ Community Making in the Eras of HIV/AIDS and COVID-19: A Panel Commemorating Johnny L. Baily, Ph.D

Matoaka Woods

PANEL 15:

Digital Archives, Communal Care, and Healing through Comics and Flowers

Dogwood

PANEL 16:

Good Ancestors, Silenced DNA, and Researching Our History

Holly

5:30 PM–7:00 PM

Break

7:00 PM–8:00 PM

The Lemon Project with the African-American Historical Society of Newport News & the Hampton University Department of Music & Performing Arts presents “The Yard,” Written by Iris Goode-Middleton.

Commonwealth Auditorium, Sadler Center (200 Stadium Drive) Parking is available at the Stadium.

Reception to Follow Performance.



14TH ANNUAL LEMON PROJECT SPRING SYMPOSIUM

Saturday, March 23

| | | |
|--------------------------|--|--|
| 8:00 AM–4:00 PM | Registration Check-In | William & Mary School of Education, Concourse |
| 8:55 AM–9:00 AM | Welcome Dr. Jody Allen, Robert Francis Engs Director of the Lemon Project Dr. Jajuan Johnson, Lemon Project Mellon Postdoctoral Research Associate | School of Education, Matoaka Woods |
| 9:00 AM–10:15 AM | “Healin de Black Famlee: A Gullah/Geechee Circle of Healing Session” Keynote by Queen Quet, Chieftess of the Gullah/Geechee Nation | Matoaka Woods |
| 10:15 AM–10:30 AM | Book Signing by Queen Quet | Concourse |
| 10:30 AM–11:45 AM | 3 Concurrent Panels: | |
| PANEL 17: | A School Name: The Identity, Impact, and Implications | Matoaka Woods |
| PANEL 18: | Facets of Public History: Graduate Student Experiences and the Lemon Project | School of Education, Dogwood |
| PANEL 19: | Racial Identity and Healing, Critical Conversations, and Family Histories | School of Education, Holly |
| 11:45 PM–12:00 PM | Break | |
| 12:00 PM–1:15 PM | Lunch | |
| PANEL 20: | Mapping as Community Healing: Space, Place, and Legacy at the Williamsburg Bray School | Matoaka Woods |
| 1:15 PM–1:30 PM | Break | |
| 1:30 pm–2:45 pm | 3 Concurrent Panels: | |
| PANEL 21: | Tick-TOCK: Tell Your Story – Objective Imaging Advocacy – Carving Space for Healing, Keeping Sustainable Practices | Matoaka Woods |
| PANEL 22: | Silenced Voices in Interpreting Sites of Slavery (Hybrid) | Dogwood |
| PANEL 23: | Reconciliation through Conversations, History, and Communal Healing | Holly |
| 2:45 PM–3:00 PM | Break | |
| 3:00 pm–4:15 pm | 3 Concurrent Panels: | |
| PANEL 24: | Moved from the Land, Called to the Stand: Reservation Descendant Reflections on the Yorktown Navy Mine Depot Displacement | Matoaka Woods |
| PANEL 25: | Rekindling the Family Flame: A Family’s Pursuit of Liberty from Virginia to Liberia (Hybrid) | Dogwood |
| PANEL 26: | Reassembling the Pieces: Restoration for Descendants of a Race Massacre (Virtual) | Holly |
| 7:00 PM | Spoken Word Event in collaboration with The Black Poets Society | Hearth: Memorial to the Enslaved (115 Jamestown Road, Williamsburg, VA 23185) (Parking is available behind the Admissions Building on Grigsby Drive.) |

Healing Through Black History, Family, and Communities

“Healin de Black Famlee: A Gullah/Geechee Circle of Healing Session” Keynote by Queen Quet, Chieftess of the Gullah/Geechee Nation



Join “Queen Quet, Chieftess of the Gullah/Geechee Nation” in a healing circle for the Black family. This keynote session will be centered in the Gullah/Geechee traditions from the Sea Islands, which extend from the Carolinas to Florida. Yeddi bout who de Gullah/Geechee be and how hunnuh chillun kin heal de Black Famlee.

Queen Quet Marquette

L. Goodwine is a published author, computer scientist, lecturer, mathematician, historian, columnist, preservationist, environmental justice advocate, environmentalist, film consultant, and “The Art-ivist.” She is the founder of the premiere advocacy organization for the continuation of Gullah/Geechee culture, the Gullah/Geechee Sea Island Coalition.

Queen Quet has not only provided “histo-musical presentations” throughout the world, but was also the first Gullah/Geechee person to speak on behalf of her people before the United Nations in Geneva, Switzerland. Queen Quet was one of the first of seven inductees in the Gullah/Geechee Nation Hall of Fame. She received the “Anointed Spirit Award” for her leadership and for being a visionary.

Friday Evening Performance: “The Yard”

“The Yard” is a historical drama, written by Dr. Iris Goode-Middleton, and inspired by true events, it follows the life of Lewis Thompson and other African American men as they worked in the Newport News Shipyard. Lewis Thompson worked in the Shipyard from 1929 until his death November 28, 1966. He was a visionary, a businessman, a community activist for equality, a family man, and above all, a devout Christian man of faith. This show depicts the average life of a working African American man during the Jim Crow Era. It is an inspirational story that highlights the injustices of how Black men were excluded from the union, and how they overcame it because “there is strength in numbers.”

Panel 1:

Voices of Integration: Black Students from the Class of 1969

Moderator: Jackie Williams

Panelists: Willis Potter, Troy Roots, Cynthia Druitt, Mary Ashlock

What are the legacies of school integration today? This panel features

a 44-minute film illuminating the experiences of Black students from the Class of 1969, the first fully integrated graduating class in the Williamsburg-James City County Public Schools. Through the film, Black students reflect on their experiences of trauma, exclusion, and isolation during the first year of mandatory integration. The film represents a process of healing for the students to finally share their stories after more than 50 years. And it is also a call to action for the broader community to address the legacies of integration today. Following the presentation of the film, four panelists from the Class of 1969 will answer questions and reflect on the legacies of school integration in the current educational system and in contemporary debates on school policy and teaching history. This film was created in relation to a digital exhibit titled Voice of Integration: Black Students from the Class of 1969 featured on The Village Initiatives’ Local Black Histories Project.

Panel 2:

Education Stories of Twentieth Century Virginia

Moderator: Dr. Alexis Swanson

Dr. Yvonne Smith-Jones, Mrs. Denise Smith, and Mrs. Brenda Jones Cotman, “Reclaiming the Gifts of the One-Room Schoolhouse in telling the Back Story of Black Political Activism in Charles City, Virginia”

As Black people in Charles City, Virginia heal from being second-class citizens, knowing the history of the trailblazers is vital in understanding the “who” and “why” as the county moves forward. In 1959, Ebony magazine identified Charles City as “Virginia’s Model County” in Black political activism. Emphasis will be placed on the prime movers from the 1940s to 60s. This session will unfold the narrative of how community builders struggled and strived to pave the path to helping future generations become the receivers of the opportunities. These presenters will reveal the narrative with visualizations, artifacts and engage in a Questioning and Answering period. The impact of the trailblazers resulted in a highway marker erected on October 15, 2023. Let’s Build Communities.



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Valerie Alfisha Valentine, "The Birthday Cake (Short Story of Segregated School for Negro Students)"

The practice of segregation demanded both Black and white school age children attend separate schools. All Negro children from the Upper Peninsula –whether rich, poor, middle class, and the Military Bases–attended George Washington Carver Elementary and High School. The commute was a long one, as our community was an old one settled by Free People of Color circa 1775 on the banks of the York River, just miles from Williamsburg, known as “The Reservation.” During a 6th Grade class lesson, students took turns sharing an experience from a birthday. When it was her turn, a shy, quiet, gifted student in hung her head when it was her turn. In soft tones, she explained she had never had a birthday celebration. Her comments touched me to the point of shock and surprise! The antiquated Negro teacher, smooth in her next move, rephrased the question so Nina could contribute. I thought, WHAT? We’re going to just move on from this revelation? Something had to be done. I took note of the actions exemplified by my family and community of long-standing relatives who were self-reliant, experience, resourceful, welcoming and kind. “It was the right thing to do.”

Camilla Lewis Tramuel, "Early African American Education"

Until 1866 and the beginning of the Freedmen’s Bureau, there were no schools in the South or the Confederate states available for black or white children to attend. Thanks to President Abraham Lincoln and the Freedmen’s Bureau, black adults and children got the chance to read and write in public. In 1870, however, Virginia adopted a public school system, setting the education for blacks a step backwards with a “separate but unequal education system”. Most of the funds for public schools was spent for white school children. This presentation will discuss the impact of black schools in New Kent, York, James City, and Charles City Counties. These schools include the Freedmen Bureau, Rosenwald Schools, one and two-room-colored schools, New Kent Training School, and George W. Watkins High School in New Kent County. It will also discuss the Freedmen Bureau, Rosenwald Schools, one/two room-colored

schools, James City County Training School in James City County from 1866 to 1870 when all schools in the United States were fully integrated due to Green vs County School Board of New Kent County.

Panel 3:

Preserving Legacies: Memorialization and Commemoration (Hybrid)

Moderator: Jessica Harris

Panelists: *Nina Smith Polley, Star Reams, Karice Luck-Brimmer*

The Descendants of Enslaved Communities (DEC) at the University of Virginia is proud to present a panel session on our journey of operationalizing the theme “Preserving Legacies: Memorialization and Commemoration” through our unique engagement with descendant groups in Central Virginia. Through the lens of our organization’s mission and vision, which is rooted in research, reclamation, and restorative justice, we will explore the following key topics:

- **The Importance of Memorialization:** Panelists will discuss the role of memorialization in acknowledging the stories, struggles, and contributions of enslaved and free Black communities
- **Community Engagement:** The panel will explore how memorialization initiatives foster community engagement, unity, and a sense of shared history. This includes the involvement of descendants, allies, and supporters in the process.
- **Honoring Legacies:** We will showcase successful memorialization projects and their impact in preserving the legacies of Black communities. This includes discussions of the Memorial to Enslaved Laborers at UVA.
- **Educational and Healing Aspects:** Panelists will highlight how memorialization serves as a tool for education, raising awareness, and contributing to the healing process. We will discuss how these projects play a vital role in advocating for justice and equity.
- **Sustainability and Future Endeavors:** The discussion will also touch upon the sustainability of memorialization efforts and how they pave the way for future initiatives that honor and remember the past while shaping a more inclusive and equitable future.

Panel 4:

Designing for Racial Healing in Real Time: The Sewanee Praises Memorial Project

Moderator: Dr. Woody Register

Panelists: *Laura Battaglia, Kevin Jones, Evelyn Patton*

Sewanee, Tennessee, home of the University of the South, is crowded with Confederate and Lost Cause memorials that preserve and enshrine the post-Civil War rationale of white supremacy. For

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generations Sewanee's white leaders reinforced these praises to white supremacy by systematically erasing the records of the lives and experiences of the African American people who contributed to our town's life. How can this institution reckon with its history and, in doing so, work in partnership with the persons most harmed by the deletion of local Black history? Our response is Sewanee Praises, a comprehensive plan to reverse the erasure of Black history and memory by joining with the people rooted in the Black community to build a monument unlike any other in reviving and sustaining their memories and experiences. Sewanee Praises entails an unusual partnership of local community members and students and instructors from three university programs — Sewanee's Roberson Project on Slavery, Race, and Reconciliation, and design/architecture at Virginia Commonwealth and Virginia Tech — who, over the course of eighteen months, are working together to design and construct a commemorative monument in Sewanee's historic African American neighborhood. Rather than waiting until the project is finished, our panel will offer participants' diverse perspectives on this Black memory and healing project at its six-month mark, well into its first phase but also well before completion. This session in real time invites audience reflections at a stage when such insights can influence its development. We will return to the 2025 Lemon Project Symposium to share and invite reflections near its completion.

Panel 5:

The Guardian's Legacies of Enslavement Programme: Atoning in the Present for Injustices of the Past (Virtual)

Moderator: Ebony Riddell Bamber

Panelists: *Dr. Cassandra Goptar, Maya Wolfe-Robinson*

The panel will explore the early phases of the Guardian's restorative justice programme, which will work in partnership with descendant communities in the Sea Islands and Jamaica, and raise consciousness of the connections between enslaved peoples in the US and Caribbean, and the legacies of slavery in Britain. It will also highlight the research and process of uncovering the Guardian's links with slavery which underpin the restorative justice programme. In March 2023, the Scott Trust issued an apology for the role the newspaper's founders had in transatlantic slavery and announced a decade-long programme of restorative justice. This followed independent academic research which revealed the varied links of the Guardian and historical slavery in Brazil, Jamaica, and the US. Significantly, it uncovered the connection between the founder of the Guardian and the enslaved people of the Sea Islands through the importation of cotton in the 1820s.

Panel 6:

Resistance and Reclamation of Black Spaces

Moderator: TBD

*Halee Robinson, "“Begged me to make this appeal to you for there sake”:
Incarcerated Black Women's Social Worlds as Resistance to the Texas
Prison System, 1883-1912” (Virtual)*

Drawing on sources like personal letters and legislative investigation records, this paper examines the social worlds that tied incarcerated Black women and girls together at Texas' all-women prison farms between 1883 and 1912. The rapidly expanding prison system made social alienation central to its punishment of incarcerated people, but incarcerated Black women and girls resisted this by forming and sustaining social bonds with each other. They assisted with childbirth, provided essential information to each other, helped each other with daily tasks when they were ill or injured, and maintained contact with free Black women on the outside. This paper, then, argues that these personal relationships formed before and during their incarceration were essential to not only how Black women and girls survived their sentences, but also how they challenged the mechanisms of Texas punishment. In line with the Lemon Project Spring Symposium's theme, this paper explores how community building was essential to surviving and resisting the afterlives of slavery. While, in most cases, incarcerated Black women and girls could not completely escape the violence that carceral institutions inflicted on their bodies and communities, they could, and often did, turn to each other for strength, care, and support.

*Benita L. Law-Diao, “Adirondacks: We Were Here, We Are Here,
We Have Every Right to Be Here”*

Black and Latino people often associate the NYS Adirondack State Park region with prisons, white people, wild animals, cold snowy weather, and harassment and injustice. The “Rockefeller Drug Laws” led to the imprisonment of tens of thousands of Blacks and Latinos. To house the prisoners, NYS officials built new prisons in the Adirondack region, converting towns that relied on logging, mining, and tourism for their prosperity into one of the largest prison complexes in the US to help the economies of these small towns and villages that could no longer depend on logging and



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mining. Why would a Black person ever want to venture into the Adirondacks? Because we have history there, we are there now and we have every right to be there. For more than 20 years, Benita has been connecting Black people to nature and history in the Adirondacks through first time camping programs, canoeing, kayaking, snowshoeing, hiking, birdwatching, bus trips, etc. As a Board Member of John Brown Lives! and the Adirondack Experience Museum, she shares the history of Blacks in the Adirondacks from the 1800s to the present with the Black community.

Faye “Consuela” Tinsley, “Transgenerational Trauma: Experiencing “Sarah Baartman” in Black and Brown Spaces”

This presentation examines the transgenerational trauma borne by black and brown women, rooted in the historical objectification of Sarah Baartman, famously known as the “Hottentot Venus.” Her 19th-century dehumanization and exploitation echo in the experiences of contemporary black and brown women, who grapple with persistent stereotypes and objectification. Key objectives include understanding Baartman’s life and its present-day implications, analyzing the multifaceted impacts of transgenerational trauma, and discerning both shared and unique experiences among black and brown women. Our goal is to spotlight this enduring trauma, amplify affected voices, guide policy, and catalyze educational initiatives for healing and understanding.

Kilsa M. Benjamin, “Recalling the Past to Incant the Future”

This presentation will consider how the Negro spiritual became a cultural practice used by Harriet Tubman and other seekers of justice to effect change during slavery. Through the exploration of the spiritual’s history and the analysis of songs which will include, “When the Chariot Comes,” and “Steel Away,” my paper will reveal the importance of the Negro spiritual in the struggle for survival and liberation. This is significant because in exploring this topic we will not only learn new truths about history, but also consider the ways in which this cultural practice could promote future healing in the Black community.

Panel 7:

From Brown to Green: Freedom of Choice and School Integration in Virginia; Firsthand Participants Tell Their Stories

Moderator: Dr. Brian J. Daugherty

Panelists: Rusty Curle, Anthony Green, Larry Woodson, Betty Burrell, Linda Holmes Taylor

New Kent County, Virginia, school desegregation began in 1965 under a freedom of choice plan, which was in effect until the U.S. Supreme Court overturned all token school desegregation plans, including freedom of choice plans, in its decision *Charles Green v. New Kent County, Virginia*. This panel comprises people who were the children – black and white – on the frontlines of school desegregation in New Kent County. Each will describe their experience, how they weathered the pressure, and what they think now of the gains – and losses – of those years.

Panel 8:

King Iron: Forging Identity Through the Untold Stories of the Iron Furnace Workers of Middle Tennessee (Hybrid)

Moderator: TBD

Panelists: Rachael A. Finch and Frederick Murphy

The 19th-century iron furnace industry occurred primarily on the Western Highland Rim in Middle Tennessee and for many decades, traditionally interpreted the perspective of business owners and ironmasters, celebrating their lives as successful entrepreneurs within the industrial antebellum South. Panelists will present extensive research on the enslaved workers of the furnaces, specifically in the middle Tennessee counties of Montgomery, Davidson, and Williamson, sharing perspectives of the enslaved workers, the conditions of their everyday lives, their attempts to forge their own freedom, the skilled craftsmanship, and created dynamic communities after emancipation.

Panelists will highlight how engaging communities affords public historians and practitioners an opportunity for cultivating relationships and creating community conversations that elevate educational programming opportunities for sharing many untold stories of the enslaved – including the stories of the enslaved iron workers. By creating educational programs in safe spaces, healing and equitable partnerships can reclaim the narrative. Panelists will also discuss the present cultural landscape realities of erasure, displacement, and omission from the historical narrative and offer up equitable solutions for repair and reflection vitally needed to heal and sustain communities undergoing renewal and restoration, and address healing techniques and methodologies for overcoming generational trauma.

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We seek to answer how public historians, genealogists, therapists, advocates, and community leaders elevate untold, yet significant, stories to promote community-led reflective, collective healing.

Panel 9:

Reclamation through Data-Informed Methods for Studying Slavery and Beyond

Moderator: Dr. Kristina Poznan

Panelists: *Jazma Sutton, Grace Murry, Camilia Bell, Victorianna Mejia, Jady Evans*

Researchers from four projects will discuss studying the lives of enslaved individuals using data-informed methods, reflecting on the hardships and value of that work. Sutton will discuss the archival challenges of recovering the experiences of Black women in antebellum Indiana and the method of Descendant Archival Practices—an approach to identify, digitize, and share cultural heritage material valued by descendant communities to give them the tools to create and explore their own histories. Murry discusses a student team’s work on the sale of 32 enslaved individuals hired out in Maryland circa 1837. She speaks to the relationship between that history and the systemic consequences of enslavement and struggle for restorative justice in the present day. Camilia Bell shares a 2023 student cohort’s work study of the enslaved community at Tudor Place, striving to center the lives of Afro-descended peoples and with the hope of aiding descendants, organizers, and other willing communities through the example of their work. Living in post-African enslavement global societies, she explains, the future of Black healing and reclamation requires radical community healing practices, intersectional foundations, and uncovering truths once buried. Finally, Victorianna Mejia and Jady Evans explore an economy, forcefully hidden, whereby Black lives were commodified. They wrestle with their dismay that their townscape honors the names of enslavers while ignoring the people who built it. This research contributes to historical justice by focusing on underutilized documents in the Bexar County Archives, intentional language and analysis, and exposing the faulty narrative of the county’s history.

Panel 10:

Reparative Work and the East Marshall Street Well Project

Moderator: Dr. Maggie Unverzagt Goddard

Panelists: *Rome Kamarouthu, Ana Edwards, Joe Jones, Daniel Sunshine, Olivia Washington,*

Through a focus on the East Marshall Street Well Project at Virginia Commonwealth University, this panel provides context for the project, ongoing updates, and future directions for reparative work. The EMSW Project documents the history of medical racism at the Medical College of Virginia (MCV, now VCU School of Medicine)

and its ongoing impact on health inequities today. The EMSW Project takes its name from a well where, in 1994, human remains of more than fifty individuals were discovered during construction of a new medical building. Historical and scientific research confirmed that the remains were of Black Richmonders whose bodies were stolen by MCV professors between 1848 and 1860, used for dissection, and then discarded in the well. The EMSW Project was founded in 2013 and works to enact the recommendations of the Family Representative Council (FRC), a group that represents the descendant community. The recommendations prioritize ethical research, memorialization, and burial of the ancestors with dignity. They also include an emphasis on contextualizing the broader history between Richmond’s medical establishments and the city’s African American community to address healthcare disparities and to better understand their historical roots within the Richmond community. Directed by community-led processes for institutional accountability and change, the EMSW Project is engaging in an oral history and memorialization project to document reparative work while advocating for the fulfillment of the FRC’s recommendations. In this presentation, we will provide the historical context for this work and present our ongoing efforts toward Black healing through reparations.

Panel 11:

Using Public History such as Markers and Statues to Heal Communities of Color

Panelists: *Allison Thomas, Viola Baskerville, Bessida White, Lori Jackson Black*

Many Virginia communities have installed or are developing public history projects to restore the history of Black communities. In an era when facts are often challenged or considered subjective, public history projects can face vocal resistance from portions of the white community, out of proportion to their numbers, often drowning out White and Black supporters. Factual documentation of these events can be dismissed by fringe right-wing groups used to being in charge, and who now see the inclusive historical narrative as racist. Without persistence and detailed documentation, these minority groups can block community efforts at reparations and reconciliation. What strategies can community advocates deploy to overcome white backlash and resistance? Each panelist has navigated this increasingly fraught terrain: Lori worked to establish the Gwynn’s Island Historic District in Mathews County, Virginia, including the role of the Black community on the Island; Allison is working on a historic marker commemorating the history of the Black community on Gwynn’s Island; Viola, as a Richmond city councilperson almost 25 years ago, introduced the resolution to erect Arthur Ashe’s statue on Monument Avenue, and Bessida has successfully gained approval for numerous historic markers in Virginia. Restoring Black history sparks opposition. How can constructive community dialogues take place in such a contentious atmosphere? How can public history help a community heal when divisiveness is the initial response. Are persistence and resilience the best and only responses?

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Panel 12:

Taking Up Space and Finding Joy in Life, Culture, and Art

Moderator: Ramona R. Chapman

Dr. Lisa Winn Bryan, "The 1% Percenters: Cultivating African American Preservationists"

Currently, only 1% of preservation professionals are African American. It is important for Black Americans to play a more prominent role in stewarding the places and spaces that created Black America. Starting in 2022, we launched an African American Fellows Program to help attract students and community preservationists to careers in historic preservation. This initiative was developed after convening a "Working Group" advisory committee of African American scholars and leaders. In our first year, we received over 40 fellowship requests from applicants across the nation. Three Fellows are currently completing this initial year of the program. To continue and grow this program, with the Mellon Foundation's support, we will recruit five fellows per year over the next two years and increase the number of participants in a preservation networking group called The Collective. The main goal is to grow the number of African American preservationists in historic preservation careers while helping add more African American historic sites to official listing programs like the National Register of Historic Places and the Virginia Landmarks Register.

Dr. Najmah Thomas, "Farming is Hot: Cultivating the Next Generation of Freedom Farmers"

This session focuses on Black healing through land, space, and ancestral ties in the context of farming, and food production. The presenter will discuss Black family farming businesses particularly in the southeast, from a historical perspective of Black farmers and Black farming organizations that sowed seeds of self-determination, collective action, and food sovereignty. The presentation will also

include a summary of existing efforts that use farming as a foundation to expand and support generational wealth building, land reclamation, and the revolutionary act of working smarter, not harder. The session will present a case study of Earth People® Farms, a micro farm on St. Helena Island, South Carolina, that is introducing a concept called 'farming is hot' (honoring our traditions, healing our trauma, helping our teens, and honing our talents) to help shape the future of Black family farming in the South Carolina Lowcountry and beyond.

Cydney A. Neville, MAEd, "All of the Joy: Centering, Aligning, and Finding Peace through Art While Researching Familiar Struggles in American and East Africa"

This presentation will introduce participants to my research, "Familiar Struggle," while participating in a Virginia Tech Fulbright-Hays fellowship through parts of East Africa. While conducting research and traveling through nine cities in Kenya and Tanzania, I had the following personal experiences: connecting me to Bantu people, learning Kiswahili, exploring foodways, discovering points of no return, Masai Markets, and coping with the remnants of the Indian Ocean Slave Trade. While the experience took me on a life-altering emotional journey, the resilience of our people (from the Motherland and Black America) always found a way to connect to joy despite challenges will be the focus of this session. Participants will have the opportunity to recreate art using East African practices, journaling, and meditation. This session will directly exemplify how to take time to engage in healing practices.

Deborah "Dede" Todmann Anderson, "Why Did I Wait So Long?"

While accepting our culture through, style, music, art, fashion and even our hair, to this day, African Americans still must withstand the humiliation, ignorance and disdain of us wearing our natural hair. A deeper look is taken into the subject of years of our love and hate of our own hair through the eyes of those who used and use it as a wielding sword, even with the passing of the Crown Act; and how the unexpected onset of a condition, helped to set me free. Also to be addressed is how institutions can reduce the various levels of harm inflicted on African American and people of color; as well how we get the country to acknowledge and address the continuing harm of past atrocities. This presentation shares the scope of trying to "fit in" to the point of damaging our hair and scalp, and testing our character, sense of self and freedom of expression. A personal journey and experiences are used to give a view of the hurt and self-esteem draining effects that can be felt from within and outside of one's race.

Panel 13:

Exploring Family Histories

Moderator: Johnette Gordon Weaver

Nicka Sewell-Smith, "We Weren't Taught How to Smile" (Virtual)

King Atlas, Sr., a formerly enslaved man, faced certain death on March

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16, 1889. The cause of his scuffle with two white men was moot as Jim Crow's tight grip on northeast Louisiana was a nightmare compared to the dream of progress seen just a decade earlier during Reconstruction. Yet, King's two aggressors faced consequences, he survived, was not charged or fined, and the incident further ignited a fire within that continues to burn in his descendants to this day. Learn the prolific story of a Black from the Mississippi Delta who went from enslavement by the family of President Andrew Jackson to the front lines of the Civil Rights Movement, birthing everything from voting rights leaders, Freedom Riders, city, state, and federal officials, and scores of community activists who carry the indomitable spirit of their ancestor into their passions, pursuits, and work in the 21st century.

Darian Akida Wigfall, "Who Were the Wigfalls?"

Wigfall will present his own family history via storytelling and data in line with the topics of Black healing through land, space, and ancestral ties as well as a family history of strength, overcoming and perseverance. Wigfall has done research through William & Mary, the South Carolina Historical Society & Archive, and more to track his ancestor August, who was found in a 2010 blog to have been next in line to be king in his native country (likely Sierra Leone), was tricked by his uncle and sold to slave traders ending up in South Carolina and finally Virginia as a result of being confiscated from the man who enslaved him named John Wigfall; a Captain for the Americans in the Revolutionary War but also a British loyalist. These people have very different stories but are all connected and forever linked, through my DNA and the DNA of my living family. Darian will take questions about these lost stories to encourage others to do similar research, and to show where the story goes from 2024.

LaTika Johnson Lee, "Island Time: Healing Through the 55th Annual Aiken-Singleton Family Reunion"

Whether it be North Carolina, South Carolina, or Georgia much of the African American population in America can trace their roots back to the sea islands of the United States. Their story, intricately woven into the Gullah Geechee National Heritage Corridor, serves as a powerful example of resilience and identity preservation. The Gullah Geechee people, descendants of freed enslaved Africans, are known for preserving more of their African linguistic and cultural heritage than any other African American community in the US. With its origins in Emancipation, formerly enslaved people placed "Information Wanted" advertisements in newspapers in search of family who were separated from them under the cruel practice of human bondage. Through primary sources, photographs and first-person storytelling, this session will delve into the long-standing gathering of the William Aiken-Maybelle Singleton Family Reunion where nearly 300 family members gather annually on Hilton Head Island, South Carolina, for an intergenerational celebration of community, fellowship, and heritage.

Darius Johnson, "Homecoming: Kent County – An Exploration of Rural Black Life"

"Homecoming: Kent County" is an exploration of family history, that seeks to unearth the intricacies of Black settlements, land sustenance, and cultural heritage preservation in Kent County, Maryland. As Johnson traces his family's lineage through oral histories and family photos, the pivotal role of family history emerges as a powerful testament to community development and sustainability. These narratives, interwoven with themes of love, labor, recreation, joy, and celebration, underscore the resilience and vitality inherent in Black rural life. Johnson's research foregrounds the importance of community curation as a methodology to unearth cultural context, harnessing the power of oral history, material repatriation, and collaborative narratives. Central to his research is the documentation of familial properties, revealing generational ties to the land, vernacular architectural influences, and the socio-economic transitions. Johnson aims to inspire proactive measures to preserve and celebrate rural black heritage, and as a call to action, he underscores the potential of cultural heritage preservation as a compelling incentive for reinvesting in hometown communities.

Panel 14:

Healing Ourselves: Black LGBTQ+ Community Making in the Eras of HIV/AIDS and COVID-19 A Panel Commemorating Johnny L. Baily, Ph.D

Moderator: Dr. Jajuan Johnson

Panelists: *Dr. Daniel Driffin, Dr. Kyle Fox, Robert Suttle*

Following the civil rights movement of the 1960s, Black gays and lesbians emerged more visibly on the socio-political scene in the late 1970s, critiquing the ideas of a "beloved community" that made minimal space for their existence. As HIV/AIDS emerged as a crisis threatening the lives of African Americans, particularly Black gay men, the National Coalition of Black Gays and Lesbians (formerly



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the National Coalition of Black Gays) organized around the country advocating for parental rights, establishing publications, and organized the first HIV/AIDS prevention program specific to Black communities. The organization became the template for later and current forms of Black LGBTQ+ community making that foster healing and diminish injuries of inequity based on race, gender, and sexuality. The session will discuss the ways Black LGBTQ+ people draw on the histories of their own to tackle inequities in healthcare, isolation, and social deprivation. The panel commemorates the scholarship of the late Dr. Johnny L. Bailey, who passed away on December 25, 2022. A Virginia native, Dr. Bailey was a scholar of Black queer community-making in the twentieth century. Upon earning a doctorate in History from Morgan State University, he was a postdoctoral fellow at Rutgers University and a visiting history professor at his Alma Mater. In addition to the panelist below, there will be a reading from his work entitled “As Proud of Our Gayness as We Are Our Blackness:” The Political and Social Development of the African American LGBTQ Community in Baltimore and Washington D.C. 1975 – 1991.”

Panel 15:

Digital Archives, Communal Care, and Healing through Comics and Flowers

Moderator: Dr. Jennifer Putzi

Joy Jackson, “Healing Our Trauma through Flora & Fauna: A Somatic Experience with Flowers”

Let’s move from existing and surviving to liberation & joy! In this session, we will use the VIMBASI framework to explore what we feel in expectation of and when experiencing being in the presence of flowers, considering how they were cultivated and what they bring to our lives. I see this as a way for some to heal their relationship with the land and farming while others may find healing from the everyday heaviness of existing and surviving in this world. This session will provide participants will have the opportunity to “play” with flowers.

Kiana Wilkerson, ““Everything’s Gonna Be Alright:” Representation and Healing through the Brotherman and Jonathan Fox Comics”

Growing up and reading comic books from publishers like Marvel and DC, three Black brothers, Dawud Anyabwile, Guy A. Sims, and Jason Sims, felt that the Black comic characters did not represent the Black community well. They sought to rectify that by joining the highly competitive industry with the creation of their own series, Brotherman: Dictator of Discipline. While Brotherman only ran for 11 issues, its impact on the comic book industry during the 1990s was monumental. This presentation highlights the Brotherman series and its empowering influence on other black independent publishers, such as John McClellan and his series Jonathan Fox, which ran for 3 issues in 1993. Examining both series shows how comic books are a powerful art form in representation, allowing black creators to write and design how they are depicted. This presentation answers how these comics can be a form of community healing (denying stigmas) and empowerment through storytelling, making a space for black perspectives in a predominantly white industry.

October Grace Kamara, ““Pledge Allegiance to the People”: Remembering the Erased History of the Black Panther Party in Chattanooga, Tennessee through Digital Archiving”

The leader of the Chattanooga Black Panthers (CBP), Ralph Moore, said: “We pledge allegiance to the people, not the flag. The flag is only a symbol. People are starving, not flags.” Frustrated by how little tangible results the Civil Rights Movement provided to poor Black people, the CBP sought a way to help people in their communities survive. However, their movement was targeted by the Tennessee state legal system and the white mainstream media. Despite opposition, the Panthers continued to provide support programs such as free breakfast, prison bussing, clothing donations, and sickle cell anemia testing to their community. They established their own newspaper to accurately tell their own story when white media wouldn’t. The CBP overcame many obstacles and contributed to the betterment of Chattanooga. Despite this, the CBP has been erased from Black Power history— as have many other Black Power movements in the Southern United States. The Southern Black Power digital archive hopes to combat this erasure by highlighting Black power movements in the South. These movements are stories of incredible resistance and community building that can add to the conversation of community healing.

Jessica Elaine Ellison, “Communal Care on Theatrical Stages (and the Black Women & Femmes Who Nurture Us)” (Virtual)

Through exploring the work of three playwrights—Aziza Barnes, Erika Dickerson-Despenza, and Katori Hall—this presentation showcases how stories written by (and predominantly featuring) Black women and femmes highlight Black cultural traditions of communal care that allow for survival in various environments. Additionally, this presentation argues that in the theatre world, these representations of communal care are only effectively presented by Black women and femmes. This work showcases various ways in

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which harm is caused, highlights the ways in which Black communal care is rooted in history, and allows Black communities to imagine what communal care may look like in the future. Featuring the impact of these playwrights' work beyond what is seen on stage, helps reinforce the importance of these stories and advocate for broader representation within the theatre, while also forcing the theatre itself to imagine a future that fully rectifies past harm.

Panel 16:

Good Ancestors, Silenced DNA, and Researching Our History

Moderator: Dr. Chinua Thelwell

Audrey M. McDowell, "Reclaiming Our History: In Search of Virginia Roots"

In 1964, Civil Rights activist Fannie Lou Hamer said, "For three hundred years, we've given them time . . . The truth is the only thing going to free us." The value of the "time" and labor that African and African American slaves contributed toward the growth of the United States has frequently been minimized, hidden and erased. Most African Americans are descended from enslaved Africans who arrived in the early U.S. between 1619 and 1808. Records related to their ancestors' origins, identities and genealogy were not consistently recorded and preserved. Further complicating matters, enslavers moved 1 million slaves from older slave states like Virginia to the new slave states like Alabama, Mississippi, and Texas between the 1790s and 1860s. This presentation will discuss strategies for tracing the roots of former slaves who were identified as having been born in Virginia in the 1870 Federal Census.

Richard M. Josey, Jr., "Becoming a Good Ancestor"

"What Kind of Ancestor Will You Be?" was a question that was posed to me eight years ago by Dakota elder Dave Louis. Since that time, "becoming a good ancestor" has been the theme of numerous conversations workshops I've facilitated with communities and history organizations across the nation. This presentation brings together knowledge and wisdom from those conversations, as well as studies of trauma, mental health, spirituality, memory and several healing modalities. I plan to respond directly to theme-affiliated questions such as, "How do we take time to engage in healing practices?", "What does that healing look like?", "What are some strategies that can be used to become aligned with the idea of being a Good Ancestor?", and "How do I balance individual healing and being part of a collective healing process?" At the end of this presentation, audience members will receive practical strategies to mental health strategies to help our journeys to becoming good ancestors.

Belle P. Long and Ernest Dollar, "Hunting for Hunters: Researching the Enslaved People at Spring Hill Plantation in Wake County, North Carolina"

Ernest Dollar and Belle Long have been collaborating for several years to locate and document those who were enslaved at Spring Hill Plantation in Wake County NC and their descendants. Members of the Legacy Committee of the Dix Park Conservancy, which is located on part of the former plantation lands, and the City of Raleigh (NC) Historic Resources and Museum Program are working together to uncover this rich history. The discovery of the two men who will be discussed here is but a small part of a much larger effort to uncover the as many of the descendants of those enslaved at Spring Hill as possible. The researchers expect the project and number of people involved to continue to grow over the years as research continues. The two men who will be featured in this presentation lived extraordinary lives that have been fleshed out through extensive research in newspapers, census records, estate records, city directories, and other documents.

Sheila K. Dodson, "Reconciling Lineages: Unravelling Silenced DNA"

Many of us have only learned about slavery in our recent adult years. The topic was brushed over or never discussed in educational and family settings, which has led descendants of the enslaved to question our lineages. Affecting millions of diasporans, the institution of slavery maintains a negative generational impact. Many in power ignore the harms committed and deny forms of reconciliation necessary for healing. By listening rhetorically to the archives, we are better equipped to unravel diasporic lineages, counter untruths and silences, and work toward ending repetitive harm. What does reconciling lineages mean for descendants of formerly enslaved Africans? For those in the North American South, reconciliation may mean understanding that diasporic bloodlines, as well as those of European and other ethnic groups, may not be "pure." We may unravel the intricately woven archive by incorporating genetic genealogy to solve our histories. As we learn to accept the hard facts of our lineages, we learn to embrace one another through peaceful dialogues, restore identities, and recover/rewrite lost familial narratives. This presentation relates to the 2024 theme as I explore ways of healing within my own family that include pairing archival research and genetic genealogy to make previously unknown discoveries.



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Panel 17:

A School Name: The Identity, Impact, and Implications

Moderator: J.W. Caterine

Panelists: *Mary Lassiter; Curtis Lassiter; Carl Lassiter; Dr. Warren Buck III*

There has been a nationwide campaign to rename schools that honor Confederate officers and individuals who owned enslaved people or displayed overtly racist attitudes. This campaign gained ground following the white supremacist rally in Charlottesville, VA in 2017 and the killing of George Floyd in May 2020. Despite some successes in school renaming, children across the country continue to attend schools honoring people associated with slavery and the Confederacy. This panel is a call for renewed action on this issue nationally and specifically in relation to local schools: Magruder Elementary in York County and James Blair Middle in Williamsburg-James City County. Panelists will discuss Magruder's role in the Confederate army and James Blair's ties to slavery, as well as recent activism to have these names changed. They will reflect on trauma through their own experiences as students, parents, and grandparents in this community as generations of students have attended these schools. Finally, one panelist will offer insights on William & Mary's policies on naming and renaming and the guidance they might provide for K-12 school renaming. The panel highlights activism as a path to healing.

Panel 18:

Facets of Public History: Graduate Student Experiences and the Lemon Project

Panelists: *Kelly Conway, Gabrielle Pressley, Monet Watson*

Research, interpretation, and collaboration are all key components of public history. This year's graduate assistants on the Lemon Project discuss their various roles in contributing to the preservation and perpetuation of public history. Monet will discuss the archeological records that support Lemon Projects' findings, Kelly will introduce the undergraduate Lemon Project Society members and their collaborative research project, and Gabrielle will highlight the tenets of oral history and the digital archive.

Panel 19:

Racial Identity and Healing, Critical Conversations, and Family Histories

Moderator: Mr. Cary Goodman

Gabrielle Kubi, "Growing With Each Other": Cultivating Reciprocations of Care through a Critical Conversation Space Curriculum" (Eden G. Harrison, Mara Johnson, Saron Fantabun, Jamaal S. Matthews also contributed to this project.)

Education literature has called for critical conversation spaces (CCSs; affinity groups facilitated by and for Black girls with scaffolding from Black woman educators) to be embedded within the school day. However, school misogynoir intensifies and sustains personnel constraints that prevent the realization of this need. To address this issue, we piloted a within-school CCS curriculum. Upon its success, we expanded the CCS by including additional facilitators, six Black woman undergraduate/master's students enrolled in a community-engaged course centering Black girls' and women's psychoeducational experiences. This course, led by the first author, provided students the epistemological and practical training necessary to facilitate CCSs, helping to ameliorate the constraints schools may have in finding available, willing, and trained personnel to lead these spaces. The present study documents their semester-long training and fieldwork. This work aims to privilege Black girls' and women's communal healing and care, particularly as a form of resistance to misogynoir.

Sosna Marshet; Kenna D. Yadeta MPH; Shawn Jones, PhD, "Racial Experiences and Racial Identity: Experiences of "New" African Americans in the United States"

This research investigates how experiences of racism are related to the development of racial identity among Black immigrants, shedding light on a critical yet often overlooked aspect of identity formation. Using the Multidimensional Inventory of Black Identity (MIBI) and the Racism and Life Experience Scale (RaLES), the study uncovers significant correlations between encounters with racism, centrality, and nationalist ideology within the MIBI. Generational disparities in these correlations are also explored, offering valuable insights into the complexities of racial identity across different immigrant

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generations. This research advances our understanding of the intricate dynamics at play in racial identity development and lays a crucial foundation for future studies in this domain. This study resonates with the symposium's theme, "Taking Our Time: Healing Through Black History, Family, and Communities," by acknowledging the resilience and struggles of "new" African Americans. By examining how racial experiences shape their identity, this research calls for a more inclusive and empathetic society. One that recognizes and values the experiences of all members, regardless of their immigration background. This study implores us to continue the conversation and research on the experiences of "New" African Americans.

Dr. Janise Parker, "Reflections from a Community-Centered Racial Healing Course"

Key tenets of healing-centered practices include, (a) targeting oppression at both the structural and individual levels; (b) recognizing the historical nature of oppression and racism; (c) building upon the cultural knowledge and historical wisdom of people of color; (d) providing participants new tools/strategies to organize change and move toward freedom; (e) making information accessible to community members; and (f) involving community members in the process of knowledge creation. Much of this work has focused on efforts in K-12 settings or at the individual level through mental health therapy. However, public health officials and scholars alike emphasize the need for population- and community-based efforts that target large groups in society, given the pervasive and widespread effects of racism and oppression. The goal of this presentation is share findings from the pilot phase of an online microcourse developed in partnership with the Bray School Lab, W&M School of Education (SOE), and Office of Strategic Cultural Partnerships (SCP). Overall, the course is designed to foster critical reflection and motivation for civic action to help mitigate contributors to systemic oppression in educational contexts and youth serving institutions, while promoting racial healing among people of color.

Carol Miller and Burnell K. Irby, "Educating Kenneth...Chapter Two, Diplomas Delayed"

Kenneth Miller came to the Lemon Project Symposium in 2016 to share his story. As the great grandson of Magruder residents it was presented as part of our Whiting family history. Kenneth was born in Washington DC in 1941. In 1944 it was determined that he was deaf and would need a school to meet his special needs. The family soon learned there was no school within Washington DC for Black deaf children. The Kendall School on the campus of the Columbia Institution was the only school providing instruction for deaf children. White children were sent to Kendall. Negro children were sent two hours away to Maryland to school. In 1946 Kenneth's parents began the effort to secure the same access to an education for their son within the District of Columbia as provided for white children. Seventy years later the institution that joined in the denial of access to their school for Black children. The Columbia Institution, now Gallaudet University, has taken steps to acknowledge and repair its past actions

with the Black community. We will share those reparative efforts in Educating Kenneth, Chapter Two, Diplomas Delayed...Is It Enough?

Panel 20:

Mapping as Community Healing: Space, Place, and Legacy at the Williamsburg Bray School

Moderator: Dr. Maureen Elgersman Lee

Panelists: *Nicole Brown; Elizabeth Drembus; Mary Hannah Grier*

Historical and current practices of self and communal healing within Black communities is a key part of racial justice work at public universities and museums. Engagement with these practices is imperative if scholars and museum professionals want to support change that liberates as well as deepens our understanding of Black life. The 2024 Lemon Project Symposium's call for papers asks, "What can institutions do to reduce harm inflicted on Blacks and people of color? How do we get the country to acknowledge and address the continuing harm of past atrocities?". This begs the question: what would happen if museums, universities, and descendant communities utilized mapping to change the landscape of the past as a form of healing? Our panel will look at various methodological techniques which can be applied to map community, as well as how this can be utilized within the framework of restorative justice.

Panel 21:

Tick-TOCK: Tell Your Story – Objective Imaging Advocacy – Carving Space for Healing-Keeping Sustainable Practices

Moderator: Rachel Ellick

Panelists: *Dr. Kristie Norwood, Dr. Linia Willis, Shana Matthews*

In continuation of last year's talk "The Power of Language: Clinical Perspectives of Systemic Narratives", Dr. Kristie Norwood, Dr. Linia Willis, and Shana Matthews charge our community members to promote self-care and optimal health through the lens of speech-language pathology and psychology. In relation to this year's theme, time will be explored as a construct related to mental and emotional health within the scope of optimal physical health. As a community, we cannot afford to rush and be passive in our own health. Amplifying our voices and taking the time and space to be heard can be a matter of life and death. Shana Matthews will review the power of language as it relates to pragmatics, barriers, and resources in telling our stories in the doctor's office. Dr. Linia Willis will provide tools to advocate for objective imaging (such as ultrasounds and MRIs) and a clinical framework of specific questions to ask healthcare providers. Dr. Kristie Norwood will offer resources regarding emotional and mental health into daily practices for sustainability and preventative care. Awareness, action, and sustainability are attainable via empowerment and unity.

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Panel 22:

Silenced Voices in Interpreting Sites of Slavery (Hybrid)

Moderator: Frederick Murphy (Virtual)

Panelists: *Jobie Hill, Nina Smith Polley, Star Reams*

“Silenced Voices” is a short film that chronicles a unique collaborative storytelling project at Pharsalia Plantation, where descendants from both enslaved communities and the enslaver’s family came together for a week-long workshop. The film demonstrates how collective storytelling at a site of slavery can help move the narrative forward by presenting authentic and truthful accounts of this challenging history. Panelists include Frederick Murphy, Historian, Documentarian, and Founder of History Before Us; Jobie Hill, a Preservation Architect and Founder of Saving Slave Houses; Nina Smith Polley, a Pharsalia Descendant and Family Historian; and Star Reams, a Pharsalia Descendant and Genealogist. Each panelist contributes unique perspectives on collaborative storytelling, historical preservation, and the journey toward healing. Our panel aims to answer the question: How can we, as a community, create spaces where all voices are heard, even those that were historically silenced by the institution of slavery? Our call to action is for institutions, communities, and individuals to recognize the significance of collaboration and the authentic representation of history. We’ll delve into the power of storytelling, shared stewardship, and the importance of providing an open, safe, and welcoming environment for descendants and stakeholders to share their perspectives.

Panel 23:

Reconciliation through Conversations, History, and Communal Healing

Moderator: Cydney A. Neville, MAEd

Kerri Moseley-Hobbs and MaryLyle Buff, “The Reality of the Unfinished Business of Enslavement and Testing the Feasibility of Reconciliation”

The purpose of this presentation and discussion is to introduce preliminary observations of a case study on the feasibility of reconciliation regarding a history of enslavement. This case study is testing the feasibility of reconciliation between the Preston family, the name sake of William and Mary’s Preston Hall, Gov. James Patton Preston who owned the plantation Smithfield (that today is Virginia Tech University) and the Fraction family who they enslaved by James Patton Preston and his descendants. In 2022, the MTAFf held an event in collaboration with Virginia Tech under their 1872 Forward schedule of events that commemorated VT 150-year history. The event focused on Virginia Tech campus’ history as a plantation site, the complexity of addressing that history, and served as an extension of the MTAFf’s case study on the feasibility

of reconciliation. A short film titled 1872 Forward: Foreword was completed that documented that event and the outcome of that event.

Dr. Shelley Viola Murphy, “Beyond the Records: Conversations with Descendants of Slave Owners in Genealogy”

Genealogists play a crucial role in unraveling the threads that connect the past to the present. This presentation aims to guide researchers in facilitating meaningful and respectful dialogues with descendants of slave owners, encouraging a deeper exploration of familial histories, beyond what is written in records and documents. In the ongoing journey of healing and reclamation, the act of uncovering the truths of the past, no matter how painful, holds the transformative power of understanding and reconciliation. By navigating conversations with sensitivity and depth, we open pathways to healing, allowing communities to reclaim lost narratives and foster a spirit of unity and mutual respect, demonstrating the healing potential in taking our time to understand and empathize with all facets of Black history.

Jenay Willis, “Texas Christian University’s 150th Anniversary: Commitment, Compassion, & Communal Healing”

In 2020, Texas Christian University (TCU) established the Race & Reconciliation Initiative (RRI) amidst the ongoing coronavirus pandemic and heightened police brutality killings (e.g., George Floyd) against Black individuals. The RRI was established to address the University’s history of racism, slavery, and the Confederacy. Having good intentionality in the establishment of such efforts was crucial to repair, rebuild, and retain genuine relationships between the TCU community and those from historically marginalized racial backgrounds affiliated with TCU. Considering the impact of the coronavirus pandemic and ongoing pandemics (i.e., classism, elitism, anti-Black racism), the focus of the RRI calls attention to answering the following: How did the coronavirus pandemic impact race and reconciliation work across universities, specifically considering TCU’s campus? In what ways have existing pandemics, such as anti-Black racism, impacted race and reconciliation work in TCU’s community? This session will address TCU’s 150th Anniversary in reconciling history to engage in reparative efforts. Through this work, I am in conversations with Black students, faculty, staff, and alumni to honor their voices while centering their experiences. In addition to reparative efforts, the RRI is healing and spiritual work engaging time, commitment, and generosity.

Dr. Ervin L. Jordan Jr., “Campus of the Damned: Slave Families at the University of Virginia, 1818-1865” (Virtual)

How did slave families psychologically survive at educational institutions? This PowerPoint presentation will survey African American slave families at the University Virginia (1817-1865) who astutely navigated campus perils during the Age of Slavery. Slaves provided a sense of comfort for white residents and visitors at the University’s pastoral Academical Village for half a century. Evocative

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of Jeffersonian architectural aesthetics these ‘semi-invisibles’ accommodations and workspaces were concealed by attics, cellars, kitchens, and high-walled backyard. Contemporaneous whites preferred the euphemism “servant” instead of “slave,” antebellum University images generally omitted them, and publications whitewashed its slaveholding and segregationist past. The Memorial to Enslaved Laborers (2020), reflecting remembrance, reconciliation and reparations, commemorates 4,000 slaves rented or owned by the University and faculty. Cole, Gibbons, Holmer, Skipwith, and Martin are among fifty slave families nameless no more. In accordance with the Symposium’s theme, and as a member of the University’s Memorial to Enslaved Laborers Names Committee and formerly of the President’s Commission on Slavery and the University (and its “enslaved” versus “slave” debate), I will offer considerations for the memorialization of African American enslavement at predominantly white American universities.

Panel 24:

Moved from the Land, Called to the Stand: Reservation Descendant Reflections on the Yorktown Navy Mine Depot Displacement

Moderator: Molly Robinson

Panelists: *Dr. Crystal Haskins; Ms. Rosa Lee; Ms. Shontel Nicholas; Ms. Jacquelyn Gardner*

On August 7, 1918, President Woodrow Wilson issued Executive Order 1472 to commandeer more than 11,000 acres of land—over 2,700 of which was owned by formerly enslaved or free Black farmers, entrepreneurs, and oystermen—in York County and Warwick County, Virginia. This dispossession established the Navy Mine Depot, where the government buried unexploded ordinance manufactured for use in the First World War. Known as the Reservation, this land was the site of Black communities’ cherished homesteads, churches, schools, businesses, and fraternal organizations. At condemnation hearings conducted by the Navy Department’s Board of Valuation on Commandeered Property, many residents testified about the value of their homes. Board members interrogated them about their vocations, the productivity of their farmland, and how long residents had owned their houses. Residents courageously disputed the Board’s view that the value of their taken land was measurable in stark financial terms. For many, their homes were priceless and facilitated ancestral connection to the land.

This panel brings together descendants to speak about their ancestors’ claims at the 1919-1920 hearings. Among the questions this panel raises, themes converge on this central question: What does it mean to honor and fight for one’s home as it is

being taken away? By interpreting testimonies through their own family histories and understandings of the dispossession, descendants of the Reservation shed light on their ancestors’ struggles to retain their homes and rebuild in the aftermath of displacement. This serves as a source of intergenerational healing.

Panel 25:

Rekindling the Family Flame: A Family’s Pursuit of Liberty from Virginia to Liberia (Hybrid)

Panelists: *Shanda Cooper Goff, Seward M. Cooper*

In 1828, nearly 50,000 free Blacks were living in the Commonwealth of Virginia. They were neither enslaved nor considered citizens. One of the free Black communities was in Goochland County, Virginia. In 1829, four free Black residents from Goochland County migrated to Liberia, West Africa. This panel will discuss the migration of these four individuals in the context of the social climate of Virginia in the 1800s, the critical role free Black Virginians played in the establishment of Liberia, and the rekindling of ancestral ties in Virginia in the 1990s.

Panel 26:

Reassembling the Pieces: Restoration for Descendants of a Race Massacre (Virtual)

Moderator: Bernice Alexander Bennett

Panelists: *Shar Goolsby, Orice Jenkins*

In 1915, lynching mobs were searching through the dirt roads of Early County, Georgia for a man named Grandison Goolsby, killing his family members as they hunted. 108 years later, genealogist Orice Jenkins cold-called Grandison’s great-granddaughter, Shar Goolsby, after spending five years researching her family. He shared the details of her ancestor’s life and death in a way that she never heard before. Together, they embarked on a pilgrimage to Early County, where their families had lived since the 1830s. The panelists will discuss the physical and psychological journey of discovering this information. As a family historian, Orice has gone through the work of identifying each of the victims and survivors of the massacre and contacting their descendants, reuniting relatives that had been separated for generations. As a student of Clinical Mental Health Counseling, Shar is developing a plan to build an inclusive wellness retreat center in Early County, on the same land her ancestors walked on, tangibly repurposing what had been taken from her family. Both Orice and Shar desire to give back to their ancestral homeland after being forcefully removed due to racialized violence.

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CHECK OUT THESE POSTERS AND EXHIBITIONS IN THE CONCOURSE.

- *Troy D. Roots, “Voices of Integration: Black Students from the Class of 1969”*
- *Mary Lassiter, “A School Name: The Identity, Impact, and Implications”*
- *October Kamara and Wood Register, “Locating Slavery’s Legacies”*
- *Gerald “Jay” Gaidmore and Ali Zawoyski, Swem Special Collections Research Center*

Notes:



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Kelley Fanto Deetz, Stratford Hall
Leah F. Glenn, Theater, Speech, & Dance
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W&M THE LEMON PROJECT: A JOURNEY OF RECONCILIATION

Save the Date for the 15th Annual Lemon Project
Spring Symposium- March 21-22, 2025.



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