



2016 Honorees

Virginia's Top 10 Endangered Artifacts



Lithograph, First Regiment Virginia Volunteers; 1858
Ashland Museum

Ashland, Virginia - Central Virginia Region

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



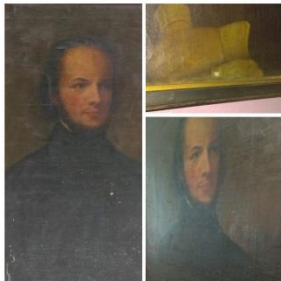
Snider – Botetourt Sampler; 1830
Botetourt County Historical Society and Museum

Fincastle, Virginia – Virginia Mountains Region

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



Portraits of Rufus and Caroline Griswold; 1840
Edgar Allan Poe Museum

Richmond, Virginia – Central Virginia Region

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



Antebellum Wedding Dress; c. 1858
History Museum of Western Virginia

Roanoke, Virginia – Virginia Mountain Region

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



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

Norfolk, Virginia – Coastal-Hampton Roads Region

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



Bob Slaughter's Order of the Day; 1944
National D-Day Memorial Foundation

Bedford, Virginia – Virginia Mountain Region

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



Garden Shed Signatures; c. 1900-1965

Oatlands Historic House and Gardens

Leesburg, Virginia – Northern Virginia Region

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



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

Taubman Museum of Art

Roanoke, Virginia – Virginia Mountains Region

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



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

University Collections of Art and History, Washington & Lee University

Lexington, Virginia – Shenandoah Region

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



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

Wilderness Road Regional Museum

Dublin, Virginia – Heart of Appalachia Region

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

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

People's Choice Honoree

Artifact Receiving the Most Public Votes; Vote Total: 20,728



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

Richmond Railroad Museum

Richmond, Virginia – Central Virginia Region

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

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

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

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