Several weeks ago, a few staff members toured the destroyer, USS George Mason. They came back excited about the experience and humbled by their exchanges with the crew. Upon learning where our team worked, the crew members’ faces filled with joy. To the sailors, the site of Cape Henry Lighthouse— one of the historic sites we steward— has special meaning. After a long deployment, the tower’s silhouette growing closer means the warm embrace of family and friends is not far away.

Historic places hold deeply personal meanings. The rolling green of an agricultural landscape, the disturbed earth of an archaeological site or familiarity of an ancestral home: these places give us a sense of belonging, of memory and of connection.

This September, we honored individuals and organizations who have a profound commitment to historic places. From Bristol to Virginia Beach, from Leesburg to Clarksville, the award recipients are inspiring us all by preserving, adapting and spotlighting history and historic places.

The pages of our fall Historic Ventures are filled with examples of how historic preservation efforts are creating opportunities and sharing perspectives about history.

These successes are a direct result of your commitment to our mission. Thank you for your support and we look forward to seeing you in the near future!

Sincerely,
Celebrating Preservation
The 2022 Preservation Awards Ceremony
(continued)

your response has been to be a YIMBY
(Yes in My Backyard). Regardless of
where you fall on the Nimby/Yimby
spectrum, I am nicknaming tonight
PIMBY Night, for Preservation in MY
Backyard, because all of the people and
places that we cite tonight are all about
Preservation—preservation practice,
preservation philosophy, preservation
policy, preservation parity, and yes, even some
preservation politics. Collectively they have
embraced and spread preservation in their
backyards and beyond.

Our 2020-2022 PIMBY awardees represent the
geographic and cultural diversity of Virginia’s
preservationists who advocate for traditional
and indigenous cultural places, communities,
countryside, presidential home sites, places
of worship, industry and commerce. Some
are places where people labored because they
were enslaved and where their descendants
have later reclaimed not only their freedom but
also their voices, and finally the right to influence
how and who will tell their stories. These are places
now not only of history but also of acknowledgment
and recognition.

What does a history that centers people and
place look like? What does Virginia’s history
tell us about temporality, disappearance,
re-emergence, threats and emergencies,
endurance, resilience, disasters and
opportunities? I think it looks a lot like
tonight’s PIMBY Class. We not only award
them but emulate them as preservation
models.

Genevieve P. Keller

Many thanks to our lead sponsors for their generous
support: Giles-Jett Investment Group, Davenport &
Company, Rick Barker Properties, PMA Architecture
and Daniel & Company.

(Left) Rick Barker, his company
Rick Barker Properties, LLC and
many partners were recognized
for their transformational
rehab work on the 500 Block of
Craghead Street in Danville.
(Below) The 2022 Preservation
Award Winners.
(Left) Philanthropist David M. Rubenstein
gave live remarks from Colorado, discussing the importance of
civics education and the need to connect students to historic sites.

(Above) 300 years old
In 2020, Patrick Henry’s
Scotchtown is one of six
historic sites Preservation
Virginia owns and opens to
the public.
(Right) Kisha Wilson-
Sogunro received
the Katherine Glaize
Rockwood Community
Preservation Award for
her efforts in Northern
Virginia.

Chief G. Anne Richardson,
Chief of the Rappahannock
Indian Tribe, received
the Louis J. Malon
Outstanding Preservation
Achievement Award.

VCU Professor
Dr. Brian Brown of Preservation
Virginia’s Board of Trustees and
Niki Brown talk with staff on the
grounds of Scotchtown.
Sourcing the Past at the John Marshall House

Submitting Research to Enslaved.org

Emma Clark, John Marshall House Museum Educator

In March of 2022, educators Lydia Nerouth and Emma Clark at the John Marshall House, a Preservation Virginia historic site, submitted their research of the enslaved community to the Journal of Data and Slavery Preservation. Through their submission, descendants and researchers can now access the names, stories and complex lives of the individuals John Marshall once enslaved in Richmond between 1784 and 1835. Their research not only benefits the greater knowledge of these individuals, but also contributes to the greater understanding of urban slavery in the American South.

Nerouth and Clark began their research by extracting names and references of enslaved individuals from a number of sources compiled by Preservation Virginia. These sources are located in different archives and libraries, but have been digitized and collected as electronic files. These sources include John Marshall’s account book from the years 1783-1795 published in The Papers of John Marshall (1998); John Marshall’s wills including his final version written in 1832 (and three previous iterations that he revoked); two deeds stipulating the use of enslaved labor between several parties including John Marshall; newspaper articles, and letters written from John Marshall to his wife, Polly. From these sources Nerouth and Clark were able to identify 64 named individuals to submit to Enslaved.org.

In most cases, enslaved individuals are only listed once or twice in the records that survive documenting Marshall’s time in his 1790 Richmond home. For most of these sources, a name is all we have to represent the entirety of an individual. At present, we are unable to know the forced responsibilities they may have performed or details about their daily life or their families. This is the case of Hanibal, who is only referenced with his name next to the price for which he was purchased on March 31, 1789. In other instances, Marshall only referred to individuals he enslaved in the abstract with the identifier “negro.” For those we can trace across more than one source, we make educated inferences about how they served the Marshall family and for how long. For example, Marshall described his enslaved man Henry as “my cook” in the 1834 section of his final will. Additionally, Marshall refers to Robin Spurlock as his “faithful servant.” Robin Spurlock is the individual referenced most in the historical record, with mentions of his family, attire and labor in newspaper articles and accounts from Marshall’s colleagues.

After the initial phase of research, sources were analyzed and names were extracted by hand into a dataset. The dataset contains the principal information available about each individual and the source in which they are referenced. Data points include a unique identifier (which we have assigned), name, surname, alias, age, sex, date range of references, full source citation, names of parents and names of children.

From this dataset Nerouth and Clark were able to broaden the historical narrative of slavery at the John Marshall House. Examples of this include the additional documents that were found which pertain to Israel’s escape from his servitude. Previously, all that was known of Israel was that he was purchased by John Marshall in 1787 and seized his freedom in 1792. Now, thanks to the research Nerouth conducted, we have since found multiple runaway ads indicating Israel escaped his servitude multiple times from various enslavers throughout Virginia. And yet, even with this new research, his story is still not complete. Additional findings include 28-names.

The research Nerouth and Clark have conducted is merely a stepping stone in understanding the holistic picture of the life, experience, memories and history of enslaved individuals at the John Marshall House. In fact, since their research submission, more documents and names were discovered, shining a light on new individuals not previously found in the historical record. The John Marshall House staff will continue to expand this research into the lives of men, women and children the Great Chief Justice enslaved in the Early Republic, and to embed these stories into historical interpretations. If anyone has knowledge or questions about the enslaved population who once lived and labored at the John Marshall House, please contact us at johnmarshallhouse@preservationvirginia.org.
If you’re looking for a flagship community for preservation in Virginia, visit Abingdon. Widely known for attractions like the Barter Theater and the Virginia Creeper Trail, much of the allure of the city is due to committed locals who invested their own time and resources to seeing historic sites preserved. There is a tightknit community of preservationists whose efforts resulted in once dilapidated structures being saved and used as restaurants, housing, coffee shops, rooftop bars, homes- all creative, adaptive reuses of sites downtown and beyond.

Saving historic buildings is an ethic that took root in Abingdon decades ago. Pioneers of preservation saw opportunity and inspired new generations, with new adaptive reuse projects happening all over. Recently the Preservation Virginia team visited to see the Abingdon renaissance for themselves, and spoke with the folks committed to preservation in their community:

PRESERVING ABINGDON

Rick Humphreys had to have a vision for the 1834 Austin Bronaugh House, now known as the Black Dog Inn. The “before” photos of the house are almost unrecognizable compared to the finished product, and they didn’t stop there. Next door, they also took on and restored an 1840s structure now known as A Tailor’s Lodging, which hosts overnight guests who can book online.

When asked about how preservation took root in Abingdon, Rick Humphreys said “I do not think it was solely the brick and clapboard of restoration that moved [preservationists in Abingdon]. I think it was much more, I think it was the discovery of how the building was engineered, researching the history of the people who lived in the structure and then something more contemporary- meeting the craftspeople who brought back the structure to life. The relationships that were built, preservationist to craftsperson, brick by brick. Truly these people are the ones who held the knowledge to make a restoration rather than a renovation.” Rick had also led the efforts to preserve and interpret the Revolutionary War-era “Muster Grounds” just outside of town, which Preservation Virginia recognized with an award in 2008.

Arguably Emmitt Yeary kicked off the preservation movement in Abingdon with the renovation of the “Tavern.” Claiming to be the oldest bar in Virginia, the Tavern was built in 1779 and served as an overnight stop for stagecoach travelers. It even hosted the first post office west of the Blue Ridge in the building’s east wing. In the 1980s, Yeary, a local attorney, restored the building to its former glory, and it still operates as a restaurant today.

Nearby attorney Byrum Geisler turned the Old Colonade Hotel into businesses and a residence. He first understood the power of preservation when in his hometown, the local courthouse was moved from downtown out to the county. With the loss of the courthouse, he saw businesses fade and his hometown decline. “Historic districts allow us today to experience, in certain aspects, what it would have been like hundreds of years ago. Structures like this will never be built again so it is important that we preserve them,” Geisler said. He now chairs the Historic Preservation Review Board for Abingdon. “At the [Old Colonade Hotel], there were mantels, floors and other elements that had been exposed for decades that were still in great shape and could be preserved. I was surprised at the extent to which aspects of the house could be repaired as opposed to replaced. I think the first reaction when seeing a very dilapidated building is that it cannot be saved. That is not the case. Saving an old building is extremely rewarding.”
David and Jill Dalton stepped in to save the Hiram Dooley House from certain demolition last year. It would’ve been added to our Most Endangered Historic Places list had Dave not arranged an audacious plan to have the house moved across the street to save it. “Back in the 1970s, my parents moved an 1890s historic home from Mooresville, North Carolina to Charlotte,” said Dalton. “They were meticulous in rebuilding the house to ensure it maintained its historic significance.”

While rehabbing the Hiram Dooley House into an event venue, the Daltons are restoring the historic William King House in Abingdon as well. “The biggest surprise or challenge is how to restore the home’s authenticity at an affordable price. Without historic tax credits, our projects could not be restored to the level of its original craftsmanship. Abingdon is blessed with numerous historic properties. Many might think a distressed home should be torn down and give way to a new structure. But if someone sees a properly restored home, they will likely see craftsmanship that cannot be duplicated to the degree it was when it was first built. It’s a window into the past.”

Amy Woolwine has preserved several buildings in Abingdon, one of which is now a local business called A Likely Yarn specializing in fibers. “I hope the community appreciates and maintains all sorts of old structures, no matter the grandiosity, the human occupations or just plain age. One structure I did was identified as built in 1590. When we took the interior back to the studs, it (or at least the wood it was framed with) was much, MUCH older. Hand-hewn timbers, likely from an older structure and construction details not used for decades.”

The Berg Brothers of Walberg Construction represent the next generation of preservationists. Nathan and David Berg have a knack for rehabbing buildings, and their brother Charlie has the knowhow to bring another world class restaurant to Abingdon. The Summers Building, a three-story turn-of-the-century structure near the courthouse, was an ambitious but fitting location. After an extensive rehab project and the installation of the rooftop bar, the Summers is once again able to welcome the public.

Alex Martin and Will Johnson had initially bought the Summers Building and contracted with Walberg to carry out the work. In addition to Summers, Alex and Will are tackling the Abingdon Mercantile Building and Old Jail.

PRESERVING ABINGDON

To see so much preservation happening from so many sources is inspiring, and their work transformational. If you don’t believe us, visit Abingdon and see for yourself! Many thanks to everyone who contributed to this article, to the Town of Abingdon and to photographer Chad Thompson.
Could you tell us a little bit about yourself and your career, and what led to this role at Preservation Virginia?

I’m a preacher’s kid who grew up in the Black church. That statement will resonate with some right away. I felt like a military child growing up. Wherever my father pastored a church, that’s where we lived and attended school. I’ve lived in Roanoke, Lynchburg, Amherst, Harrisonburg, and Richmond.

I’m a two time graduate of JMU (BA and MEd) and VCU (BA and EdD). I love school, college, language, culture, travel and African American history. African American Studies is what led me to Preservation Virginia.

What first got you interested in history?

As a child I loved looking at old photos and documents, and listening to my elders tell stories. I loved spending time with my grandmother, who was an awesome cook, and learning about the history of all of the communities we lived in. I wish I had asked her more questions. So many secrets and clues to our Virginia history are left with the ancestors, so I will have to dig deep to get those answers from the people that I meet and the communities I visit.

What do you hope to accomplish? Is there specific work within the preservation community that you would like to highlight and support?

Where do I begin? The assignment and responsibility are huge. I’m passionate about the historic preservation of African American and Native American communities and spaces; it means a lot to me personally. The Virginia story is a direct reflection of me and my family.

Aside from discovering all of the historic spaces Virginia has to offer, I want to really connect with the people and communities that live and have history in the cities and spaces that I will visit. I want to formalize programming to help tell the stories of the sites that Preservation Virginia stewards, the stories of the enslaved, Rosenwald Schools, Native and Indigenous communities, cemeteries and organizations are all priorities for me. I also want to help Development identify families, organizations and foundations that will support the programming our constituents want to see and experience. I have over 21 years of development experience that we can also leverage at PV. I know these are ambitious goals but not impossible.

What would you hope folks will have a better understanding of after attending Preservation Virginia programs?

I hope everyone participating knows what we do as a statewide organization- that we serve as a resource to so many. I also hope we can attract untapped audiences, all audiences. I want to expand our Preservation Virginia Family to know and understand who we are. I’d like to share the full story of all Virginians, especially those that have been disenfranchised.

This initiative is supported through a grant from the Jessie Ball DuPont Fund. The goal of AAF is to create a pipeline of new professionals in the field of historic preservation by:

Identifying, supporting and providing opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students, emerging professionals in preservation-related fields, African American scholars, creatives and experts in historic, social justice and preservation disciplines

• Amplifying and preserving the full Virginia Story through our Voices Remembered Initiative

• Providing greater diversity in the field of preservation with more significant consideration to the African American communities in Virginia

• Providing participants with a pathway to careers in historic preservation related fields.

We intend to meet this goal by providing paid fellowships each year with the fundamentals, experience and mentorship necessary to prepare preservationists of color for careers, professional opportunities, research and the sheer love of communities specific and unique to you.

If you are interested in becoming a fellow, you can apply online at preservationvirginia.org. For more information contact: Dr. Lisa Winn Bryan at lwinnbryan@preservationvirginia.org or call us at 804-648-1889.

Application Cycle Opens for African American Fellows Program

Currently, only 1% of preservation professionals are African American. We think that needs to change. 2023 is the inaugural year of Preservation Virginia’s African American Fellows (AAF) program. If you’re African American and have an interest in preserving African-American voices and history, we want to offer financial support for you to learn the art and science of preservation. The AAF program offers a $7,500 stipend to learn the process of preservation, make valuable connections in the industry, and have a chance to conduct research in their area of interest.
Spring Bank is a late Georgian-style house built in 1793 in Lunenburg County, Virginia. A surviving letter confirms this date and dendrochronology has recently provided a more precise understanding of the construction of the house in three phases.

The house was built for the newly married John Starke Ravenscroft (1772-1830), who became the first Episcopal bishop of North Carolina in 1823, and Anne Spotswood Burwell (1773-1814), a great-granddaughter of Governor Alexander Spotswood. The date of the construction of Spring Bank is confirmed by a bill submitted for stonework by Jacob Shelor in November 1793, as well as by a letter from Anne Ravenscroft to Lady Jean Skipwith, dated “Spring Bank January 25th 1794”. In that letter, Anne writes, “With pleasure I tell you there is every prospect for my being perfectly content with my new habitation.....”

I purchased Spring Bank in 1998 while I lived and worked as a lawyer in New York City. The house was structurally sound, but needed a new roof immediately, various carpentry repairs and a complete exterior paint job. For about eight years, I came down from New York a couple of weekends a month to enjoy peaceful interludes at Spring Bank. In 2006 I engaged a contractor to do a renovation of the interior of the house, which retained virtually all of its 18th century woodwork and heart pine floors.

I retired in 2018 and moved to Spring Bank full time. An old house can be both a wonderful home and an absorbing hobby. I have learned a great deal more about Spring Bank in the last few years through the work of various professionals, including Matthew Turner of GeoModel, Inc., who performed a ground penetrating radar examination of the cemetery to the south of the house, which identified four previously unmarked graves. Graham Callaway, a graduate student in Archaeology at William & Mary working on his Ph.D thesis, has been conducting archaeological surveys at Spring Bank, which have already produced important information about the use of the land.

In January 2022, Michael J. Worthington and Jane I. Seiter of Oxford Tree-Ring Laboratory in Baltimore Maryland, completed a dendrochronological analysis of the house and two outbuildings at Spring Bank. Dendrochronology (tree-ring dating) involves the study of samples taken from timbers in a building and comparing them through computer analysis to a database of firmly dated sequences from other buildings. Although the documentary evidence seems to provide a firm date for the construction of the house, I was interested in dating what appears to be a later porch on the front of the house, as well as the smokehouse and a log building near the house. Unfortunately, neither the smokehouse, nor the log building, nor the porch could be dated at this time, but the samples taken from the house revealed new information. Samples from timbers supporting the roof in the central section of the house were cut in the winter of 1792-93, just after the marriage of the Ravenscrofts on September 29, 1792, consistent with other documentary evidence. (The report states that it was common practice to build timber framed structures with green or unseasoned timber.) However, the timbers in the south wing were cut in the spring of 1795, and those in the north wing were cut in the winter of 1796-97. The Ravenscrofts became wards of five orphaned children at some point after April 1794, which may explain the addition of the new spaces.

I am grateful to and remember the many individuals of diverse backgrounds, including enslaved men, women and children, who have lived at this place and helped to create it and preserve it as a part of our shared history. When I recently toured an historic house in England, the owner spoke of the challenges and responsibilities of maintaining an historic house – a project is barely finished when it seems it needs to be done again, and planned improvements are delayed. He said that it helps him to think of it all as a process, always moving forward, from the past, to the present, to the future. As William Morris said of historic buildings, “They are not in any sense our property, to do as we like with. We are only trustees for those that come after us.”

We would love to learn about other preservation projects throughout Virginia! Please share your historic preservation journey with Marny Hackley at mhackley@preservationvirginia.org.
**Supporter’s Spotlight**

A Conversation With Nancy Welch

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**What first got you interested in history and historic places?**

Growing up I did the usual visits on family vacations to the significant historical places in our country. But it was getting older and getting interested in genealogy that made me realize how important the lesser-known sites are. The places that don’t get mentioned by the tourism board but mean a lot to individuals and their personal histories.

**Do you have a favorite historic site that you’ve visited?**

The one that I visited the most is River Farm in Alexandria that I used to live near. It was an amazing place to visit for so many reasons: a place for kids and families to play and picnic, the amazing views, and of course, the beautiful gardens. What a unique site used by so many!

**River Farm was listed in our Most Endangered Places program! Why is it important to see historic places preserved and interpreted for future generations?**

These structures teach us and remind us of who we are and were. Learning in the classroom is wonderful, but seeing a site in person and understanding its significance leaves more of a lasting impression and brings humanity together.

**Why did you decide to support Preservation Virginia in these efforts?**

After reading the Washington Post article about Kimberly Morris and her efforts to locate and help preserve the century-old schoolhouse that her father had attended, I knew I wanted to help the organization that would make it possible. I never heard of Preservation Virginia before reading that article, but it led me to finding out more about the significant work the group does.

**What do you hope to see accomplished through your support and Preservation Virginia’s work?**

I hope more people have the lightbulb moment I did that there is a need to remember our past by preserving our historical places, both big and small.

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**Major Grants Made to Two Preservation Virginia Historic Sites**

2022 is proving to be a momentous year for the care of our historic sites. Turning 230 years old this year, Old Cape Henry Lighthouse is the recipient of a Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) grant of $1.5 million. An additional $500,000 is being sought to partially match the grant, with the funds being used towards masonry repair of the lighthouse tower. Meanwhile we’re thrilled to announce that Bacon’s Castle was approved for a $400,000 Save America’s Treasures grant through the National Park Service. The SAT grant will help address needed masonry repairs to the Jacobean-style chimney stacks, moisture mitigation, roof replacement and window restoration.

Both of these opportunities are challenge grants, meaning we need your help to match them, unlock the funds and perform all the work needed on these two iconic and irreplaceable historic structures. Gifts can be mailed to Preservation Virginia’s headquarters in Richmond or made online at preservationvirginia.org. Both locations will remain open during preservation work over the next few years, so be sure to visit and see your donations in action!
Double (and even Triple) Your Donation to Preservation Virginia!

For the third year running, the Jessie Ball duPont Fund has put up a $25,000 challenge to Preservation Virginia supporters. The details: gifts must be made through our website during the month of November to count! Each online gift is doubled, and best of all, on Giving Tuesday (November 29th), donations will be tripled by the duPont Fund! The gift amount for each online transaction is limited to $500 but there is no limit to how many donations can be made.

In the spirit of Giving Tuesday, we’re celebrating our members and community partners with a special offer. **BUY ONE, GIVE ONE!**

Purchase a new or renew your membership online and we’ll give an equal level membership to an individual, partners, family or an organization of your choice. If you’re considering a year-end gift to Preservation Virginia, remember that giving through our website in November means your donation is doubled, and on November 29th, tripled! Contact Marny Hackley at 804-648-1889 ext. 305 if you have questions.
Calendar of Events

Giving TWEosday
November 29, 2022
Giving Tuesday is a global generosity movement to set aside a day for donating during the season of giving. This year is special, as gifts made through our website are tripled through a challenge grant from the Jessie Ball duPont Fund. For example, a gift of $100 online becomes $300 on Giving Tuesday.

Frost Fair Featuring the Knights Before Christmas
Bacon’s Castle
Saturday, December 10 – 10 a.m. to 4 p.m
The Tidewater Dogs of War living history group return to the grounds of Bacon’s Castle to battle it out medieval-style. This unique event also features open house tours, visits with Father Christmas, children’s games, a bonfire, hot cider and more.

Christmas in Early America Guided Tours
The John Marshall House
Enhance your winter holiday with a visit to the John Marshall House. Take a special “Christmas in Early America” guided tour and see the Chief Justice’s 1790 home decked in period garnish and ornaments. Themed youth scavenger hunts and coloring sheets will be available to take on tour, and special holiday gifts can be found in the Museum Shop.

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