



2016 Nominees

Virginia's Top 10 Endangered Artifacts



Norcomium, High School Yearbook of I. C. Norcom High School; 1926
African American Historical Society of Portsmouth

Portsmouth, Virginia – Coastal-Hampton Roads Region

Media Relations Contact and Title: Lavis Pace, Deputy City Manager

pacel@Portsmouthva.gov / 757-487-9431 / www.blackhistoryportsmouthva.org

The Norcomium is the first yearbook printed for I. C. Norcom High School, Portsmouth's first high school for African-Americans. Several prominent early black educators appear in the album's photographs, including William Weaver who went on to become an early principal of Norfolk County High School. The yearbook is fragile and in dire need of conservation and rebinding.



Lithograph, First Regiment Virginia Volunteers; 1858
Ashland Museum

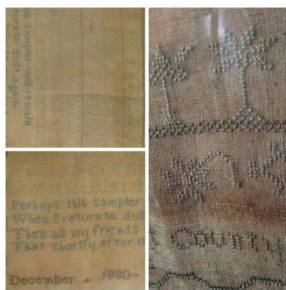
Ashland, Virginia - Central Virginia Region

Media Relations Contact: Rosanne Shalf, President

jrshalf@gmail.com / 804-368-7314 / www.ashlandmuseum.org



The Ashland Museum's lithograph (25.75" x 21", by Ritchie & Dunnivant; Richmond, Virginia, 1858) portrays Camp Robinson in Ashland, Virginia in May 1858 under the command of Colonel T. P. August, which was the last peacetime encampment prior to the start of the American Civil War. The lithograph is one of only two known copies, the other being at the Virginia Historical Society. The lithograph is in need of assessment and conservation. The paper is fragile and darkened and the edges are crumbling and the top right corner is separated from the print. While the blue and green colors don't seem to have faded, it's likely other colors have.



Snider – Botetourt Sampler; 1830
Botetourt County Historical Society and Museum

Fincastle, Virginia – Virginia Mountains Region

Media Relations Contact: Ann Layman, Vice-President

ann.bell.layman@gmail.com / 540-473-8394 / www.bothistsoc.org

The Snider-Botetourt Sample is a beautifully worked alphabet sampler typical for the 1800s as a way to document family records. Unique is the fact that it is dated "December 1830" and includes the names of "Botetourt County" and "Nancy Snider", which is believed to be the same Nancy Jane Snider who married William P. Brown in Botetourt County in 1848; this couple among the earliest settlers of the county. The sampler is in need of conservation. The loose weave mesh background shows signs of discoloration and fading, with possible mildew, and is stapled and glued to backing and mounted in a frame where the glue appears to have stuck to the glass.



Earliest Stereo Daguerreotype in America; c. 1852

Camera Heritage Museum

Staunton, Virginia – Shenandoah Region

Media Relations Contact: David Schwartz, Director and Curator

info@cameraheritagemuseum.com /540-886-8535 / www.cameraheritagemuseum.com

According to the Daguerreian Society, the Camera Heritage Museum's artifact is the earliest known stereo daguerreotype in America, dated approximately 1852 when stereo imaging was introduced in America. It consists of two visually similar photographs in a stereo case with an attached viewer, which creates a single 3D image when viewed through a stereo case with an attached viewer. The museum believes it was crafted as a prototype to test the stereo imaging process that later led to traditional stereo imaging.



Bugle; c. 1890s

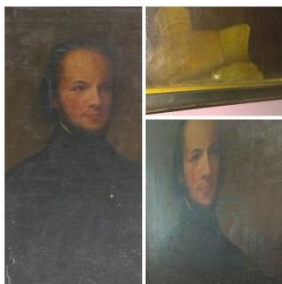
Casemate Museum at Fort Monroe

Fort Monroe, Virginia – Coastal-Hampton Roads Region

Media Relations Contact: Phyllis Terrell, Director of Communications

pterrell@fmauthority.com / 757-788-3391 / www.fmauthority.com/visit/casemate-museum

The Casemate Museum at Fort Monroe's bugle dates from the 1890s, and was recovered from the moat surrounding the fort in 1978. Because the object had been submerged in salt water for a number of years, there is active corrosion occurring to the metal over the entirety of the bugle and it requires conservation. The bugle is displayed to interpret the importance of music at Fort Monroe; the now legendary bugle call, 'Taps' was performed for the first time at a military funeral in 1862.



Portraits of Rufus and Caroline Griswold; 1840

Edgar Allan Poe Museum

Richmond, Virginia – Central Virginia Region

Media Relations Contact: Chris Semtner, Curator

chris@poemuseum.org / 804-648-5523 / www.poemuseum.org

Most of what we know about Edgar Allan Poe is wrong, mostly because his first biographer, Rufus W. Griswold, was also his rival and enemy. As such, Griswold did more than anyone else to influence public opinion about Poe, which makes the Poe Museum's recent acquisition of a portrait of Griswold and his wife and an archive of Griswold's letters a notable event. The surfaces of the two paintings are obscured under years of dirt, mold, darkened varnish and bad over-painting plus the canvas and stretchers are compromised. Conservation of the portraits will assist the museum in telling the true story of Poe's life, literary contributions, and the creation of the Poe Myth.



Southern Railway Baggage Cart; c. 1900s

Fairfax Station Railroad Museum

Fairfax, Virginia – Northern Virginia Region

Media Relations Contact: Joyce Hill, Media Relations

information@fairfax-station.org / 703-425-9225 / www.fairfax-station.org

The Southern Railway Baggage Cart in care of the Fairfax Station Railroad Museum dates from the 1900s and represents the cultural heritage of small railroad depots found across the country during the peak of passenger rail services in the United States. The baggage cart has been fully restored thanks to community efforts but the museum is in need of a permanent, outdoor display shed to house the cart and protect it from further damage by climate exposure. Fairfax Station itself played an important role in local and state history in terms of regional economic development and as a crucial logistics and evacuation point during the American Civil War.



Nineteenth-Century Sinumbra Lamp, aka "Jefferson Lamp"; c. 1820s

Historic Sandusky Foundation

Lynchburg, Virginia – Virginia Mountain Region

Media Relations Contact: Greg Starbuck, Director

info@historicsandusky.org / 434-832-0162 / www.historicsandusky.org

Nicknamed the "Jefferson Lamp", oral history suggests the Sinumbra Lamp (shadow-less lamp) was originally at Thomas Jefferson's Poplar Forest and conferred to William and Marian Cobbs upon their purchase of the property. It found a new home at Sandusky through marriage, with the Hutter family who purchased the home in 1841 and owned it for over a hundred years. Now the centerpiece of Historic Sandusky's formal parlor, it was designed to burn Sperm Whale Oil but has been converted for electricity. The Historic Sandusky Foundation plans to have it restored, which includes having it cleaned, re-gilded, and the electrical elements removed.



Antebellum Wedding Dress; c. 1858

History Museum of Western Virginia

Roanoke, Virginia – Virginia Mountain Region

Media Relations Contact: Ashley Webb, Curator of Collections and Exhibitions

awebb@vahistorymuseum.org / 540-342-5770 / roanokehistory.org

This Antebellum Wedding Dress is one of only a few in the collection of the History Museum of Western Virginia, especially due to the fragility of historic textiles. The red and black striped silk fabric was a unique wedding dress choice in 1858, after Queen Victoria popularized white wedding dresses in 1840. It is also unique in that it is both horizontally and vertically striped, creating a ribbed effect. Melissa Adeline Spalding wore this dress at her marriage to Edmond Escourt Wilkins Gale, early residents of the Shenandoah Valley. The dress is in need of conservation as it contains several rips, areas of shattering, insect damage, and heavy staining.



Cloth Children's Map of the United States (with National Historical Scenes); 1941
MacArthur Memorial

Norfolk, Virginia – Coastal-Hampton Roads Region

Media Relations Contact: Corey Thornton, Curator

james.thornton@norfolk.gov / 757-441-2965 / www.macarthurmemorial.org

Helen Angeny was a missionary working in the Philippines and art teacher at Brent School in Baguio when Japanese forces invaded in December 1941. Helen led her students in the creation of this Cloth Map of the United States, now in care of the MacArthur Memorial, as a class project to teach the principles of art, social studies and geography and to boost morale during their imprisonment. Knowing the consequences of severe punishment, she did this at great personal risk to herself, concealing the map from the enemy for three years. The MacArthur Memorial seeks to have the artifact assessed and conserved by a professional, and to secure an effective archival encasement to protect it during exhibitions.



USS Monitor's Dahlgren Gun Carriages; 1862

The Mariners' Museum and Park

Newport News, Virginia – Coastal-Hampton Roads Region

Media Relations Contact and Title: Jenna Dill, Marketing and Communications Manager

jdill@marinersmuseum.org / 757-591-7746 / www.marinersmuseum.org

The USS Monitor was the first ironclad ship built by the Union Navy for use in the American Civil War, changing the nature of naval battles and shipbuilding. It featured the world's first revolving gun turret on a ship. Its two XI-inch Dahlgren shell guns rested on specially designed gun carriages, which consisted of about 300 individual component parts made of wood, copper alloy, wrought and cast iron. Recovered in 2002, both carriages are housed at the Mariners' Museum's Batten Conservation Laboratory complex, and are the only ones known to be undergoing active conservation. The carriages are very fragile having undergone over 140 years of degradation on the ocean floor. No treatment exists to preserve copper alloy, iron, and wood simultaneously so the carriages must be disassembled for treatment.



Portrait of Mary Wood Early (life dates unknown); 1820s

Museum of the Shenandoah Valley

Winchester, Virginia – Shenandoah Region

Media Relations Contact: Julie B. Armel, Deputy Director, Community Relations

jarmel@themsv.org / 540-662-1473 / www.themsv.org

The Museum of the Shenandoah Valley's Portrait of Mary Wood Early is attributed to Maryland-born artist George Esten Cooke (1793-1849), one of the South's most prolific portrait painters of the antebellum period. Cooke traveled frequently throughout the Shenandoah Valley and Richmond in the 1820s and 1830s. According to family tradition, Mary Wood Early worked as a nursemaid for the Latham family of Winchester, caring for an infant whose mother had died, and married an officer in the military with the surname Early. While her identity remains a mystery, Early's Empire-style dress and accessories including matching jewelry and a tortoiseshell comb offer important documentation of women's fashion in Virginia in the 1820s. The conserved portrait may help uncover additional clues about Early as well as reveal the portrait's original appearance.



Bob Slaughter's Order of the Day; 1944

National D-Day Memorial Foundation

Bedford, Virginia – Virginia Mountain Region

Collections Contact Name: John D. Long, Director of Education

jlong@dday.org / 540-586-3329 / www.dday.org

Eisenhower's *Order of the Day*, issued to troops prior to the June 6, 1944 Invasion of Normandy, was one of the most important documents of WWII. Bob Slaughter, of Roanoke, was a D-Day veteran and the founder of the National D-Day Memorial. He had 75 fellow soldiers sign his copy prior to the battle; 11 of those men died within hours. The artifact is in very fragile shape. Printed on inferior wartime paper, it literally endured months of battlefield conditions, and stands greatly in need of conservation. The rarity and significance of Bob's *Order of the Day* make it imperative to preserve this endangered artifact as a testament to one of the most important battles of the 20th Century and to the men who fought it.



Garden Shed Signatures; c. 1900-1965

Oatlands Historic House and Gardens

Leesburg, Virginia – Northern Virginia Region

Media Relations Contact: Matt Kraycinovich, Director of Development

mkraycinovich@oatlands.org / 703-777-3174 / www.oatlands.org

Oatlands' most unique historic document appears on its Garden Shed's walls, part of 19th century dependencies bordering the garden's northern edge. Beginning in the 1920s, generations of gardeners at Oatlands have signed their names to the walls. Some also drew pictures or penned inspirational slogans. The poignant handwriting provides a fascinating research avenue into individual employees, otherwise unknown. Unfortunately, the etchings are in danger of disappearing forever due to ultra-violet light and other harmful elements causing irrevocable damage to the ink. Of particular concern are areas where plaster is detaching from its wooden lath backing. If not repaired soon, Oatlands will lose this tangible element of voices from its past.



Hardin Reynolds's Business Trunk; c. 1850

Reynolds Homestead

Critz, Virginia – Southern Virginia Region

Media Relations Contact and Title: Lisa Martin, Senior Program Manager

martinlm@vt.edu / 276-694-7181 / www.reynoldshomestead.vt.edu

The entire business history of the Hardin Reynolds family was found in this trunk, which was filled with tightly folded receipts, notes, deeds, accounts, a few letters, and all manner of other business papers. The contents of the trunk dated from the Reynolds family patriarch, Hardin Reynolds' early years and ended considerably after his death. Without discovering the contents of this strangely shaped little trunk, the Reynolds Homestead would never have known the history of the Reynolds Family. The trunk, appropriately, now sits in the room where Hardin once laboriously prepared his accounts. The conservation situation is dire as the exterior surface is chipping and peeling and the interior lining is deteriorating.



The “Dinwiddie County”, Pullman Sleeper/Lounge Railroad Car; 1926

Richmond Railroad Museum

Richmond, Virginia – Central Virginia Region

Media Relations Contact and Title: Ray Potter, Volunteer

rrminfo@richmondrailroadmuseum.org / 804-233-6237 / www.richmondrailroadmuseum.org

The “Dinwiddie County” is a heavy-weight sleeping and lounge car built by the Pullman Company in 1926. One of 264 of its type built, the car retains its original wood work, accessories and lighting fixtures. Originally, all of these cars had a brass-railed open observation platform at the rear and were used only on the best or most scenic trains. Currently, the “Dinwiddie County” is stored under a permanent roof at the Richmond Railroad Museum to protect it from the weather and is not publicly displayed. The current restoration plan has three stages: cosmetic restoration, limited operation, and later Amtrak certification. Cosmetic restoration will allow public display of the artifact.



Macdowell-Eakins Archives Photographs and Negatives; c. 1880-1935

Taubman Museum of Art

Roanoke, Virginia – Virginia Mountains Region

Media Relations Contact and Title: Sunny Nelson, Dep. Dir. of Marketing & Communications

snelson@@taubmanmuseum.org /540-342-5760 / www.taubmanmuseum.org

The Macdowell-Eakins Archives came to Roanoke through the Macdowell family, one of the founding members of the Norfolk and Western Railway terminus at Roanoke. The Macdowell family originated in Philadelphia, where Susan Macdowell remained and married the eminent painter, Thomas Eakins. Eakins, his wife, and Eakins' students were prolific artists of the photographic medium. The photographs served both works of art and painting aids that helped transform his career and figurative painting in America. The Macdowell-Eakins photographic archives comprise over 350 loose photographs and negatives. Some of the negatives have begun to curl, and some on glass are broken. While the negatives are currently stored in freezer conditions, must be stabilized for long-term survival.



Richmond Coliseum Architectural Model; 1968

The Library of Virginia

Richmond, Virginia – Central Virginia Region

Media Relations Contact and Title: Jan Hatchcock, Public Information & Policy Coordinator

Jan.Hathcock@lva.virginia.gov / 804-692-3708 / www.lva.virginia.gov

The Richmond Coliseum Architectural Model is part of the Ben R. Johns, Jr., Architects records (ca. 1967-1971) in care at The Library of Virginia. Benjamin R. Johns, Jr. (1922-2006) was an award-winning architect who was best known for designing the Richmond Coliseum. For his design, he was honored in 1974 by the Virginia Chapter of the American Institute of Architects and in 1975 by the Richmond Planning Commission. In February of 2016, the Virginia House of Delegates passed a bill allowing construction of a new coliseum, which makes conservation of this model important in order to remember this important piece of Richmond’s architectural history.



Robert E. Lee's Three Piece Wool Sack Suit; c. 1860s

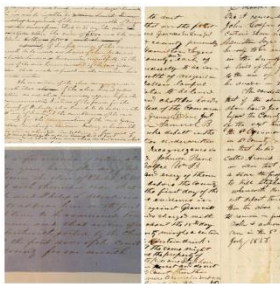
University Collections of Art and History, Washington & Lee University

Lexington, Virginia – Shenandoah Region

Media Relations Contact & Title: Drewry Sackett, Director of Media and Community Relations
dsackett@wlu.edu / 540-458-4120 / www.wlu.edu/university-collections

The casual suit, belonging to the University Collections of Art and History, consists of a gray wool sack coat, vest and trousers, and is one of only five sets or single items of clothing known to have belonged to General Robert E. Lee. It has a presentation inscription from the tailor who made it that reads "Genl. R.E. Lee, From Jn. C. Shafer Co. Richmond". It remains one of the very few pieces of clothing worn by the general still intact. This suit is over-all in poor condition with hundreds of moth holes and several large areas of loss.

Since this posting, a copy of an 1867 letter to Shafer has been located in which Lee acknowledges receipt of clothing and states that "all fits well." We now believe this may be that very suit of clothes, worn by Lee when he served as Washington College President (1865-1870).



Deep History: Collection of Documents Related to Virginia Slave Codes, 1798-1890s

Wilderness Road Regional Museum

Dublin, Virginia – Heart of Appalachia Region

Media Relations Contact & Title: Kasey Campbell, Collections Administrator
klcampbell36@gmail.com / 540-674-4835 / www.wildernessroadregionalmuseum.com

The Wilderness Road Regional Museum's unique collection of several hundred documents (1798-1890s) details the lives of African Americans in what became Pulaski County (1839).

Nowhere in Southwest Virginia is there such great primary source material of African American history going back to the settlement of the region. The collection narrates the force the Virginia Slave Codes had on African Americans, both enslaved and freed. When read alongside the Freedman's Bureau records, the Deep History (and the larger archive of photographs and land and personal property tax records that it is part of) provides genealogical resources for persons of color seldom found in Southwest Virginia, and an unprecedented opportunity for professional historians and civic educators. The collection is in dire need of conservation due to age, damage, and the fact that many of the documents were laminated in a scrapbook over 30 years ago, in a misguided attempt to preserve them.

**For more information about the specific artifacts or for additional photographs,
please contact the individual participants or the Virginia Association of Museums at 804.358.3170.
www.vatop10artifacts.org**

Please note, VAM does not verify authenticity or accuracy of information submitted.

Virginia Association of Museums
3126 West Cary Street, #447 Richmond, VA 23221
www.vamuseums.org / 804.358.3170

Mission: The Virginia Association of Museums is a statewide network serving the museum community.

Vision: A united museum community inspiring the world around us.