

W&M THE LEMON PROJECT: A JOURNEY OF RECONCILIATION

15TH ANNUAL LEMON PROJECT SPRING SYMPOSIUM

Undefeated:

Black Resilience through Resistance,
Creativity, and Cooperation

March 21-22, 2025



This symposium will take place both in person at the William & Mary School of Education (301 Monticello Avenue) and virtually over Zoom. The Saturday evening event will be at Hearth: Memorial to the Enslaved (115 Jamestown Road).

15TH ANNUAL LEMON PROJECT SPRING SYMPOSIUM

Friday, March 21

8:00 AM–4:00 PM	Registration	School of Education, Concourse
8:00 AM–9:00 AM	Breakfast	School of Education, Concourse
	Reading of Land and Labor Acknowledgments	
8:55 AM–9:10 AM	Welcome Dr. Jody Allen, Robert Francis Engs Director of the Lemon Project Remarks by Dr. Pamela Eddy, Associate Provost for Faculty Affairs and Development, William & Mary Introduction of Keynote Speaker by Dr. Jajuan Johnson, Public Historian for Research & Programs	School of Education, Matoaka Woods
9:10 AM–10:40 AM	“What Would The Ancestors Say?” Keynote by Dr. Daniel Black, Followed by Q&A	Matoaka Woods
10:40 AM–11:00 AM	Book Signing/Break	Concourse
11:00 AM–12:15 PM	3 Concurrent Panels:	
PANEL 1:	“The Evolving History of Virginia’s Central State Hospital, 1869-2025: Panel discussion”	Matoaka Woods
PANEL 2:	“Exploring the History of Enslavement in North Carolina and Virginia”	Dogwood
PANEL 3:	“Reclaiming Our Story”	Holly
12:15 PM–1:15 PM	Lunch	Matoaka Woods
	Poster & Exhibition Viewing	Concourse & Lobby
1:15 PM–2:30 PM	3 Concurrent Panels:	
PANEL 4:	“Strength in Sisterhood: The Power of a Council of Women in Navigating Life, Family, and Career”	Matoaka Woods
PANEL 5:	“Exploring Black American Lives through Disability, Relationships, Religion, and Conversation”	Dogwood
PANEL 6:	“Prenatal Through Postpartum: The Renaissance of Black Maternal Health”	Holly

Undeclared: Black Resilience through Resistance, Creativity, and Cooperation

2:30 PM–2:45 PM

Break

2:45 PM–4:00 PM

3 Concurrent Panels:

PANEL 7:

“Descendant Power | Mobilizing for Community and Advocacy”

Matoaka Woods

PANEL 8:

“Jackson Ward: The Birthplace of Black Entrepreneurship”

Dogwood

PANEL 9:

“Resilience and Healing Through History and Communities”

Holly

4:00 PM–4:15 PM

Break

4:15 PM–5:30 PM

3 Concurrent Panels:

PANEL 10:

“Undeclared by Eminent Domain: The Lee Family Rebuilding after Displacement in WWI”

Matoaka Woods

PANEL 11:

“Piney Swamp: A Place of Black Resistance, a Site of Black Landedness, a Subject of Cooperative Research”

Dogwood

PANEL 12:

“‘We’ve Come Full-Circle:’ How Two Families Separated by Slavery are Back Together Again”

Holly

5:30 PM–6:30 PM

“Food, Fun, and Fellowship: A Community Reception”

Matoaka Woods & Concourse

Poster and Exhibition Viewing

Concourse & Lobby



15TH ANNUAL LEMON PROJECT SPRING SYMPOSIUM

Saturday, March 22

8:00 AM–3:00 PM	Registration	School of Education, Concourse
8:00 AM–9:10 AM	Breakfast	Concourse
9:10 AM–10:25 AM	3 Concurrent Panels:	
PANEL 13:	“Healing Through the Arts: Music, Stories, and Dance”	Matoaka Woods
PANEL 14:	“The Resilience of Black Women”	Dogwood
PANEL 15:	“Partnership Model for Historical Preservation that Empowers Communities: The Cape Charles Rosenwald School Restoration Initiative and the W&M Public Policy Program”	Holly
10:25 AM–10:45 AM	Break	
10:45 AM–12:00 PM	3 Concurrent Panels:	
PANEL 16:	“Writing <i>The Williamsburg Bray School: A Study in Community Resilience and Partnership</i> ”	Matoaka Woods
PANEL 17:	“Fostering Community and Collaboration: Building Upon Fifteen Years of Public History with the Lemon Project”	Dogwood
PANEL 18:	“‘This Represents Opportunity:’ Black Resilience and the Legacy of Mitchelville”	Holly
12:00 PM–1:00 PM	Lunch	
	Poster and Exhibition Viewing	Concourse & Lobby
1:00 PM–2:15 PM	3 Concurrent Panels:	
PANEL 19:	“Aspiring for Change: Community Transformation Through ‘Coming to the Table’”	Matoaka Woods
PANEL 20:	“Initiatives For Memorialization & Institutional Accountability”	Dogwood
PANEL 21:	“Highlighting Undergraduate Research at William & Mary”	Holly
2:15 PM–2:35 PM	Break	
2:35 PM–3:50 PM	3 Concurrent Panels:	
PANEL 22:	“Healing Through Truth: Exploring the Intersection of Historical Narratives, Reparations and Mental Health at Virginia Theological Seminary”	Matoaka Woods
PANEL 23:	“Reclaiming the Narrative: Rediscovering the Black History of Smith’s Fort”	Dogwood
PANEL 24:	“Resilience Through Cooperation – William & Mary Cultural Heritage Immersion Program (CHiP)”	Holly
7:00 PM–9:00 PM	“A Celebration at Sunset: 15 Years of The Lemon Project”	Hearth: Memorial to the Enslaved (Rain location: Lodge 1, Sadler Center)

Undeclared: Black Resilience through Resistance, Creativity, and Cooperation

“What Would The Ancestors Say?” Keynote by Dr. Daniel Black

As much as Black ancestors endured, they never stopped dreaming. For themselves. For their children. For the transformation of the world. Every Black soul who was denied dreamed a future of Black children’s freedom.

Dr. Daniel Black is an award-winning novelist, professor, activist, mentor and public speaker. His published works include *They Tell Me of Home*, *The Sacred Place*, *Perfect Peace*, *Twelve Gates to the City*, *The Coming*, *Listen to the Lambs*, *Don’t Cry for Me*, and *Black on Black*. In 2014, he won the Distinguished Writer’s Award from the Mid-Atlantic Writer’s Association. The Go On Girl! National Book Club named him “Author of the Year” in 2011 for his best-selling novel *Perfect Peace*. *Perfect Peace* was also chosen as the 2014 selection for “If All Arkansas Read the Same Book” by the Arkansas Center for the Book at the Arkansas State Library. The novel has been reprinted more than ten times and is being heralded as an American literary classic. Dr. Black has been nominated (three times) for the Townsend Literary Prize, the Ernest J. Gaines Award, the Ferro-Grumbleby Literary Prize, the Lambda Literary Award, he Georgia Author of the Year Prize, and the Mark Twain American Voice in Literature Award.

“Food, Fun, and Fellowship: A Community Reception” on Friday at 5:30 pm, Concourse & Matoaka Woods

After the last panel concludes on Friday, we invite symposium participants, community members, and William & Mary faculty, staff, students, and alumni to join us for an hour-long reception with food and refreshments. Come together as we find joy in Black resilience through resistance, creativity, and cooperation. All are welcome to join this community-centered social event.

“A Celebration at Sunset: 15 Years of The Lemon Project” on Saturday at 7:00 pm at Hearth: Memorial to the Enslaved (Rain Location is Lodge 1, Sadler Center)

Join the Lemon Project as we conclude the 15th Annual Lemon Project Spring Symposium by gathering at Hearth: Memorial to the Enslaved as the sun sets on March 22. We invite community members, William & Mary students, faculty, staff, and alumni, symposium participants, and others who would like to share reflections on The Lemon Project, Black history, and Black resilience. All are welcome to join in.

Panel 1:

“The Evolving History of Virginia’s Central State Hospital, 1869-2025: Panel Discussion”

Location: Matoaka Woods

Moderator: Adrienne Fikes, Friends of Virginia’s Central State Hospital board member.

Dr. King Davis, President of the Friends of Virginia’s Central State Hospital

Dr. Olivia Garland, 1st Black woman Administrator at Central State Hospital

The session will discuss the first hundred and fifty-five years of Virginia’s Central State Hospital, originally named Central Lunatic Asylum for the Colored Insane. Panelists will describe a fourteen-year research project to protect, digitize and catalog over 800,000 historical documents. The discussion will include a distinction between descendants and scholars’ access to these historical psychiatric records and demonstrate how the genealogical data contained in the patient file is reshaping family history research and perspectives on mental health and institutionalization. The panelists will also highlight the ongoing mission of the Friends of Central State Hospital to ensure that the legacy of Central State Hospital is not only preserved but also serves as a valuable resource for education, research, and ongoing improvements in mental health care for all communities.

Panel 2:

“Exploring the History of Enslavement in North Carolina and Virginia”

Location: Dogwood

Moderator: Dr. Adrienne Petty

Maverick Easton Huneycutt, “Memories of Enslavement and the North Carolina WPA Ex-Slave Narrative Collection”

One of the more spectacular yet understudied forms of Black resilience is the Works Progress Administration’s collection of “Ex-Slave” narratives, comprised of over 2,000 narratives contains the last firsthand memories of slavery in the United States. Using



15TH ANNUAL LEMON PROJECT SPRING SYMPOSIUM



examples from the North Carolina WPA collection, I will provide an interdisciplinary approach to studying the WPA interviews through the lens of psychological autobiographical memory theory. I use examples from a sample of nearly thirty interviews to present instances of autobiographical memory. I will discuss two specific types of autobiographical memories: vital memories, which focus on traumatic experiences, and flashbulb memories, which involve memories from the Civil War. Combining psychological research with individual examples, the goal is to quiet doubts surrounding the validity of the interviewee's memories and the WPA collection.

Gaila C. Sims, "Sparking Freedom: Enslaved Resistance in Fredericksburg and Stafford, Virginia"

In Spring 2024, the Fredericksburg Area Museum partnered with the local National Park Service to present a new trolley tour entitled, "Sparking Freedom: Enslaved Resistance in Fredericksburg and Stafford, Virginia." Combining historical documentation and archival research, the program featured accounts of enslaved resistance including an uprising of enslaved men at Chatham plantation in winter 1805, the story of Anthony Burns, an enslaved man who escaped to Boston in 1853 but was later apprehended under the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850, and enslaved individuals like Bethany Veney who resisted sales and auctions. Sponsored by a grant from the National Park Foundation, "Sparking Freedom" serves as an example of museum interpretation centered on experiences of enslaved people, focusing on the myriad ways enslaved people resisted their enslavement. Gaila Sims, the tour's organizer, will share the genesis of the tour, some of the stories shared during the program, and the overwhelmingly positive community responses.

Audrey McDowell, "Tracing Jordans from Eastern North Carolina to Colonial Era Virginia"

One of the earliest planters in colonial Virginia was Samuel Jordan, who arrived in Virginia in 1610 and patented land in 1620 that

eventually became known as "Jordan's Journey." Several counties in northeastern North Carolina were settled by individuals from colonial Virginia as early as 1650. I will examine the feasibility of tracing connections between enslaved persons and formerly enslaved persons to enslavers with the Jordan surname in colonial Virginia.

Tyrone S. Goodwyn, "Enslaved Indigenous in Central Virginia. The Power of the Grapevine Against Institutional Slavery"

In the early 1700s four indigenous girls were enslaved around Dinwiddie County VA. Their names are lost. We only have what their enslavers called them. Judith & Bess were Apalachee from Florida, whose tribe had been oppressed by Spanish and then destroyed by the English because of their 'affiliation' with Spanish. They were held in Dinwiddie. Butterwood Nan was also held in Dinwiddie, as her name indicates a creek there. Chance was in close-by Powhatan County. Their children were by Indian men, African men, and European men, but each of them ensured their descendants knew that THEY were indigenous people by passing the word down the ancestral line. In the 1770s, their grandchildren and great grandchildren began to sue for freedom—at great personal risk—and win. Across Virginia, in Kentucky, Tennessee and Alabama, the word reached descendants, and they made it to court and to freedom for the next forty years. These were landmark cases defining race and slavery. The word has been critical for the survival of people of color in America. What do we do with our words today?

Panel 3: "Reclaiming Our Story"

Location: Holly

Moderator: Dr. Lisa Winn Bryan

Michael Johnson

Michelle Oliver

Lorenzo Dickerson

Dr. James Harrison

Horace Scruggs



Undeclared: Black Resilience through Resistance, Creativity, and Cooperation



Robert Monson, “Black Disabled Resilience in an Age of Waiting”

The theme of resistance takes special meaning when it is used as a lens to view the histories and present realities of Black, disabled people in American society. With the landing of the first slave ship on American soil, Black people were disabled and made disabled both mentally and physically. Through anti-Black laws and interlocking systems of oppression, Black disabled bodies have had to find new pathways of imagination, resistance, and meaning making. This session will illuminate the words that Lucille Clifton uttered when she said that “every day something has tried to kill me and has failed.” Black disabled people are present, loving, resisting, and leading in activist spaces, healing spaces, spiritual spaces, and in governmental spheres.

darlene anita scott, “Relationship Goals: The Liberating Power of Intimacy In ‘What We’ve Become’ ”

Black people’s romantic lives cannot be divorced from the construction of Black women’s personhood as established by the partus sequitur ventrem legal doctrine of hereditary servitude. The 1662 doctrine codified the status of Black girls and women and their children as property—not humans. By denying them the protection that humanity affords, the status ensured their commodification as both laborers and producers of the same so that to this day constructions of Black female-ness center on labor and sex. Yet Black women have consistently and courageously practiced intimacy that does not reduce it to sexual labor. Their intimacy practices are radical and yet often quotidian acts of resistance. Casually read, “What We’ve Become” is a collection of poems about romantic intimacy but in this presentation, selected poems from the collection will be presented against the historical backdrop to explain the ubiquity of salutes to “Black love” and “relationship goals” as celebrations of liberation.

Gabrielle Kubi, “Conversations in Color: Conceptualizing University-Based Black Girls’ Development of an Intersectional Awareness of Misogynoir”

University-based and high school Black girls in Circle of Sisters (CoS), a within-high-school homeplace, increasingly attributed intersectional



Preservation Virginia is committed to growing a new initiative, Voices Remembered, that encourages Black Virginians to share their stories. The initiative’s primary goal is to tell a fuller Virginia story and increase the number of Black preservationists and historians in the field of historic preservation while forming a network. Hear from the fellowship participants selected to conduct summer research projects. This fellowship is supported by the Mellon Foundation. Learn more about the fellowship application and selection process.

Panel 4:

“Strength in Sisterhood: The Power of a Council of Women in Navigating Life, Family, and Career”

Location: Matoaka Woods

Moderator: Shené V. Owens, Ph.D.

Eltonette Harris, Ph.D.

Stephanie L. Sutton

Tasha Turnbull

This session explores the significance of friendship and sisterhood as pillars of Black resilience, highlighting the vital role a council of women plays in supporting each other through life’s challenges. Centered around the conference theme, the session will delve into how Black women have historically and contemporarily relied on each other for strength, guidance, and inspiration. The discussion will emphasize the importance of cultivating and sustaining these bonds to navigate the complexities of life, family, and career.

Panel 5:

“Exploring Black American Lives through Disability, Relationships, and Conversation”

Location: Dogwood

Moderator: Dr. Phyllis Slade Martin

15TH ANNUAL LEMON PROJECT SPRING SYMPOSIUM



oppression to societal structures. Discussion supported their lived experience processing, enriching their activism. University-based girls enrolled in the facilitation training course Conversations in Color (CiC) identified their facilitation as resistance to misogyny. Thus, I assert that the intersectional awareness scaffolded within such programs helps Black girls reconcile the contrast between their academic and sociopolitical prowess and (internalized) gendered racism. Further, I argue that CoS and CiC combat school misogyny by countering intersectional invisibility. I meld critical Black feminist qualitative methodologies to investigate how university-based Black girls developed an intersectional awareness of misogyny. In all, I enact Black feminist praxis, counteracting the misattribution and usurping of Black girls' praxis through my dissertation.

Panel 6:

“Prenatal Through Postpartum: The Renaissance of Black Maternal Health”

Location: Holly

Moderator: Devonne Winston, MPH, MB, HTL (ASCP)cm, CIC

Moira Offord, M.S.

Ashley Nelson, M.S.

Maternal health in the U.S. poses significant challenges, especially for African American women who face higher pregnancy-related complications and fatalities due to racial and socioeconomic disparities in healthcare. As professors at Norfolk State University, an HBCU, we are committed to educating the public and advocating for equitable treatment for Black and Brown communities. We highlight Black excellence and the contributions given back to the culture. Our proposal outlines the pathologies contributing to increased mortality rates among Black mothers and calls for legislative reform, improved postnatal care, and community-led initiatives, such as Racha Tahani who created the first black-owned midwifery in Virginia. Our panel aims to discuss causes of increased mortality for Black mothers, review the healthcare experiences

of Black women to highlight necessary changes, investigate racial and socioeconomic biases in healthcare, and employ mixed-methods research to analyze Black maternal health outcomes.

Panel 7:

“Descendant Power | Mobilizing for Community and Advocacy”

Location: Matoaka Woods

Moderator: Jessica Harris

Star Reams

Laura Morgan Roberts

This session will explore the descendants of enslaved communities in Virginia, focusing on how adversity has shaped their strengths and challenges, particularly through the work of DEC-VA. DEC-VA serves as a collective voice for these descendants, aiming to collaborate with and support families in researching and honoring their ancestors' narratives. The panel will examine cultural practices, collective action, and grassroots initiatives that demonstrate resilience, highlighting successful efforts that have fostered mutual support. A key component will be on our first Descendant Symposium, where we will share insights from that gathering. Participants will gain a deeper understanding of Virginia's enslaved communities, our ongoing initiatives, and strategies for mobilizing in their own areas. By celebrating our history and envisioning collaborative paths to empowerment, we aim to inspire actionable strategies that address local challenges and promote descendant power.



Undeclared: Black Resilience through Resistance, Creativity, and Cooperation



One may argue that the dreams of Black families fuel the constant quest for freedom and justice in the U.S. and across the U.S. education system. This presentation describes a community assessment used during the double pandemic of COVID-19 and racial violence in the U.S. co-conducted by a community-rooted organization and its Black parents. The community assessment, rooted in articulating freedom dreams, increased Black parents' use of participatory research methods and resistance and healing practices to identify the dreams Black students, parents, and teachers held for Black children in North Carolina. The presenter demonstrates how Black-bodied resistance, healing, and love emerged through that work and evidence gathered. This presentation invites attendees into a facilitated dialogue around these key questions: what does it mean to build Black community power through assessment and research? How does that power contribute to continuous healing through love?

Lynette N Stewart, "Family First: The Bedrock of Black Resilience through Cultural Practices and Collective Action"

This presentation explores how family dynamics serve as a core source of resilience within Black communities. By examining cultural practices like oral storytelling, music, and intergenerational wisdom, alongside family-led grassroots initiatives, this talk highlights the pivotal role of Black families in sustaining collective action and community strength. Asking "how do family structures contribute to Black resilience," the presentation calls for a deeper appreciation of family as a foundation for empowerment and encourages exploring family-centered pathways for future social justice efforts.

Robin Jeser Wootton, "Can you meet me at Log Cabin Beach: a history of Grove and its resilience"

So much history is erased. Just gone. Poof. Nothing left but a fleeting memory in a single mind somewhere. Grove is a community that



Panel 8:

"Jackson Ward: The Birthplace of Black Entrepreneurship"

Location: Dogwood

Moderator: Faithe Norrell

Enjoli Moon

Sesha Moon

A phoenix called Jackson Ward arose from the ashes after the burning of the Capitol of the Confederacy as the Civil War ended. Formally established in April of 1871, the Ward is recognized as the United States' first historically registered Black urban neighborhood and the "Birthplace of Black Entrepreneurship." We will tell how Jackson Ward emerged as a diasporic model in reparative historic preservation through excavating, elevating, and educating on the hidden histories of the Ward, an often under-told story of excellence and enterprise in the national narrative; Educate attendees about the historical significance of Jackson Ward as the birthplace of Black Capitalism in the USA; Highlight key figures and events that shaped the Ward; Foster dialogue on the cultural significance, current challenges, and opportunities within Jackson Ward; Celebrate the success of the Ward despite it being a gerrymandered political district; Promote cultural preservation despite present gentrification.

Panel 9:

"Resilience and Healing Through History and Communities"

Location: Holly

Moderator: Andre Taylor

Dawn Henderson, "Using a Community Assessment to Cultivate Resistance, Healing and Love"

15TH ANNUAL LEMON PROJECT SPRING SYMPOSIUM



has seen attempts to erase, between the privatization of Carters Grove Plantation and Log Cabin Beach. The Grove Community is resilient, and it is worthy of remembering. With renewed interest in its history, Log Cabin Beach could stand for the many ways history has its last word. Interviews with residents and historians will be included in the presentation, as well as photography by Albert Durant. The emphasis will be on Grove's current progress and resilience while casting vision for future thriving as residents support each other and build stronger artistic community in the area. Highlights will include efforts like Grove Connections, a local community group with some big ideas to "Transform and Elevate Grove."

Orisade Awodola, "The Pennington Project"

The Pennington Project (TPP) is based on Rev. James W.C. Pennington's book *The Fugitive Blacksmith*. TPP depicts more than historical accounts from his book; it is a family memoir with narrative accounts and aims to foster a natural healing climate to address crucial issues of racial discourse open to debate and discussion on racial and social justice.

Panel 10:

"Undeclared by Eminent Domain: The Lee Family Rebuilding after Displacement in WWI"

Location: Matoaka Woods

Moderator: Mary Lassiter

Rosa Lee
Curtis Lassiter, Sr.
Berrender Johnson

In 1918, the Lee family was among the families ordered to leave their homes to establish the Navy Mine Depot, now known as the Naval Weapons Station Yorktown. This panel will explore the family's efforts to rebuild their traditions, homes, and businesses through the lives of three of the Lee family children: Ezekiel, Yearda, and John Henry Jr. As the symposium theme suggests, the Lee family was undefeated by eminent domain. The siblings epitomized Black resilience through their resistance, creativity, and cooperation as they forged ahead after their displacement. Ezekiel, Yearda, and John Henry Jr. worked together in their family and community to create opportunities for their children and for other community members to flourish.

Panel 11:

"Piney Swamp: A Place of Black Resistance, a Site of Black Landedness, a Subject of Cooperative Research"

Location: Dogwood

Moderator: Sara Lewis, Fairfield Foundation

Darold Cuba, PhD (ABD), Founding Chair of the Cambridge Anti-Racism Forum (CARF) and MarronageOrg, Cambridge University, UK

David A. Brown, PhD, Director, Fairfield Foundation

Nathaniel Glasgow, GIS Technician & Archaeologist, Fairfield Foundation

Apostle Markita Brooks, Pastor, Truth in the Spirit, Historic Antioch Baptist Church

The indistinctly-bounded area in mid-Gloucester, Virginia, known today as Piney Swamp, was a place of refuge for enslaved African Americans. Early documentary evidence shows that some people fled to this area to escape bondage or used it for concealed gatherings, as it was a remote forested portion of Fairfield and other plantations. Following emancipation, many formerly enslaved people formed a



Undeclared: Black Resilience through Resistance, Creativity, and Cooperation



distinct community here. Although many left the 20th-century Piney Swamp community during the Great Migration, some remained, as did fond memories among those whose ancestors first owned land, formed churches, and attended schools there. For two decades, the Fairfield Foundation studied early land ownership patterns. During the past year, descendants of the enslaved and enslavers have cooperated in dialogue as the Fairfield Foundation Family Circle. This venture is renewing and raising awareness about the beloved community, sharing memories, and reconnecting descendants.

Panel 12:

“We’ve Come Full Circle:’ How Two Families Separated by Slavery are Back Together Again”

Location: Holly

Moderator: Malerie Gamblin, M.Ed.

Ellicia Bragg Chau
Corinne Chau
Herbert Bragg

Families being separated and torn asunder is one of the most devastating and long-lasting consequences of America’s “original sin,” chattel slavery. When Freedom came, many Black families were reunited but far more remained apart for the rest of their lives. A century later, Alex Haley’s *Roots* created a firestorm of interest in genealogy for millions of Americans, especially those of African descent. The name Kunte Kinte became a household word, sending Black people across the country on a mission to research and reunite their families. In the decades following Haley’s 1976 bestseller, science and technology-- most notably DNA testing, the internet and genealogical websites like Ancestry.com-- have allowed even more African American families to reconnect. Join Corinne, Herbert and Ellicia for a lively discussion on the How-Tos of collaborative genealogy and the story of how their two families, separated by time, distance and bondage, were able to come full circle and be brought back together again.

Panel 13:

“Healing Through the Arts: Music, Stories, and Dance”

Location: Matoaka Woods

Moderator: Andre Taylor

Horace J. Scruggs, III, “Song: The Tie That Binds”

The African American spiritual is arguably the first truly American art form. Created in the colonies of America, it was neither wholly European or African and therefore a new musical creation. This creative process was formed while the African American community was under great social, political, and physical pressure strengthening those communal bonds through religious expression and creativity. Not only did these communities collectively create this art form, but they also continued its development and evolution through its use in post-emancipation communities, churches, and educational institutions. Many of these songs were re-invented and reworded to enliven those who were fighting for complete American citizenship during the civil rights movement and are still sung today in small country churches and concert halls alike. Presented in a lecture-concert setting, this presentation will examine the development, growth, and use of these “musical artifacts” while providing well-known examples.

Vincent Sneed, “How Teaching African American Music Can Create Equitable Schools”

African Americans have faced much adversity in education. Since *Brown v. Board of education*, schools across the country increased diversity in their student body, yet decreased diversity in educators and principals. This led to disparities in school disciplinary actions, as well as a lack of connection between white educators and African



15TH ANNUAL LEMON PROJECT SPRING SYMPOSIUM



American students. However, there is a unifying element among African Americans that can help fix this problem: music. Many white educators teach their classes with a passive receptive Eurocentric model (ie classical music approach). However, African Americans live in engaging environments. This will be demonstrated through musical concepts such as call-and-response and polyrhythm in jazz, rap, and soul. By teaching African American music concepts to educators, it can create schools where educators create lessons that are culturally relevant. This presentation will serve as a call to action to advocate for cultural relevancy in education using music.

Valerie-Alfisha Valentine, 'No Fish Allowed in this Area'

As a descendant of the Original Black Settlers of "The Reservation," I write short stories about this community. Past stories included "The Birthday Cake" and "Lee Hall Elementary." This story is how that same little girl began her successful career in corporate America at the age of 23—the first African American, and this time the 1st WOMAN. I will provide insight on navigating 1974 Corporate America.

Valerie A. Winborne, 'Alchemy of Being: Black Memory, Movement, and the Dance of Survival'

I will explore the intersection of Black memory, identity, healing and the art of just being, through movement, gesture and speech, focusing on how dance and dance within a certain context becomes ritual, religion and legacy...the basis of survival, the catalyst of being. Authentic movement reflects all we are as a people, it's in the way we walk, the rhythm of our speech the anatomy of being black which serves as one of many tools for survival and legacy. Aligned with the Lemon Project's theme of being undefeated, this movement speech highlights the resilience within the Black community. The format includes personal storytelling, movement sequences, and audience engagement that reflects and embodies Black Memory. Ultimately, the presentation aims to demonstrate that movement and who we, when we are, authentically so, is

essential for healing and survival. Celebrating the spirit of Southern Black folk and emphasizing the power of resilience.

Panel 14: "The Resilience of Black Women"

Location: Dogwood

Moderator: Dr. Sarah Thomas

Jill Found, "Didn't I Bring You Up?" Maintaining Family at Betsy's South Carolina College"

I will focus on an enslaved woman's attempts to maintain her family within the system of slavery. Enslaved at South Carolina College for over twenty years, Betsy worked against disease, sale, and death, to keep her family together and safe. I will attempt to create a historical narrative of her life and consider how much this is possible given the fact that the most ample source on her life is in the writings of her enslavers. It is both an in-process presentation, in that I will be discussing research and writing that I am currently developing, and a process presentation, in that I will focus on the methodological and theoretical considerations of this work. My goal is to consider how we can understand the resilience of the stories of enslaved people alongside their personal resilience.

Ivey Kline, "Contesting Slavery, Articulating Selfhood: Black Virginian Women's Freedom Suits in the Nineteenth Century"

I will analyze Black Virginian women's petitions for freedom in 19th-century courtrooms to illuminate how they contested slavery and subverted the law to articulate selfhood. I argue that freedom suits and courts served as crucial sites of self-articulation for enslaved women in Virginia whose testimonies, although mediated, functioned to make and shape the self through their persistent engagement with legal spaces. I will demonstrate their engagement by focusing on how these women represented and performed themselves in the courtroom,



Undeclared: Black Resilience through Resistance, Creativity, and Cooperation



alongside an analysis of how officials chose to document them within the archive. By analyzing what is said and left unsaid, documented and undocumented, noisy and silent, freedom suits allow a deeper understanding of how Black women have historically generated ideas of freedom, alternative geographies, and autobiography.

Karen A. Ford, "Lessons from Janie Porter Barrett: Past to Present"

Janie Porter Barrett's (1865-1948) life's work and leadership clearly demonstrate Black women's resilience through resistance, creativity, and cooperation. Barrett demonstrates a life of active involvement and participation at the individual and organizational level. Her practice agenda was broad-based showing awareness of the interconnection of the social, civic, and legal aspects of society and the impact of these aspects on individuals. Barrett provides a model of effective work in a hostile environment and creating a vision at the macro level to move forward. We will look at current issue/s and discuss possible interconnections, cooperations, and creativity with the hope that actionable ideas might be generated in the near future.

Panel 15:

"Partnership Model for Historical Preservation that Empowers Communities: The Cape Charles Rosenwald School Restoration Initiative and the W&M Public Policy Program"

Location: Holly

Moderator: Paul Manna

Tevya Griffin

Dianne Davis

Matthew Nwaneri

The Cape Charles Rosenwald School Restoration Initiative (CCRSRI) is a 501c3 nonprofit that, with its many diverse supporters, is preserving the historic Rosenwald School property in Cape Charles, Virginia, refashioning it as a hub for community development. The

CCRSRI partnered with W&M Public Policy to help clarify its values. In this small tight-knit community with development pressure and gentrification, locals are feeling more unwelcome. Still, the CCRSRI has helped spotlight African American history in Cape Charles where before it was basically invisible. Still, some African American locals are skeptical of the CCRSRI and its future plans for the Rosenwald School. The W&M program helped the CCRSRI board answer hard questions about its efforts like who is the community it wants to reach and what are the organization's core values, which can help it fulfill its mission and support the communities it strives to empower. Lessons learned from the partnership can inform future efforts like this one.

Panel 16:

"Writing *The Williamsburg Bray School: A Study in Community Resilience and Partnership*"

Location: Matoaka Woods

Moderator: Maureen Elgersman Lee and Nicole Brown

Janice Canaday

Jobnetta Gordon-Weaver

Burnell Irby

Theodora "Teddi" Asbby

Bray School Descendant Community members; William & Mary staff, faculty, and students; Colonial Williamsburg Foundation staff; and Bray School scholars—all collaborated to produce a ground-breaking book, *The Williamsburg Bray School: A History Through Records, Reflections, and Rediscovery* (2024). Led by the William & Mary Bray School Lab (Office of Strategic Cultural Partnerships) and published by The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, *The Williamsburg Bray School* explores the history and legacies of the 18th-century Williamsburg Bray School for enslaved and free Black children through archival documents, photos, and a collection of more than thirty essays of reflection. The resilience of Williamsburg Bray School students and their descendants is a theme that runs through the book and, therefore, through this panel.



15TH ANNUAL LEMON PROJECT SPRING SYMPOSIUM



Panel 17:

“Fostering Community and Collaboration: Building Upon Fifteen Years of Public History with the Lemon Project”

Location: Dogwood

Kelly Conway
Monet Watson
Bennett White

Expanding our understanding of William & Mary’s relationship to slavery and cultivating public engagement with its legacy remain central to the Lemon Project’s mission. This year’s graduate students celebrate the Lemon Project’s fifteenth anniversary through sharing their work on three expansive projects. Monet will discuss the legacy of Black people’s involvement and contributions to the university, Kelly will introduce the Lemon Project Society’s work to highlight the living legacy of Dean Carroll Hardy, and Bennett will demonstrate the ways in which archival research on enslaved communities has the potential to inform the genealogical efforts of descendant communities.

Panel 18:

“‘This Represents Opportunity:’ Black Resilience and the Legacy of Mitchelville”

Location: Holly

Moderator: Madie Critchfield Fischetti

Dr. Katherine Seeber
Ahmad Ward

This panel will explore the significance of Historic Mitchelville Freedom Park as a symbol of Black strength and determination. Mitchelville, established on Hilton Head Island in 1862 as the first

self-governed town of formerly enslaved individuals in the United States, exemplifies the power of collective agency and the pursuit of self-determination. Archaeological evidence and narratives from living descendants reveal how daily life in Mitchelville reflected a sense of freedom, community responsibility, and self-sufficiency. Through a discussion of its history and its cultural legacy, panelists will explore how Mitchelville’s inhabitants built a thriving, self-sustained community and collaborated to form a model of Black perseverance that carries through to the present day. The panel will discuss Mitchelville’s enduring legacy, exploring how its story continues today as a testament to the creative and cooperative strategies that this Black community has historically employed to overcome adversity.

Panel 19:

“Aspiring for Change: Community Transformation Through ‘Coming to the Table’”

Location: Matoaka Woods

Moderator: Hayat Bain

Danita Rountree Green
Laura Hill
Roslyn Ella Honesty

Coming to the Table is a national organization with over 50 local groups that is focused on working together across the racial divide to create a just and truthful society that acknowledges and seeks to heal from the racial wounds of the past. We accomplish this through practices of uncovering history, making connections, working toward healing, and taking action to dismantle systems of oppression. Symposium participants will be introduced to this national organization and given a taste of what our local groups in Richmond, Historic Triangle (Williamsburg-Jamestown-Yorktown), and Northern Shenandoah Valley are doing or have done to work toward healing and taking action to dismantle oppressive systems and as a part of that, uplift Black individuals and communities, thus transforming our wider communities. We will include an experiential component with participants invited to engage in conversation around a provided prompt, utilizing circle process and CTTT Touchstones.

Panel 20:

“Initiatives for Memorialization & Institutional Accountability”

Location: Dogwood

Moderators: Dr. Christine Cynn and Dr. Michael Dickinson

Asbley Burks
Arya Hanjagi
I-Kamilah Hiwott
Maryam Shaw
Victoria Vidal

Undeclared: Black Resilience through Resistance, Creativity, and Cooperation



In 1994, construction at VCU uncovered the remains of 54 mostly Black Richmonders from the antebellum period. Faculty and staff from Hampden-Sydney College, now VCU Medical Center, had stolen the bodies from their graves for dissection use, then discarded them in what is now known as the East Marshall Street Well (EMSW). Spearheaded by the Family Representative Council (FRC) representing the descendants of the people whose bodies were found in the EMSW, the EMSW Project was formed in 2011. As our panel discusses, VCU Health Humanities Lab undergraduate fellows work to amplify FRC priorities around memorialization and institutional accountability through an oral history project, a podcast investigating archival study, digital walking tours, educational exhibitions, and a proposed human remains policy. Integrating the FRC's recommendations into university practices, these efforts highlight the Richmond Black community's resilience in seeking justice and remembrance and fostering community healing.

Panel 21:

“Highlighting Undergraduate Research at William & Mary”

Location: Holly

Moderator: Dr. Jennifer Putzi

Martha Holler, “Envisioning Change: Frances Ellen Watkins Harper’s American Utopia in “Iola Leroy”

As part of my English Honors project, I have been researching 19th-century utopian literature, specifically the novel *Iola Leroy*. Frances Ellen Watkins Harper’s *Iola Leroy* is a novel centered on the desire for change in American society. Set during the Civil War, *Iola Leroy* uses the uncertainty of America’s future to depict the necessary changes required to create a utopian society rooted in racial uplift. Frances Ellen Watkins Harper positions African American women at the forefront of this movement and, through her literature, emphasizes their key role in attaining her utopian vision. I think sharing her work could contribute

to discussions of how we envision change during times of conflict, past and present, and how these moments of conflict activate our desire for something better. Harper’s novel is continuously revisited by English scholars, largely because her writing broke the boundaries and rules of literature of her time and continues to remain relevant today.

Abigail Swanberg, “Diversity on DOG Street”

Diversity on DOG Street is a study in the current and historical state of marginalized communities’ representation, involvement, and inclusion in the museum field using Colonial Williamsburg and William & Mary’s Historic Campus as a case study. Communities including, but not limited to, African American, Indigenous, and Queer individuals are historically underrepresented in the content, programming, and staffing of many museums. These communities have actively advocated for their own inclusion in museum programming, and the current state of representation in museums would not exist without that activism. This presentation is focused specifically on African American representation, but it is a part of a larger honors thesis on the representation of African American, Indigenous, and Queer communities.

Jennifer Putzi and Micah Hutchings, “Mary Virginia Montgomery’s Diary: Education and Resilience in Reconstruction Mississippi”

In this presentation, we will introduce our work on a digital edition of the 1872 diary of Mary Virginia Montgomery (1850-1902), focusing on education as an example of Black resilience in Reconstruction Mississippi. Enslaved until 1862 by Joseph Davis (brother of the president of the Confederate States), Virginia was privately educated by her father and a series of tutors prior to the Civil War. Her diary documents the continued support of her family and community as well as her own commitment to both self-education and formal education after the war as she prepared for admission to Oberlin College. We read the diary as a record of Virginia’s extensive studies in history, composition, and the sciences, as well as material evidence of her ambitious commitment to education for its own sake—a rejection of the white racist perception of African Americans as incapable of



15TH ANNUAL LEMON PROJECT SPRING SYMPOSIUM

and uninterested in learning. We will conclude by reflecting on the digitization of the diary as a learning opportunity for W&M students.

Panel 22:

“Healing Through Truth: Exploring the Intersection of Historical Narratives, Reparations and Mental Health at Virginia Theological Seminary”

Location: Matoaka Woods

Moderator: Ebonee Davis-Hayes

Maddy McCoy
Simone Jacobs

As communities and institutions wrestle with legacies of historical injustices, it is crucial to develop effective paths towards individual and communal healing. Such work involves understanding the interconnection between historical truths, reparations, and mental health facilitation. In 2019, Virginia Theological Seminary (VTS) announced the creation of a reparations endowment fund and the intent to research and recognize the labor of Black persons who toiled under the oppression of VTS during slavery and throughout the Jim Crow era. Prioritizing both moral and material repair, the VTS Reparations Program has been making annual cash payments to descendants while also engaging in the work of relationship building. We explore the complexities and intersections of identifying historical truths, laying the ground for reparations, and mental health. We explain how confronting difficult history can impact individual and collective mental health and highlight the healing effects of reparative work.

Panel 23:

“Reclaiming the Narrative: Rediscovering the Black History of Smith’s Fort”

Location: Dogwood

Moderator: Elyse Werling

Faith Page
Rev. Dr. James Harrison

In 1886, four Black families purchased a large plantation along Gray’s Creek in Surry County, Virginia. Aside from the hundreds of acres of farm and timber land included in the property, it also contained the remnants of John Smith’s 1609 retreat fort, as well as a 1765 manor house, then believed to date to the 1650s. By the 1920s, Bolling and Josephine Morris were the sole owners of the property, but it was highly coveted by a local branch of the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities (APVA). By the early 1930s, the APVA owned the property, which they opened as “Smith’s Fort.” In 2024, we discovered the true history of that acquisition through archive research. In this panel, we will discuss how we rediscovered this unsettling history, and what the future holds for this incredible site.

Panel 24:

“Resilience Through Cooperation – William & Mary Cultural Heritage Immersion Program (CHIP)”

Location: Holly

Moderator: Tonia Meredith

Olivia Blackshire
Eliza Fernandez
Elle Kim

This panel will include the experiences of three interns for the Bray School Lab oral history program as they learned about the intersection of race, religion and education, the history of the Williamsburg Bray School and its descendant community. The CHIP program serves all students, but is focused on recruiting first-generation, low-income, veteran, and other under-represented students. These internships are funded and/or offer academic credit that will enable a broader array of students to expand their skills and opportunities within the context of their academic programs. This in turn provides cultural heritage institutions with a pipeline of new employees that will diversify their workforce, integrating new visions and voices in this time of unprecedented change, highlighting collaboration with William & Mary, its student body and the descendant community.

Undeclared: Black Resilience through Resistance, Creativity, and Cooperation

CHECK OUT THESE POSTERS AND EXHIBITIONS IN THE CONCOURSE AND MAIN LOBBY.

Madie Fischetti, “An Inescapable Network of Mutuality:” Cultural Landscapes of Black Resistance

- *This poster will explore the dynamic intersections of Black resilience within cultural landscapes through the lens of National Park Service sites. By highlighting pivotal moments of resistance—such as liberation movements, art, music, and intellectual contributions—these landscapes the depth of creativity that has emerged in response to oppression. The poster will showcase the cooperative efforts in Black communities, from the residential areas of freedom seekers to HBCU campuses to the homes of civil rights leaders, illustrating how these strategies have fostered strength and sustainability. Through this lens, these landscapes underscore the importance of these physical spaces, which are enduring testaments to Black innovation and survival.*

Friends of Virginia’s Central State Hospital, “The Evolving History of Virginia’s Central State Hospital, 1869-2025: An Exhibit”

- *This exhibit features a segment of historical photographs, documents, and artifacts that narrate the first hundred and fifty-five years of Virginia’s Central State Hospital, originally named Central Lunatic Asylum for the Colored Insane. Central State Hospital was the first mental health institution in the US opened for people of African descent. Originally founded in 1869 in Richmond, the hospital relocated to Petersburg in 1882. The purpose of this exhibit is to examine the legacy of Black mental health in Virginia and the US; highlight the most valuable set of records in the world as far as Black people in the mental health system; reduce the stigma of mental health care; and uplift stories of the devoted staff and community connections to patient care.*

Gerald “Jay” Gaidmore, Swem Special Collections Research Center

Lemon Project Society students under the leadership of Kelly Conway, “Living the Legacy of Dean Carroll Hardy”



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