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Virginia Libraries is a quarterly journal published by the Virginia Library Association whose purpose is to develop, promote, and improve library and information services and the profession of librarianship in order to advance literacy and learning and to ensure access to information in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

The journal, distributed to the membership, is used as a vehicle for members to exchange information, ideas, and solutions to mutual problems in professional articles on current topics in the library and information field. Views expressed in Virginia Libraries are not necessarily endorsed by the editors or editorial board.

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The guidelines for submissions to Virginia Libraries are found on page 4.
I've lost count of the number of times I've heard the arguments: “The library offers more accurate and valuable information than the Internet.” Or, “Ask a librarian, not Google.” Librarians protest the prevalence of Internet searches over reference interviews with truisms such as “The Internet contains a lot of inaccurate, misleading, and incomplete information,” or “Top-ranked search engine results do not necessarily represent the best websites.”

Reference librarians in particular have expressed concern that their staff and resources are being underused while Internet searches seem to rule the day, particularly among younger patrons. Studies of Internet searching behavior have revealed that users are aware that their hits may not generate the most complete or appropriate information, but that overall, they are still satisfied with the results—getting something usable in a fraction of the time is preferred to getting something great after taking the trouble to call, let alone visit, a library and then hunt for, or wait while a librarian searches for, the results.

The problem is, even librarians find themselves relying heavily on Internet searches during the course of a day, and computer users aren't going to alter their behavior just because we tell them to. Let's face it: Internet search engines such as Google have won this round. Perhaps it is time to spend our energy finding ways to embrace the information revolution, rather than ex-tolling what's left by the wayside.

There are already several projects underway that take advantage of Internet use behavior to provide traditional services in a new way. The Open WorldCat initiative keeps getting stronger in its union with Google to provide users around the world with knowledge of their local library holdings without requiring the hassle of locating regional libraries and searching individual catalogs. QuestionPoint provides a collaborative means for libraries to pool their resources in providing 24/7 virtual reference to all their patrons. Many libraries are working on digitization projects that will make out-of-copyright holdings available to seekers regardless of location or affiliation. Some libraries are making use of blogs and RSS feeds to contact computer-savvy patrons about current happenings, or providing online tutorials on a wide range of library and research topics.

There are so many ways to use information technology to our advantage—so many new ways that we can step forward and provide the accurate, complete information that we've complained the Internet users are failing to obtain. Let's be honest: at least some of our protests stem from fear that computers will eventually put many of us out of our jobs. But if we aggressively pursue new ways to engage our users in the style that they prefer, instead of continuing to spend our time touting the admitted value of our traditional services, we should find more need for our services than ever.
President’s Column

by Ruth Arnold

I’ve come to that place in my term when as outgoing VLA president I get to write my Year in Review column. It’s my time to tout my achievements and exit in triumph. However, I realize that what I really want to do with this space is thank all the people who helped me during my presidential year. I know I am taking a risk naming names because I am sure that there will be some people I fail to mention. I hope that, whatever they are, they will also accept my apologies and my thanks.

Legislative activities, as usual, were a main focus of the year. I am grateful for the efforts of the Legislative Committee, cochaired by John Moorman and Jerry McKenna, and the work of Legislative Liaison Phil Abraham. Although we advanced very little toward our goal of full funding of state aid to public libraries, we did manage to stave off mandatory Internet filtering for one more year, with great assistance from Senator John Chichester. Our biggest success was with a bill that restored language requiring certification to the code section on qualifications for librarians and also with a bill confirming that libraries can pass their discarded materials to groups such as the Friends for resale.

On the federal side, VLA had a significant presence at ALA Legislative Day in Washington, D.C. Our VLA cochairs, Jessica Schwab and Lucinda Munger, had everything very well organized for our delegation, which included public and academic librarians, as well as two school librarians representing VEMA. Attending ALA Legislative Day was certainly one of the highlights of my year. Imagine my surprise when, instead of meeting with an aide as expected, we were ushered into the office to meet with my congressman himself.

Another high spot for me was attending the VLA Paraprofessional Forum Annual Conference. All VLA can be proud of our Paraprofessional Forum. Not only are they nationally recognized and award-winning, but they also put on a really good conference. I recommend it to all VLA members.

One of our goals was to improve our website and add some online services. Input from the task force chaired by Past President Sam Clay and many hours of work by Steve Helm, our webmaster, allowed our executive director to be able to process credit card payments online, both a cost- and time-saving measure. Online registration debuted in October, just in time for the fall conference. The revamped www.vla.org is still in process, but we are very excited about its new look and the planned use of blogs to facilitate more participation from the membership.

A special thanks goes to Laura Speer, who, in addition to her regular duties as chair of the Awards Committee, took on the task of scheduling the VLA centennial exhibit, which is still available for display in your library.

As I write this, our fall conference is just around the corner. I have no doubt that it will be successful, but since I don’t want to jinx anything, I won’t brag. I do want to let Mary McMahon and John Halliday, cochairs, and the Conference Committee know how much I appreciate all their hard work and the many phone calls they had to make to line up speakers and sponsors.

I am pleased that we were able to add some extra content to our VLA Council meetings. After a discussion of membership issues, Second Vice President Libby Lewis agreed to chair an ad hoc committee on the subject. As with many VLA undertakings, this is one that will cover more than one year.

On my personal checklist, I enjoyed being VLA president. I would recommend the position to others. Although on occasion I felt overwhelmed with extra work, this was usually only in spurts, not continuously. I did learn something about myself and organization and time management (more to accomplish here, too).

I would have liked to have more opportunity to get to know individual members of the VLA Council. Maybe that can happen in the coming year now that I am past president. Of course I need to thank the members of Executive Council: Sam Clay, Pat Howe, Lydia Williams, Sue Burton, and Libby Lewis. We have been a good team and I have enjoyed our camaraderie.

Last, but not least, I will always be grateful to Linda Hahne. As our executive director, she is the key- stone of the Virginia Library Association. Her productivity and quality of work never fail to amaze me. I wish her many more happy years with VLA.

So that was my year as VLA president. I think it was a pretty good year, but I am very happy to have passed the gavel to my successor. Good luck, Pat. May you have a good year, too.
Guidelines for Submissions to *Virginia Libraries*

1. *Virginia Libraries* seeks to publish articles and reviews of interest to the library community in Virginia. Articles reporting research, library programs and events, and opinion pieces are all considered for publication. Queries are encouraged. Brief announcements and press releases should be directed to the VLA Newsletter.

2. Please submit manuscripts via email as attachments in Microsoft Word, rich text, or plain text format. Articles should be double-spaced with any bibliographic notes occurring at the end of the article. Please avoid using the automatic note creation function provided by some word processing programs.

3. Articles in *Virginia Libraries* conform to the latest edition of the *Chicago Manual of Style* and *Webster’s Third New International Dictionary, Unabridged*. Accepted articles are subject to editing for style and clarity. Authors will be consulted on points of fact.

4. All articles submitted for consideration are reviewed by the editors and may be refereed by the editorial board. Articles that are not selected for publication will be returned within three months.

5. VLA holds the copyright on all articles published in *Virginia Libraries*. Contributors of articles receive two copies of the issue in which their work appears.

6. Illustrations are encouraged and should be submitted whenever appropriate to accompany a manuscript. Hard copy illustrations will be returned if requested in advance. Digital images should have a resolution of at least 300 dpi. Authors are responsible for securing legal permission to publish photographs and other illustrations.

7. Each contributor should provide a brief sketch of professional accomplishments of no more than fifty words that includes current title, affiliation, and email address. Unless specified otherwise, this information will be shared with readers of *Virginia Libraries*. Physical addresses should also be provided for the mailing of contributor’s copies.

8. Articles should generally fall within the range of 750–3,000 words. Please query the editors before submitting any work of greater length.

9. Email manuscripts and queries to Cy Dillon, cdillon@ferrum.edu, and C. A. Gardner, cgardner@hampton.gov. Please be sure to copy both editors.

10. *Virginia Libraries* is published quarterly. The deadlines for submission are: December 15 for Number 1, January/February/March; March 15 for Number 2, April/May/June; June 15 for Number 3, July/August/September; and September 15 for Number 4, October/November/December.
Twisting Paths: An Interview with Mike Allen

by Danny Adams

Reading the work of Roanoke author Mike Allen is like hiking off-trail on a mountainside at night: no straight way, places to trap or tumble you, and no way to see what is coming directly ahead—especially if what is ahead sees you coming first.

Allen is one of the fastest rising stars in the world of speculative poetry — “speculative” meaning science fiction, fantasy, horror, or occasionally any combination of the above—with over 160 poems and short stories in print and more on the way in magazines ranging from the small press to heavy hitters in the field such as Asimov’s Science Fiction. Speculative poetry itself is a rising star; while it has been around for decades, only recently has it seen an upsurge in popularity, thanks in no small part to Allen himself.

Allen has enjoyed a number of paths of his own. His sizable bibliography includes four chapbooks: Defacing the Moon and Other Poems (DNA Publications), Petting the Time Shark and Other Poems (DNA), Disturbing Muses (Prime Books, ISBN 0809556049), and, most recently, Strange Wisdoms of the Dead (Wildside Press, ISBN 0809556758). He is also an editor; his first such job was the 1995 anthology New Dominions, which collected speculative works by Virginia authors. More recently, he coedited (with Bud Webster) The Science Fiction Poetry Handbook by Suzette Haden Elgin; Allen also runs his own poetry magazine, Mythic Delirium, along with a series of fantasy anthologies titled Mythic. (In the interest of disclosure, the author of this interview has appeared in both.) In addition, Allen was the president of the Science Fiction Poetry Association (SFPA, www.sfpoetry.com) until September 2006 and helped bring that organization much more prominence than it had previously enjoyed.

The hike metaphor above is no accident. My interview with Allen did not start with questions; he and his wife Anita led me on a three-mile, forest-enclosed hike before we ate nearby at one of his

Danny Adams is the coauthor, with science fiction veteran Philip José Farmer, of the short novel The City Beyond Play, forthcoming from PS Publishing, and has over two dozen speculative poems published or forthcoming in various magazines. He is the evening services librarian for Ferrum College in Ferrum, Virginia, where he, his wife Laurie, and four very speculative cats live on a mountainside beside a dark and thick forest.
favorite restaurants (barbecue). Deciding that the restaurant was too noisy for recording the interview, we sat on a walled set of stone steps that wound their way into another grove behind the restaurant. The poem below is an excellent example of Allen’s work. In 2006, it won the Rhysling Award, the top award in speculative poetry.

**The Strip Search**

By Mike Allen

The Gate said “Abandon All Hope.”

I thought I’d tossed all my hope away, but when I stepped through the Gate, it still pinged. One of the guards slithered out of its seat, snarling as it drew forth a wand.

_C’mere_, it hissed,

*it seems you’re still holding out hope.*

Its crusted hide was a Venus landscape up close. It brushed that cold black wand all over my skin, put it in places I don’t want to talk about. Snaggle fangs huffed in my face:

_Sir, step over here, please._

Then the strip search began. My flesh rolled up & tossed aside for mushy sifting. Bones X-rayed, stacked in narrow rows, marrow sucked out, tested, spit back in. They made me open mind, heart, soul, shook them out like sacks of flour, panned the contents for every nugget of twinkling hope, glistening courage; applying lethal aerosol to any motion that could be ascribed to love or will or malingering dreams— sparing only a few squirming morsels for later snacking.

Once they were done they made me pick up my own pieces (I did the best I could without a mirror), then my guard kicked me out— with a literal kick— sent me rolling down the path to my final destination.

I’ll be honest with you, it’s no picnic here. But, my friends, I still have hope. I do.

I’m not going to tell you where I hid it.

You’re welcome! I suppose I should be a good author and tell you about *Strange Wisdoms of the Dead*, which came out this past January. It’s a collection of ten years’ worth of my poetry and fiction. It’s kind of frightening to realize that I’ve been writing and publishing that long and people are maybe only now starting to hear about me—but at least they are hearing about me!

I organized *Strange Wisdoms* into four parts. One part is essentially meant to concentrate on horror poems. One part is meant to focus more on life secrets, life mysteries—the “strange wisdoms” of the title. One part is more science-fictional, and also more meditative. And one part is collaborations; I collaborate with a lot of people. It’s fun to collaborate and then include the results in my books. *Strange Wisdoms* contains “The Strip Search,” which at the time had not yet won the Rhysling.

Also, right now in conjunction with Prime Books I’m editing a series called *Mythic*, which contains a lot of fantasy stories and poetry. It’s intended to be like a literary magazine, although they’re books. Science fiction publications have tended to steer clear of that mix, I think in part because there’s this assumption that readers aren’t interested in poetry, which isn’t necessarily true. There are people coming into the field now who are interested in seeing a publication with more of a “litzine” mix: heavier on the poetry, treating the poetry equally with stories, stories that are themselves at times very experimental and very poetic. Not that I have any problem with old-fashioned, plot-driven storytelling either, so I mix that in as well. It’ll be very interesting to see in the next few years if this is something that catches on and becomes more widespread, or something that fades back into the woodwork. Or if it becomes one diverse thread that
continues and continues, which is how science fiction and fantasy really seem to work these days.

VL What do you tell people when they say to you, “I didn’t even know there was such a thing as science fiction poetry!”

MA The version of this I normally hear is, “I’ve never heard of a Science Fiction Poetry Association,” to which, after two years in charge, I developed a fairly well-rehearsed response: SFPFA has been around since 1978; we’re interested in poetry that contains elements of science fiction, fantasy, or horror; we give out an award every year, the Rhysling Award, that honors the best of this type of poetry, selected by the full membership.

When trying to explain speculative poetry, I’ve found it’s best if I’m in a workshop setting where I can simply plop an example or series of examples in front of the questioner and let the work speak for itself. Without those examples—I like to use Joe Haldeman’s “Eighteen Years Old, October Eleventh” or John Grey’s “Explaining Frankenstein to His Mother,” to name a couple¹—some people are just convinced that you can’t mix poetry and SF. Usually this show-and-tell process makes them believers.

VL Along with the Rhysling Award, what are some of the accomplishments you and SFPFA have enjoyed while you’ve been president?

MA Gosh, where to begin? We’re a small group, but we’re a little less small now; our membership just about doubled in the first year I was president, to about 170, and has stayed that way since. We put out our first trade paperback books, reprinting and revising *The Science Fiction Poetry Handbook* by Suzette Haden Elgin, who founded SFPFA, and releasing *The Alchemy of Stars*, which for the first time collected the Rhysling Award-winning poems from 1978 to 2004 in one volume, minus one piece we couldn’t get permission to reprint. We also switched our annual

1 Both poems can be read in *The Alchemy of Stars: Rhysling Award Winners Showcase*, edited by Roger Dutcher and Mike Allen (Science Fiction Poetry Association, 2005; ISBN 0809511622). Haldeman’s poem is also available online at his official website: http://home.earthlink.net/~haldeman/poem1.html.

… let’s face it, most readers want to be told traditional stories.

Rhysling anthologies, which collect members’ nominees for the award, from chapbook format to a much more professional trade paperback. We found a regular venue for presenting the award, at ReaderCon, a convention in Boston that focuses on books and fiction. We improved and expanded our website (www.sfpoetry.com). We for the first time gathered as many of our newsletter and magazine publications since 1978 that we could find with the goal of contributing them to a library collection. And so on. Mind you, I can’t take credit for all this. Many volunteers have selflessly donated time and effort to make this happen, because we want to see speculative poetry taken seriously. The idea is that all this activity attracts attention, draws in new members, and widens our audience.

VL What do you think speculative poetry can accomplish, either with language or for a reader, that speculative prose can’t or would have difficulty doing?

MA Poetry in this day and age can be seen as the higher mathematics of written language, exploring concepts, emotions, personalities, or epiphanies, or simply experimenting in wordplay without the burden of story arithmetic, plot, traditional character development, or the chapters of exposition required to set the stage for a science fiction or fantasy world. It can cut to the chase, get right to the heart of the matter, without going out of its way to include the formula elements of a “well-told story.”

Little “short-short” or “flash fiction” stories used to be a fairly prominent part of science fiction and fantasy, but have fallen out of fashion. I believe that for better or for worse, poetry now fills that gap. Consider that several prominent venues for fantastic fiction in the short form, such as *Asimov’s* or the online magazine *Strange Horizons* (www.strangehorizons.com), routinely give space to poetry. Even such stolidly prose-dedicated periodicals as *Analog Science Fiction and Fact* or *Fantasy & Science Fiction* sneak it in from time to time.

That said, what I’m giving you here is a gross oversimplification, as all poems tell stories in their own way, and prose can be written poetically; and let’s face it, most readers want to be told traditional stories. There aren’t as many readers willing to engage in the fluid and abstract challenges of poetry.

Yet that’s unfortunate, especially these days, because, as with poetry in general, speculative poetry has been moving toward transparency in its meaning. The casual reader who checks out the contents of a current issue of *Star*Line (the journal of SFPFA), *The Magazine of Speculative Poetry*, or my own *Mythic Delirium* will likely find that he or she won’t have to struggle much to understand the aim of any given piece.
Tell me about the Rhysling Award.

The Rhysling Award recognizes speculative poetry that is considered particularly outstanding in a given year. The award was created in 1978 by Suzette Haden Elgin, who founded the Science Fiction Poetry Association the same year. She noticed at conventions that there were people who wrote SF poetry, were interested in SF poetry, but didn't seem to be talking to each other. It wasn't that such an award had never existed before, but this was the most prominent such award to be created, and it had the support of some major writers. The name “Rhysling” comes from the Robert Heinlein story “The Green Hills of Earth,” which describes a star traveler—I believe he was an engineer—and a bard who was blinded in an accident. Suzette actually got permission from Robert Heinlein to use the name.

There are two Rhysling Awards: one for short poetry, less than forty-nine lines long under the current guidelines, and one for long poetry, fifty lines or longer. The Rhysling winners are reprinted most years in the Nebula Awards anthology. This is a nice way for the field to acknowledge that these poems are interesting enough as pieces of writing that they deserve to be reprinted in such a prestigious venue.

There are a lot of young writers joining the organization, participating in the field, who are coming to things from the fantasy side, who grew up reading fantasy. This interest leads them to write poetry as well, and what they’re doing is they’re exploring the writers’ marketplace and discovering us. “Wow—there’s an association for people who like to write this sort of poetry. I thought it was just me!” And I feel that’s a good measure of SFPA’s success, because we’re doing a better job letting people know we’re out there.

Before my presidential term began, we didn’t have a lot of advertising out there. We had a website that wasn’t updated very often; Star*Line wasn’t included in very many market listings; we weren’t doing any kind of public events like we do now. So we were just this big secret, which I felt needed to be changed. I didn’t think we were doing a lot to promote our award. I feel like we’ve done a much better job of that now, and there’s a lot of evidence that it’s working.

Tell me how you came to write your poem “The Strip Search,” the piece that won the 2006 Rhysling Award.

“The Strip Search” began as a kind of complaint. In my day job I work as a courts reporter; I cover trials, lawsuits, all kinds of court cases. One of the side effects of having this job is that every day at least twice, and probably more often on any given day, I have to walk through a metal detector—after 9/11 all sorts of government institutions stepped up their security, and this is as true for courthouses as anywhere else. Now I like to wear suspenders when I’m dressed up for court. Suspenders are built with metal in them, so I was setting off the metal detector every time I came in. Some of the guards got a little frustrated with me and they started asking me, “Why do you keep wearing those?” My reaction was, “Doesn’t it seem a bit unfair that this heightened and probably justified—at least to some degree—paranoia about fellow human beings trickles down to the point where I’m not free to choose how to dress the way I want to, because I’m upsetting these metal detectors?”

So it’s because of this relatively trivial problem and my thoughts about its larger implications that I was suddenly struck with the idea of the gate of Hell operating as a metal detector. What would the gate of Hell detect? Well, it says “Abandon All Hope,” so no doubt if you entered that gate and you had some hope they would search you to find out where you were keeping it. My mind jumped on that: I imagined what that sort of metaphorical soul-searching—so to speak—would be like, and thus came the poem.
VL You’ve done poetry as performance art quite a lot. Tell me what your ideal night reading a poem would entail: not just what you’re doing, but perhaps audience reaction, even audience participation, if any.

MA I have never tried to write a poem specifically to invite audience participation—that’s probably something I ought to try.

When I perform a poem I usually am hoping for some kind of audience reaction. “The Strip Search” is a lucky piece for a live performance in that it’s funny, and when you have a funny piece (and it actually is funny), people start reacting to it right away, so you know it’s working. With a more serious piece, it’s not so easy, because people stay quiet until the end and then you know how well you did by how enthusiastically they applaud. I have a few poems that I’ve written specifically to be performed, but mostly they’ve been written already and I experiment with them to see if they’ll work for an audience or not.

And not all poems work for an audience. A poem specifically aimed for the page assumes you’re going to be able to spend some time with it, take it in at your own pace, look at how the words are placed on the page, and draw meaning from that in addition to what the order of the words happens to be. With a performance poem, I’m generally thinking the same way as I might with a monologue. In fact most of my performances are more or less monologues in that they’re meant to be heard, not so much dependent on how they look on the page.

VL Since a lot of people come at science fiction wanting to predict the future, this may be an inevitable question: where do you see speculative poetry going from here?

MA I think so long as the interest in the field of speculative poetry continues to grow the way it has been, then we’ll continue to see more markets for it—small markets, but venues nonetheless. But many of these have taken the forefront in terms of publishing poetry that actually moves the genre forward, pushes the boundaries. I mentioned earlier the trend of new and young people coming in with a bent toward fantasy, and I think what’s going to happen is we’re going to see more and more fantasy poetry. This is true of the speculative field as a whole—fantasy writing is becoming more dominant. There are already relatively new markets existing now that are all fantasy, and that wasn’t something you saw so much of before.

In terms of SFPA, I think the new leadership is going to continue the kinds of things I have been doing. And I know that it’s also the intention of the new president, Debbie Kolodji, to have SFPA reach out to other poetry organizations, something that I didn’t consider myself particularly qualified to do.

If she’s successful, and maybe even can coordinate joint events, we might see the field get really wild: bringing in the cowboy poets, the haiku poets …
They Don’t Look Like Me: Library Multicultural Awareness and Issues

by Edwin S. Clay III

(Adapted from a presentation at the 2006 Virginia Library Association's Paraprofessional Forum Conference.)

One would be hard-pressed to find a nation anywhere on earth whose population is more diverse in race, religion, and national origins than the United States.

In an essay celebrating the American Library Association’s centennial in 1977, noted historian John Hope Franklin examined the impact of a pluralistic society on library development. His thoughts were summarized in *Multiculturalism in Libraries* by Rosemary Ruhig Du Mont, Lois Buttlar, and William Caynon (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1994). According to Franklin, early views of Americans included only those of European origins. With such a definition, three-quarters of a million blacks already in the country were considered ineligible to be Americanized. There was no willingness to nurture educational and cultural institutions that would serve all people; indeed, the great influx of immigrants in the 1820s and 1830s “raised suspensions and hostility among those of original American stock” (23).

Does this sound familiar?

These new Americans were not like those already in the country. They had different religious beliefs, were willing to work for lower wages, and wanted to keep their languages and traditions. Du Mont et al. continue, “Early expressions of anti-foreignism and anti-Catholicism culminated in the formation of the American Party in 1854. It was a political party whose main goal was maintaining the status quo and attempting to quell the social changes initiated by the thousands of immigrants flocking to America” (23).

The new profession of librarianship realized it had a responsibility to the immigrant through its services.

In the years following the Civil War, the population of the U.S. grew exponentially due to another wave of immigration. As Du Mont et al. explain, this time immigrants came from northern, southern, and eastern Europe, as well as from China and Japan. The population also became more urban. Cities developed around the mill, the factory, or the railroad. These cities attracted thousands of immigrants looking for work.

Libraries Enter the Fray

About this time, some individuals began to notice that existing institutions were not helping to assist the immigrant in “entering into the American way of life.” As time went on and the social problems mounted, many reformers focused on education as the key to solving and resolving the social pressures brought about by immigrants separated from society. There were active protests, as well as publications—again, does this sound familiar?—fomenting public opposition to rights for immigrants.

Libraries in this period were much more identified with education than today. The new profession of librarianship realized it had a responsibility to the immigrant through its services. The library was to become a community cultural center as well.

Du Mont et al. quote Frederick M. Crunden, a well-respected librarian whose article, “The Value of a Free Library,” originally appeared in *Library Journal* in March 1890. Crunden describes the role of the library in helping to integrate immigrants into society:

The free library is the most promising of all measures for social integration because more than any other, it teaches and leads to

Edwin S. Clay III has been the director of the twenty-one-branch Fairfax County Public Library since 1982. FCPL is the largest public library system in the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area, as well as the largest in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Clay is a past president of the Virginia Library Association and the Virginia Public Library Director’s Association.
self-help. Reading library books causes increased productivity of our mechanics and artisans, in the lessening of crime and disorder among us, in the influx of the most desirable class of citizens, the greater sobriety, industry, morality and refinement throughout the community that must necessarily result (24).

Librarians during this period were disturbed by the effects of city life on the population and wished to share their knowledge and middle class ideals with the underprivileged, i.e., the immigrants. They hoped that immigrants and poor Americans alike could be transformed into enlightened, self-supporting citizens.

In order to reach those who would benefit from library services, the library itself was extended through the development of public library branches, deposit stations, and home libraries. Branches and other extension agencies were viewed as a convenient method for catering to special population groups, who would not likely utilize library services in centralized locations.

The initial emphasis of library programs for immigrants in the 1920s was on the individual. The major goal was assimilation into the American mainstream. Libraries cooperated with day and evening schools by furnishing books recommended by teachers. They aided interested students in their struggle with the English language by sponsoring English classes in the library.

Libraries supplied books in native languages, as well as translations from English. Citizenship classes were held in the library. (My library system recently held an updated version of such citizenship classes and had to close registration after one hundred joined!) Libraries in the 1920s contributed pamphlets written by library personnel in native languages describing community rules and laws, prevailing wages, cost of living, health codes, and other information.

A strong theme in the history of the provision of services to immigrants is that the library would help them assimilate into mainstream society. Is this rationale still valid? Is assimilation the goal? What is the rationale for the importance of multiculturalism?

Definitions: Assimilation versus Coexistence

Perhaps we need to look at some definitions before attempting to answer that question. For Du Mont and the coauthors of Multiculturalism in Libraries, “Cultural diversity refers to sensitive recognition of existing cultural differences” (9).

The authors go on to cite a working definition developed by the National Coalition for Cultural Pluralism described in Cultural Pluralism in Education: A Mandate for Change edited by Madelon D. Stent, William R. Hazard, and Harry N. Rivlin:

Thus, it is a state of equal coexistence in a mutually supportive relationship within the boundaries or framework of one nation or people of diverse cultures with...
significantly different patterns of belief, behavior, color, and in many cases with different languages. To achieve cultural pluralism, there must be unity with diversity. Each person must be aware of and secure in his own identity, and be willing to extend to others the same respect and rights that he expects to enjoy himself (9).

Sounds a bit like a combination of the golden rule (“each person must be aware of and ... willing to extend to others the same respect and rights that he expects to enjoy himself”) and a New Age philosophy (“there must be unity with diversity”). But perhaps such a definition that stresses coexistence is more on target today.

Here’s another set of definitions from the fourth edition of the American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language. According to this reference, “multicultural” is defined as “1) of, relating to, or including several cultures” or “2) of, or relating to a social or educational theory that encourages interest in many cultures within a society rather than in a mainstream culture.” The phrase “cultural pluralism” is defined as “a condition in which many cultures coexist within a society and maintain their cultural differences; also called multiculturalism.” Finally, “multiculturalism” is defined as “the doctrine that several different cultures (rather than one national culture) can coexist peacefully and equitably in a single country.” Again, that word: “coexist.”

How do these definitions, with their emphasis on coexistence, square with the earlier rationale of assimilation? Do you remember some of the metaphors for assimilation? “Melting pot” was one. Then something changed and “melting pot” became “mosaic.” Has the rationale for serving immigrants changed? Has our view of the new American changed?

Well, something has changed— for there sure are a lot of library customers who don’t look like me. Virginia’s population statistics certainly support the fact that the face of Virginians is changing. According to the Weldon Cooper Center at the University of Virginia, even though the commonwealth remains a majority-white state, it has experienced high growth rates in nonwhite and Hispanic populations. Virginia is far more diverse than it was even a few decades ago, and projections call for this diversity to increase.

Changing Strategies

In the best of all possible worlds—and in the best library systems—there is the recognition that change in the operational environment is a given. This change (or changes) are anticipated and planned for. The changes—and the response to them—may take the form of a library’s budget, strategic plan, or other such document. How many of you have such a plan or document in your library that addresses the issue(s) of multiculturalism?

An initial and incredibly important aspect of any library’s approach to becoming responsive to multicultural issues is that of attitudes, knowledge, and training. Obviously, these three components are staff-centered.

Those interested in multicultural issues in libraries have suggested that a library system should foster attitudes toward multiculturalism that include:

1. Committing to cultural diversity and working to achieve it.
2. Accepting that the “world has changed” for the better.
3. Making judgments that are centered on the individual; caring about what happens to each person as a result of culturally diverse experiences.
4. Being aware of how background and experiences form perceptions of cultural diversity; understanding clearly individual cultural assumptions and patterns of behavior.
5. Understanding other people’s cultural assumptions and patterns of behavior regardless of their race or ethnic background; appreciating perceived discomforts and prejudices of minor-
Does this sound calculating? It should. A better word, though, is strategic.

A library should encourage knowledge toward majority and minority toward majority.

A library should encourage knowledge about multicultural issues that includes:
1. Responding to a wide diversity of cultural experiences.
2. Understanding the community and the resources that can help in promoting cultural diversity in library settings.

A library should offer training that develops such skills as:
1. Ability to put a person at ease regardless of cultural background.
2. Ability to be at ease in culturally diverse situations.
3. Ability to deal with the stress that develops with proactive behavior in a culturally diverse library environment.

Such attitudes, knowledge, and skills are developed through formal training opportunities, our own personal experiences, and our backgrounds, as well as other opportunities. But it all begins with a staff’s commitment to a library system’s goal to provide services that respond to the unique needs of all.

The Value of Self-Awareness

There is an exercise often used in multicultural awareness training. It asks individuals to stand up if they have certain characteristics in common. For example, all those who are the oldest in a family are asked to stand. All those who are thirty and younger are asked to stand. All those who are married are asked to stand. This illustrates how many different groups individuals may belong to and reinforces commonalities.

Self-awareness and acceptance is the basis of an individual’s approach to multiculturalism. Without this commitment, it will be difficult for a library to have a successful program. It will also be quite difficult to have a successful program without a plan or direction of some kind—a direction that identifies the elements, enumerates a response, and quantifies what success looks like.

A Successful Model

Let’s begin with the internal issues that have to be in place. The first element to consider is the staff. I’ve discussed the need for appropriate staff attitudes, knowledge, and skills, but how can these be achieved? Training, recruitment, scheduling, and the establishment of diversity committees can all impact staff awareness of multicultural issues.

Another element that is significant in a library’s approach to multiculturalism is its collection. I believe a library’s collection is its third most valuable asset behind its customer base and staff. In developing a collection that responds to multicultural needs, a library system must determine the needs of its customers and then acquire appropriate resources. It’s a challenging task that involves juggling the budget, priorities, languages selected, and the difficulty of cataloging materials in languages other than English.

Next, a library must look at the services it offers. Do the reference and information services meet the needs of a multicultural audience? Does programming for both children and adults respond to these needs? Adult programming can include English conversation classes or even more formal English language classes. Are new Americans aware of the free Internet access that can allow them to keep in touch with their home countries?

Marketing these services is important as well. Libraries must decide how to reach their market. Does this mean publications in different languages? Should internal signs be in more than one language?

Last, a library should consider how to evaluate its success. What criteria will determine if activities to promote the collection and services to new Americans are working?

Potential Barriers

It’s one thing to prepare a plan and develop strategies. It is quite another thing to actually implement the plan. There are many potential barriers to implementing...
a creative program. One area is library administration, where there may be resource shortages, a lack of multicultural staff, the inability to change strategies, local government demands (a significant issue), or lack of understanding of different cultural attitudes and beliefs.

A second area where barriers can exist is the library staff, who may have problems with the reassigning of staff roles; competing demands among various staff ethnic groups; resentment toward new cultural programs; or cultural differences, conflicts, and misunderstandings among staff members.

A third, and surprising, area is the multicultural customers libraries seek to serve. Often these customers lack knowledge of library services because the public library is not a worldwide institution, because some immigrants would never give their names and addresses to a public institution, or because of communication difficulties with administration and staff. In addition, time and energy constraints can limit visits to the library. Other problems include the gap between what multicultural customers need and available library services, cultural differences between customers and staff, and cultural differences between various potential customer groups.

A fourth potential barrier is the age-old problem that libraries always confront—resources. How will a library system pay for the changes required by an appropriate response to multicultural demands? If additional funds are required, how can a library secure them? There are a couple of strategies. First, make a budget case. Let the powers that be know about the

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Challenge or Opportunity?

Is multicultural awareness a challenge or an opportunity? I think awareness is a positive challenge, but that the responses provided by a library to this challenge offer an opportunity. Being aware is nice—responding proactively, aggressively, and appropriately is wonderful! The role of a library is to respond to its community of users. Not some of its community of users, but all of them.

I am a practicing cynic, but a closet idealist. So the cynic side of me says that if for no other reason than enlightened self-interest, a library must be aware of and responsive to its customer base. (Remember, I believe the most important asset of a library is its customer base.) Ignore this changing base at your own peril and be prepared to wither away.

My ideal self believes that becoming a library responsive to multicultural needs continues the tradition of the library’s role in society and in the community as a place where all can come to learn, enjoy, and recreate. Simply recall the early history of the library: libraries have previously faced and met the challenge of responding to the new American successfully.

Perhaps we just need to be reminded of this. 💡
On a chilly April afternoon in 1966, Lynchburg’s leading citizens and hundreds of others gathered next to a bunting-and-balloon-draped building as the local high school band piped out the national anthem and politicians talked the talk. The black high school’s concert band struck up a few tunes and the mayor cut the ribbon with oversized scissors.

When it was over, the crowds pushed forward for the prize of the day—a public library card. In the next four hours, the new library’s users checked out 561 books. In those moments, in a scene replayed in many Southern towns, Lynchburg’s racial divide began to close.

Lynchburg this year celebrated its fortieth anniversary of that day, the beginning of its public library. In many ways the growth of the library has reflected the growth of the city.

The library indeed had humble beginnings: eight thousand square feet on the third floor of a six-floor former warehouse that mostly housed the city’s maintenance department and was located behind the businesses facing the one-way Main Street. It was hard to find.

With room for seventy-five people, it was staffed by nine employees, four of them professionally-trained librarians, including a part-time reference librarian. But with a start-up collection of 35,000 books, it didn’t take long before it was one of the big hits of the city, packed on afternoons by youngsters doing homework assignments. It was quite a treat for those who’d had almost nothing before. In its first eight months, the library circulated 100,000 books.

What took Lynchburg so long? Neighboring Bedford has had a library for more than a hundred years, Roanoke and Charlottesville for more than eighty.

Actually, efforts to start a public library in Lynchburg date back to 1822 when a literature and library company was incorporated by the state legislature and fizzled. Other efforts to start a public library

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failed over the years. It was nearly 150 years before Lynchburg joined the public library fraternity.

All that time, Lynchburg was not without a library.

The George M. Jones Memorial Library opened in 1908 through a $50,000 grant from Mary Frances Jones with the stipulation that the library was “wholly for the use of white people without respect for religious distinction.” Although at the time of its founding in 1908 Jones Memorial Library was trumped as the second oldest “public” library in Virginia, nonwhites and nonresidents were not allowed to use it. Blacks were forbidden to even enter the building.

Mary Frances Jones was the widow of George Morgan Jones, a Civil War soldier/land developer/philanthropist who originally conceived the idea of a library but died before the project was started. Mary Frances Jones was eccentric, to say the least, arranging books in the library by color and leaving a note on the door that the library was closed when she needed to take a social junket for the weekend.

Jones Memorial Library was so heavily used that it started three branch libraries: at the midtown Aviary Building in what is now Miller Park, at the west side Fort Early Building, and at Paul Laurence Dunbar High School. In the 1920s, the library got its first professional administrator, Maud Campbell, who brought much-needed organization to the libraries as she wheeled among them with a limousine and a hired chauffeur.

Dunbar’s library was Lynchburg’s answer to providing library services to the black community.

Owen Cardwell Jr., one of two black students to integrate the white E. C. Glass High in 1962, remembers the time well. Many of the books available to black children were threadbare, out of date, or both. “It was a terrible time for the education of young black children,” said Cardwell when he spoke at the library’s fortieth anniversary celebration last April.

Basically one room, the Dunbar Library was run by Anne Spencer (whom the Jones Library sent to library school). She later won renown as a Harlem Renaissance poet and colleague of Paul Laurence Dunbar and W. E. B. Du Bois. There is some evidence that Spencer may have trained at the Jones Library, which would have made her the first African-American to use the city's library facilities. At Dunbar, she furnished many of her own books to the library and conducted regular library classes, giving blacks access to books they could not have easily obtained elsewhere. After World War II, the entire contents of the Dunbar Library, including books and furniture, were donated by Jones Memorial Library to the school system.

Lynchburg was not alone in providing few library services for its black citizens. Public library facilities for blacks in the South before 1940–50 were extremely limited. Most college libraries did not allow African-Americans to use their facilities.

Not much changed until the influx of northern industry in the early 1950s. Lynchburg’s prosperity had always been based on its one dominant industry. Tobacco was first. Just before the Civil War, its tobacco factories made
Lynchburg's per capita income the second wealthiest in the country. Then came textiles and shoes. Lynchburg was always dominated socially and politically by the guardians of old money emanating from the smokestacks along the James River's Lower Basin.

Between 1930 and 1950, Lynchburg grew by 7,000 to a city of 47,000. In the mid-1950s, Babcock & Wilcox, a nuclear power company, and General Electric, the mobile radio manufacturer, moved to Lynchburg, both looking for expanded markets and cheaper labor. GE alone brought 600 families to Lynchburg. Many of the newcomers were young, highly educated professionals recruited from outside the city and state.

They jumped into civic leadership roles and effectively penetrated the city's closed society. They changed the social, political, and cultural fabric of the city dramatically. One of the results was the rebirth of the idea of a tax-supported public library open equally to all citizens and funded adequately to meet the needs of a growing community.

In 1961, an Interim Committee for Citywide Library Services was formed, comprised mostly of college and school librarians, both black and white. Their task became focused when Mary Breazeale, a member of the committee and a reference librarian at Randolph-Macon Woman's College, took the director of the R-MWC nursery school, a Chinese woman, to Jones Memorial Library for some reading materials for her students. She was turned away.

The Virginia State Library offered its support to the committee through its Demonstration Library Program. This program was designed to encourage the establishment of public libraries where none existed, with localities providing the building, shelving, and furniture in exchange for a starter collection of 25,000 books and assistance in managing the library’s staff for up to two years. In Lynchburg, the state urged the formation of a metropolitan library that would include Amherst and Campbell counties, but both decided to form their own libraries.

Opposition from Jones Memo-
rial Library came swiftly. Josephine Wingfield, head librarian at Jones at the time, said of the idea of a public library, “Lynchburg already has more library facilities than any city of its size.” She noted that Dunbar “has a fine library” and that there were libraries at two Negro elementary schools.  

The library committee’s other opponent was the city’s newspaper, the Lynchburg News & Daily Advance, run for years by Carter Glass, who had led the move to disenfranchise blacks at the 1900 Democratic State Convention. His newspaper had a powerful hold on the white community. Dr. Heywood Robinson, longtime pastor of Diamond Hill Baptist Church, said, “The newspaper was against everything that a black kid wanted. Many white people were afraid of it. The paper got its power from being the voice of the community and that’s what’s so frightening about it.” The newspaper ran free death notices for whites, but not for blacks (the policy wasn’t changed until 1972). Photos of black brides were rejected and photographers were advised not to include black and white athletes in the same photo. When Martin Luther King Jr. spoke before a mixed crowd at E. C. Glass High School in 1962, newspaper accounts stressed his link to communist organizations. There were cracks in the newspaper’s hard line, though, and it finally collapsed with the civil
rights movement in the mid-1960s under public pressure from the same group of citizens who formed the backbone of efforts to start a public library.23

In 1964, the Friends of the Lynchburg Public Library formed to spearhead efforts to encourage the city council to take advantage of the demonstration library opportunity. At the time, the Friends of the Library may have been the only such group in the country without a library. The Lynchburg City Council said it would not back a public library unless it was shown that there was sufficient public support.24

The Friends went to work. Their theme was “A Library to Serve All Citizens.” Lynchburg was said to be the only city of its size in the country without a true public library.25

A grassroots campaign involving numerous civic clubs and led by the Lynchburg Jr. Woman’s Club saturated the city with flyers and launched a door-to-door membership drive. More than 5,000 citizens paid the $1 dues. One volunteer said, “A lot of them would invite us in and try to feed us. The struggle wasn’t getting in the door but getting back out.”26

The first Friends of the Library Board of Directors was a true cross section of the community, representing “old” Lynchburg, its newcomers, the African-American community, and the business community, with J. Burton Linker Jr. of General Electric as its first president. The Friends published their own newspaper. In an editorial, Linker stated his case: “What we are losing beyond money and losing irretrievably cannot be counted or measured: knowledge, pleasure, opportunity and future excellence.”27

In March 1965, thirteen prominent business and civic leaders (all male) spoke before the city council in a coordinated series of arguments for the library. After the fifth or sixth speaker, a councilman threw up his hands and said, “Give those people what they want.” The vote to support the demonstration library was unanimous. Even the News & Advance finally waved the white flag. An editorial stated, “The Friends of the Lynchburg Public Library are about to remedy the city’s grave cultural deficiency…. It is extraordinary that Lynchburg does not have a free public library.”28

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### Opening the library to people of all races was simply one barrier that came down.

David Rowland, a thirty-five-year-old West Virginian, was the city’s first library director and presided over that festive occasion of April 16, 1966.29 As it turned out, the library’s opening was one of a series of coming-of-age events for the city, all springing from that cauldron of the turbulent sixties. In short order, Lynchburg’s public schools and three area colleges were integrated. For the first time, a black doctor could practice at the local hospital (Dr. Walter Johnson later became known as Arthur Ashe’s first tennis coach). The business community also opened its doors: Leggett’s department store became the first retail business to hire black salespeople.30

It was not an easy fight. The hospital opened its doors to blacks primarily because it was threatened with losing its Medicare benefits. There were several other flashpoints: a sit-down at the Patterson’s Drug Store whites-only lunch counter saw six local college students arrested. The S&W Cafeteria reopened to all citizens after a small incident there. The municipal pools were closed and filled in after a group of black youngsters showed up one day to swim.31 Opening the library to people of all races was simply one barrier that came down.

The city took over operation of the demonstration library in July 1967. Jane Black became the first library director hired by the city in 1968. She was succeeded by the current library director, Lynn Dodge, in 1974. Space quickly became the library’s biggest problem. The city had provided funds for the library to expand upward to the next floor at its Main Street site. Children’s services, cataloging, and magazine storage were moved into the renovated 8,000-square-foot space. But soon that was not enough.32

The library’s master plan, developed in 1977, called for a more centrally-located main library and branch libraries in the Boonsboro, Timberlake, and downtown areas. Only part of the wish list was fulfilled. In 1981, the city council, after hearing a demand for a bigger main library during the 1980 council election, voted two million tax dollars to transform the former Sears retail store in the Pittman Plaza shopping center into the city’s central library.33 With 36,000 square feet, it was more than twice the size of the original library. The new library opened in 1984, and almost immediately the number of patrons and circulations doubled. A downtown branch library followed three years later.34

In 1985, the Lynchburg Bar Association had asked the library to take over its law library. In 1987, the law library and the new downtown branch combined and opened in 1987 in the lower level of City Hall. At the time it opened, the branch library was called “the 7-11 of libraries,” designed for quick stops by downtown workers to check out a bestseller, get a paperback, or read a magazine.35

The law library is supported by a $4 fee assessed in civil court cases,
brings in $55,000 annually. In addition to serving the legal community, the law library provides citizens with help in writing wills, filing for divorce, etc. Inmates at the nearby Blue Ridge Regional Jail send written requests for legal information, and a legal bibliographic instruction class is taught there.36

Also in 1987, Jones Memorial Library moved from its deteriorating 1908 Rivermont Avenue building to the Sears library building’s second floor. Its primary focus today is on genealogy and local history research. Its genealogical collection is regarded as one of the best in the state.37

In 1991, the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Center for Human Rights opened at the Lynchburg Public Library, resolving a fifteen-year struggle to honor the civil rights leader. Ironies of ironies, this struggle had included one proposal to rename the Lynchburg Public Library the Martin Luther King Jr. Public Library. After a firestorm of opposition, the concept for the MLK Center for Human Rights was born. Designed as a living, educational memorial to King, the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Lynchburg Community Council was established by the Lynchburg City Council. The group relies solely on donations and grants to provide annual exhibits on local, state, and national civil and human rights issues.38

Forty years is but a speck in the history of librarianship in Virginia, but changes since that first day in 1966 have been enormous. Today’s Lynchburg Public Library has more than 29,000 borrowers, averages 800 visitors a day, and checks out more than 500,000 items a year. A volunteer program established by the Friends of the Library numbers more than 100 volunteers who in 2006 provided almost 3,200 hours of service. The Friends also raised money to allow the library to continue its journey into new formats. From 33½ phonographs and records, it has moved to audiobooks, videos, CDs, DVDs, and MP3s. The Friends also sponsor *Lynchburg Reads*, a community-wide reading program that has brought authors James McBride, David Baldacci, Orson Scott Card, and Sharyn McCrumb to Lynchburg.

Nearly 150 people use the library’s public Internet computers daily. More than 6,000 have attended free computer classes in the Gates PC Lab. Through its summer reading and numerous other programs that foster a love of reading, the youth services department has brought in new young readers for generations. The library’s outreach program helps many seniors who cannot come to the library.

All this in just forty years. The next forty should be just as amazing.

**Notes**


5 Doyle, 15.


12 Doyle, 15.

13 Greene, 88.


16 Laurant, *City Unto Itself*, 94-111.

17 Doyle, 16.

18 Ibid.


20 Ibid.


23 Elson, 410-422.

24 Doyle, 16-17.


26 Doyle, 17.

27 Ibid.

28 Doyle, 18.

29 Frye.

30 Laurant, *City Unto Itself*.

31 Elson, 410-422.

32 Doyle, 18.

33 Ibid.


35 Doyle, 18.

36 Ibid.

37 Laurant, “Keeping Up.”

38 Doyle, 19.
Virginia Reviews

Reviews prepared by staff members of the Library of Virginia
Sara B. Bearss, Editor


*At Day's Close* explores “the history of nighttime in Western society before the advent of the Industrial Revolution.” It is a highly original account of a topic on which little formal study has been done. The physical territory taken on by the author is impressive, embracing most of western Europe, from Scandinavia to the Mediterranean Sea. *At Day's Close* delves most deeply into the study of nighttime in the British Isles while also incorporating materials from early North America and eastern Europe. The timeframe is equally expansive, ranging from the later Middle Ages to the early nineteenth century, but focusing most closely on the period from 1500 to 1750. Each of the book’s twelve chapters is, in its way, a nocturnal journey into the mystery of darkness, how human beings regarded it, and how they functioned within its confines.

As A. Roger Ekirch observes at the outset, night has always held terrors for humankind …

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EKIRCH REVIEW

... night has always held terrors for humankind …

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ed time, these fears have found expression in our literature, often in fantastic fashion. The author liberally quotes from these rich sources. For the Greeks, nighttime was the domain of demons. Biblical writers frequently distinguished between darkness that deceived, and light, which brought forth clarity and truth, the preeminent expression of which is found in the Gospel of John the Apostle, in which Jesus declares: “I am the light of the world.” For the superstitious, night was the province of ghosts, werewolves, goblins, and witches, creatures that took on convincing form in folklore. Evil men also were abroad during the sunless hours. Both the religious and the secular spheres protected the community by regulating human behavior in the hours after sundown through curfews, patrolling watchmen, and sentinels in church watchtowers.

The use of fire as a wedge against the darkness brought some comfort, as did outside lanterns, and indoor candles, oil lamps, and slivers of burning candlewood. Thieves and burglars were discouraged, while domestic life thrived after sunset, when darkness for many persons meant a suacease from labor and families gathered around open hearths and chimney fireplaces. For many, this was a time, too, for solitude and prayer. Individuals ventured out, of course, on one errand or another, navigating the hazardous and blackened landscape to visit neighbors or conduct business. Later, in the eighteenth century, urban areas began in small ways to make public spaces accessible after nightfall. Gradually night became a time of liberation, when the social constraints governing daytime behavior yielded to more adventurous pursuits.

With artificial light came the opportunity to rest and enjoy social pastimes such as playing cards, eating, drinking, and, for some, reading and enjoying music. Diarists frequently recorded such activities, staying up until after midnight in the privacy of their homes or at inns and taverns. Lower orders gathered at the public alehouse. Members of the aristocracy had the resources to indulge in lavish nighttime pursuits such as balls, operas, concerts, and masquerades with little regard for the inconve-

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Sara B. Bearss is senior editor of the Dictionary of Virginia Biography, published by the Library of Virginia.
nences that nighttime customarily imposed on other folk.

Night also provided a seductive curtain behind which passion bloomed in the darkness like a nocturnal flower. Maidens and gallants rendezvoused in country lanes and lay together in churchyards and cemeteries. Aristocrats and wealthy men of business mingled in the streets with tradesmen, pursuing prostitutes down London streets. To a surprising degree, the wives of prominent men were able to escape the constraints imposed on them and seek similar entertainments, venturing forth in search of illicit affairs. Clergymen, too, succumbed to the temptations of dissolute nightlife, and youths, their ardor mixed with intoxicants, joined in jealous, and sometimes fatal, frays.

Gas lighting in the nineteenth century invested nighttime streets with the safety formerly reserved for daytime and dramatically extended daylight activities late into night. As labor and recreation extended into the later hours, the privacy and quiet traditionally found during darkness diminished. With greater activity came increased crime and greater police presence. The social oversight common during daylight hours began to rule nighttime hours as well. With the advent of electric lighting, night has gradually yielded much of its domain, eclipsed by the glare of artificial illumination.

Of particular interest is Ekirch’s examination of preindustrial society’s segmented sleep patterns, when it was commonplace for persons to sleep for several hours and then rise in the dark to visit neighbors, smoke, indulge in lovemaking, or write in their diaries or journals for an hour or so before returning to bed to finish their sleep. He speculates on how the natural rhythms of sleep have been altered and raises the disquieting specter of a time when night has, for all intents and purposes, been eliminated. The potential consequences, not only for humankind, but also for the natural world, and especially for that nocturnal world that flourishes in the darkness, are sobering.

A finalist in the nonfiction category of the annual Library of Virginia Literary Awards scheduled for October 2006, this fascinating and beautifully written narrative should find a special place on the Virginia bookshelf.

—reviewed by Donald W. Gunter, Assistant Editor, Dictionary of Virginia Biography

... the most logical explanation, he asserts, is that they moved to territory occupied by the Croatoans ...

LOKER REVIEW


During the first half of the sixteenth century, seafaring representatives of Portugal, Spain, and France vied for geopolitical superiority by establishing outposts in the Americas. As explorers claimed territory for their monarchs, advanced their religious interests, and extracted valuable commodities, conflict frequently erupted. Piracy flourished on the seas. It is in this context, Aleck Loker contends, that England’s first, unsuccessful attempts at “New World” colonization must be understood.

England’s earliest efforts at settlement focused on present-day Canada, where John Cabot and Martin Frobisher had searched in vain for a Northwest Passage. In 1583, Sir Humphrey Gilbert, armed with a patent from Queen Elizabeth, arrived in Newfoundland with more than two hundred men and laid claim to the area, despite the presence of thirty-six fishing vessels from other European nations. This attempt at settlement failed almost immediately, but it inspired Sir Walter Ralegh—Gilbert’s half-brother and a regular at the queen’s court—to pursue the endeavor elsewhere in North America.

Ralegh planned his expedition amid a rapidly shifting political landscape. A Spanish rise to dominance, fueled by treasure the Catholic nation routinely shipped home from the West Indies, coincided with the aftermath of the Reformation and destabilized international relations in western Europe. England, without a large navy, employed private ships and seamen to conduct its foreign policy, which often amounted to a system of legalized piracy in which Englishmen robbed Spanish vessels of their riches. These raids were quite lucrative for ship owners, captains, and crew members, as the crown took only twenty percent of the yield. Mariners therefore found privateering expeditions more rewarding than the prospect of shuttling settlers and supplies to North America; this enticement, coupled with the growing threat of the Spanish Armada, meant that colonization was not a priority as Ralegh sought to fulfill the patent he received in 1584.

After hearing positive reports about Roanoke Island from a reconnaissance party, Ralegh dispatched five ships to the coast of present-day North Carolina in 1585. The colony’s roughly one hundred men, under the leadership of governor Ralph Lane, were
to secure the area, conduct agricultural experiments, explore the region, and gather marketable goods. Early clashes with nearby tribes of Native Americans created ongoing tension, and distractions in Europe prevented the arrival of supply ships and additional colonists. About a year after their arrival, the Englishmen abandoned the settlement. Not to be denied, Ralegh recruited another group of settlers in hopes of establishing a new outpost, this time on the Chesapeake Bay. Led by the weak-willed John White, this group—which included women and children—found itself at the mercy of a domineering ship’s captain whose preoccupation with privateering led him to drop them off in the summer of 1587 at Roanoke rather than at their intended destination.

Because the 115 colonists were not where they were supposed to be, White returned to England to report their location. War with Spain, and an unfortunate encounter with French pirates, kept White in England for more than two years. His 1590 expedition encountered an abandoned Roanoke Island. The only clue to the settlers’ fate was the name of a local Indian tribe, Croatoan, carved into a post, unaccompanied by the agreed-on symbol for distress. Foul weather, along with yet another impatient ship’s captain, cut short the search in the summer of 1587 at Roanoke rather than at their intended destination.

Henries makes a persuasive case that Washington was not a man of deep religious faith...

HENRIQUES REVIEW

makes consulting them a cumbersome process.

—reviewed by Jennifer R. Loux, Research Associate, Dictionary of Virginia Biography


The ten interrelated essays in this volume provide one of the best and one of the most sensitively informed discussions of important aspects of George Washington’s character and personality. The essays treat Washington’s evolution into a successful military and political leader, his relationships with his wife and family, his relationships with Thomas Jefferson and Alexander Hamilton, and his attitudes and beliefs about religion and slavery.

The author is a retired professor of history at George Mason University and has studied Washington for many years. Not a traditional biography, his volume focuses sharply on essential features of Washington’s mind and character that made him into the man that he became. The author draws on a large body of scholarly analysis of Washington’s life and career, but he bases his own particularly well-informed analysis on a close reading of Washington’s own writings and on what his contemporaries said about him and how he interacted with them.

Washington had a limited formal education, but he had a formidable mind and was very well-read and informed about military and political affairs. He had a passion for order and system and efficiency, and he was a man of honor and integrity and of ambition for honorable fame. He was the sum of those parts, and he put all of them into everything that he did, including being head of a family, general of an army, manager of a plantation, master of slaves, and president of the United States. Washington was a man of almost mythic status even during his lifetime, but he was not the man of the myths that later writers constructed.

Those who engage in hero worship may find themselves uncomfortable with Peter R. Henriques’s discussion of Washington’s ownership of slaves and of his slow and possibly incomplete conversion to antislavery views. In what will probably prove a controversial chapter on Washington’s religious beliefs, Henriques makes a persuasive case that Washington was not a man of deep religious faith or even a devout Christian, as those terms are generally understood these days.

Washington was a man of his times, and he should be understood as a man of the Enlightenment, not as a twentieth- or twenty-first-century man or a man who stood outside of time and historical change. Henriques’s Realistic Vi-
Agency succeeds in portraying and evaluating Washington in precisely the right context.

—reviewed by Brent Tarter, Editor, Dictionary of Virginia Biography


Martha Dandridge Custis Washington is immediately familiar to most readers as the wife of George Washington, but people rarely imagine her beyond her role as the aged original First Lady. Martha’s own destruction of her correspondence is the foremost reason behind the obscurity of her private life. Using published editions of Martha’s surviving correspondence as well as mentions of her in other people’s mail, newspapers, and a variety of other primary sources, Patricia Brady describes Martha as an intelligent, strong woman with a panache for sparkling conversation. Martha Washington: An American Life places this dynamic woman in the society of Revolutionary America.

Martha Dandridge was the first child of many born in a middling-to-wealthy colonial family. She helped her mother with the younger children and other household duties; studied basic reading, writing, and arithmetic; and learned social deportment. At seventeen, Martha caught the eye of Daniel Parke Custis, a man of the highest class of the colonial elite. Daniel’s father opposed the match, loudly and in public. In a private meeting, however, teenaged Martha was able to change the mind of the seventy-year-old John Custis.

... teenaged Martha was able to change the mind of the seventy-year-old John Custis.

BRADY REVIEW

From the beginning of their marriage, the Washingtons led a very busy life, which Brady chronicles in an engaging narrative: their love for Mount Vernon, the plantation they would always call home; the births and deaths as well as comings and goings of many family members crossing four generations; the moves of the family to be with George during the winter encampments of the Revolutionary War; and the eight long years of his presidency in New York and Philadelphia, when both dreamed of their retirement to Mount Vernon. Brady emphasizes the love between the couple and repeats how they detested being apart. She discusses their disappointment in not having children of their own and their informal adoption of two of Martha’s grandchildren.

Brady depicts the president as a family man and shows how he struggled, with Martha’s help, to balance governmental, public, and private duties. Included is Martha’s sadder, more private existence as the president’s widow. The book closes with a chapter that reiterates the facts of Martha’s life while exploring some of her ideologies, including her beliefs on slavery. Martha Washington: An American Life is an excellent choice for any reader interested in the Washingtons or the lives of the upper class at the end of the colonial period.

—reviewed by Maria Kimberly, Project Editor


Even before the death of George Washington, his Mount Vernon became a place of pilgrimage. While the general was alive, visitors came to meet the great man; after his death, they came to visit his grave, walk through the house and grounds, and recall Washington’s many significant contributions to the founding of the nation. In 1860, the Mount Vernon Ladies’ Association of the Union purchased the house and grounds from members of the Washington family to preserve the site for future generations of visitors. It was the first such historic preservation project in the country.

These forty or more excerpts from visitors’ accounts plus a few documents composed by residents at Mount Vernon present the variety of reactions that the visitors experienced. All venerated Washington for his military and political achievements, and many commented on his exemplary family life, but some also expressed admiration for his mansion house and his plantation management. As the nineteenth century progressed, a larger number of visitors commented on the presence of slavery at the
foundational father’s home, reflecting the increasingly sensitive role of the South’s peculiar institution in national sensibilities and politics. The editor has selected excerpts that cover more than eighty years and come from famous men and women and from ordinary citizens. She judiciously introduces each one but without more commentary than is necessary to allow the visitors to speak for themselves.

—reviewed by Brent Tarter, Editor
Dictionary of Virginia Biography


The story of James Madison as Father of the Constitution is an oft-told tale and has been recounted *ad nauseam* in period histories and “Little Jimmy” biographies. A reader must wonder if an original work could spring from this well-worn ground. To his credit, Richard Labunski has written a book with a fresh angle, *James Madison and the Struggle for the Bill of Rights*. Other works mention the passage of the Bill of Rights within the larger context of ratifying the Constitution and forming the federal government. Labunski focuses on the Bill of Rights itself.

Labunski recounts how Madison originally opposed a proposal made at the 1787 constitutional convention that would have included a bill of rights as part of the country’s new governing document. Even after some delegates refused to sign the Constitution without a bill of rights, Madison contended that such amendments were unnecessary. During the ensuing state ratification debates, critics decried the lack of protection of rights in the Constitution, but Madison actively rallied supporters to push for passage of the document as it stood. His struggles to secure passage culminated in Virginia’s ratification convention, where the soft-spoken political theorist barely achieved his native state’s acceptance of the Constitution over the formidable opposition of Patrick Henry.

Madison learned how fierce Henry’s opposition remained when the latter thwarted Madison’s election to the United States Senate and then oversaw the establishment of Virginia’s congressional districts and placed Madison in a tough one. Madison overcame his strong dislike of active campaigning and defeated his good friend James Monroe to serve in the first session of the United States House of Representatives.

The events of the state ratification convention and his race for Congress convinced Madison that amending the Constitution with a bill of rights was necessary. In Congress, he introduced such a bill, only to discover opposition from Anti-Federalists who hoped for a second convention to radically alter the Constitution, and also from his supposed allies, Federalist congressmen who contended that there was more important work to be done in establishing the new federal government. Madison skillfully negotiated, brokered, and compromised to achieve the necessary two-thirds vote in both houses of Congress to pass the proposed amendments to the states for their consideration.

Another potential showdown loomed in Virginia, where Patrick Henry waited in the General Assembly. Henry and his supporters, including Virginia’s two senators, did not think that the proposed amendments went far enough in protecting rights. The political landscape was shifting in Virginia, however. Political maneuvering between the opposing sides prolonged the debate over the new amendments until 1791, when the Virginia legislature finally accepted them. With Virginia’s approval, the first ten amendments—the Bill of Rights—were added to the United States Constitution.

*James Madison and the Struggle for the Bill of Rights* chronicles Madison’s epic fight not only for the Constitution, but also for the Bill of Rights, which Americans now consider the essential statement of their liberties. In the face of stout resistance both at the state and the national levels, Madison consistently labored for a more perfect Union. In Labunski’s volume, the diminutive Madison emerges as a giant.

—reviewed by Trenton E. Hizer, Senior Finding Aids Archivist


Anchored by Johnson City, Kingsport, and Bristol, Tennessee, and Bristol, Virginia, the Appalachian valley region of northeastern Tennessee and southwestern Virginia supports a population of more than half a million people. Such an urbanized, not to mention industrialized, reality confounds southern Appalachian stereotypes of rural hollers and small coal-
company towns. Tom Lee’s careful analysis of the emergence of this urban realm highlights the canny town leaders and impersonal structural forces that opened the region up to business and transformed it from a predominantly agricultural to an industrial economy.

Town growth and economic diversification followed a pattern shared by much of the South. As in other areas, the construction of railroads linked the region to new markets, fueling economic growth and emboldening town elites to exercise greater control over their hinterlands. Appalachia, of course, had much sought-after natural resources, and initially railroads stimulated largely extractive endeavors. Towns such as Bristol and Johnson City took advantage of their prominence along rail-lines and became key transportation and processing centers. As the growth potential of extractive industries began to wither, however, business leaders worked to attract manufacturers. Low-wage workers became their chief selling point. Instead of extracting coal and timber from the highland areas, town elites now extracted workers, who, finding semi-subsistence agriculture increasingly nonviable, welcomed the opportunity and excitement found in the city. Northern and European industrialists also liked what they saw. Textile and chemical plants soon dominated the area’s economy.

Yet, as Lee documents, the reliance on low-wage, low-skill manufacturing locked the Tri-Cities into a persistent game of catch-up.

... the reliance on low-wage, low-skill manufacturing locked the Tri-Cities into a persistent game of catch-up.

—reviewed by William Bland Whitley, Editorial Research Fellow, Dictionary of Virginia Biography

The elite’s neglect of rural areas (other than as a source of low-wage workers), a neglect exacerbated by New Deal programs, heightened the region’s economic imbalances and left it vulnerable to cyclical shocks. Business leaders, in short, chose an understandable path to industrial development, but one that was bound to bring diminishing returns.

Lee’s economic history of the Tri-Cities balances the impressive accomplishments of the region’s movers and shakers with a sobering analysis of the inadequacies of an economic philosophy that privileges low wages. It should become the standard account of urban development in southern Appalachia.

—reviewed by William Bland Whitley, Editorial Research Fellow, Dictionary of Virginia Biography


Soon after Edwin Anderson Alderman was inaugurated as the first president of the University of Virginia in 1905, he sought to establish a school of education. With a $100,000 donation from philanthropist John D. Rockefeller Sr., the Curry Memorial School of Education was founded to train teachers and administrators, support and conduct education research, and work with educational institutions statewide. Eleanor Vernon Wilson, an associate professor and alumna, traces the development of the Curry School of Education as it has fulfilled these goals through the twentieth century.

Named for southern educational reformer Jabez Lamar Monroe Curry, the school had its roots in the university’s nineteenth-century summer teacher programs, which had been organized after the establishment of a state public school system required better teacher training. During the Curry School’s first year, two professors taught courses such as History of Education and Principles of Education to seven undergraduates and four graduate students. A $40,000 donation from the Peabody Education Fund helped finance the construction of a building, and in 1914 Peabody Hall was completed.

In 1920 the program became a degree-granting department within the university. John L. Manahan was appointed the first dean of the renamed Curry Memorial Department of Education. During his twenty-nine-year tenure, he put the school on firm ground as enrollment increased and the curriculum was augmented. Manahan also established working relationships with school superintendents and the state board of education, fostered teacher training based on scientific methods, worked to improve access for women in graduate programs, and expanded the department’s Bureau of Appointments, which assisted students in securing teaching positions.

Through chronological chapters, Wilson describes how each of Manahan’s successors has contributed to the Curry School’s growth.
Lindley J. Stiles (1949–1955) developed the first graduate degree programs and supervised the organization of the Bureau of Educational Research, designed to conduct and promote educational research. Ralph W. Cherry (1956–1968) directed the introduction of a special education program and accreditation by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, as well as assisted in school integration throughout the state. Frederick R. Cyphert (1968–1974) tripled the size of the faculty, and Richard M. Brandt (1974–1984) helped create the Curry School Foundation. During the term of James M. Cooper (1984–1994), students could begin earning a bachelor’s degree and a master’s degree in teaching in five years (now the standard preparatory degree for educators). Since 1995, David W. Breneman has maintained the growth of the Curry School, which has become predominantly a graduate-degree institution with an enrollment of more than 1,200 students.

Wilson contextualizes the evolution of the school with larger state and national issues such as teacher training methods, racial integration of public educational institutions, and the full entrance of women into academia. The author also illustrates how the Curry School of Education begins its next hundred years still striving to prepare educators, conduct and promote research, and support educational institutions and organizations across the commonwealth.

—reviewed by John G. Deal, Assistant Editor, Dictionary of Virginia Biography

Virginia Bookends

Genealogists and those studying local history eagerly look forward to the appearance of additional volumes in Wesley E. Pippenger’s Index to Virginia Estates, 1800–1865. This series, begun in 2001, attempts the monumental task of indexing all items recorded in city or county will books during the first two-thirds of the nineteenth century. Volume 6 (Richmond: Virginia Genealogical Society, 2005. xxiii + 572 pp. ISBN 1-888192-35-6. $40.00) covers the counties of Augusta and Rockingham and the city of Staunton. Volume 7 (Richmond: Virginia Genealogical Society, 2006. xxix + 674 pp. ISBN 1-888192-36-4. $40.00) covers Amelia, Brunswick, Cumberland, Goochland, Lunenburg, Mecklenburg, Nottoway, Powhatan, and Prince Edward Counties. Organized alphabetically, each one-line entry includes the personal name, city or county, type of account (will, inventory, sale, trust account, license, guardian or executor’s bond, power of attorney), year, and source citation.

The Virginia Genealogical Society also continues the valuable series Cavaliers and Pioneers: Abstracts of Virginia Land Patents and Grants with the publication of Volume 8, covering the years 1779–1782 and edited by Dennis Ray Hudgins (Richmond: Virginia Genealogical Society, 2005. xxxii + 412 pp. ISBN 1-888192-14-3. $30.00). This volume abstracts Grant Books A through F and includes an introduction that reprints the legislation enacting the Land Office. Three more volumes are projected to complete the abstracting through June 1786.

History enthusiasts who prefer to make their road trips with guidebooks in hand will enjoy Randell Jones’s In the Footsteps of Daniel Boone (Winston-Salem, N.C.: John F. Blair Publisher, 2005. xxviii + 244 pp. ISBN 0-89587-308-7. $14.95 [softcover]). The author provides an entertaining guide to eighty-five sites associated with the famous explorer and his family in Florida, Kentucky, Maryland, Michigan, Missouri, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia. Jones offers detailed driving instructions for getting to the sites, but the three sketchy state-level maps are inadequate for helping travelers find their way.

—bookend notes prepared by Sara B. Bearss
The Virginia Coalition for Open Government

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