

Center for Historic Preservation  
1301 College Ave  
Fredericksburg, VA 22401

University of Mary Washington  
Center for Historic Preservation

# Historic Preservation

NEWSLETTER

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Fall 2018



# Diversity in Preservation

Recently launched by the University of Mary Washington, the ASPIRE Statement of Community Values places at its center students' participation in the community through responsible leadership and service. However, such experiences have long been a hallmark of the curriculum offered in the Department of Historic Preservation. Since the early days of the program, faculty conducted work in the community with the understanding that preservation could not exist in isolation from the people it served. Historic preservation (HISP) professors always look for ways to integrate real-world experiences in the classroom and connect students with members of the larger Fredericksburg area through projects serving the goals of preservation organizations, city entities, and property owners.

Through the joint effort of Prof. Christine Henry and Prof. Lauren McMillan, a series of courses taught under the generic title *Preservation in the Community* has been recently added to the HISP offerings. As of now, these courses meet the Special Topics designation and each of them will cover a different subject and project each semester. Through these courses, HISP students and faculty respond in a timely manner to the needs of the community. As Prof. McMillan explained, *Preservation in the Community* classes are not designed to dictate local community projects, but rather help community members with their existing initiatives, by providing the assistance of faculty and students. "What can we do to help?" is the main question driving these projects. With this in mind, Prof. McMillan and Prof. Henry have reached out to community groups to learn about their agenda, accomplishments, challenges, and need for help in areas related to historic preservation. A primary focus of this approach has also been the diversity of both community groups and their projects so that HISP students learn first-hand about diversity-related challenges in historic preservation.



Jervis Hairston gave a walking tour of downtown Fredericksburg to students in the *African Diaspora* course

In the spring of 2018, Prof. McMillan taught an *African Diaspora Archaeology* course that embraced a holistic approach to historic preservation. She wanted students to learn about African diaspora through activities such as museum visits, walking tours, meetings with local community leaders, and class discussions. These activities exposed students to a variety of viewpoints and challenges that preservationists face on a daily basis. For instance, students looked at the ways in which local historical sites are currently interpreting African-American history as well as the factors that shape these interpretations. This class format also encouraged students to understand historic preservation as a multi-disciplinary field entailing varied approaches to the preservation of cultural heritage.

To prepare students for various types of real-world challenges, this fall Prof. Henry is teaching *Diversity in Historic Preservation*, a course that gives students the unique opportunity to learn about current preservation issues in the Fredericksburg community. Class activities encourage students to consider the preservation of spaces related to specific groups of people, including sites that elicit emotionally charged responses. Prof. Henry encourages her students to think beyond the cut-and-dry practice of placing signs along roads and instead develop new types of formats to preserve and share the stories of diverse groups of people that otherwise may go unnoticed. Students who take Prof. Henry's *Diversity* class are assigned the development of a tour, event, or other unique way to preserve the narrative of an underrepresented local group. The work on this project required students to answer the question, "how and why do we preserve sites?" and gave them an active, participatory role in preserving history.

In the spring semester of 2019, Prof. Henry is slated to teach an oral history course under the broad designation of *Preservation in the Community*. The class will provide students with the opportunity to learn professional oral history methods and also to help the community with a specific project that is time sensitive and records the stories of an underrepresented group of people. Prof. McMillan will be teaching *Worlds Collide: Virginia 1619*, which will explore the development of Virginia from initial contact between Native Virginians, Enslaved Africans, and English colonists in the early 17th century to the present. As part of this course, students will be partnering with the Patawomeck Indian Tribe of Virginia to explore pre-contact and early colonial-era archaeological sites within the tribes' ancestral lands in Stafford County, Virginia.

In general, Special Topics courses are very popular among HISP majors because they allow hands-on, out-of-classroom, practical experiences that immerse students in the local community and allows them to become engaged citizens who serve the needs of the community.



Students in the *Diversity in Historic Preservation* course participated in community meetings on the interpretation of the slave auction block downtown Fredericksburg

# Ghost Walk 2018

It has been over three decades since historic preservation students at the University of Mary Washington (UMW) had the idea of offering a haunted tour of downtown Fredericksburg every year around Halloween. As the event quickly caught on with both organizers and the local community, a tradition was born.

Soon after the closing of the 34th annual Ghost Walk this fall, Sasha Erpenbach (Class of 2020) shared with us more about the behind-the-scenes aspects of this event. Sasha has been a member of the Historic Preservation Club at UMW since her freshman year and, in that capacity, she participated in the Ghost Walk as an interpreter. After gaining more experience, she became the chair of the event for the 2018-2019 academic year.

The work of the chair usually begins during the summer, takes off gradually in the fall, reaches out the peak during the pre-event night, and wraps up during the following month. Within this short time, the chair plans tasks such as volunteer recruitment, costume preparation, partnerships with hosting sites, advertising, permits, script revision, interpret training and many more. Obviously, the complex planning of the Ghost Walk could serve as a great capstone course in management.



Sasha Erpenbach



As always, this year's walk presented opportunities and challenges. Sasha had the idea of starting a Ghost Walk website to improve the event's outreach and web analytics as well as visitation figures demonstrated the positive impact of the event's online profile. She also learned a lot about working with volunteers. The Ghost Walk counts entirely on volunteers, therefore securing the interest of students in order to get them to volunteer is key in making the event possible.

Sasha recalled what made her become involved as a freshman and decided to reach out personally to all potential volunteers. She presented the Ghost Walk to them as a one-of-a-kind, not-to-be-missed, fun experience that the larger Fredericksburg community has come to identify very closely with the Department of Historic Preservation and UMW. By and large she was successful in recruiting volunteers although several last-minute cancelations still existed and required her to redistribute tasks and ask for additional help.

Sasha felt very honored to have served as the Ghost Walk chair. Knowing that continuing this long-standing tradition rested upon her work and effective coordination of the planning committee gave her strength and determination. She thoroughly enjoyed meeting new people and interacting with volunteers and the local community. Ghost Walk chairs certainly deserve a lot of credit for keeping the tradition going.

Photographs on these pages show student participants at Ghost Walk 2018.



# Where in Fred?



Donna McCague introduced HISP205 students to archival materials at the Central Rappahannock Heritage Center



Curator Meghan Budinger gave HISP200 students a tour of Kenmore Plantation

Because historic preservation cannot exist without the material to be preserved (buildings, sites, artifacts, etc.), access to such resources and related documentary materials is paramount to teaching historic preservation in an effective manner. The Historic Preservation Program at the University of Mary Washington (UMW) was established on the premise that Fredericksburg offers a wealth of resources that could augment the practical component of the class curriculum. While upper-level courses entail projects in support of museums, historic sites, government entities, and owners of historic properties, most lower-level courses include both faculty-directed and student-directed field trips that expose students to the built heritage as well as preservation organizations.

The two courses ushering students to the HISP major (HISP100 - *Introduction to Historic Preservation* and HISP105 - *The American Built Environment*) incorporate assignments that bring students in contact with the local community. One of them requires students to survey blocks in the historic district of Fredericksburg, and compare the current city with the respective Sanborn maps. By engaging students in a thorough physical examination of individual structures, this exercise increases their familiarity with their surroundings. Another assignment exposes students to the workings of the local Architectural Review Board (ARB), a panel designated by the City Council to maintain the historic and architectural integrity of Fredericksburg's historic area. By attending or watching recordings of ARB meetings, students get first-hand knowledge of the local preservation system, particularly its legislation, policies, and methodologies.

The *Documentation and Field Work* (HISP 205) course relies on students' access to local resources that help the documentation part of their class projects. In this context, field trips take students to several archival repositories. At the Clerk's Office, students learn how to identify and analyze deeds and court records to track the chain of title for properties they research. Students also visit the Virginia Room at the Central Rappahannock Regional Library, which holds fire insurance policies for downtown properties as well as city directories, and the Historic Fredericksburg Foundation, where they mostly research marker records and property files. Consisting of historical documents and photographs pertaining to the history and people from the City of Fredericksburg and its adjacent counties, the collections of the Central Rappahannock Heritage Center also provide contextual material to class assignments and projects.

Several museum visits are integrated into the *Introduction to Museum Studies* (HISP200) course syllabus. The course section on museum interpretation is followed by a visit to Historic Kenmore Plantation, where the curator explains the furnishing-plan process. Material covered in class lectures on collections management is supported by a visit to the James Monroe Museum's storage area, where the collections manager discusses the nature of his work. Finally, a visit to Fredericksburg Area Museum brings students in contact with education and marketing staff, who provide examples for how best practices explained in class lectures apply to their organization.

Follow-up written assignments and class discussions require students to reflect further on these visits and their connections to class material.

Over 30 years of teaching historic preservation at UMW have proved without a doubt that the program's visionary founders were right in imagining the City of Fredericksburg as an extension of the classroom. In their work, faculty and students in the Department of Historic Preservation rely heavily on the wealth of resources available to them.



Curator Jarod Kearney shows James Monroe's storage area to HISP200 students

# Students Abroad

Quite often, learning takes historic preservation students away from the University of Mary Washington (UMW) campus and Fredericksburg. In some cases, *away* means Europe, where some of our majors study abroad for a semester or an entire school year. We caught up with Caleigh Sullivan (Class of 2019) and Carolyn Roush (Class of 2020) to learn about their recent experiences abroad.

Caleigh Sullivan, a double major in historic preservation and anthropology, studied at the University of College Cork in Cork, Ireland during the spring of 2018. Caleigh was drawn to Ireland because of her Irish background. Despite her relative familiarity with the country, the difficult first couple of weeks in Cork reminded Caleigh of her beginnings at UMW, when she had to get adjusted to the new surroundings and make friends. However, the same excitement that carried her through her sophomore year and onward at home proved beneficial in Ireland as well.



Caleigh took numerous trips to the Irish seaside

In Cork, Caleigh took several classes, including a few (archaeology, archives, and Irish folklore) related to historic preservation. In her free time, she traveled around the country, visiting historic sites everywhere she could and observing differences in preservation practices between Irish and American organizations. None of the places she visited equaled EPIC The Irish Emigration Museum in Dublin, the world's only fully digital museum. Caleigh enjoyed the interactive nature of this museum that features 1500 years of Irish history and presents stories of Irish emigrants.

With two other American students, Caleigh lived in an apartment about three miles away from the university she attended. When asked about her favorite part about her trip, Caleigh immediately mentioned the connections and friendships she made in Ireland. She befriended several of her classmates and they became Caleigh's trusted trip partners and great guides through Irish culture. Caleigh recommends all students to study abroad. She thinks that the challenges inherent in living and studying in unfamiliar places always lead to personal growth. Let alone that a location like Ireland can serve as the base for short (and affordable) trips to other European countries.



Caleigh enjoyed spending time on the picturesque campus of the University of College Cork



In the summer of 2018, Ireland was also the destination for Carolyn Roush, a historic preservation major and prospective minor in museum studies. While abroad, Carolyn studied at the University College of Dublin and interned at EPIC The Irish Emigration Museum in Dublin's famous Docklands tourist district (the same museum that Calleigh Sullivan loved!).

A previous trip to Ireland placed the country on Carolyn's radar as a potential study-abroad destination. Furthermore, the personal connection stemming from her Irish family lineage contributed to her decision and also led her on the path to look for an internship with EPIC. Through her academic and work experiences, Carolyn learned more about the field of museum studies in Ireland, including the challenges and opportunities related to museum development and tourism.

Carolyn's favorite memory from her time abroad was meeting Prince Harry and Meghan Markle during their visit to EPIC. She was given the chance to talk to the royal couple about the Department of Historic Preservation at UMW as well as her interest in museum studies. A highlight of Carolyn's trip was also the time she spent with her co-workers both at the museum and off the job. They were a great source for insights to the Irish culture and life as well as a vital support system. Carolyn is still in contact with her new friends and plans to return to Ireland very soon for another trip.

In hindsight, the summer program that Carolyn completed this year significantly shaped her career plans because she wants to pursue employment in the museum field in Europe after graduation. Carolyn encourages all majors to consider becoming international students as a unique chance to learn a lot not only about different cultures but also about themselves.



The modern architecture of the Titanic Centre in Belfast is one Carolyn's favorite buildings in Ireland



Carolyn (second from right) made many friends while abroad

# Graduate School Fair

Every year the Center for Historic Preservation organizes a graduate school informational session to help current students learn about graduate studies in general as well as such options in the historic preservation field. This fall four recent graduates served as guest speakers: Sam Biggers (Class of 2015), Project Engineer with Kjellstrom and Lee in Richmond, Virginia; Susanna R. Finn (Class of 2013), Community Development Planner with the City of Fredericksburg, Virginia; and Robin Ramey (Class of 2015), Archaeological Crew Chief with Fairfax County Park Authority in Fairfax, Virginia. As each of them earned a graduate degree in a preservation-related field (historic preservation, urban planning, and anthropology /archaeology), they used their personal experiences to discuss subjects such as a graduate degree's role in career advancement, applying to grad

school, graduate school academic and professional work, as well as post-graduation employment.

The room was packed and the audience included not only HISP seniors but also majors who are still in the early stages of the HISP program. The genuine connection between the audience and the panelists translated into an extended Q & A session, whose topics ranged from the GRE test to recommendation letters and cost of graduate studies. Organizers also provided current promotional materials from various graduate programs in historic preservation. Participants' overwhelmingly positive feedback confirms this event's merits and the Center has already started planning its next edition.

Photographs on this page show participants at the 2018 fair.



# We Asked You!

This fall, we asked HISP alumni to share on Facebook their favorite memory from college days! This is what we've got thus far ...

"Asking the professors to leave the office suite open so we could use the coffee maker during all-nighters in the drafting studio."  
Missie Plokin

"Brick Day lives in my memory. Brown Morton told us at the beginning of class we would tell our children about the day we learned about bricks at Mary Wash. I intend to do just that."

Laura Reid

"The HISP department couch! It made for great conversations, study sessions, and friends."

Erin Clark

"One time we were documenting a barn with Prof. Spencer and a red fox trotted in. Of course, Prof. Spencer was very calm and just said, "Nobody move. He'll leave us alone." Then the fox just turned around and trotted right out. Scary but a fun memory, nonetheless!"

Carol Vinatieri

"HISP Center Secretary Mrs. Louise Holz was so professional and so sweet to all of us, and patiently helped us type our resumes, etc. while keeping everyone (staff and students) in line and on time."

Jamie May

Please follow our HISP Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram accounts. We plan to continue collecting your comments and publishing them in our newsletter.

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[@MaryWashHISPDept](#)

**Twitter**  
[@umwhisp](#)

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**#umwHISP**

**Thank you for sharing  
your memories!**

# Upcoming Talks

**January 31, 2019:** Caitlin DeSilvey, author of *Curated Decay: Heritage Beyond Saving*, winner of the Historic Preservation Book Prize 2018

**March 21, 2019:** Elif Gokcidem, editor of the anthology *Designing for Empathy. Perspectives on the Museum Experience*

## Congratulations to the New HISP Club Officers 2018-2019 School Year

President: Gracie Hardy

Vice-President: Kathleen Elliott & Renee Stemcovski

Treasurer: Carolyn Currin

Secretary: Lily Eghtessad

Historian: Ilana Bleich

Ghost Walk Committee: Sasha Erpenbach (Chair) & Tessa Honeycutt