

Center for Historic Preservation
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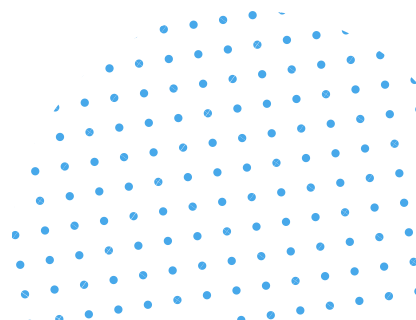
University of Mary Washington
Center for Historic Preservation

Historic Preservation

NEWSLETTER

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Fall 2019



In Memoriam: Professor John N. Pearce



HISP Faculty in 1993



HISP Faculty in 1995

John Newton Pearce, former professor in the Department of Historic Preservation, passed away on Monday, October 14, 2019 in Fredericksburg. He received his B.A. from Yale University in 1956 and his M.A. in Early American Culture from the Winterthur Program of the University of Delaware in 1958. After years of working with the Smithsonian and the National Trust for Historic Preservation, he began teaching in the newly established Historic Preservation program at Mary Washington College in 1984. As a faculty member, he established the Museum Studies curriculum and many alumni of the program credit him for inspiring their museum careers.

In 1989, Professor Pearce was named Director of Planning and Programs at the James Monroe Museum and Memorial Library, and in 1993, he became the museum's director. During his time at the museum, he started the *Little Welsh Festival* in honor of Monroe's Welsh heritage, developed an annual James Monroe Lecture, and took over the management of the 18th-century Masonic Cemetery next door to the museum. Professor Pearce retired in 2010.

On social media, numerous HISP alumni, museum professionals, faculty, and friends have honored Professor Pearce's memory.

Kevin Bartram: "John was indeed a true gentleman. Friendly and courteous but also a superb caretaker of the James Monroe legacy."

Kerri Barile: "He was my adviser at Mary Wash. What a kind, thoughtful person, with an incredible knowledge of museums and Fredericksburg's past."

Mary Triola Bailey: "He was always kind and defined the word enthusiasm in all his endeavors!"

Tara Corrigan: "I remember meeting Professor Pearce years ago at various Alumni Association Board meetings. He was our faculty representative and I always enjoyed his perspective and knowledge."

MC Morris: "John was filled with JOY, for learning, for sharing his knowledge - never in a boastful way, and joy for the people he encountered."

Professor Pearce will be deeply missed and fondly remembered.

Prince William Forest Park

Summer Work

Professor Michael Spencer's summer work often engages students in preservation projects conducted for heritage organizations. This summer, students Garek Hannigan, Kathleen Keith, Anna Ruuskanen, and Grace Smith assisted with the development of a Cultural Landscape Inventory Report for Cabin Camps 3 and 5 at Prince William Forest Park in Prince William County, Virginia. The cabin camps were built in the 1930s as part of the New Deal's Federal Emergency Relief Act (FERA) and some have been in continuous use since 1939. The 2019 summer project had the goal of creating a reference document regarding the history and significance of these camps' historic resources. To complete the inventory, the team divided up the work into several phases.

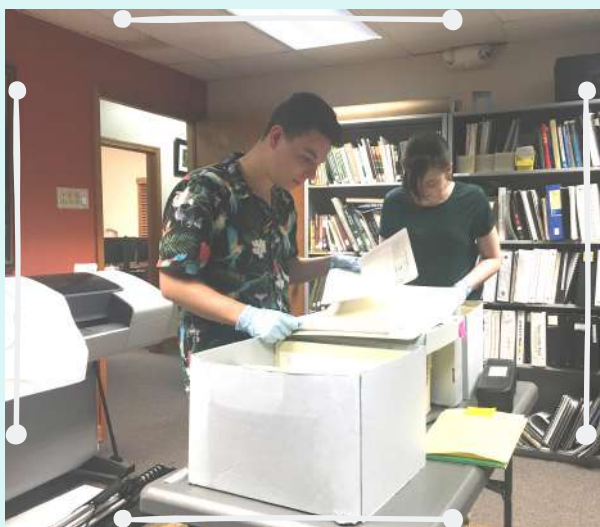
The group first gained familiarity with each site by visiting all locations and gathering information from the park staff. They also surveyed the features associated with each camp, from fire hydrants to camper cabins. Once all cabin camp features had been surveyed the team divided up remaining fieldwork tasks. Garek and Kathleen conducted archival research at the park archives as well as local archives in Prince William County. At the same time, Anna and Grace worked towards collecting GPS coordinates for all features previously surveyed.



Grace Smith (left) and Kathleen Keith document the structures.

Prince William Forest Summer Work (continued from pg.3)

After completing the documentation and the research, the team analyzed the information to establish the significance of the cabin camps. This significance resulted in the establishment of a period of significance from 1935 to 1942, the period during which the federal government acquired the park land to establish a Recreational Development Area as an outdoor leisure venue for children and low-income residents in the larger Washington D.C. area. Each identified feature was then analyzed based on this period of significance to determine its status as either contributing or non-contributing.



Garrick Hannigan (left) and Kathleen Keith conduct archival research.

As the GIS specialist on the team, Anna used the GPS coordinates to create maps of the area including overlays of features relevant to the established period of significance. Anna also produced maps that documented specific aspects or periods of the landscape showing change over time. In the final phase of the project, the fieldwork, archival research, and the GIS mapping were formatted together to create the Cultural Landscape Inventory report. This work was presented by the students to the Prince William Forest Park staff at the end of the summer.

Reflecting on this experience, Garek, Kathleen, Anna, and Grace agree that it was the most productive way to spend their summer break. The practical experience they added to their resumes will certainly make a difference as they start looking for post-graduation employment.

A New HISP Elective

With all its seats booked long before the end of the registration period, Prof. Smith's Fall 2019 iteration of the *Graves and Burial Grounds* is for sure a student favorite.

Focusing on American burial and funerary practices, the course covers the history of various sites, materials used in burial practices, and the logistics of funding and administering cemeteries. Over the course of the semester, the class visits some of Richmond's famous cemeteries, including Hollywood, Evergreen, and East End. In Fredericksburg, students become familiar with the Confederate, Shiloh, and Masonic cemeteries. The course emphasizes the contrast between historically white and black burial grounds.

The second half of the semester is largely student led, in that it gives students room to expand on research questions of interest to them. This culminates in a final project, which can be either research or creative based. In the past, students have documented broken gravestones and turned them into 3D models, created preservation plans for local cemeteries, and studied regulations in the funeral business in the United States.

Reminiscing on how a similar undergraduate course started her interest in the history and preservation of cemeteries, Prof. Smith is pleased to see this subject catching the attention of HISP majors. She also appreciates the sense of discovery that comes with this topic, particularly how students become aware of the beauty of cemeteries – both gravestones and landscape – that are a ubiquitous yet under-appreciated heritage resource in all communities.



Students in the *Graveyards and Burial Grounds* class visit Hollywood Cemetery in early October.

The Living-History Club

In the rich landscape of clubs at the University of Mary Washington, the Living-History Club currently stands out as a favorite among students with an interest in history. In the Fall Semester 2017, a new generation of members, mainly freshmen and sophomores with extensive experience in historical reenactment, revitalized the club by adding new opportunities to the club's agenda. They focus on reenacting 18th-century history, particularly the Revolutionary War, at various museums and living-history events in Fredericksburg and across the state.

A couple of recent club activities speak for the dedication of its members. At Warner Hall in Gloucester, Virginia, in an event planned by the 7th Virginia Regiment of the Continental Line, Inc., students performed English country dancing and also recreated a battle scene by setting up British and American camps. At Mary Washington House in Fredericksburg, club members offered demonstrations in historic music, including commentaries on the significance of music in the 18th century; they also created and conducted historically accurate activities for children.



The Living-History Club (continued from pg. 6)

Club meetings are not just for planning upcoming events but also for helping members develop new skills and learn about 18th-century history and material culture. Abigail Phelps, Vice-President of the Living-History Club, finds the organization appealing for its blend of learning and relaxing opportunities. Along with other club members, she learns how to sew 18th-century clothes and to perform 18th-century music. At the moment, the club includes 15 students, whose efforts also focus on growing the membership. As they look to the future, they hope to expand their expertise to early to mid-19th-century interpretation. The club is also interested in community outreach and partnering with local museums in need of public programs.

Photographs on these pages show club members and fellow reenactors during the public program at Warner Hall in Gloucester, Virginia.



Smithsonian Interns



Emily Hilbert unwraps a photograph in preparation for compiling its condition report.

Junior Emily Hilbert has always wanted to intern at the Smithsonian Institution, so when one of her professors sent out an announcement on an internship at the National Museum of Natural History, she immediately submitted her application and was offered a fall internship in the Exhibitions Department.

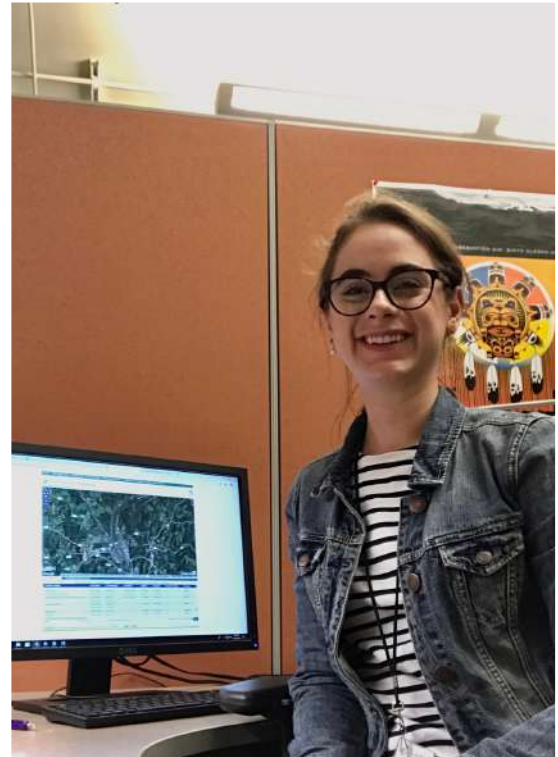
She is most proud of seeing her work as an intern supporting the *Deep Time* exhibition, recently opened in the museum's famous Hall of Fossils. One of Emily's projects has the goal of assisting docents with information on animals, plants, and scenes in the exhibition's dioramas. Emily has also been tasked with tracking the attendance of the exhibition, to measure its popularity. Future projects include condition reporting and preparing objects for *The Bearded Lady Project*, a traveling exhibition that highlights women in the male-dominated field of science.

Emily is now even more determined to build a career in museums. The time she spent interacting with visitors, young and old, as well as her renewed appreciation for museums' efforts to improve visitors' overall experience have cemented her passion for museums and the confidence in her future.

Smithsonian Interns (continued from pg. 8)

The National Museum of Natural History has offered a fall internship to another HISP student, senior Sasha Erpenbach. Sasha is completing her GIS Certificate, which recommended her for work in the museum's GIS Department. Her internship includes two main tasks: revising existing maps and creating new maps. The former required Sasha to georeference historic maps for various departments in the Smithsonian Institution; she took, for instance, a physical map of various languages in southwest Mexico and created a digitized map of the areas where those languages are spoken. Creating new maps exposed Sasha to the museum's minerals collection with specimens dating back to the 1870s and spanning the entire country. Sasha is organizing data on this collection in spreadsheets to assist with the new maps she will be creating.

"I've learned how much work goes into making a map with just small points on it," says Sasha. "Before information in a spreadsheet can be displayed on a map, it needs to be formatted correctly so that the program can read and interpret it properly." Sasha's familiarity with GIS has made her pay more attention and be more attuned to the amount of work entailed in preparing museum displays. From this intimate understanding, she sees future career opportunities at the intersection of her two main passions -- museums and GIS.



Sasha Erpenbach uses the *GEOLocate* software to find the center point coordinates for collection-related data.

Preservation Abroad



Every other summer, a group of UMW students explore the city of Paris as part of Professor Smith's *Historic Preservation Abroad* course. During the Summer Session 2019, in France's main city, eleven students delved into topics including the design of ancient, medieval, and modern Paris; the evolution of its infrastructure; and adaptive reuse and cultural heritage tourism in the city. Sites such as the Quartier Latin, Opera Garnier, Jardin du Luxembourg, Montmartre, and the Catacombes served as informal classroom space and students loved it. Record heat this past summer did not prevent the completion of the planned activities but some had to be re-scheduled accordingly; for instance, the hottest day of the entire trip was spent in the Catacombes, which were a cool 65 degrees compared to the 108 degrees outside.

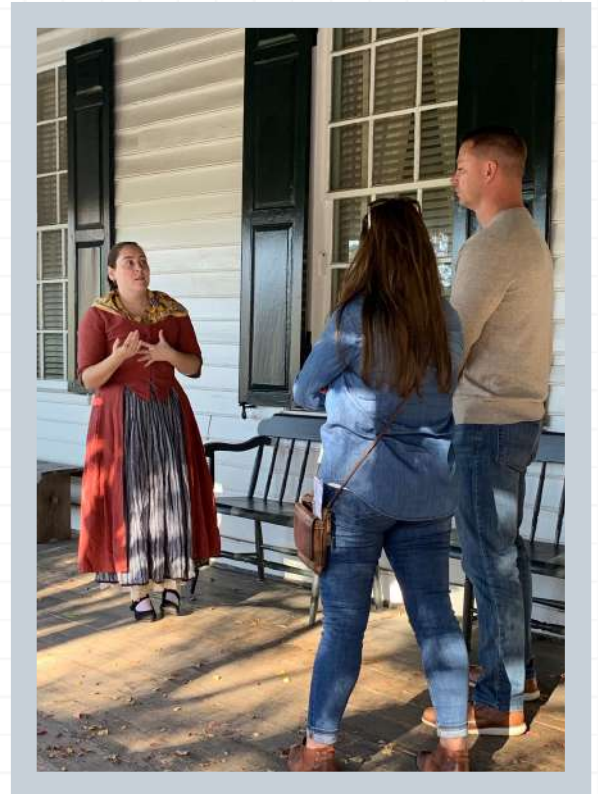
Many students refer to the class meeting at the top of the Eiffel Tower as the most memorable event of the trip; that location offered the perfect city vistas to illustrate architect Hausmann's renovation of Paris during the reign of Napoleon III. Jessica Lynch, one of the students enrolled in this course, also appreciated the class format that allowed her to take short trips outside Paris. The one-day visit to Strasbourg stood out as a moment of revelation as she discovered the city's famous half-timbering architecture "charming like nothing I could find anywhere else." Another favorite moment of hers was Bastille Day, when students gathered to watch the fireworks at Professor Smith's apartment with an amazing view of the Eiffel Tower.

The day of departure came with regrets for the month of living in Paris ending too soon but after taking this course, students can confidently say that they learned a great deal about the role of preservation in this historic city.

Students in the Community

Our newsletter and social media have referred extensively to faculty-led, community-engagement, project-based courses in the Department of Historic Preservation. Less discussed has been HISP students' individual work as part-time staff members of heritage organizations. Over the course of years, Washington Heritage Museums, a consortium of four historic properties (Mary Washington House, Hugh Mercer Apothecary Shop, Rising Sun Tavern, and St. James House) in Fredericksburg has been a steady employer for UMW students.

Brianna Melick, a junior who is completing no less than three majors in Historic Preservation, Classics, and Religion, has worked at Mary Washington House for a year. As a docent, she finds the schedule very accommodating of her study needs and thoroughly enjoys this experience that strengthens her resume with practical skills. Brianna's main duty is to provide tours of the house. She praises the on-the-job training she completed for giving docents flexibility regarding the content of their tours. Brianna said, "everyone develops their own style of tour and adds in supplemental information they find interesting."



Brianna Melick

Because school groups visit the house in large numbers, Brianna has developed skills in adjusting the tour to students' class material and learning needs and also in managing large groups of young students. Brianna's post-graduation goal is to work in museum collections management or education.

Historic Preservation Award Plaques

To honor the alumni of the program, the Department of Historic Preservation has decided to display award plaques in the lobby of the HISP suite. At this time, current students and guests of the department can see five plaques identifying the recipients of the Department Honors Award, the Historic Preservation Achievement Award, the Grace Wadsworth Award for Professional Promise in Historic Preservation, the Governor Alexander Spotswood Award in Historic Archaeology, and the Historic Fredericksburg Foundation Award in honor of Prince B. Woodard. As of November 2019, 146 names are memorialized on these plaques and more will be added every year after award recipients are announced at the department's annual spring picnic.



Students in the Community (continued from pg. 11)



Kiersten Laclede

Junior Kiersten Laclede, a Historic Preservation major and Museum Studies minor, started working at Mary Washington House in February of this year after hearing about the job from a classmate. Kiersten enjoys the small scale of the museum and the friendly, family-like staff, which helped her quickly become comfortable with offering public tours. Like Brianna, Kiersten appreciates that docents can tailor tours to their interests. For instance, Kiersten tries to make them more object oriented because "this engages students in the visit by relating information to artifacts they are familiar with as opposed to having facts recited to them." Kiersten speaks with pride about her growing experience in interacting with visitors of various backgrounds and interests.

Historic Preservation Club

I still remember how, as a young bright-eyed freshman, I was filled with excitement while searching for the Historic Preservation Club's table at the traditional Club Carnival on the first Wednesday of the fall semester, my first at UMW. Three years later, I attended the carnival as the president of the club and saw that same excitement with our new members. This fall, new club members, along with their older colleagues, have been active and very excited to learn in informal ways about historic preservation in not only Fredericksburg but also Virginia.

We started the semester by helping with the cleanup at *Bourbon and Boxwood*, the main fundraising event of Washington Heritage Museums.

We continued with the preparations for the Ghostwalk, which celebrated its 35th edition this year. We had a wonderful turnout on October 18-19 and we want to thank to all of the alumni who attended it!

After the Ghostwalk, the club went on a trip to Mount Vernon to see the newly restored west elevation. On that day, the museum was also hosting its annual Horses and Hounds event, so we were able to see demonstrations of 18th-century fox-hunting techniques.

The semester will end with the Historic Gingerbread house meeting, which is always a members' favorite. I can only hope that in the spring semester, we have just as much fun as we did this fall. Happy Holidays!

- Sasha Erpenbach '20

Congratulations to the New HISP Club Officers

2019-2020

President: Sasha Erpenbach (Class of '20)

Vice-President: Cody Youngblood (Class of '20)

Treasurers: Renee Stemcovski (Class of '20)

Secretary: Colette Fralen (Class of '21)

Historian: Lily Eghtessad (Class of '20)

Ghostwalk Committee:

Tessa Honeycutt (Class of '20), Megan Williams (Class of '22),

& Lexie Hamley (Class of '22)

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