

# LIA at Work

## Literacy InterActives, Inc.

501(c)(3) nonprofit organization • [www.literacyinteractives.org](http://www.literacyinteractives.org)

Sponsor of the Parker Sydnor Historic Preservation Site

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2021 - 2022

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## Silver Linings: Books, Newspapers and Zoom in the Age of COVID-19

Despite the persistent onslaught of COVID-19 and its related challenges in our communities, Literacy InterActives (LIA) had a year of exceptional accomplishments because of your commitment and ongoing support with your generous [donations](#). We thank you!



In 2020 LIA received a generous grant from Virginia Humanities. We were set to conduct a series of in-person workshops that would focus on multiple interpretations of historic preservation in Southern Virginia. With the impact of the pandemic, LIA had to quickly shift its planning and target a virtual audience for the series.

How could we also invite prospective participants in rural areas to Zoom workshops when there are [digital divides](#) in many of these communities?

Using Zoom as the platform for the series enabled us to have a measurable impact with the use of technology in the way that our tagline—"literacy is more than reading a newspaper or a book"—connects technology to the meaning of new definitions for literacy in today's world. With a Team Project in command, LIA took a deep dive in the spring of 2021 with its virtual series entitled, "This is Us: Preserving Our Church Histories."

The virtual platform expanded the series to a wider geographical range that yielded 122 attendees during two consecutive weekends. Participants who did not have access to computers used their cell phones and learned "to zoom" with individualized assistance from LIA. Acquiring new internet skills was an unexpected bonus. In addition to using regular social media and email, LIA publicized the series in local print newspapers and through the old fashioned way – using the telephone to get the word out.

"The workshop series connects to the legacy of the [Parker Sydnor historic preservation](#) site," explains Dr. Angelita Reyes, president of LIA. "The site is named after Patrick Robert "Parker" Sydnor (1854-1950), a tombstone maker who promoted

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## Historic Preservation: Equity and Social Justice

### Guest Contributor

Sonja Ingram

Historic preservation is complex and constantly evolving. Today, some of the main issues in historic preservation include equity, social justice, urban preservation, affordable housing, climate change, and sustainability. In the summer of 2020, the police killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis began a national reckoning for racial justice. This heightened awareness about the need for equity and social justice has led to a deeper scrutiny of using preservation tools such as designated historic districts and national register nominations for social change.

In the past, many important Native American and African American historic communities were ignored by historians and preservationists and, subsequently, these communities

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## Advisory Council

LIA has an Advisory Council of community, regional, and national consultants who help us to pursue our mission with new directions that will advance our community initiatives and collaborations. Come and join us!

Contact:  
Cameron Patterson at 434 426 6606 or email: [pattersoncd3@gmail.com](mailto:pattersoncd3@gmail.com)



### 2020-2021 VENUES and Programs Literacy InterActives, Inc.

- National Trust for Historic Preservation Symposium on Plantation Weddings
- Preservation Virginia Award for Achievement in Historic Preservation Research
- National Trust for Historic Preservation Diversity Scholars Award
- National Trust for Historic Preservation National Virtual Conference
- American Association for State and Local History
- Slave Dwelling Project
- National Trust for Historic Preservation Reconsidering Celebrations at Sites of Enslavement
- ARCUS Leadership Academy for Historic Preservation Fellowship Award



To support the historic preservation efforts of LIA, tax deductible monetary gifts according to tax guidelines, may be made via PayPal at Literacy InterActives at <https://literacyinteractives.org/donate/>

### Equity and Justice, continued from page 1

didn't have the protection that benefited other historic communities. Inclusive preservation practices protect all historic neighborhoods along with ways to provide affordable housing. Preservation is no longer



Minneapolis, MN. Photo Credit: Angelita Reyes

only about preserving historic places in wealthy and affluent communities.

Many designated historic African American communities formed after Emancipation have been turned into industrial areas or are threatened by pipelines and toxic landfills. Historic schools, churches, and cemeteries—places at the heart of these communities—now receive renewed attention due to threats from development, relocation, and vandalism. These and other issues transforming preservation rest on effective historic preservation leadership at the local, state, and federal levels. ✨

## President's Volunteer Service Award

We are proud to announce that Literacy InterActives has been selected and approved as an official Certifying Organization for the President's Volunteer Service Award (PVSA). Established in 2003 by the President's Council on Service and Civic Participation, this is a prestigious and nationally recognized award. The President's Volunteer Service Award honors the valuable impact, achievements, and contributions volunteers are making for a better world.

## New LIA Board Member!

Sarah Jencks is the Director of Education and Interpretation at Ford's Theatre in historic Washington D.C. She has created numerous award-winning interpretive and educational museum projects. Sarah is a direct descendant of Humberston



Skipwith and his first wife, Sarah Nivison Skipwith, who owned Prestwoud, the well-known ante-bellum plantation

in Southern Virginia. Sarah is an active member of *Coming to the Table*, an organization that brings together descendants of the enslavers and enslaved in conversations for truth, justice, and racial healing. They are building relationships in order to dismantle inequitable systems and structures based on "race." Sarah brings her professional skills and enthusiasm to the LIA Board.

*Welcome, Sarah!*



For more information on PVSA visit <https://www.presidentialserviceawards.gov/>

literacy and the preservation of sacred spaces in African American church cemeteries. Our series is relevant to his mission and to the new dimensions and perspectives about historic preservation.”

Members of the LIA Team Project who brought the workshops to success were Pastor Michael Jackson (St. Matthew Baptist Church), Honorable Glanzy Spain (Mecklenburg County Board of Supervisors), and the following LIA Board Members: Inez Arnett-Ferrer, Alexandria Reyes Schroeder, and Dorothy M. David. Chelsea Cleghon was the Team’s indispensable technical communications specialist.

According to David Bearinger, Senior Director of Grants & Global Virginia Programs at VA Humanities, who attended the series, “This was an absolutely fantastic program. Thank you for giving us the opportunity to be part of this very important work.”



The workshops featured keynote speakers and a panel of diverse and inclusive participants sharing remarks during the Open Mic segment that was followed by Q&A when

Literacy InterActives, Inc. presents

**This is Us: Preserving Our Church Histories**

Why should you help to preserve your church history? *How can you?* Join us for an exciting weekend workshop series on new ways to celebrate your church as a sacred and vital home place – especially for generations to come and for bridging communities.

Registration is free! Register today!

Phone: 262 385 3432 or  
Please register by using this link: <https://forms.gle/VDPNnuostabHPGr7>

**Virginia Humanities** Virginia Chapter 704

**Saturday, April 17, 2021**  
11:00am – 1:00pm ET  
Via Zoom and Audio (telephone)  
“Conversations with the Ancestors: Women Collecting Funeral Service Programs”  
**Dr. Michelle Pinkard**  
Tennessee State University  
*All are welcome!*

**Saturday, April 24, 2021**  
11:00am – 1:00pm ET  
Via Zoom and Audio (telephone)  
“Preserving Our Church Histories for the Generations”  
**Benjamin Ross**  
Church Historian  
Sixth Mount Zion Baptist Church  
Richmond, VA




everyone had the opportunity to interact with each other on Zoom. Marc Wagner, Senior Architectural Historian at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, exclaims “I loved the workshop. It was run perfectly!”

There is undisputed popular enthusiasm for interactive history-telling, sharing stories, and “doing” history in workshop settings. Our keynote speakers reflected that enthusiasm. Dr. Michelle J. Pinkard, associate professor at Tennessee State University, talked about African American women’s culture of collecting funeral service programs. Dr. Pinkard is an expert on the provenance of church funeral service programs as historical artifacts and a source for genealogical research.

Benjamin Ross, the renowned historian for Sixth Mount Zion Baptist Church in Richmond, Virginia, led participants through preservation strategies for church documents. A church historian for more than 35 years, he introduced an engaging set of practical skills, techniques, and ideas that could entice anyone to work with historical documents.

“Just about every aspect of church history can be preserved and become a part of your church’s historic preservation,” says Benjamin Ross as he encourages us to think outside of the box about preserving documents related to sacred spaces. The workshop series was free and open to the public.

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## LIA Advisory Council

LIA is pleased to announce new members of its Advisory Council. The Council serves as a consultancy cohort that assists with advancing our initiatives.



**Linda Davenport** is a native of North Carolina, having relocated to southern Virginia in 2003 to launch Galleria on the Lake—a gallery for local artwork. She currently sits on the Board of Directors of the Clarksville Lake Country Chamber of Commerce.

**Pastor Michael Jackson** of St. Matthew Baptist Church in Clarksville, Virginia is a native of South Boston, VA. A United States Armed Forces Retiree, he has been instrumental in assisting LIA with outreach in Southern Virginia.

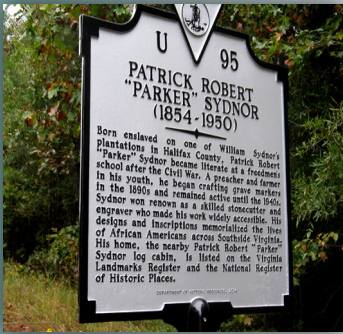


**Cathy Bergstrom** is a true Yankee-born and raised in Maine, but Greensboro, NC has been home for 20 years. Cathy spent her career as a business professional. Now, sewing, knitting, gardening, baking, cheese making—the avocations continue.

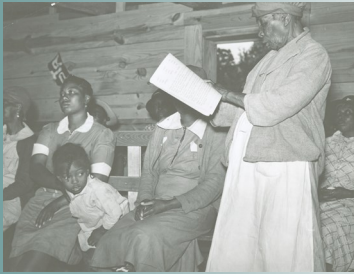
**The Honorable Glanzy M. Spain, Jr.** is a member of the Mecklenburg County Board of Supervisors in Virginia. With his effective leadership style, he has been quietly improving the lives of his constituents and the people of Mecklenburg County for more than 20 years.



# “Literacy is more than reading a newspaper or a book....”



The Virginia historical highway marker commemorates the Parker Sydnor historic preservation site for statewide significance and national integrity. Mecklenburg County, VA  
Photo courtesy of Ania Rzeszutko



82 year-old woman learning to read in the 1930s. Attaining literacy was an achievement of justice as well as a rite of passage for African Americans. Courtesy of The New Public Library on Unsplash



“Literacy is more than reading a newspaper or a book!” In today’s world literacy includes new learnings and being accurately informed via multiple, interactive media, technological, historical, and cultural sources.

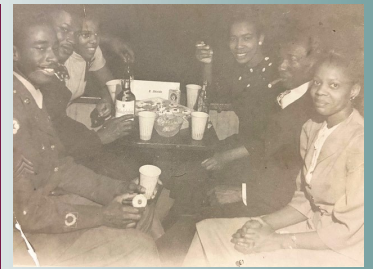


*LIA connects the literacies of culture, public history, and digital technology through creative initiatives and programs in order to maximize new directions for diversity and bridging our communities.*

*Literacy Interactives is the sponsor of the*



A historic preservation project in Mecklenburg County, Virginia



Memories of the generation from the African American Great Migration. We are the ancestors’ dreams of a better world for tomorrow.  
Photo courtesy of Joan Shields



Inez Arnett-Ferrer, LIA Board Member, receives an award for her extensive community service from the Oxford-Henderson Chapter (North Carolina) of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority.



Protecting ourselves and caring about others during the time of coronavirus.

*Books, Newspaper, Zoom continued from page 3*

Thank you to AARP Virginia Chapter 741, St. Matthew Baptist Church, Rev. Dr. Elisha Burke of the Baptist General Convention of Virginia, and a host of volunteers who helped to make our first virtual workshop series a resounding success.

### Workshop Series Recording Links

April 17, 2021 - "Conversations with the Ancestors: Women Collecting Funeral Service Programs"

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dqk9iA6Y6\\_Y](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dqk9iA6Y6_Y)

April 24, 2021 - "Preserving Our Church Histories for the Generations" [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q\\_FENBh-dvs](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q_FENBh-dvs)



“So powerful is the light of unity that it can illuminate the whole earth.” Baha’i Writings