

Center for Historic Preservation
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UNIVERSITY OF MARY WASHINGTON
CENTER FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION

HISTORIC PRESERVATION

FALL 2021 NEWSLETTER

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Cemetery Workshop

Preservation in the Community

The Center of Historic Preservation is well known in the Fredericksburg area as a resource capable of responding to the preservation needs of the local community by facilitating projects that engage HISP students and faculty in service learning. In 2019, Jeanette Cadwallender, President of the Fredericksburg Cemetery Co., contacted the Center with the idea of a partnership with mutual benefits for the involved parties.

Located on a lot delineated by William Street, Washington Ave. and Amelia Street in historic Fredericksburg, the Fredericksburg City Cemetery was established in 1844. As the final resting place for former mayors, professionals, civic and religious leaders as well as soldiers, the cemetery has become a site that preserves the memory of the community.

Because time has left its mark on monuments and gravestones, physical preservation work is critical to extending the integrity of the site. In this spirit, Jeanette Cadwallender, proposed a workshop that would introduce cemetery volunteers and preservation students to this type of work. With Prof. Smith's highly popular Graves and Burial Sites elective having made this subject a part of our curriculum, the workshop aligned well to the parameters of a service-learning project.

For three days at the beginning of the fall semester, fifteen HISP students and cemetery volunteers attended lectures and hands-on work sessions with Robert Mosko, Chief Conservator and founder of Mosko



Students document gravestone types and conditions



Students restabilize gravestones

Cemetery Monument Services. Building on 20+ years of experience in preserving, conserving, and restoring cemeteries, his lectures focused on cemetery history, types of burial grounds, gravestone typology, and restoration and maintenance methods.

During the hands-on portion of the workshop, the participants were instructed and practiced their newly honed skills in gravestone condition assessment and documentation, gravestone stabilization, and basic cleaning techniques. Reflecting on the outcomes of this workshop, our majors highlighted its relevance to historic preservation and its hands-on aspects that resulted in practical support of the cemetery. Sam Focazio (Class of 2022) said, “I wanted to sign up for this because I thought it would blend well with Professor Smith’s Graves class. I really enjoyed the workshop and got so much out of it!”

Lydia Sunderlin (Class of 2022) explained, “I was interested in cemetery conservation because I have always been drawn to historic cemeteries. I visit them all the time, but some of the things we learned (...) were so eye opening and new to me. I immediately bought the cleaning supplies so I can continue to practice.”

With the gravestones that were documented, stabilized, and cleaned during the workshop, the event made an immediate and visible impact on the site. However, long-term results are also expected as the cemetery volunteers will continue their work and the students will hopefully also become volunteers and carry their interest in cemeteries as historical resources in their future careers.



Booker T. Washington National Monument Site

A Project in Building Forensics

An ongoing project in the Department of Historic Preservation is a documentation and condition assessment of the tobacco barn on the site of Booker T. Washington National Monument in Franklin County, Virginia. Located about three hours from the UMW campus, this National Park Service site preserves a section of the farm where Booker T. Washington was born in slavery in 1856. He lived there with his enslaved mother, sister, and brother until the end of the Civil War. Though the tobacco barn was built in the 1890s, it gives visitors a glimpse into the harsh and physically demanding life that revolved around tobacco cultivation. Documentation and condition assessment of this structure will help park staff interpret the story of Booker T. Washington's early life, better understand building technologies from the period, and preserve the barn for future generations.

Professor Spencer visited the site over the summer to collect wood samples from various parts of the log tobacco barn. Over the course of the semester, Hannah St. Onge (Class of 2022) was tasked with analyzing these samples and identifying where in the structure various types of wood were used. Hannah softened the wood samples in boiling water and sliced off small slivers that could be placed under a microscope. By examining the porosity and structure of these samples and comparing them to images of known wood types, she identified whether they were hardwood or softwood and the species of tree from which they were cut. Through a Cultural Landscape Survey, Hannah identified the types of trees that have been most prevalent in the area. She also used a Cultural Resource Survey, which documented other tobacco barns in the Virginia Piedmont, to better understand the context in which this tobacco barn was built.

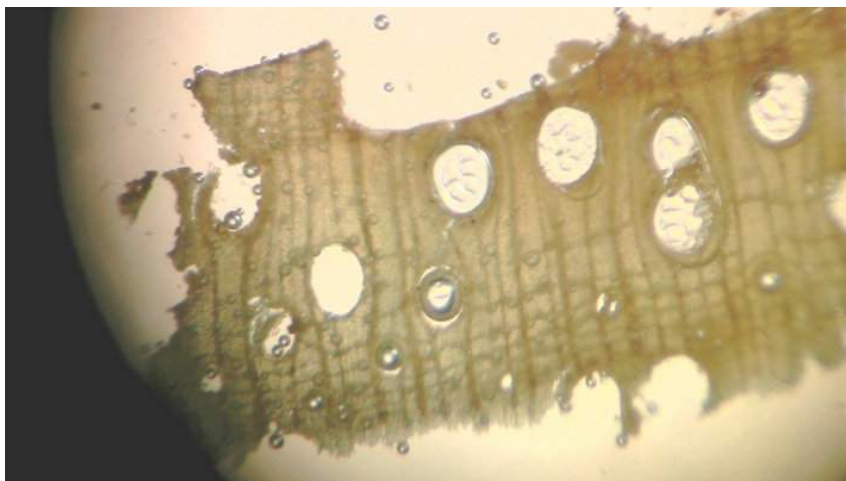
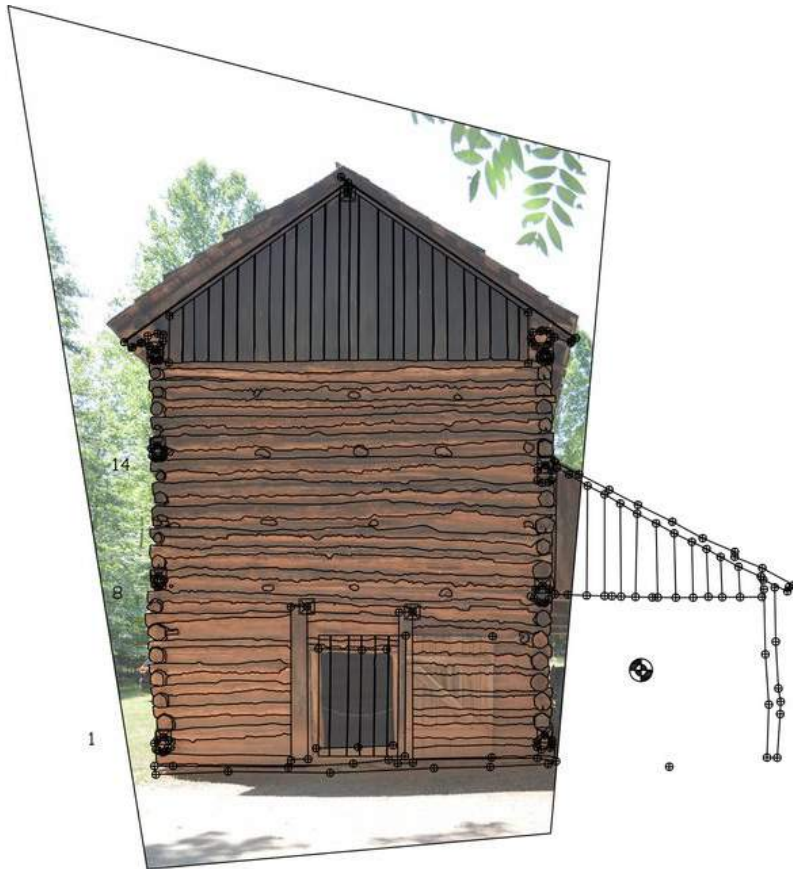


Photo of a barn wood sample under a microscope

After taking Professor Spencer's HISP 345: Computer Applications in Historic Preservation class last spring, Hannah found a passion for digitally driven preservation work. For the Booker T. Washington project, she applied skills learned in that class to document the structure. She used AutoCAD to trace photorectified images of the barn's elevations to create accurate measured drawings, which would have been much more tedious with traditional tools. She used these scaled drawings to indicate where in the structure the various wood types she identified were used.



The tobacco barn (ca. 1890s)



Hannah's 2D drawing of the barn's east elevation

Though she has experience with this type of documentation, Hannah struggled with this project at first. The combination of learning new skills, such as microscopy, and uncertainty about what the final product should look like led her to Professor Spencer's office many times over the semester. She finds that asking questions is the key to success. Thinking critically about best practices and how to approach tasks, as well as asking for guidance when needed have resulted in a product that ties our department to a site of national significance.

HISP Tutors in the Writing Center

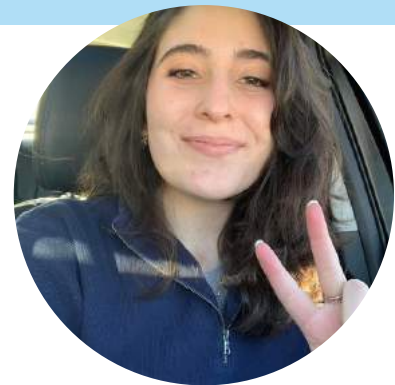
All courses in our major stress writing and public speaking as foundational skills in historic preservation. HISP majors with superior abilities in these areas often find employment as tutors in campus centers that provide assistance to UMW students. The three HISP majors who currently work in the Writing Center shared their background and experiences with us.

Chloe Martin (Class of 2022) is double majoring in Historic Preservation and English. She began working at the Writing Center when she was approached with a job offer from then director Dr. Gwen Hale, who overheard Chloe and her friends “joking around and coming up with some outlandish ideas for our final paper.” When asked how her course work in the Historic Preservation major has impacted her writing, Chloe said that “all of the professors in the HISP department have made me a better writer. Because they all have different strengths and specialties, I will graduate UMW with a comprehensive knowledge base of both general writing skills and HISP-specific tips and tricks.” Chloe has consulted fellow Writing Center staff about her own work many times and finds that it is always improved by their review.



Chloe Martin, Class of 2022

Sam Melvin (Class of 2022) is a double major in History and Historic Preservation. She is thrilled to have a job that caters to her love of writing and her desire to help her peers grow. When asked what she loves most about her work, Sam said she is “convinced we have some of the kindest, most hardworking, and creative students at UMW working at the Writing Center.” She credits her sharp writing skills to lots of reading, many appointments of her own at the Writing Center, and academic work. Sam feels that there is “a level of rigor within the writing expectations that professors have in both the Historic Preservation and History Departments.” Having studied in both departments, she reported that her writing style, mechanics, and process have drastically improved over the past few years.



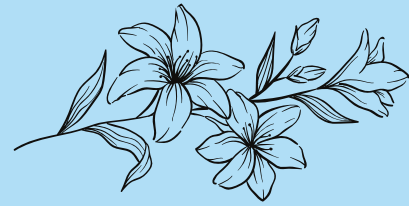
Sam Melvin, Class of 2022

Cosette Veeder-Shave (Class of 2022) is a Historic Preservation major and Museum Studies minor. A Writing Center Consultant since her freshman year, Cosette was also hired under the guidance of Dr. Hale. She said that Dr. Hale “introduced me to the incredible family at the Writing Center and invited me to social nights to help me meet people and ease my homesickness. I started to get to know everyone and decided I might like to work there.” When asked about writing for Historic Preservation classes, Cosette said that “Professors’ criticism at first was difficult to accept but has improved my writing. It can be hard to accept critique sometimes, but I did grow from it.” Cosette noted that it can be difficult to ask for help, but review is a key part of the writing process and it’s what Writing Center Consultants are trained to do!



Cosette Veeder-Shave, Class of 2022

With great sadness, we share that Dr. Gwen Hale passed away this semester. Cosette writes that “Beyond help on assignments and a job, the Writing Center gave me an outlet, a place to go when I needed support, a place to help other people, and a home. I give all the credit to Dr. Hale for making the Writing Center such a safe space for students. I hope we can continue to create these positive impacts without her, though it will never be the same.” Our four HISP students who worked closely with Dr. Hale remember and celebrate her for her fun-loving spirit, commitment to building a close community, and guidance as Director of the Writing Center.



Students working in the Writing Center
(Courtesy of the UMW Writing Center)

HISP Intro to Conservation Course

Would you sign up for a course with a class activity that requires breaking a clay pot and putting it back together like a jigsaw puzzle? If you answered yes, please know you are in good company. Every fall, HISP majors rush to enroll in an Introduction to Conservation course that has the reputation of introducing them to a career path that some end up following.

For the third year in a row, Kate Ridgway, State Archeological Conservator at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, returned to UMW to teach HISP 208: Intro to Conservation. Conservation is a very small, specialized field. Few graduate programs in the United States confer conservation degrees, and there are fewer than 100 archaeological conservators across the country. Professor Ridgway teaches this course knowing that not every student will become a conservator, but that students will leave with a working understanding of what the field is all about. She hopes that at the end of the semester, students will have productive working relationships with conservators by understanding how they think, what kind of resources they need, and what their goals are.



The first step in learning about mending is breaking!



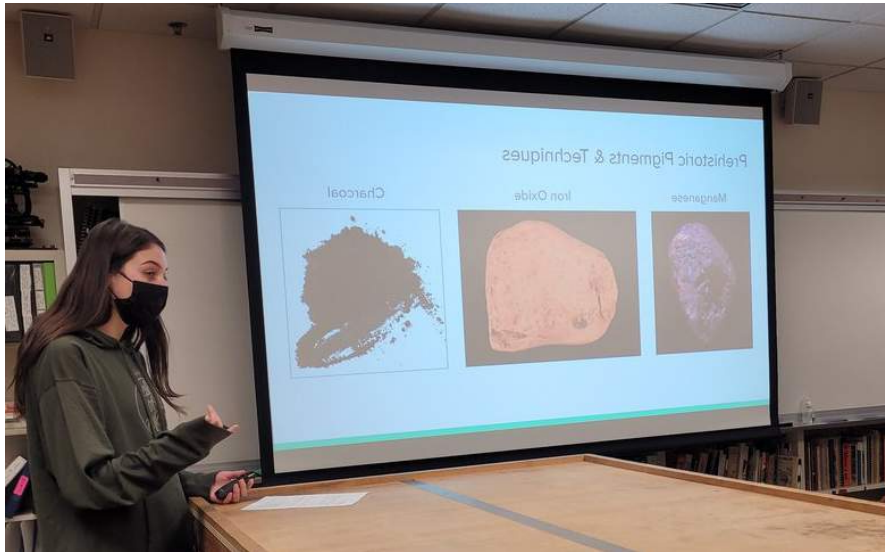
HISP 208 student Nina Sacco's mended terracotta pot

HISP major Megan Williams (Class of 2021) signed up for this course because she felt that conservation was a blind spot in her understanding of the many facets of historic preservation. After taking the course, she “gained a tremendous amount of respect and admiration for conservators because they need to know a lot of information to conserve and preserve historic resources for future generations.”

Nina Sacco (Class of 2023) first learned about conservation in her HISP 200: Museum Studies class. She was fascinated by the tools and techniques conservators use to

bring old objects back to life, but was surprised by the small size and competitiveness of the field. In general, the hands-on nature of this class also attracts majors in Art History, Studio Art, and other disciplines.

This highly sought-after course is a valued part of our program not only because it is popular with students, but also because conservation is a key, highly specialized area of Historic Preservation. The Department looks forward to offering this course for many years to come.



Nina Sacco (Class of 2023) presents her final project on conservation issues pertaining to the Lascaux Caves in France



Jacob Czerwonka (Class of 2022) presents on a 14 ft. tall bronze gilded statue of Marcus Aurelius in Rome

Independent Study Project

Collections Research at WHM

UMW's Historic Preservation program works closely with many community partners to provide students with real-life, hands-on learning experiences. These can take the form of class activities at historic sites, internships with local museums, field training workshops, and, occasionally, independent-study projects. This semester, Historic Preservation major Kelly Pedigo (Class of 2022) conducted a material-culture study of an antique quilt top in the collections of the Rising Sun Tavern, one of the Washington Heritage Museums' properties in downtown Fredericksburg.

Several alumni have also completed independent studies at the Tavern. Ethan Knick (Class of 2021) and Abigail Phelps (Class of 2021) created an educational booklet for elementary-school students. While Daphne Ahalt (Class of 2019) researched a case clock and a portrait of George Washington, Gil Kenner (Class of 2019) documented the piano forte and the harp lute, which are all attention-grabbing pieces at the museum. In a similar vein, Kelly was tasked with uncovering the history of one of the quilts on display at the Tavern.

Though there is little documentary information about the quilt top, the piece caught her eye because on the back are hundreds of scraps of handwritten documents. In a technique called mosaic patchwork, quiltmakers of the 18th and 19th centuries sewed fabric around paper templates, creating crisp geometric



The quilt top was made in a "Honeycomb" or "Grandmother's Flower Garden" pattern



Paper pieces on the back of the quilt provide clues about the quiltmaker

patterns. By examining these fragments of paper, as well as the fabrics and the stitching techniques used by the maker, Kelly was able to propose an approximate date for the quilt top and reveal aspects about the quilters' life.

The art of collecting information and translating it into a meaningful narrative that connects us with people from the past is what Kelly finds most rewarding about the study of material culture. She is also a Digital Studies minor, and this project

serves as her Digital Studies capstone project. In addition to research, Kelly maintained a weekly blog of her progress, digitally documented the quilt with photos, and created a webpage with interactive images so that more people can access this fascinating piece.



Kelly used photography equipment in the HISP Department to document the quilt in great detail

Alumni Highlights

From Our Inbox

With the permission of the author, we share here an email sent by Isabella Gordineer (Class of 2020) to all faculty in the Department of Historic Preservation:

“I am now a second year in the Master's in Historic Preservation at Clemson/College of Charleston. I have gotten to work on many amazing projects including documentation in Charleston and Anderson, South Carolina, a National Register Nomination, a Cultural Landscape Report, paint analysis, and much more. Last fall, I was accepted as Frank Lloyd Wright Conservancy Fellow for the Fall conference.

This past summer I interned with Richard Marks Restoration where I worked in the wood shop shadowing master carpenters to learn to make doors, windows, shutters, moldings, trim, and much more. I was offered a full time position as an apprentice in the shop following my graduation from school. I also began taking classes in construction management at Trident Technical College. The program lasts four semesters for certification in construction management. This semester, I am taking several classes and beginning to write my thesis.

My thesis topic is community based preservation programs in small towns in Virginia, specifically looking at the history/patterns of programs used and identifying factors to measure their success. The spark for this thesis came from my job prior to graduate school where I restored plaster cornices in a Charles Robinson designed hotel in Petersburg, Virginia. Petersburg is looking at initiatives and programs to revitalize and this led me to my topic.

I want to also take a moment to thank each of you for everything in the preservation department at UMW. All of my success has come from hard work and guidance from each of you. Thank you!”



Isabella in the woodworking shop

HISP professors thank Isabella for her thoughts and wish her and all recent alumni a productive and rewarding career.

From the Field

Headquartered in Marshall, Virginia, Dominion Traditional Building Group is a reputable provider of masonry restoration services. As employees of this company, Sam Biggers (Class of 2016), Lawrence King (Class of 2020), and Hunter Shackelford (Class of 2020) restored the historic Horseshoe Staircase at Gari Melchers Home and Studio in Falmouth, Virginia.

Sam and Lawrence focused on documenting the staircase with measured drawings and photographs, as well as researching its history and the materials used to construct it. Hunter completed the hands-on aspects of removing, cleaning, and replacing the stonework.



The alumni's backgrounds show both commonalities and differences. After college, Sam went on to receive a Master of Science in Historic Preservation from Clemson University/ College of Charleston in South Carolina. Hunter and Lawrence came to UMW after serving in the U.S. Army, and found that the bachelor's degree positioned them well for quickly finding work in the preservation field.

All three though regard their UMW degree as the starting point for successful careers in restoration as they build on hard skills and soft skills they learned at UMW. On the job, they have had the opportunity to continue learning new trade skills from the master craftsmen they work with, and they are proud of their company's "ethic of teaching." They also wanted to thank HISP professors for their commitment to students' success, and remind current students that professors will "bend over backwards" to help them out if they put in the work.



Above (L-R): Lawrence, Sam, and Hunter on site at Gari Melchers Home and Studio

Left: The Horseshoe Staircase during the restoration process.

HISP Club Updates

“Hello! My name is Meredith Glasco and I’m the 2021-2022 Historic Preservation Club President. I’m a double major in Art History and Historic Preservation and a minor in Museum Studies, so I love bringing different perspectives into the realm of historic preservation. I’ve been a member of the club since my freshman year in 2018 and a part of the Executive Board since last year. I’ve always loved how the club (and the department) has been a family of dedicated and extremely caring people. It’s so refreshing to see alumni, professors, students, and community members come together to discuss the far-reaching branches of preservation.

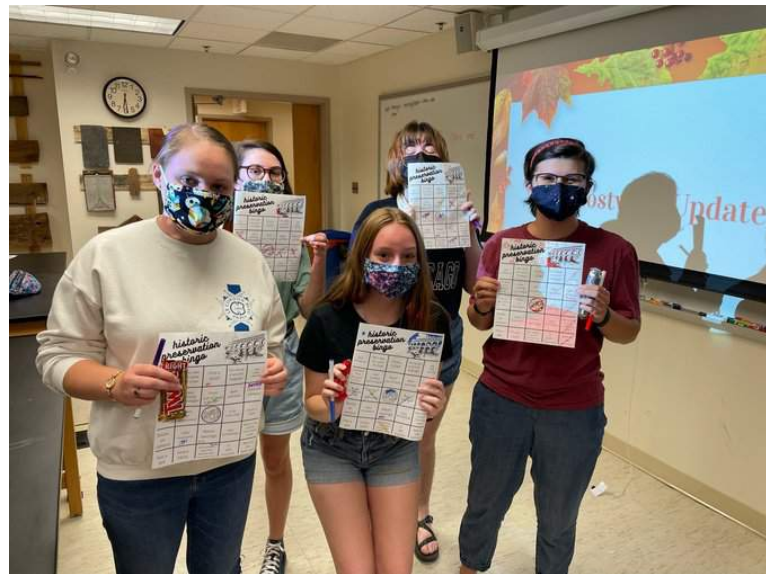
One of the first events we had this fall semester was an officer’s showcase, where our club executives talked about their experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic to spread awareness that though we are in a pandemic, there are always opportunities for preservationists! We also saw the triumphant return of the Ghostwalk! Since we missed last year, we decided to combine the edition numbers and call it the 36/37th Annual Ghostwalk, to acknowledge the time of the semester last year when many of our peers were away from campus.

A sneak peek of club activities for next semester includes visits from Fredericksburg Area Museum staff, a club-nominated day trip to a historic site, and the Student Choice Lecture series! I am so excited for every meeting and love talking to new members. I feel as though the club has grown so much, even though we were apart.”

- Meredith Glasco



Meredith Glasco, Class of 2022



New HISP Club Members show off their completed UMW-themed bingo cards at the first meeting of the semester



Dedicated HISP Club members made the return of Ghostwalk a success. Pictured are "Mary Washington," played by Hannah St. Onge, and housekeeper Gertrude Sawyer, played by Alexis Kochanski.



New HISP Club members celebrated the end of a great semester with a gingerbread house contest. Pictured are Aidan Hill and Alex Lee with their rendition of Ferry Farm, George Washington's childhood home.

Congratulations to the new HISP Club Officers!

President - Meredith Glasco (Class of 2022)

Vice President - Megan Riley (Class of 2023)

Treasurer - Catherine Haines (Class of 2023)

Secretary - Cosette Veeder-Shave (Class of 2022)

Historian - Hannah St. Onge (Class of 2022)

Ghostwalk Committee: Megan Williams (Class of 2021), Abigail Zurfluh (Class of 2023), & Kelly Pedigo (Class of 2022)

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