



The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation

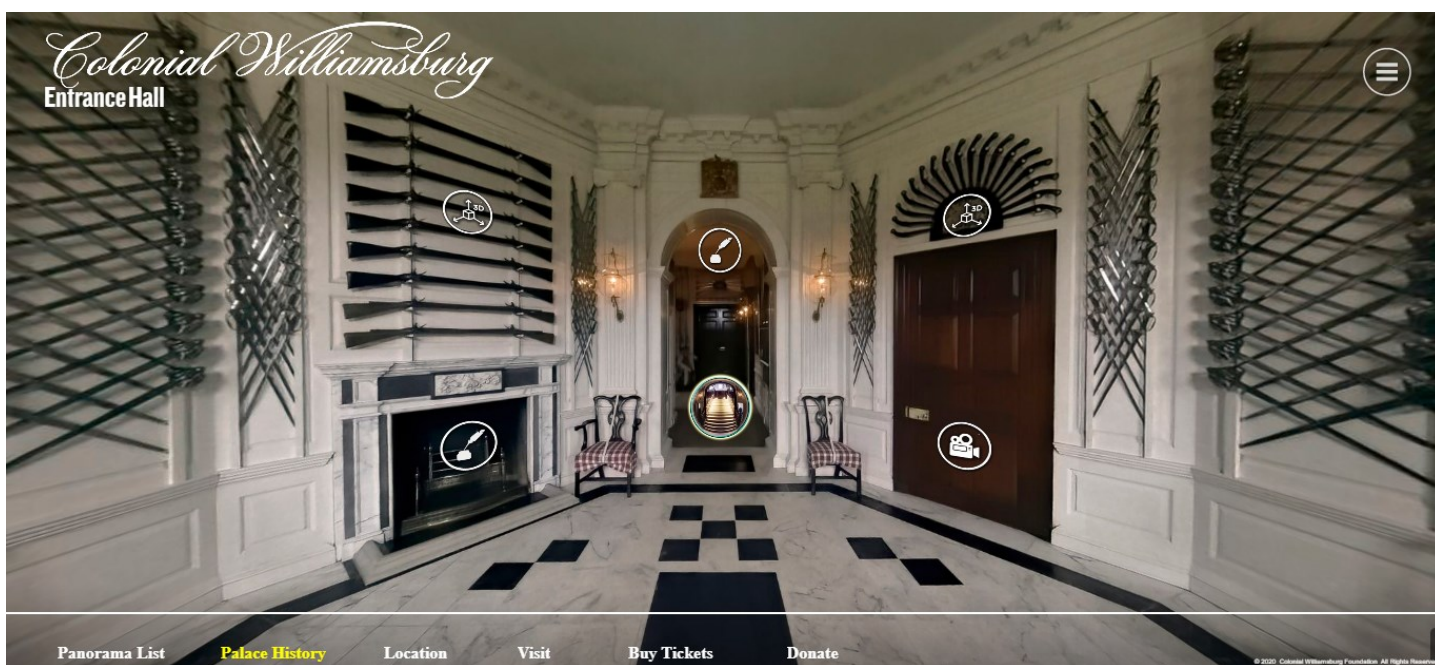
JOHN D. ROCKEFELLER, JR LIBRARY

SPRING 2020

NEWSLETTER

VOL. 2, NO. 4

THE ROCK WORKS REMOTELY



A screenshot of Colonial Williamsburg's new, online interactive tour of the Governor's Palace.

IN THIS ISSUE

The Rock works remotely:	p. 1-2
Did you know:	p. 2-4
Vodcast transcription project:	p. 5
Online lecture:	p. 5-6
Williamsburg postcards:	p. 6-14
Drone photography continues:	p. 15-16
Corporate accession:	p. 17-18
Community Photography Challenge	p. 19

Since Colonial Williamsburg's closure to the public in March, Rockefeller Library and Historical Research staff quickly transitioned to working from home: helping to support the creation of online educational experiences, ensuring our colleagues have access to critical research resources, and expanding the availability of digital content.

With Colonial Williamsburg's increasing reliance on using 21st-century technology to tell our 18th-century story, staff pivoted to adapt services to meet new demands. With the help of our IT colleagues and vendors, we first worked to ensure uninterrupted access to our subscription research databases for

THE ROCK WORKS REMOTELY

(continued)

Foundation employees. And because the need for information from our collections never ceases, staff worked within the imposed safety restrictions to fulfill numerous internal reference requests including shop drawings, building and site information, and information on key events in CW's history. Library staff has also continued to process image order and rights and reproductions requests from external researchers, and our historians have continued to provide their expertise to support CW's historic interpreters.

To help satisfy the Foundation's virtual audiences, Digital History staff developed 360° virtual tours of the Governor's Palace and Art Museum galleries, allowing visitors to experience one of our iconic buildings and several art exhibitions without having to travel to Williamsburg. Additionally, our historians contributed several educational pieces to the CW Blog, such as *Out of Adversity: The Smallpox Census*, *Researching 40 Years of African American Interpretation*, and *CW Historians' Guide to Writing Historical Fiction*. Staff also focused on increasing our social media presence by producing daily posts for our own Facebook page. Content has included regular features such as *Online Research for Homebound Historians* and *Document of the Day*, celebrations of events such as National Photography Month, and posts using resources from library, archival, and media collections to highlight special moments and people from CW's past. In addition to creating our own content, staff have worked hard to meet the demand for photo, audio, and video resources to support all of CW's social media activities, including shooting drone and still photography. We also partnered with the Williamsburg Regional Public Library to present a ZOOM talk centered on the making and restoring of the 1956 classic *Williamsburg: The Story of a Patriot*, which proved so popular an additional session was added. All of these projects are part of an ongoing initiative to engage CW's audiences in new and innovative ways.

Beyond maintaining library services where possible and participating in CW's virtual outreach, our staff have also worked creatively, using the time to initiate a number of projects that could be carried out remotely by colleagues unable to perform their primary work duties. These projects included transcribing manuscript collections and newly purchased Virginia Gazettes and will benefit all library researchers. We also increased the digital content available through our library website, most notably our collection of digitized CW publications. The Foundation's long running newsletter, the *CW News*, encompasses over 1800 issues dating from 1940 to 2020 and offers an unparalleled look into the history of Colonial Williamsburg and the Restoration. It can now be viewed in full at: <https://cwpublications.omeka.net/collections/show/10>.

So, this has been anything but a quiet time for Rockefeller Library and Historical Research and Digital History staff and we look forward to welcoming our colleagues and visitors back to The Rock soon!

Our social media engagement grows daily as does our number of followers -- Please Join the Rockefeller Library & Historical Research Facebook group for continued regular updates from the library, peeks into our collections, and the research of our historical research staff.

DID YOU KNOW?

The Merci Train was sent by France to the United States as a thank you for the food the United States provided in 1947 to France and other European nations on the American Friendship Train. The Merci Train, or French Gratitude Train as it was sometimes called, arrived in February 1949 aboard the French ship Magellan. It contained 49 boxcar loads of gifts, one boxcar for each of the then 48 states and the other one to be divided between the District of Columbia and the Territory of Hawaii. Upon arrival, the boxcars were sent to the respective states which often had special celebrations to welcome them. A large number of the gift filled boxcars were exhibited and many remained on display by the states following the disbursement of their contents. Such was the case with the Virginia boxcar, which was sent to the Virginia War Museum in Newport News to be displayed permanently after the objects had been assigned.

DID YOU KNOW?

(continued)



Colonial Williamsburg President Kenneth Chorley (left) and Coach Consultant Colonel Paul H. Downing (right) examine and discuss the so-called "Gratitude Train Diligence," (or Chariot) also known as the "Merci Train".

The 49 boxcars contained thousands of treasures from the French citizens and included items such as jewelry, swords, dolls, trees, books, glass, seals, tapestries, furniture, paintings, a 1777 Houdon bust of Benjamin Franklin, a bust of Thomas Jefferson, lace, a vial of holy water from Lourdes and even a bridal gown for an American bride. Certain items were designed for museums while others were considered for individuals and sometimes came with notes. However, some states chose not to give articles to individuals but to various in-state museums, libraries, and repositories so that they could be viewed by the public.

The Virginia boxcar full of gifts arrived in Richmond and was on display for several days at Thalhimers and Miller & Rhoads department stores. Governor Tuck appointed a committee of five to decide where the gifts would be sent. One of the gifts for Virginia was a Louis XV period chariot built circa 1750. This coach was chosen for the Merci Train by Jacques Robiquet,

DID YOU KNOW?

(continued)

Honorary Curator of National Museums. At one time, the chariot had been stored in pieces in a warehouse outside Paris.

The elaborate two-passenger carriage was adorned with cherubs and gilt and lined with red damask. It was sent to Colonial Williamsburg and intended for permanent display. It arrived on February 21, 1949 sight unseen and was promptly put in storage. It was felt the coach could not be properly exhibited until the Palace stables were reconstructed and was too ornate to be used except for formal events. In 1949, the cost of restoring the elegant vehicle was estimated at over \$4,400. For various reasons, it was decided not to restore the chariot at that time. A 1952 Colonial Williamsburg photo shows the carriage departing from the west gate of the Capitol to proceed down Duke of Gloucester Street. In 1953 it was being stored without benefit of repairs or maintenance due to its uncertain future and by early 1954 Colonial Williamsburg leadership suggested either gifting it or loaning it. After researching the carriage, it was determined it was “not suitable for display or use in Colonial Williamsburg for reasons of authenticity.” In 1957, after approval from the Commonwealth of Virginia’s Department of Conservation and Development, it was transferred to Luray Caverns. The carriage was to be used for exhibit purposes and could be recalled by the Department of Conservation and Development at any time. The carriage is currently displayed at the Car and Carriage Caravan Museum which is part of Luray Caverns.



The carriage on display at the Car & Carriage Caravan Museum (Courtesy of Luray Caverns, VA).

Courtesy of Luray Caverns, VA

VODCAST TRANSCRIPTION PROJECT BEGINS



The introductory screen of a Colonial Williamsburg vodcast from the “Colonial Williamsburg Past & Present” series.

The Rockefeller Library’s Media Collections group has started a project to produce written transcripts for the extensive collection of “vodcasts” in our archive. Vodcasts are short videos intended for internet viewing, and were created on a variety of topics, from colonial history to the Restoration to new exhibits in the Art Museums of Colonial Williamsburg. Some of these are available on YouTube, but since the transition to a new website this spring the bulk are now stored in digital archives. We would love to have them more available online again, but to make them more accessible to the hearing-impaired we need to have transcripts!

This April, a project was initiated to begin transcribing these videos. In a collaboration between Colonial Williamsburg employees and Rockefeller Library volunteers, accurate word-for-word transcripts are being produced. As of late May, 47 transcripts have been created, making more than three and a half hours’ worth of video accessible. Believe it or not, this is only a fraction of the work to be done, but we are excited to have it well underway!

COLLABORATION WITH WILLIAMSBURG REGIONAL LIBRARY AND WILLIAM & MARY FOR ONLINE LECTURE

If you have been following our newsletter, you’ll know that the Rockefeller Library has been collaborating with the local public library system, the Williamsburg Regional Library, to present interesting programs for the public. In the inaugural lecture, Marianne Martin and Tracey Gulden presented a much-lauded talk on the history Merchants Square. This past fall, Jenna Simpson spoke about the history, legacy, and restoration of the film *Williamsburg: The Story of a Patriot*. The Patriot talk was scheduled for an encore performance at the public library in March – but alas, coronavirus closures forced its cancellation.

COLLABORATION WITH WILLIAMSBURG REGIONAL LIBRARY AND WILLIAM & MARY FOR ONLINE LECTURE

(continued)

Undaunted by the possible technical challenges and seeking to continue public outreach through these difficult times, the libraries decided to move the Patriot talk online, through the Williamsburg Regional Library's Zoom account. This first internet presentation was given on April 27 – and the 100-viewer limit was reached within minutes of the program's start time. Facing disappointment from many eager viewers who were unable to log in due to the great demand, an encore of the encore was presented on May 11. The College of William & Mary generously hosted the May presentation through their Zoom, allowing for more viewers, so no one was left out!

The Zoom program allowed Simpson to show the movie before presenting her talk and slides, and attendees were able to submit questions through a "chat" function. The experiment has been deemed a success, and the libraries are considering collaborating on future topics through this platform!

"WISH YOU WERE HERE": WILLIAMSBURG POSTCARDS—THE EARLY DECADES

Most of us recall sending or receiving postcards from far away locales and treasuring the memories they hold of experiencing a new culture, place, or insight into history. Postcards played an important role in promoting Williamsburg's historic sites as recreational travel and tourism developed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries throughout the United States. When postcards emerged as a souvenir format in the 1890s, Williamsburg quickly became a featured destination. Once Colonial Williamsburg opened as an official historic site in the 1930s, postcards became a product sold by both the museum and local businesses to satisfy tourists' desire to share their travels. In celebration of National Postcard Month, the Rockefeller Library is pleased to share some highlights from its collection of over one thousand postcards.

During what is known as the Pioneer Era from 1870-1898, the first form of postcard, featuring an illustration on one side and an undivided back on the other, did not allow the sender to include a note, unless it was written across a portion of the image on the front. Most pioneering postcard formats served as advertisements up until the 1893 Columbia Exposition, when postcards first appeared as souvenirs for Exposition visitors to purchase.

The Private Mailing Card Era from 1898-1901 is characterized by cards printed with the notice "Private Mailing Card Authorized by Act of Congress on May 19, 1898." Backs of the cards remained undivided and purchasers could mail the cards for a cost of one cent. Several examples of postcards from this



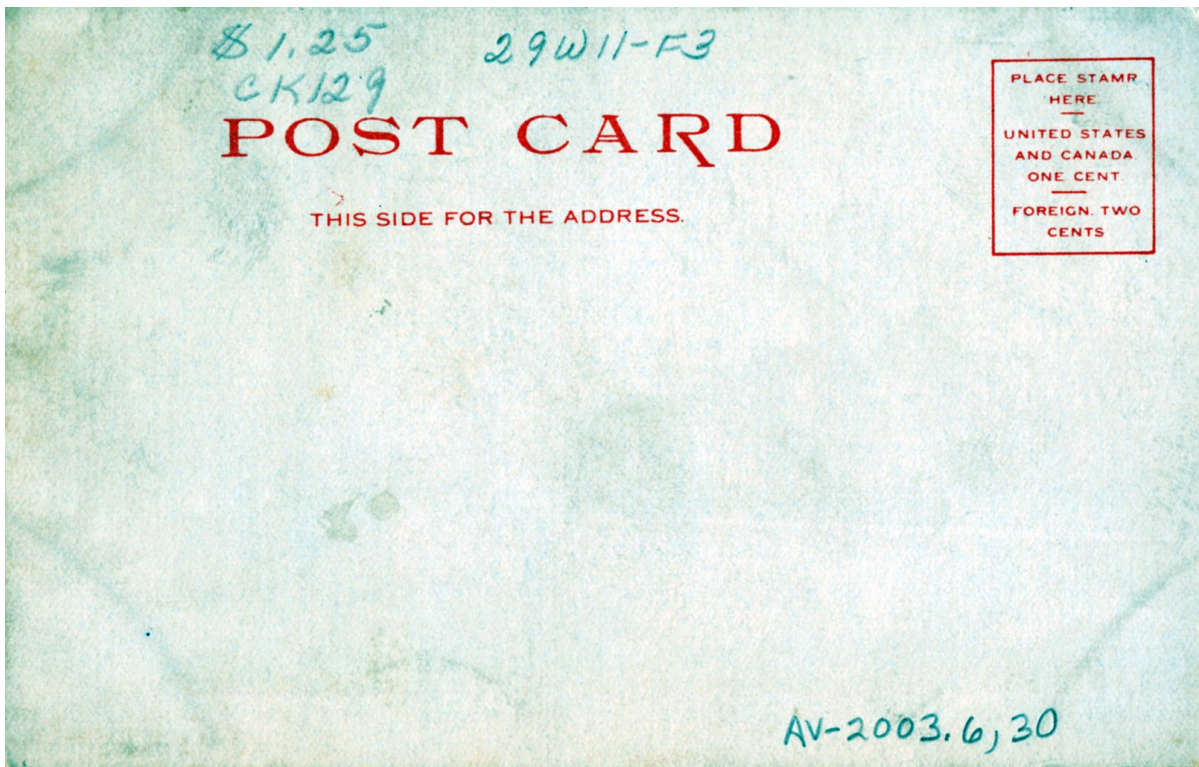
Old Powder Horn, Detroit Photographic Company, ca.1898

“WISH YOU WERE HERE”: WILLIAMSBURG POSTCARDS—THE EARLY DECADES

(continued)



Duke of Gloucester Street, Detroit Photographic Company, ca.1898 .



The address side of Duke of Gloucester Street, Detroit Photographic Company, ca.1898 .

“WISH YOU WERE HERE”: WILLIAMSBURG POSTCARDS—THE EARLY DECADES

(continued)

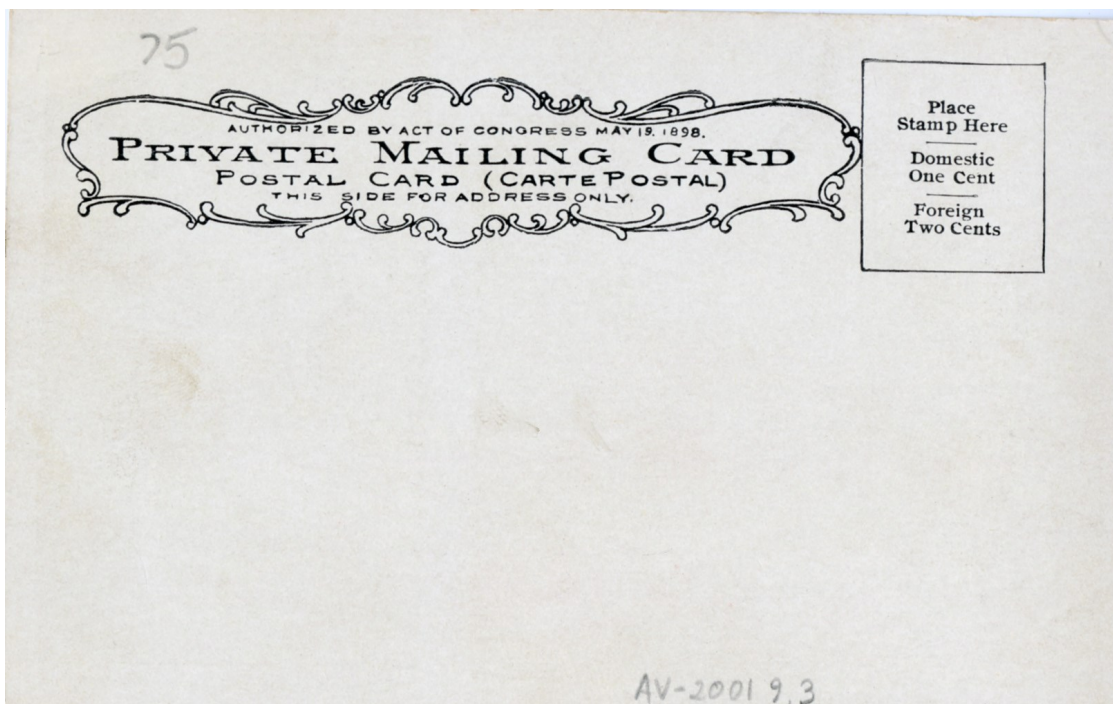


Old Powder Horn, Williamsburg, 1714



Nathaniel Bacon Window in Powder Horn

Old Powder Horn and Nathaniel Bacon Window, United States Congress, ca.1900



The address side of Old Powder Horn and Nathaniel Bacon Window, United States Congress, ca.1900.

“WISH YOU WERE HERE”: WILLIAMSBURG POSTCARDS—THE EARLY DECADES

(continued)

era are present in the collection. They feature places around Williamsburg with historic associations such as the Everard House, the site of First Theater, the Debtor’s Prison and the Powder Magazine.

By the time the Jamestown Exposition took place in 1907, postcard production had entered the Divided Back Era, which continued until 1915. Modified postcard backs offered a segment on the left side for senders to pen a brief message. Production of cards gradually shifted to more American printers. The Jamestown Exposition provided a strong impetus for promotion of other historic sites that attendees might also stop at along the way. A series of postcards commemorating Williamsburg area historic sites in conjunction with the 1907 celebration are excellent examples of very early divided back cards.



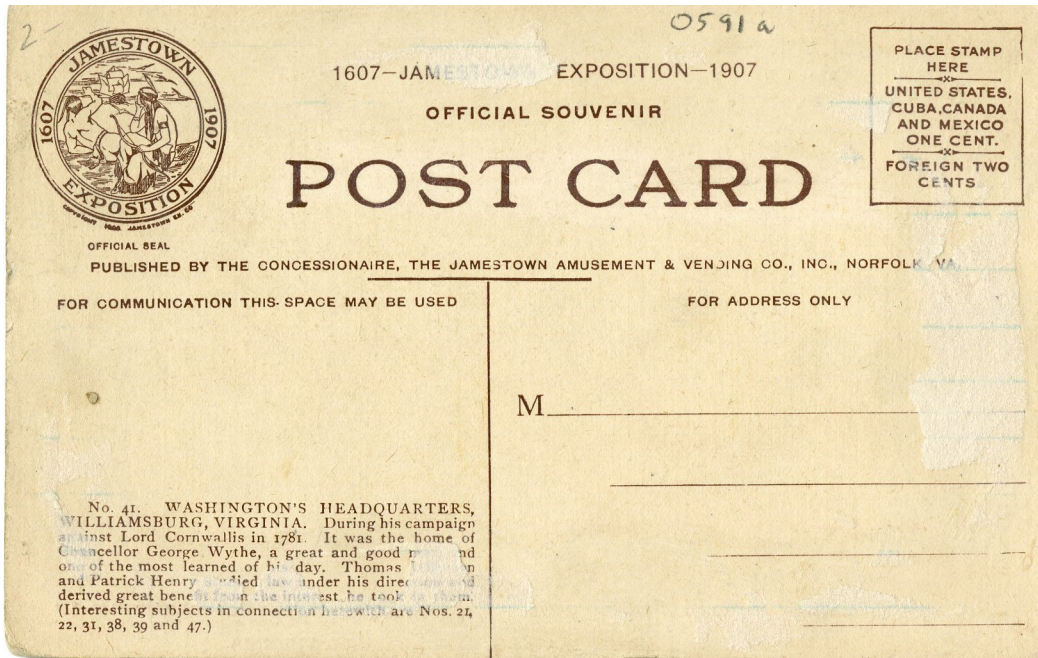
Washington’s Headquarters [George Wythe House], Williamsburg, Virginia, Jamestown Amusement and Vending Co., Inc., 1907

The Early Modern Era between 1916-1930 led to an increase in production of souvenir cards relating to the Williamsburg area. One type of format popular in this period is the "White Border Card" characterized by a view surrounded with a white border. Real photo cards also began to appear that featured photographs, rather than prints, of local surroundings. In the era before Colonial Williamsburg operated official gift shops, tourists counted on the Cole News Shop as their source for maps, postcards, travel guides, and souvenirs. The proprietor, Mr. Henry Dennison Cole, produced his own postcards of historic sites in the area being restored by the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities and other groups of preservation minded citizens.

Once Colonial Williamsburg opened a core group of exhibition buildings to the public in the early 1930s, a new era dawned in which the museum began production of official postcards as souvenirs for visitors. Photographs by F.S. Lincoln, an architectural photographer hired on a contract basis in 1935 to take some of the first promotional photos of Colonial Williamsburg exhibition buildings, appeared on several real photo postcards issued in the late 1930s. Both examples of postcards bearing his photos, as well as his actual photograph collection, reside at the Rockefeller Library.

“WISH YOU WERE HERE”: WILLIAMSBURG POSTCARDS—THE EARLY DECADES

(continued)



The address side of Washington's Headquarters [George Wythe House], Williamsburg, Virginia, Jamestown Amusement and Vending Co., Inc., 1907



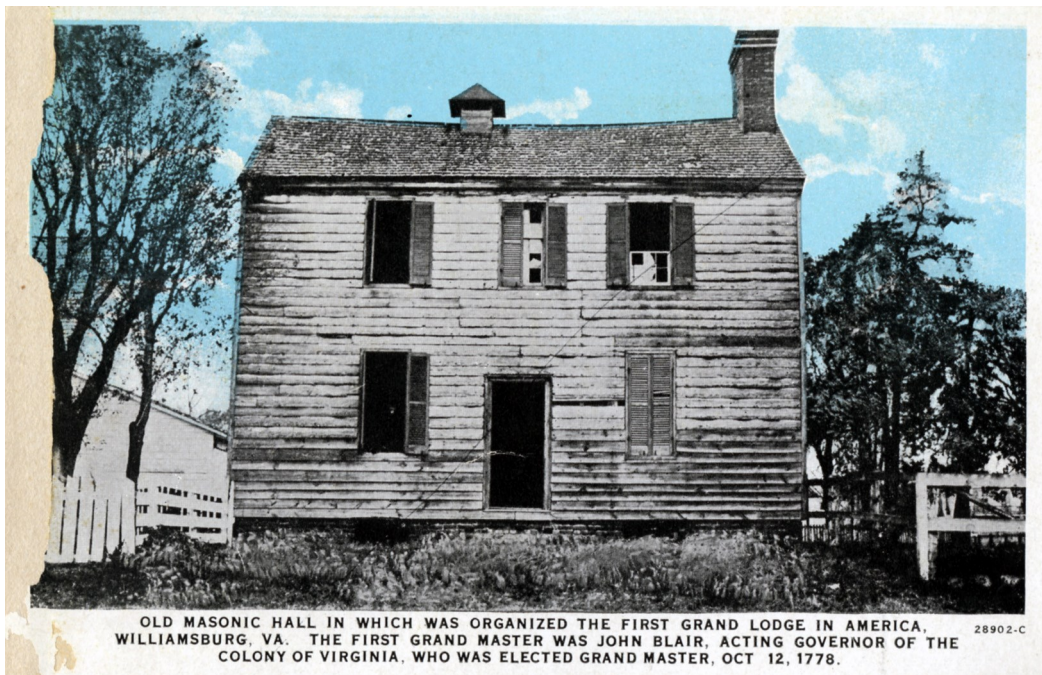
Henry Dennison Cole in doorway of Cole News Shop on site of today's Taliaferro-Cole Shop, 1928, Clyde Holmes Photograph Collection.

“WISH YOU WERE HERE”: WILLIAMSBURG POSTCARDS—THE EARLY DECADES

(continued)



Postcards on display inside Cole News Shop, Frank Nivison Photograph Collection.



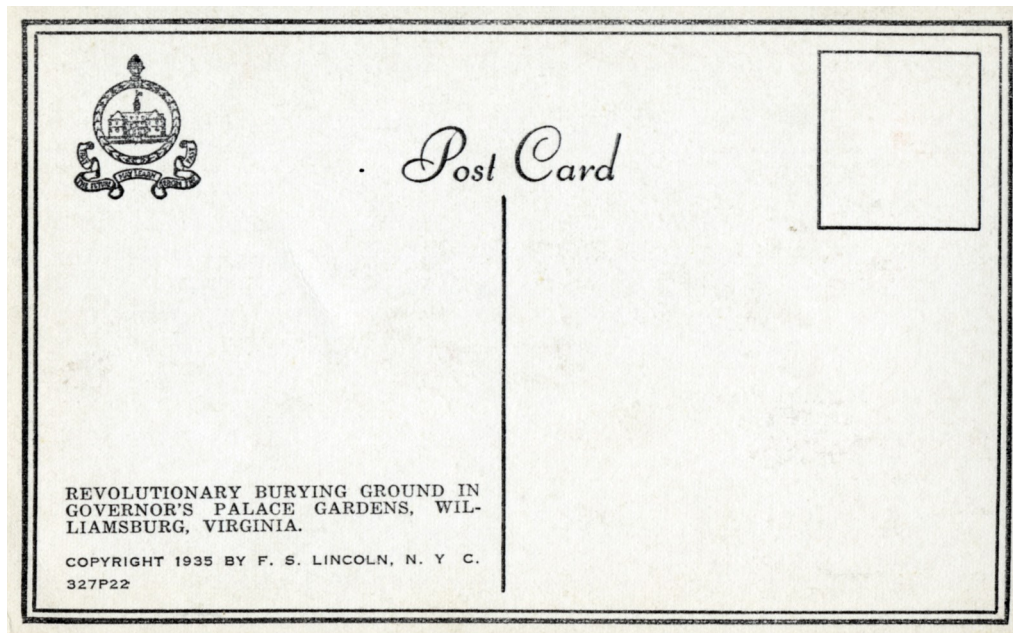
OLD MASONIC HALL IN WHICH WAS ORGANIZED THE FIRST GRAND LODGE IN AMERICA, WILLIAMSBURG, VA. THE FIRST GRAND MASTER WAS JOHN BLAIR, ACTING GOVERNOR OF THE COLONY OF VIRGINIA. WHO WAS ELECTED GRAND MASTER, OCT 12, 1778. 28902-C

Old Masonic Lodge, published by H.D. Cole.

“WISH YOU WERE HERE”: WILLIAMSBURG POSTCARDS—THE EARLY DECADES

(continued)

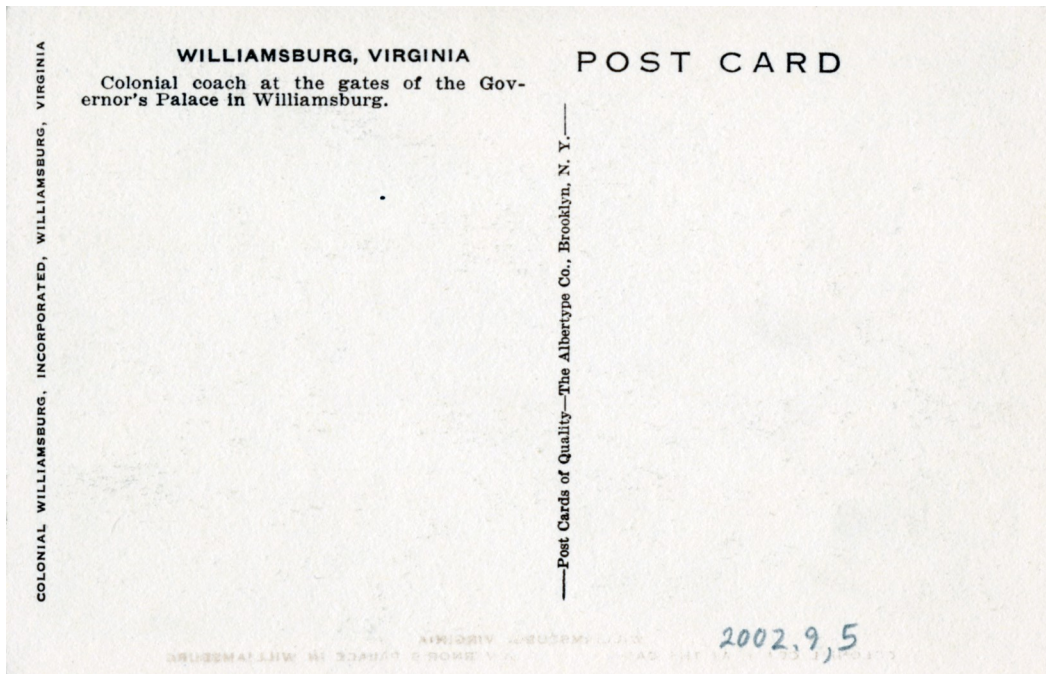
The Albertype Company of Brooklyn, New York, produced one of the earliest official postcard series highlighting Colonial Williamsburg exhibition buildings, costumed interpreters, Williamsburg Inn and Lodge, and Merchants Square. In addition to holding numerous examples of Albertype cards, the Rockefeller Library also houses the corresponding photographic prints used to generate the postcards. Albertype cards are characterized by sepia toned images that show exterior and interior views of exhibition buildings, as well as some of the earliest scenes of African Americans in costume demonstrating colonial cooking techniques.



Revolutionary Burying Grounds in Governor's Palace Gardens, F.S. Lincoln, late 1930s.

“WISH YOU WERE HERE”: WILLIAMSBURG POSTCARDS—THE EARLY DECADES

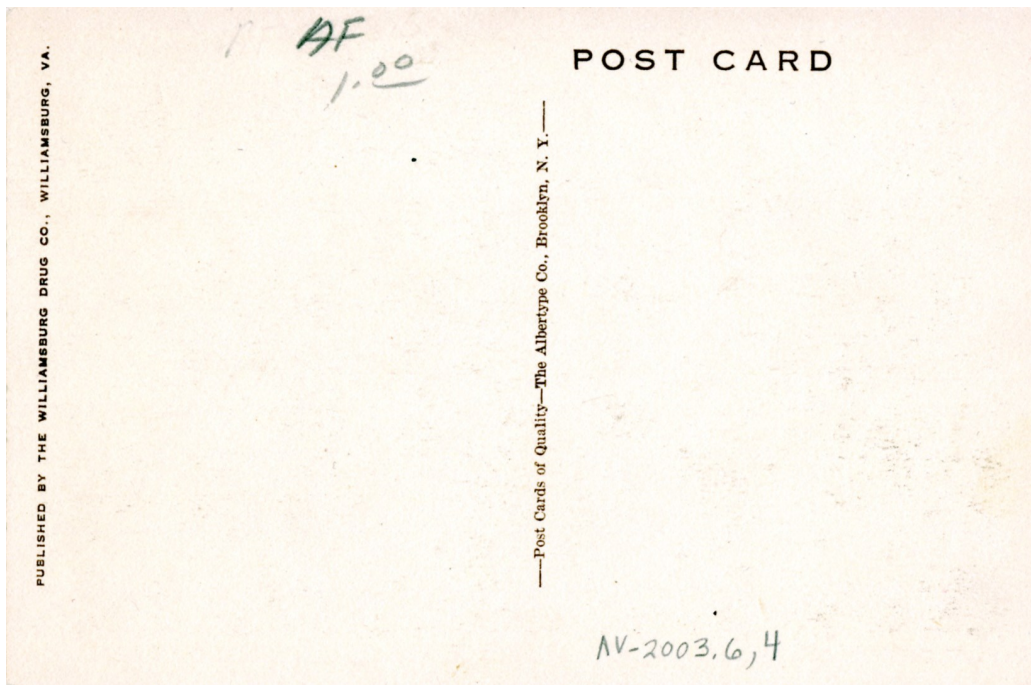
(continued)



The Reconstructed Governor's Palace, Williamsburg, Virginia, Albertype Company, late 1930s.

“WISH YOU WERE HERE”: WILLIAMSBURG POSTCARDS—THE EARLY DECADES

(continued)



Colonial Coach at Gates of the Governor's Palace in Williamsburg, Albertype Company, late 1930s.

Want to view more postcards in the collection? Please visit the Rockefeller Library's Visual Resources Omeka site: <https://rocklib.omeka.net/items/browse?collection=15>

DRONE PHOTOGRAPHY CONTINUES



Peyton Randolph House (Colonial Parkway at lower right).

Photo courtesy of Wayne Reynolds.

While Colonial Williamsburg has been closed, drone photography has continued! Wayne Reynolds, the Rockefeller Library's volunteer photographer and drone pilot, and I ventured into the Historic Area on four occasions to photograph the town from the air. The first flight occurred on March 27th. We went to Market Square and took aerial views of the Peyton Randolph House, the Magazine and the Courthouse and captured stills and video footage. Wayne created the Library's first ever drone video and saw it posted on Colonial Williamsburg's main Facebook page where it was viewed by over 20,000 people. Our second flight was April 29th back at the Governor's Palace. You may remember that last year we photographed the rear gardens of the Palace from the air - but without video. This time we shot video and included 360-degree views of the building plus flights down Palace Green. Wayne created a second video with music from our Media Collections that was posted on the Library's Facebook group page. Our third flight on May 1st recorded the repaving of Duke of Gloucester Street at the Capitol end of town. Our fourth flight on May 18th was again at the Capitol where we shot 360-degree video of the Capitol to be included in a virtual tour of the building currently in development. Wayne created two more videos using footage from both trips and each are also posted on the Library's

DRONE PHOTOGRAPHY CONTINUES

(continued)

Library's Facebook group page here: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/RockefellerLibrary/>. You do not have to have a Facebook account to see them – the page has been made public and anyone can view them at any time. In the meantime, you can see a few of the stills included with this article. What is up next? We are currently planning our next flight (pending the weather) – location TBD!



Governor's Palace

Photo courtesy of Wayne Reynolds

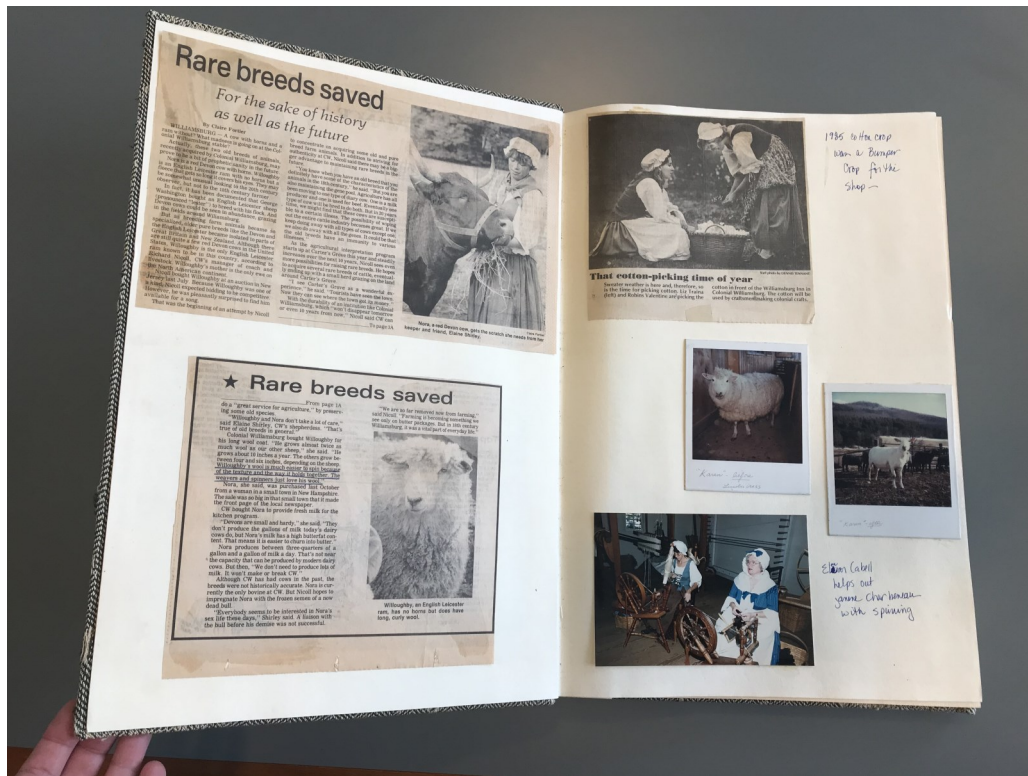
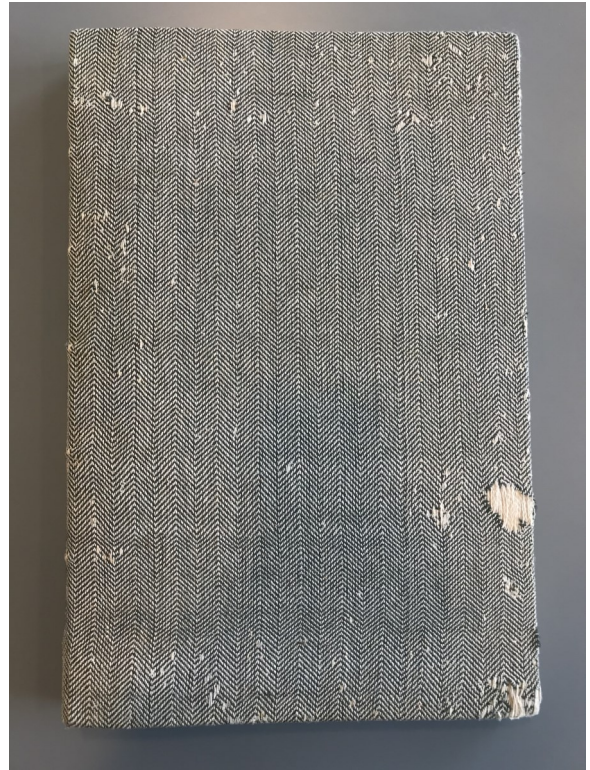


Duke of Gloucester Street repaving project

Photo courtesy of Wayne Randolph

CORPORATE ACCESSION

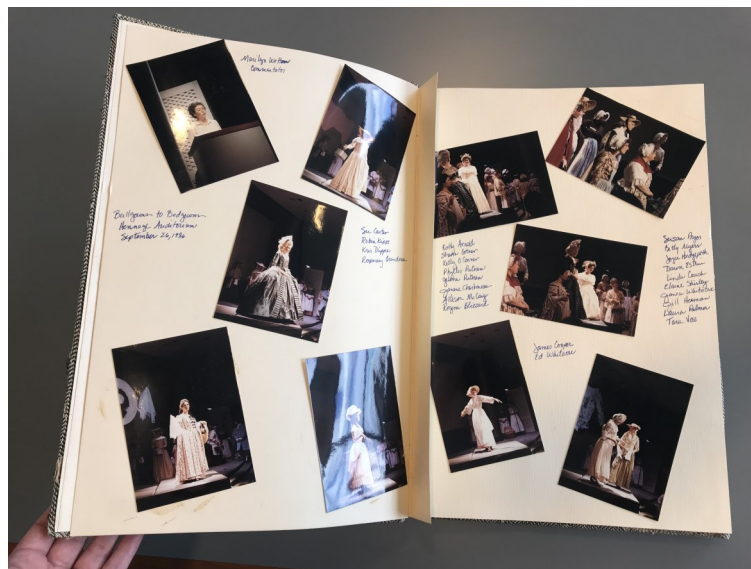
In January 2020, Corporate Archives accessioned a scrapbook that the Weavers had until then kept in their shop but wanted deposited in the archives for permanent safekeeping. The book is covered in a dark green herringbone woolen fabric that we suppose was woven there in the shop and is now a bit worn around the edges. The scrapbook documents shop activities through newspaper clippings and personal snapshots for the dates 1986-1987. Activities in addition to weaving include CW's rare breeds program especially the sheep, cotton growing and picking, flax breaking, spinning, dye days, and a fashion program titled "Ballgowns to Bedgowns" held in the Hennage Auditorium on September 26, 1986. Crucially, many of the people in the photographs are identified in handwritten notations on the pages. Items like these are vital to the archival documentation of the Trades at CW and their involvement in many projects and programs across the Foundation. To view the scrapbook (when we reopen for business!), please send an email to rocklibrary@cwf.org or call 757-565-8510 to make an appointment.



Corporate Archives, Scrapbook of the Weaver's Shop covered in green woven herringbone fabric, 1986-1987.

CORPORATE ACCESSION

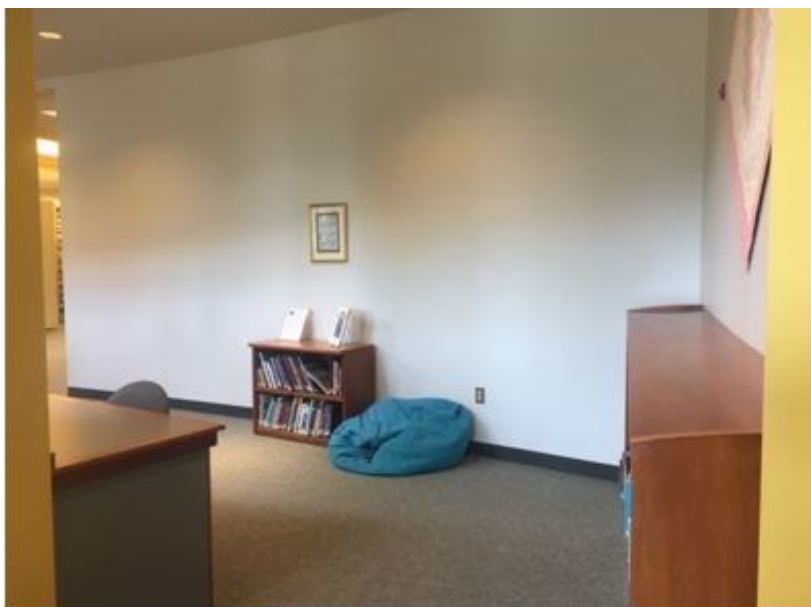
(continued)



Corporate Archives, Scrapbook of the Weaver's Shop covered in green woven herringbone fabric, 1986-1987.

THE COMMUNITY PHOTOGRAPHY CHALLENGE

May was National Photography Month and as such we launched our first ever “Community Photography Challenge” on the Library’s Facebook page. We asked the CW community – both locally and abroad – to help us decorate the walls of the Janice McCoy Children’s Book Collection located on the Library’s second floor. If you have not heard of it before - it is a small but wonderful group of children’s books dedicated to the memory of Janice McCoy, an interpreter in the Historic Area. Originally, we envisioned this as a children’s photography challenge. However, due to the closure, we decided to expand it and asked folks to send in images that illustrated the theme “Why I love Colonial Williamsburg”. Since the walls to be decorated were in a children’s book area we asked folks to involve their children in the photos: having fun in previous visits or field trips. And if folks did not have children then anything, they felt illustrated the theme. We posted the Challenge to our FB group and asked our colleague Nealla Champagne to send the information out to our fabulous CW volunteers. The responses were overwhelming! Through FB and our volunteers, we received over 200 images of children, grandchildren, nieces and nephews, friends and family all visiting and enjoying CW! Some e-mails also included wonderful stories of visits for anniversaries, birthdays, and holidays. Especially touching were notes and photos from both Chris and Jerry McCoy whose mother and wife are commemorated with this collection. Right now, we are hard at work printing and hanging the photos on the wall. We will post pics of the result on our FB page and in the next edition of this newsletter when we are done. Many thanks to Nealla for helping get the word out and to all our CW volunteers and friends of the Rockefeller Library -both near and far - for making this happen!



Janice McCoy Children's Book Collection

The *John D. Rockefeller Jr. Library Newsletter* is a publication of Colonial Williamsburg’s John D. Rockefeller Jr. Library.

Vice President, Education, Research, and Historic Interpretation

Beth Kelly

Executive Director, John D. Rockefeller Jr. Library

Carl Childs

Editor

Doug Mayo

Contributors

Carl Childs, Donna Cooke, Tracey Gulden, Marianne Martin,
Sarah Nerney and Jenna Simpson

To learn how you can help or for assistance, please call 757-220-7249; 757-565-8510 or email us at rocklibrary@cwf.org.