

July 2010

WILLIAMSBURG'S

# Next Door Neighbors®

VOL. 4, ISSUE 7

PRICELESS

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Colonial Williamsburg

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Most people think of history as what is in the past. In Williamsburg, however, we are surrounded by history. It is a part of our everyday lives. As caretakers of such a rich history, we are all entrusted in some way to preserve the past. It is a past that helps define us as a community - one unlike any other community in the world.



Meredith Collins, Publisher

There are literally thousands of people living in Williamsburg who actively preserve history - in their work, their writings, their interests and past-times. There are authors, archeologists, historians, professors ... and the list goes on. Our community is a magnet for those who have a passion for both learning more about people who lived long ago and for sharing their discoveries with others. It is our nature to want to know about the past even though every moment we live moves us farther away from it. Perhaps it is that very thing - unattainability - that fascinates us so much about it. How cool it would be to talk to the men and women who settled here over 400 years ago!

Since we could not set up those interviews, we will introduce you to some of your neighbors whose lives touch different aspects of our history. These individuals are active in preserving our history in a variety of ways, through their actions and interests. We hope you enjoy reading their stories. NDN

SEE PAGE 35  
TO PARTICIPATE IN A  
COMMUNITY SURVEY  
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**CORRECTION:** In the June issue in the story, *Anna Loves to Cook for You*, we wrote that Anna Liguria opened Welcome South Restaurant in Toano. This was incorrect. Welcome South Restaurant was started by the Anderson family and Anna purchased the business from them, keeping the name. We regret the error.



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## COLIN CAMPBELL

# Preserver of Our Living History Museum

*By Lillian Stevens*

Colin Campbell is President of the largest living history museum in the world: Colonial Williamsburg. His passion for history - and the people who have made history - percolate down through each of Colonial Williamsburg's interpretive programs and educational/citizenship outreach efforts.

"From the time I arrived here, I got pretty caught up in the 18th century period and the Founding Fathers. Then, as vice chair of the Jamestown 400th steering committee, I became naturally fascinated with the period between 1607 and the Revolution," Campbell says. "There are people in particular who have

had an impact on my interest in this specific period. We have a colonial historian on our board, Barbara Oberg. She's the editor of the Jefferson papers at Princeton. Additionally, we have two historians who are senior trustees: Paul Nagel of Minnesota who is one marvelous historian, and then there is Gordon Wood, the Pulitzer Prize winning historian. Gordon had a great deal of influence on my reading and interest in colonial history."

Campbell has been involved with the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation for decades, having served on its Board of Trustees prior to becoming president. His wife, Nancy, is chair-

man emeritus of the National Trust for Historical Preservation, and served as vice chairman and commissioner of the Jamestown 400th celebration. Their interest in history is apparent in their daily lives.

Colonial Williamsburg spans more than 300 acres and holds more than 500 restored or reconstructed buildings, but it takes living people to make a living museum. Colonial Williamsburg's costumed interpreters and other people-driven initiatives, such as the Revolutionary City®, go beyond the historically accurate physical surroundings to bring to life Williamsburg as it was in the 18th century.

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“In microcosm, Colonial Williamsburg does more than preserve the past; in a manner more comprehensive, more tangible, more immediate than at any other museum, it maintains a living legacy,” Campbell explains.

Campbell oversees every aspect of Colonial Williamsburg which knits the generations each to the other, both in the local community and beyond. He is widely regarded by his colleagues at the College of William and Mary where he serves as a member of the Board of Visitors.

“To really make a difference for the better in a community, you’ve got to understand the place, care deeply about its welfare, be willing to work hard for its good, and come armed with a powerful intellect, a lot of common sense, and some resources. Colin Campbell is graced by all these civic virtues. He has been an extraordinary force for good in Williamsburg as well as the Historic Triangle. Our community is blessed to have him in its midst,” says Taylor Reveley, William and Mary’s President.

Before relocating to Virginia, Campbell served as the President of the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, President of Wesleyan University, Vice President of the Planning and Government Affairs Division of the American Stock Exchange, and an associate at the law firm of Cummings & Lockwood in Connecticut.

“Through my career, I’ve had plenty of exposure to the history agenda and to the non-profit agenda – and exposure to the combination of not-for-profit and profit activities. So both the history agenda and the non-profit agenda, all seemed to me to be relevant to my taking on this assignment,” he says.

With Campbell at the helm, Colonial Williamsburg has implemented a new marketing structure and has amped up what he calls “the citizenship agenda”.

For instance, every afternoon, weather permitting, a street theater called Revolutionary City® emerges in the Historic Area where events of the Revolution are performed to tell the stories of everyday 18th century citizens.

“If you watch a performance of Revolutionary City®, you think about the military families today and the impact Iraq or Afghanistan has had and continues to have on them. Today’s performance is about a wife who is trying to find her soldier husband who may have been captured in Charleston. She doesn’t know where he is, and has no funds for the family,” Campbell says. “So if you think about it, the agenda in 2010 is still very much as it was back then: war, taxes, race and religion. We try to help people make the connection, not just between 18th and 21st century governments, but also 18th century citizens and citizens today.”

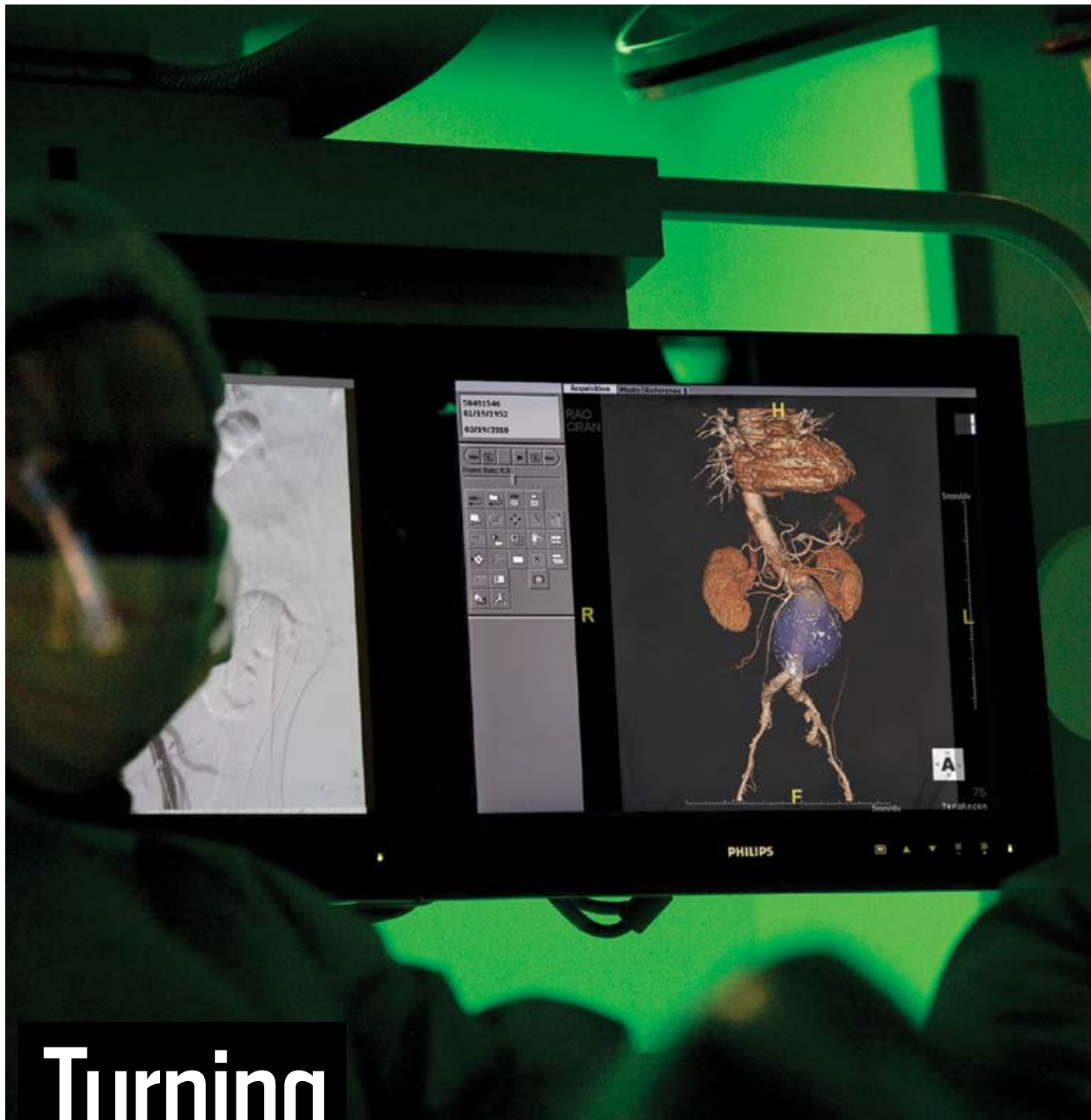
In terms of advancing the citizenship agenda to those who cannot visit in person there are electronic field trips which are now reaching six million students, and a new *Idea of America* program which is being introduced for secondary schools in the fall.

“This is really remarkable, all technology based - 100% digital. So our citizenship agenda will continue to move forward with those programs in schools and with the Revolutionary City® here on site,” he says.

Still, there is the challenge of making sure that people around the country understand and appreciate Colonial Williamsburg, and visit.

“It’s very concerning to me that in this highly competitive age and highly technological time, that the message of Colonial Williamsburg is not being heard and seen by people in the numbers that it should be. That’s something that we continue to work on,” Campbell says.

Though Colonial Williamsburg enjoyed an upward trajectory in the



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wake of the Jamestown 400th celebration, with ticket purchases close to 800,000, the economy took a downward turn shortly thereafter.

“That was a huge disappointment on two levels. One, it certainly discouraged tourism and effectively it required us to really pull in our belts. Certainly, having to eliminate more than 400 positions over the last 18 months has not been something that I would have hoped to do,” Campbell says quietly.

While Colonial Williamsburg remains one of the most well-known and compelling reasons for people to visit our area, it is not immune to the affects of a soft economy. Preserving history at the level of quality that Colonial Williamsburg does requires an immense commitment to ideals that have stood the test of time. Campbell supports local efforts being made to strengthen the economy of our region.

To face challenges locally, the Historic Triangle Collaborative Task Force has taken the lead in looking at Williamsburg, James City County, and York County as one integrated economy. James Golden, William and Mary’s Vice President for Strategic Initiatives, is leading that effort.

“Our Task Force explores ways to diversify

the economy by promoting growth in other sectors while simultaneously strengthening the tourism sector. Colin Campbell has been a leader in promoting that broad regional perspective,” says Golden.

Campbell is optimistic that these efforts will generate many positive results over time. However, as a seasoned leader who has experienced many challenges before, he knows change will not be overnight. Good leadership and clear vision will help make progress and this may sometimes require making difficult choices.

This was evident when the Foundation’s Board of Trustees approved expensive renovations which Campbell acknowledges came at a bad time financially. Today, however, he is extremely proud of the emergent face of some of its well-known structures.

“This place was in major need of a facelift and we made a decision to move forward with the Woodlands, with the expansion of the Visitor Center, with what I would call the restoration of the Williamsburg Inn and with the dramatic changes made at the Williamsburg Lodge,” Campbell says. “This was a huge investment, a big risk, and I can only be enormously proud of our Board of Trustees for making difficult

choices for the sake of Colonial Williamsburg’s future.”

With summer bearing down, inquiries are up and event planners are visiting in larger numbers.

“But the turnaround can be long for the business we’re in. Hospitality takes longer than other businesses, and high end hospitality takes longer than the rest,” says Campbell. “So we know we aren’t in that quick fix situation here and we urge people to be patient as we try to get through it,” says Campbell.

In the meantime, Campbell tries to balance his passion for perpetuating history with spending time with his family. He and Nancy have four children. Like most parents they are very proud of them.

They especially look forward to seeing their eight month old granddaughter this summer. With all of the responsibility that Campbell bears on his shoulders in preserving the past while leading the way for an even better Colonial Williamsburg, one would expect that load will lighten immeasurably in the not-too-distant future when family visits and he can hold his little granddaughter in his arms. NDN



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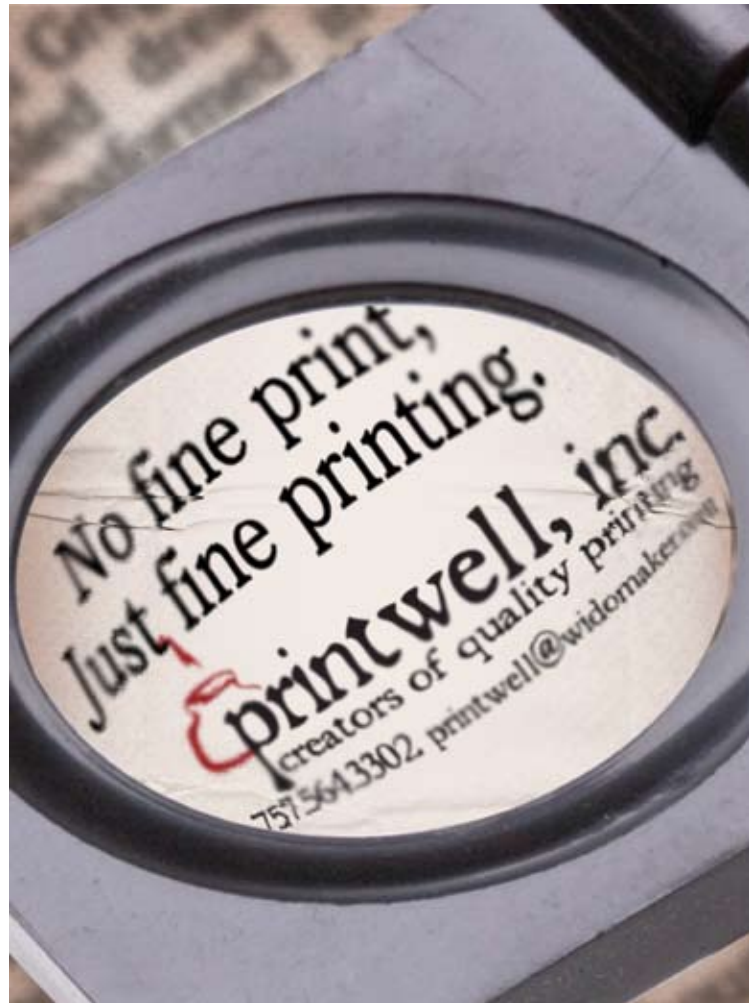
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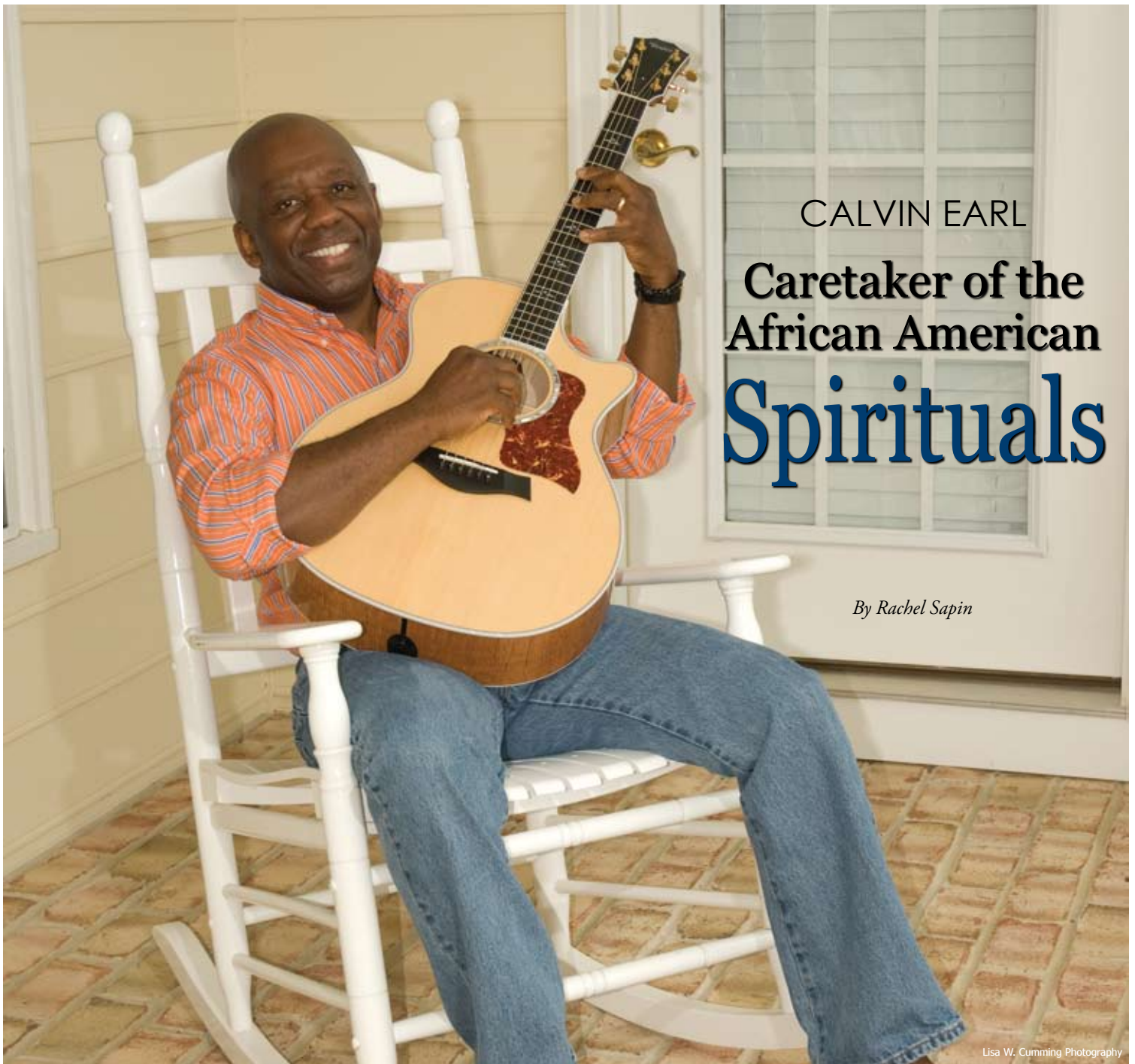
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CALVIN EARL

## Caretaker of the African American Spirituals

*By Rachel Sapin*

Lisa W. Cumming Photography

Calvin Earl wants you to think about American history, but he wants you to think about it differently. “Everything starts out as a thought,” explains Calvin. “If we change the way we think about things, the things we are thinking about will change. If you look at our history, and you only look at the horrors of slavery, you don’t really see the people who were enslaved.”

As a musician, storyteller, activist, and preservationist, Calvin wants others to look beyond African American slaves as being mere victims of their time, and see the beauty in their creation of a music that gave them comfort, hope, and perhaps most importantly, agency in their lives.

“For me, it’s like the original cry of freedom,” says Calvin. “The slaves created the most beautiful sound ‘born this side of the seas’ as W.E.B. Dubois would say. It gave them a voice; it gave them a way to communicate with one another without the slave masters understanding what they were saying; it allowed them to connect to the power that created us all.”

African American slaves not only utilized Old and New Testament imagery in the spirituals they sang to frame their experiences, they also used these songs as a strategic response to their plight in the New World, often using words and metaphors with dual meanings to communicate covert messages. For example, the spiritual *Go Down Moses* not only served as

a means of relating the slaves’ situation to that of the Israelites under Pharaoh’s grasp in Egypt, it also alerted them to the arrival of Harriet Tubman, an Underground Railroad conductor and a former escaped slave. She earned the nickname Black Moses for her courage in later returning to the South to help many other slaves escape north, risking her own freedom in the process. In fact, double entendre is prominent in many famous spirituals. “In *I’m On My Way to Canaan’s Land*, Canaan means going to heaven,” notes Calvin, “but for the slaves, Canaan also meant Canada.”

As perhaps one of the most poignant and layered documentations of a people transcending unthinkably inhumane conditions, it is the

raw, emotional pulse packed within a spiritual that lends it an undeniable universality.

“When you hear a baby cry, you cannot just pass by. It affects you, it kind of pulls on your heartstrings,” says Calvin. “The spirituals are about an inclusive history; it’s everyone’s history, back to our Declaration of Independence. I imagine that sound, that influence is not only for Americans. Around the world, this is a universal sound that everyone connects with.”

When Calvin served as Tuskegee University’s Ralph Ellison Lecturer in March, he was warmly received by the overflow of students and scholars that came to hear him speak on the history of the spirituals. He even received a melodic introduction from the university’s choir, a world-renowned student musical ensemble with roots in African American music that date back to the days of the school’s founder, Booker T. Washington. But even in the voices of students attending one of America’s most prestigious historically black colleges, Calvin heard a spiritual that had gotten away from the original sound.

“They sang a beautiful spiritual, but they sang it in a European operatic style,” he explains. “If you sing it in a European style, or sing it as it has been written down, you’re taking the essence of the spirituals out because

you cannot really write a spiritual down on paper. There are not enough notes that will give the expression of human emotion that comes through the spirituals. I told the students to think about it this way: ‘Would you take an R&B song, like a Marvin Gaye song, and sing it in a European style?’” The students of course said no. “‘Well why would you do it with a spiritual?’”

To get the students to sing beyond their formal training, Calvin had them reflect on the specific historical situation that engendered these songs. “I took a couple of the students on stage and I said, ‘You have to imagine that you’ve been out in the fields all day maybe picking cotton, and you are tired,’” he says. ‘Maybe you don’t know where your mother is, your brother was taken; you don’t even know if you’re going to be around that much longer. You’re trying to get strength, and yet you want to tell your story.’” The students still had trouble getting out of their academic voices, so Calvin took another approach.

“I took a couple of the students and put my arm around their shoulders,” he says. “I took them to the back of the stage, and picked up my feet, I’m swinging from their shoulders. And I said, ‘Now, walk.’ They started walking, they were carrying me on stage; I was swinging

from their shoulders. We walked up one side of the stage and back down the other side of the stage. I said, ‘Now, I want you to sing this song while you walk.’ They felt the pressure, and then they began to really feel, and the voices, oh-my-goodness it was a transformation. They finally pulled away from what was written on paper and they expressed what they felt on the inside.”

Calvin’s most notable contribution to the spirituals has been ensuring its formal legacy in American public memory. In 2007, as a result of a campaign he spearheaded, Congress honored African American slaves for their contributions to the nation and unanimously recognized the African American spirituals as a national treasure. “I thought that in doing this I would be able to preserve it for future generations not yet born,” says Calvin.

There is good reason to believe that the original sound of the spiritual may soon disappear. As with any musical genre that is steeped in oral tradition, the further away generations get from being able to actually hear the history, the less personal that history becomes. Stories stop being passed down from grandparents to grandchildren; vibrant recollections of events wear down over the years into parched, historicized summaries one merely reads in text-

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books.

"The spirituals are something that has to be preserved," emphasizes Calvin. "I realized that they were going to die. They were actually going to die - the sound, the meaning of them - and we were all going to lose out. I just couldn't allow that. I was finally aware that the information that had been passed down to me wasn't being shared, and the future generations would never know anything about it."

Calvin grew up in a rural community in North Carolina in the 1950s. The community was tight-knit and largely segregated from the surrounding white population; Calvin's family was only two generations away from slavery. "My parents didn't have an education," he remarks. "My family as well as every other family we knew stayed within the black community; segregation was all they knew."

As a child, Calvin would sit on the cotton bales, spending time with the elders while they worked in the fields. "They would pick maybe 120-150 pounds of cotton during the day," he remembers of their labor. "In the mornings, around 10 or 11 o'clock, I would always go out and jump on those bags as they were pulling them through the fields, and we would sing songs and I would ask them questions."

Musically prodigious, Calvin picked up a

guitar at the age of seven and by the age of nine, was hosting his own weekly radio show broadcast live every Sunday from Virginia. His musical prowess soon attracted the attention of gospel legend Mahalia Jackson who would travel to his church just to hear him play. It was through Mahalia that Calvin learned about the struggle for equal rights that was sweeping the nation at the time.

"The Civil Rights Movement, segregation or the effects of Jim Crow were never discussed in my presence by my family or my church community," he explains. "When Mahalia and I used to talk, we talked about many subjects. I was really interested in her and her life regarding her music and travels. In explaining that to me she told me about her experiences, several of which were with Dr. King and of course Thomas A. Dorsey, whose songs she made famous. She didn't really give me a detailed history lesson, it was more her experiences with Dr. King and Dorsey. She talked about New Orleans, her love for country preachers and their rhythmic style to make a point. We also talked about her travels, singing, and of course her love for the Lord. I just loved her and wanted to know everything about her."

Despite his community's wishes for him to serve as a leader in the church, traveling and

playing music with Mahalia Jackson solidified Calvin's interest in pursuing a life as a musician. Born with his eyes open and to a mother that survived being hit by ricochet lightning, Calvin was considered a special child in his community. "Because of that, my church and my bishop and the elders ordained me at birth to be the bishop, to take over the church someday," he says. "As I got older, I said, 'No, I don't have the patience for that.' They always wanted me to become this bishop, and I just thought, 'Oh no, that's not for me' [laughs]. But I love the music."

Calvin's love of music led him not only to playing with Mahalia Jackson, but also with James Cleveland and the Five Blind Boys of Alabama. During his time in the Army near the end of the Vietnam War, he formed an R&B band called *Elements of Peace* that played in officers clubs on Army bases. Despite his success playing gospel, blues, R&B, and jazz standards, Calvin eventually found himself called back to the songs he had so lovingly heard as a child.

"A lot of people think that spirituals and gospels are all the same, which can't be further from the truth," he says. "All of our music - jazz, blues, gospel, R&B, hip hop and rap - the foundation of all of this music came out of the spirituals. We don't realize that because we

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### EARL HASTINGS - Author & Historian

Mr. Hastings is a retired NASA Research Engineer and a local author specializing in the Civil War. He has spent years studying

the Battle of Williamsburg and his published novel, *A Pitiless Rain*, is available in the Chambrel library where it can be enjoyed by all.

### VIRGINIA HAVENS - Librarian

Mrs. Havens has been a librarian for more than 20 years. From histories to mysteries, she enjoys reading all kinds of stories and gladly helps anyone find "a good read" to suit their particular interest. She started as a volunteer in the Chambrel library and has been maintaining it ever since she moved here more than 10 years ago.



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haven't been taught that."

While pursuing a career as a musician in California, Calvin had a revelation: he wanted to understand what it was that moved him so about the spirituals as they were originally sung, and how he could communicate the genuine texture of the spirituals to others. "I thought as a kid that everyone had the information that I was receiving," he says. "I thought everyone knew about the secret codes within the music, how all of the words had dual meanings. The elders are telling me this, and I'm thinking they already told my brothers and sisters and everyone else in the community. Not true. I didn't realize until later that even after slavery, most of the freed slaves didn't want to sing the spirituals anymore. As a matter of fact, they wanted to forget everything that reminded them of slavery."

Calvin's deeper research into the spirituals inspired him to create a concert/lecture series on the subject. The series debuted in 1999 at the Children's Storefront school in Harlem. It was so successful that it influenced Calvin to create other educational programs, including his one-man show, *Gifts From My Ancestors*, which has been performed in universities, schools, and concert halls nationwide. In 2008, Calvin received a presidential proclamation from President George W. Bush honoring his work and contributions toward preserving the spirituals and educating the public on the subject.

Calvin is not surprised that his love for the spirituals eventually led him to make a home in Williamsburg, a city only minutes away from slavery's beginnings in our nation. "Historical Jamestown is where the first 20-odd Africans arrived in 1619," Calvin says. "When I do my shows in historical Jamestown, I take the music all the way back to that moan-and-groan and how this whole thing came about. What better place to do it in than where our country started. It just shows how far we go back together."

Calvin's mission to keep the original sound of the spirituals alive is tenacious. The strides he has made in preserving the genre, though tremendous, are far from what he considers the finish line. When Earl contacted every Senator and member of the House during his campaign to designate the spirituals as a national treasure (a feat he remembers involving at least a dizzying 25 calls per Congressman), he spoke with some Senators who did not even know what a spiritual was. "No one was doing anything about spirituals before that," he emphasizes. "No one was talking about it." Although Calvin helped pave the way for spirituals to be forever documented in American political memory, he believes there is still more work to be done in terms of creating a tangible space for the spirituals in public space and discourse.

He is also working on a forthcoming book, *I'm Gonna Tell*, where he hopes to share his experiences with the spirituals and help others teach the intricacies of the subject. "I am writing this book, because it is important to me that people know the authentic sound of the spirituals before they are lost forever," says Calvin. "It is important to know what a spiritual really is. It's important to know that the spirituals are and were a vital part of our American history because they unlock the secrets of a people who not only endured slavery, but played a major role in ending the institution of slavery in America in 1865. It is our history as Americans. There's no other country in the world that created this. It took all of us, all of our ancestors to create what we have. It belongs to all of us. The spirituals bring out the humanity in people. That's not a black story or a white story, that is a human story." NDN

To learn more about Calvin Earl, listen to his music and watch videos of his concert lecture series, visit his website: [www.calvinearl.com](http://www.calvinearl.com)



# BILL O'DONOVAN Recording History One Newspaper at a Time

By Meredith Collins

Lisa W. Cumming Photography

When it comes to preserving history, Bill O'Donovan is the perfect caretaker for a truly historical American gem: *The Virginia Gazette*. The oldest newspaper in Virginia since it dates to 1736, the *Gazette* is deeply ingrained in the culture and history of Williamsburg. Its Publisher, O'Donovan, is the perfect fit for such an important role.

O'Donovan is not only the Publisher of the

paper, but he also has a keen personal interest in history. For more than 40 years he has seen to it that the pages of the *Gazette* contain more than news and current events that become a written recorded history of the area. They also reflect the vibrancy, diversity, and interesting qualities of our community.

O'Donovan, a native of Rye, NY, came from a family of journalists. His dad was a newspa-

per editor in New York City and later in White Plains, NY. His sister was an editor for *Look* magazine. It was no surprise to learn that ink was in his blood also. While finishing college at the University of Detroit, O'Donovan worked summers on newspapers at his father's old newspaper in White Plains, and in Stockton, CA before serving two years in the Army.

It was Army service that brought him to Fort

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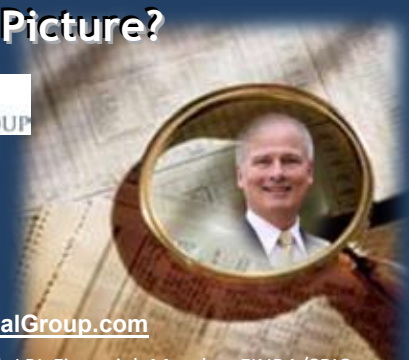
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Lee, VA where he was introduced to Williamsburg for the first time. The positive impressions he formed during those early visits stayed with him when he was assigned overseas.

"I had taken the paper when I was in Vietnam and they had a story about the opening of Woolco, which is now where Marshalls is, in the Williamsburg Shopping Center," O'Donovan says. "It was really a well done article. It wasn't a shill piece. It was about how the community needed this store. So I wrote a letter to the editor to that effect and the publisher eventually looked me up and offered me a job. John O. W. Gravely, III was the owner and publisher."

By 1971, O'Donovan was a First Lieutenant in the Army. While his military pay was much better than the offer to become a reporter for the *Gazette*, he accepted the position anyway. He thought Williamsburg would be a good place to live and he liked the small town feel. As a reporter for the *Gazette*, O'Donovan wrote local stories and contributed to the news content. He worked with two other reporters to produce the newspaper each week.

As O'Donovan reflects on his early days in the newspaper business, he credits John Gravely and his wife, Martha, for doing two things that were significant for future growth of the newspaper: John changed the newspaper from a tabloid to a broadsheet format and in 1984, almost a decade after John's death in 1975, Martha converted the paper to a twice a week publication.

O'Donovan also vividly remembers the adjustments that had to be made when the *Gazette* went to the broadsheet format in 1971. That strategic decision allowed the newspaper to better serve the advertising needs of the local supermarkets, thereby generating more revenue for the newspaper. Advertising sales and circulation income from subscriptions are the two primary ways newspapers generate revenue. This decision opened a door for more advertising sales opportunities. However, it also created a larger news hole. In the early 1970's, Williamsburg was still a small town and a typical week in the life of the community offered much less in the way of news than it does today.

"It became a real challenge to fill the paper, or as we say, 'feed the beast,'" O'Donovan explains. "I can remember lying awake at night thinking 'Never mind what's the lead story, what am I going to put on page one?' because there was just so little news."

This did not present a problem for long. The newspaper enjoyed steady growth during the first decade O'Donovan worked for the *Gazette*. In July of 1972, the newspaper moved its offices and printing facilities to a more spacious facility on Second St. which included a wing for a full-sized press that could print 15,000 papers per hour. By 1975, O'Donovan had been promoted to Editor and the newspaper was steadily keeping pace with the growth of Williamsburg.

"Martha Gravely, his [John's] wife, was getting ready to sell the paper so she hired a consultant to see what would help," O'Donovan says. "We went twice a week in 1984. And that was the best thing we ever did. That made the paper more timely and quicker to react to news. But it also presented a very compact edition of the news."

Two years later the *Gazette* was sold to Chesapeake Publishing Corporation, a newspaper group based in Easton, MD. O'Donovan was promoted to Publisher and his role expanded as the group purchased more newspapers.

"We had newspapers from the Potomac to the Carolina border," O'Donovan says. "At one point we had ten business units. We had seven newspapers, two magazines and a printing press. I became Vice President, essentially for the Virginia operations."

In 2001, the *Gazette* was purchased by Daily Press, Inc. and Tribune Company. O'Donovan has remained Publisher of the newspaper which is now located on Ironbound Rd. and for almost four decades he has had an active role in preserving history through publishing the news in print every Wednesday and Saturday morning. Today, the newspaper also provides news content on the Internet six days a week at [www.vagazette.com](http://www.vagazette.com).

What O'Donovan especially enjoys, in addition to his well-known excursions with advertising clients and newsmakers on his sailboat, *Dead-line*, is speaking to local civic groups about our history.

"I think it evolved from coming here and getting into Colonial Williamsburg and seeing the whole gamut of things and how they do it. You can't live here and not appreciate history, and learn it," O'Donovan says. "I got into it heavily when I wrote the history of the paper 35 years ago. That was a big project because I had to do it for the 250th Anniversary of the paper and it took a whole issue of one of our special sections. So I got into writing and I got into researching it. What I do now is presentations to civic clubs on different facets of history. I get in a few subliminal points about the paper and company in order to promote them. But the idea is to give a really good talk using slideshows, and the clubs seem to find it interesting. I did one big one last year on the modern history of James City County - what happened after 1607. I have done one on the 1970s on why it led to the growth that we now experience. And I have done one on the future of newspapers which has been well received."

O'Donovan's most recent presentation is about something else entirely.

"I took the Battle of Yorktown and put it to paintings - 110 paintings from all over the world that depict both the battle of the capes and the siege on land," O'Donovan explains. "It's all done with paintings, maps and various art devices and it's called *The Art of War*. That's been well received."

O'Donovan's leadership at the *Gazette* spans decades and is uncommon in these times of changing media strategies and short-term focus on results and profitability. Many community newspaper publishers are moved from newspaper-to-newspaper, and some don't remain publishers for long. O'Donovan's consistent leadership is an asset to the community because it brings the depth of understanding that almost 40 years of living here and engaging with all sectors of the community teaches. There are no shortcuts to that kind of experience.

"I'm very grateful for all of the support we have had in the community, but it's a lot of work to produce [the newspaper]," O'Donovan says. "We're putting out 98,000 words a week in content, plus ads. One of the things we are grateful for as a staff is the cooperation of the community when we are pursuing a story. We really do appreciate it when people help us with information. A lot of what we do is to try to get the story that nobody wants us to get. And that's what makes the paper fascinating because we are constantly digging for news. One of my guiding principles is that you should be able to pick up any newspaper and be surprised by it."

O'Donovan's commitment to keeping readers engaged means he is focused on your interest in reading the newspaper. In a room upstairs at the *Gazette*, the walls are lined with copies of front pages; headlines, subheads and visuals that are analyzed by O'Donovan and his editors to determine what made one newspaper sell more than another and which ones delivered on the element of 'surprise'. If the old saying is true that we only need to look at our past to be able to predict the future, we should be able to count on a few more years of surprises as O'Donovan continues to be a leader in preserving our history. NDN

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We all know that qualified retirement plans (401(K), 403(b), pensions, IRAs) are important ways to save for retirement because they are funded with pre-income tax dollars. The earnings made on these funds are also exempt from Federal and State income tax until withdrawn. This can provide years of compounding tax-deferred dollars which will result in increased retirement savings and greater wealth accumulation for you and, later, for your children and grandchildren.

Even though retirement plans are excellent income tax deferral savings vehicles while alive, without the "right" beneficiary designation, retirement plans (including traditional IRAs) can result in unnecessary taxes at death because of the interplay of Income and Estate Tax Laws that govern them. In fact, retirement plan account values can experience substantial shrinkage (60%+) at death if you have a sizeable amount in retirement plans and your estate is large enough to pay Estate Taxes.

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Primary and Secondary beneficiaries: spouse, trust, estate, individual (children or grandchildren), or charity. For greater detail, go to our website, [www.ferrisandassociates.com](http://www.ferrisandassociates.com), click Online Library, and look for the article, *The Importance of Naming the "RIGHT" Beneficiary to Your Qualified Retirement Account*.

The question that is more often asked of us is - "Can a revocable living trust be a proper beneficiary?" Since 2002, a "TRUST" that meets the IRS's "Conduit Trust" rules can be a beneficiary of an IRA or other qualified retirement plan. Many families who have a Revocable Living Trust will name their trust as either the primary or the contingent beneficiary of their IRA depending on their family situation. Why? At death, the retirement plan or IRA account will be converted to an inherited IRA and acts as the "conduit" for the beneficiary of the trust, instead of being paid outright to the IRA beneficiary. This allows the IRA owner to control the distribution of such funds while allowing for the "stretch" of the income taxation of the IRA account over a greater period of time (usually the life expectancy of the oldest trust beneficiary). In addition, an inherited IRA remaining in the trust will protect the funds from the beneficiary's possible failed marriage, lawsuit, unwise spending or predators.

Whether an individual, charity or trust is the "beneficiary" of your retirement plan, the beneficiary designation form must be coordinated with your estate plan. And, always remember, the form should have both primary and secondary beneficiaries named to be sure your tax and non-tax goals are being achieved in your estate plan.

DR. CAROLYN WHITTENBURG

# TEACHING OUR STUDENTS OF HISTORY

By Erin Zagursky



Lisa W. Cumming Photography

Before tomorrow's history educators step up to the podium as professors, scratch the surface of a dig as archaeologists or open the door to museums as curators, many of them are inspired and set on their respective career paths through the National Institute of American History & Democracy (NIAHD).

Dr. Carolyn Whittenburg, Director of the

Williamsburg based institute, considers each of NIAHD's students as members of her family. This year, nearly ten years after the institute's start, she and her husband Jim will celebrate seeing their 1,000th student come through NIAHD's programs.

"We're showing them what they can do with the many different facets of history, and they're

telling us over and over again that we're having a profound effect on their lives. That's an incredible reward," Dr. Whittenburg said.

A partnership between the College of William and Mary and Colonial Williamsburg, the institute seeks to promote programs for both college and high school students.

"We're trying to give our students as much

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hands-on experience and as much experience with public history as possible while they are learning all they can about early American history,” said Dr. Whittenburg.

For high school students, the institute offers its Pre-Collegiate Summer Program in Early American History. William and Mary students can enroll in a Williamsburg Program in Early American History, Material Culture, and Museum Studies. College students from around the country also come to the institute for programs including a Semester-in-Residence Program at William and Mary. Students also enroll in the new Collegiate Summer Program in Early American History, or a summer field school in the methods of architectural history.

“When students come here, whether they are in high school or in college, they experience history taught in a different way,” said Dr. Whittenburg. “They study history taught almost entirely with field trips, seminar discussions, and extensive writing assignments. Instructors work with students in small groups. They learn American history in a new way - how to analyze these field trips, how to evalu-

ate the material culture that they study at these historic sites, and then how to unify all this together with readings by preeminent historians in the field.”

This approach to teaching history is something that Dr. Whittenburg experienced early

it alive in a way that no one had before,” Dr. Whittenburg explained.

Encouraged and excited by the early experiences she had with learning history, Dr. Whittenburg went on to study history in college. She attended Averett College in Danville then

**“We’re trying to give our students as much hands-on experience and as much experience with public history as possible while they are learning all they can about early American history.”**

- Dr. Whittenburg

in her life, and something she looks back on with appreciation.

She grew up in Danville, VA, and had a sixth-grade teacher who used a similar method of teaching.

“When she [her sixth grade teacher] taught history, she not only taught history, but she incorporated the culture, the art, the music, the opera - she incorporated everything she possibly could to show you how all of history and all of the culture united together, and she brought

transferred to Meredith College in Raleigh, NC, where she earned her Bachelor’s Degree in History.

Dr. Whittenburg continued with her studies in history at Wake Forest University. It was there that she met her husband, Jim. She also earned a Master’s Degree in History at the university.

The couple married and moved further south so Jim could pursue his doctorate at the University of Georgia. They later moved to Mis-

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souri and had a daughter, Catherine. In 1977, the couple moved to Williamsburg.

Dr. Whittenburg taught at Walsingham Academy for several years, enjoying her time with young students. She began her career in higher education by taking a position as an adjunct at Hampton University. She taught there for twelve years as a full-time instructor and assistant professor, teaching history.

"I had always wanted to teach in a college," Dr. Whittenburg said. "I had really enjoyed the history surveys and I loved Averett College; before I met my husband I thought I would go back and teach history at Averett College because it had been such a good experience."

However, she never did. She enjoyed teaching at Hampton University, but also wanted to pursue her doctorate and after having a second daughter she was ready to take on the challenge. She began working on her doctorate in higher education at William and Mary.

While Dr. Whittenburg was attending William and Mary, the NIAHD got its start. In honor of U.S. Congressman Herbert Bateman, who was working to secure funding for the institute when he died in office, Congress provided two large grants to William and Mary to finance the new venture. Dr. Whittenburg was hired as a full-time administrator. Her husband became the first director.

"We started the institute from scratch," Dr. Whittenburg said; she became Director about five years ago.

As NIAHD approaches its 10th anniversary, Dr. Whittenburg is proud of all that they've been able to accomplish.

"On the one hand, we're tiny because we have such a small staff, but on the other hand what we're accomplishing with such a large number of students is quite remarkable," she said.

Dr. Whittenburg credits her dedicated instructors who put so much of themselves into their courses and the administrators who work so hard behind-the-scenes to keep everything running, for contributing to the success of the

organization. She is also very complimentary of the students.

"These are bright, intelligent, motivated, dedicated students," Dr. Whittenburg said. "They come to us with a passion for history and many of them either are going to teach history or they want careers in museums and public history. So we are able to offer to those students just an incredible career-planning and career-

changing group of courses."

The institute is more than a place to educate tomorrow's history educators. To Dr. Whittenburg, it has also become a "long-term family operation."

"Perhaps this is in part because

my husband and I started it together, but the students stay with us," she said. "My pre-collegiate students and my collegiate students stay with us for years and years. They stay in contact, they come back and work for us, they come back and teach for us, they come back and give lectures for us. It becomes family. It's a big family."

Dr. Whittenburg and her husband, who holds the Pullen Chair in William and Mary's history department while also serving as Chief of Instruction for the institute, feel very connected to their students. It seems appropriate that as the institute approaches its 10th anniversary, Dr. Whittenburg and her husband will also celebrate 40 years of marriage.

"My greatest blessing is my family - my husband, Jim, and my daughters, Catherine and Elizabeth, are the greatest blessings in my life. They have given me a wonderful and beautiful life. They are the heart and soul of my life," she said. "I have also been blessed through my work at NIAHD. I have worked with wonderful students who are incredibly bright and dedicated to their studies, and are terrific young adults. I have also been very fortunate to work with exceptional faculty, administrators, and staff at William and Mary, Colonial Williamsburg, and a host of other museums in the region who are totally committed to excellence in their work. They have made my work a great pleasure." NDN

**"These are bright, intelligent, motivated, dedicated students."**

- Dr. Whittenburg



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JAMES CAMERON

# Brings History to Life

By Alison Johnson

When James Cameron first visited Colonial Williamsburg 10 years ago on a trip with his then-fiancée to celebrate his 50th birthday, he had little understanding of the role African Americans played in the city's earliest days. Cameron was very much like the audiences he performs for today as a living history re-enactor. He assumed 18th century black residents were either slaves or poor free men. He didn't know that while the obstacles for African-Americans were admittedly many, some did become successful businessmen, landowners and even slaveholders.

Cameron's job now is to share the story of one such man, a remarkable free black named John Rollison. Born in 1725 in Yorktown, Rollison began his career as a shoemaker's apprentice but went on to open his own shop and became a prominent businessman and landowner. When he died in 1780, Rollison



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was one of the richest men in Williamsburg and York County, with holdings that included eight lots with dwellings, a tavern and a number of slaves.

"I'm trying to change the idea that the only blacks here were walking around in tattered clothes," says Cameron, who plays Rollison as part of his business, Revolutionary Tours. "It goes so against what most people were educated to believe that it usually takes them a while to get it. What do I mean, Rollison was never a slave? They ask me a whole lot of questions."

When Cameron plays the Rollison character for schoolchildren, particularly minority students, he also wants the message to be inspirational: "I tell them that in every century, there have always been those who did great things with very little – people who succeeded with a lot less opportunity than they have now. So, I ask them, what is their excuse? If you tell me you don't have a computer, well, you go to the library and use one there. You go read and teach yourself like Rollison did if you have to. There are no good excuses."

Like the character he plays, Cameron's own life has been anything but ordinary. He was raised in Brooklyn and Coney Island, NY, the only child of a father from Honduras and a

mother from Jamaica. Cameron remembers an early interest in history and wanted to travel to Williamsburg even as a child.

Already 6-feet-3-inches tall by the age of 13, Cameron began a basketball career that would carry him all the way to the professional level. Topping out at 6-feet-7-inches, he played forward for two years for the Kansas City Kings, a NBA team that later relocated to Sacramento, after earning a spot as an undrafted free agent. He also played football and was a track athlete; in college, he competed in the high jump, triple jump and broad jump.

Cameron, never shy in front of audiences, was drawn to the arts as well. When he was 18, he nabbed a role as an ensemble dancer with the Everyman Theater Company, a street performance group that had posted audition flyers in Coney Island (notable Everyman alumni include actor, Louis Gossett, Jr., who lived in the building next to Cameron in Coney Island, and director, Elia Kazan).

Acting came effortlessly to Cameron in a way that sports never had. "With basketball, at first I was so uncoordinated. I had to learn a lot and work really hard," he remembers. "Acting was something that almost was second nature. It gave me a feeling of purpose, like this is what

I was meant to do."

Cameron majored in Psychology with a minor in Communications at Queens College in New York. After graduation and his short-lived pro basketball career, he worked for 13 years as an on-air radio personality in New York, Georgia, Maryland and Virginia, primarily at stations specializing in R&B music. He later pursued jobs in sales and marketing.

"I sold many different things," he says. His ambition for sales brought Cameron to Williamsburg five years ago with a plan to market timeshares.

While his efforts in this field did not provide the long-term opportunity he had hoped for, he was able to draw on his talent for performing and accepted a job leading ghost tours for Colonial Williamsburg. When he wanted to develop a specific historical character to portray, a fellow employee told him about Rollison, who was a partner in Josiah Chowning's Tavern.

Rollison's mother was a free black and his grandmother was an indentured servant, but never a slave. Rollison was a savvy investor who took the money he earned at his shoe business, bought properties near the Capitol building, built lodgings and leased the space to travel-




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ers passing through Williamsburg. He later acquired his own tavern after studying the trade with Chowning.

"I was immediately fascinated," Cameron recalls. "Every fact I learned, I was just thinking, 'wow, wow, wow.' This was a man who self-taught himself in law, a man who had an assessor refer to him as Mr. John Rollison after he died. He had recognition in society, which was very unusual for a black man [during that time]."

Cameron eventually resigned from Colonial Williamsburg to portray Rollison through his own business. He now does regular one-hour performances for visitors at local timeshares and also travels to colleges, schools and museums. For the past four years, he has performed at the annual National Archives Fourth of July celebration in Washington, D.C. – once with President George W. Bush in the audience.

Because there aren't many letters or other documents preserved from Rollison's life, Cameron can only guess what his subject felt about Williamsburg's social hierarchy, including slavery. "What we do know is that it wasn't so unusual for people of color to own other people of color in this country," he says. As for Rollison's social life, his second wife was a

white woman – his one-time housekeeper – although the two were never legally married and lived as common law spouses.

Recently, Cameron has been reading up on 18th-century law, just as Rollison did many years ago. Cameron continues to research Rollison's life along with co-worker, Vanessa Cole, who leads historical ghost tours for Revolutionary Tours. By twist of fate, Cole also happens to be a distant relative of Rollison's through marriage; Rollison's daughter married a man named William Cole, Jr.

A father of two grown daughters and a grandfather of two, Cameron is married to a professional singer, Marcia Dadds, who has performed at Yankee and Shea stadiums in New York and still does some appearances locally. In his free time, he likes going to museums and watching sports. Set to turn 60 this fall, he also continues to play a bit of hoops. "I can still surprise people sometimes," he laughs.

Surprising people is exactly what he likes to do with his portrayal of John Rollison. "I think when we all better understand our past, we better understand ourselves," Cameron says. "On top of all that, this is just an amazing person. Quite simply, he's someone people should know about." **NDN**

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ANGELA DANIEL

## A Champion for the History and Culture of Native Americans

By Brandy Centolanza

*Angela* “Silver Star” Daniel is working to preserve the history of Native Americans. She is the creator of The Foundation for American Heritage Voices, a three year old non-profit organization that promotes Virginia Indian stories, arts, traditions, and culture. Today, the organization helps all Indian tribes and other ethnic or cultural groups share a part of themselves with the rest of the world.

“I’ve always had an affinity for American Indians,” Daniel explains. She grew up in Lynch-

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burg, VA.

"I loved to play in the woods, and would always wonder where the Indians were," she laughs. When she was a teenager, Daniel attended her first powwow, one for the Monacan tribe, where an elderly Indian couple was honored and she was able to dance in public for the first time.

"That was very moving to me," she recalls.

Though unsure of her own Indian lineage (believed to be Cherokee), Daniel's fascination lies mostly with the Mattaponi, one of six core Pow-

**"In Powhatan tradition, a name is intricately linked to one's identity and behavior. It is one of many embedded ideological features to boost individual self-worth and esteem, to be a productive person in the community."**

- Angela Daniel

hatan tribes. Her love for the Mattaponi began when she moved to Charlottesville and met Marjorie "Sunflower" Sargent, the adopted daughter of Chief Webster "Little Eagle" Custalow. The two worked together at a pre-press operation printing newsletters and powwow fliers for the Mattaponi. Daniel also helped with the replication of the Treaty of 1677, a ratification of the 1646 peace treaty between the Powhatan Indians and the British government.

Her memories of meeting Chief Webster "Little Eagle" for the first time are special to her.

"I was pleasantly overwhelmed," she says. "I could not help but like him. The thing that surprised me the most was how much his reasoning and manners reminded me of my mother. Although there had been some talk of Indian heritage on my mother's side of the family, no one specifically stated, 'We are Indians.' I expected there to be profound differences glaring at me, but there wasn't. Instead, it was a familiarity."

Daniel's interactions with the Mattaponi during annual powwows "began the real connection for me," she says. "It gave me a group of people that I could be a part of. I was considered family."

She became so close to them that Chief Webster gave her the name "Silver Star." She remembers that moment vividly. "He stopped and looked up into the air and said, 'Silver Star,'" she says. "Chief Webster 'Little Eagle' continued, stating, 'You are the brightest star in the sky. Keep on shining. Keep on shining. Keep on shining like silver.' At that moment, I was ecstatic and overwhelmed."

Daniel takes extreme pride in her Indian name.

"It was a life-altering moment and one of the greatest honors in my life," she shares. "In Powhatan tradition, a name is intricately linked to one's identity and behavior. It is one of many embedded ideological features to boost individual self-worth and esteem, to be a productive person in the community."

The tradition of being given an Indian name is just one of many as-

pects of the Native American way of life that she enjoys.

"The things I value about American Indian culture go past the physical, material culture like the feathers, the regalia," Daniel notes. "I more admire the American Indian philosophy and ideology."

Daniel, who is currently working on her Doctorate in Anthropology at the College of William and Mary, especially respects the four primary components in the Powhatan medicine wheel: interconnectedness/harmony; giving back; seeking the good of the tribe; and reconciliation.

"I believe that these cultural attributes have a bit to offer our society," she says.

Daniel met Dr. Linwood "Little Bear" Custalow, son of Chief Webster, "Little Eagle" while she was pursuing her bachelor's and master's degrees at the University of Virginia. The pair, who often discussed the background of the Mattaponi, eventually collaborated on a book about the tribe's history.

"I always knew he wanted to have it [oral history] written down, but I never knew I'd end up helping him with it," she says. "It was the first time an aspect of the oral history of the Mattaponi was published for public use."

The book, *The True Story of Pocahontas: The Other Side of History from the Sacred History of the Mattaponi Reservation People*, was printed in 2007, coincidentally the same year as the 400th Anniversary of the Settlement at Jamestown. Royalties from the book go toward scholarships for Indian youth.

Daniel initially broached the idea for the book with Linwood after she helped facilitate a survey at the College of William and Mary about how Virginia Indians are portrayed in schools.

"Many of the people responded with 'tell the true story of Pocahontas,'" she says.

The book includes just a portion of the Mattaponi history, and "the main message is that the Indians welcomed the colonists when they first arrived," Daniel says. "Pocahontas is a part of that."

**"The things I value about American Indian culture go past the physical, material culture like the feathers, the regalia. I more admire the American Indian philosophy and ideology."**

- Angela Daniel

Daniel started The Foundation for American Heritage Voices the same year the book was published. The organization works to preserve all aspects of Native American culture, including the written history, landscaping, and material items. She hopes the organization will continue to grow.

"The heart of it is cultural expression, and that's really where my passion lies, preserving the histories," Daniel says. "History is so important because it tells you who you are. I've come to realize how important history is to people. It is a critical aspect of their identity." NDN

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