



Colonial Williamsburg, William & Mary Renew Omohundro Institute Partnership



[\[DOWNLOAD HIGH-RESOLUTION IMAGE\]](#)

WILLIAMSBURG, Va. (Oct. 8, 2021) – Colonial Williamsburg has renewed its commitment to independent scholarly research by joining William & Mary to financially support the [Omohundro Institute of Early American History & Culture](#).

The Omohundro Institute (OI) was established by the two institutions in 1943 and has grown into the nation’s leading academic center of historical research on all aspects of early America. The reunion of the three entities re-establishes financial support and in-kind benefits provided by The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation and positions the three institutions at the center of historical scholarship as the country approaches its 250th anniversary in 2026.

“Renewing our relationship with the Omohundro Institute, in partnership with William & Mary, allows us to greatly expand our relevance and educational reach through this internationally renowned research institution. The OI’s Executive Director Karin Wulf was instrumental in restoring the partnership. Thanks to her tireless work to re-establish this important relationship, we are once again combining our resources to advance scholarship and understanding of the formation of our country and its impact on today,” said Cliff Fleet, president and CEO of The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation and member of the Omohundro Institute’s Board of Directors.

Among the partnership’s first priorities is the development of “For 2026,” a conference series leading up to the nation’s semiquincentennial. Beginning in 2022, five annual meetings will spotlight emerging research, connect scholars with each other and with the public, and host

significant conversations about how and why understanding America's formative past is vital today.

"For 2026 is committed to an expansive, inclusive history of early America that accounts for the diversity of people and experiences of the revolutionary period. Each year will provide forums for significant new knowledge about this essential period in both scholar-to-scholar and scholar-to-public forums," said Karin Wulf, executive director of the Omohundro Institute.

Additionally, Colonial Williamsburg is supporting the Omohundro Institute's wide-reaching podcast [Ben Franklin's World](#). Hosted by OI Digital Projects Editor Liz Covart, the podcast currently features more than 310 episodes designed for people who love history and want to know more about the early American past.

The Omohundro Institute consists of 33 staff members and has been led by Wulf for eight years following a decade as the *William and Mary Quarterly* Book Review Editor. Wulf begins a new position as Director and Librarian of the John Carter Brown Library at Brown University on Oct. 15.

During her tenure as executive director, Wulf expanded the OI's work into digital humanities projects and scholarship, and including collaborations with the **Georgian Papers Programme**, *Journal of Slavery and Data Preservation* (**Enslaved.org**), **Slavevoyages.org**, and **Commonplace** with the American Antiquarian Society.

Current Omohundro Institute Editor of Books Catherine Kelly will serve as interim director of the OI while the institute conducts a search for Wulf's successor. An [Aug. 4 post](#) on the institute's website provides additional information.

"Leading the Omohundro Institute has been a tremendous privilege and I am grateful to leave it poised for even greater achievements," Wulf said. "The renewal of our relationship with Colonial Williamsburg, coupled with the continued strong support of William & Mary, is sure to bring many new opportunities for all. I have no doubt that the brilliant Cathy Kelly will begin to realize many of those opportunities when she assumes the role of interim director, and that the next executive director will find an OI even more ready to take on the challenges of leading the scholars and scholarship of Vast Early America."

Colonial Williamsburg's return as a primary funding partner to the OI underscores its commitment to the OI's mission to support and publish scholars and scholarship of Vast Early America, defined as the history and cultures of North America's indigenous and immigrant peoples during the colonial, Revolutionary, and early national periods of the United States and the related histories of Canada, the Caribbean, Latin America, the British Isles, Europe, and Africa to approximately 1820.

"We welcome with great enthusiasm this renewed alliance," said William & Mary President Katherine A. Rowe. "Colonial Williamsburg and Omohundro are important university partners. Together, we are better positioned to tell a fuller, more complete story of our nation's history as we approach the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. Situated in this cradle of democracy, we can provide unique insights into our country's founding – guided by William & Mary's mission to reflect on the lessons of history to meet the challenges of a rapidly changing world."

The partnership agreement between William & Mary and Colonial Williamsburg includes joint funding for a new position that will oversee this and other initiatives between the two educational institutions. William & Mary's Dr. Ann Marie Stock serves as [Presidential Liaison for Strategic Cultural Partnerships](#). In her role, Stock will work closely with Fleet and Rowe and

lead projects associated with the Omohundro Institute and the Williamsburg Bray School initiative, among other joint ventures and projects.

“This expanded partnership offers extraordinary potential,” said Stock. “By coming together in new ways, we will leverage our unique resources to explore the history of our community, the Commonwealth and our nation – and we will do so with a marvelous array of combined tools.

“When likeminded institutions work together toward a common purpose, the potential is extraordinary. I feel privileged to support President Rowe and President Fleet in this visionary endeavor and am already collaborating to imagine the bridges we will build to connect us with one another and with yet-to-be-identified individuals, organizations and communities around the world.”

Stock and her staff will reside in office space provided by Colonial Williamsburg in the historic [Travis House](#), which was built by a member of the House of Burgesses and is situated at the northeast corner of Francis and Henry streets. The newly founded [W&M Bray School Lab](#) will also be located in this structure, in close proximity for the William & Mary faculty and students who will carry out research on the history and legacy of the school.

Media contacts: Colonial Williamsburg
Ellen Morgan Peltz
epeltz@cwrf.org
757-220-7287

William & Mary
Adrienne Berard
amberard@wm.edu
757-221-1925

Omohundro Institute
Martha Howard
martha.howard@wm.edu
757-358-1519

About The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation

Colonial Williamsburg operates the world’s largest living history museum, preserving Virginia’s 18th-century capital as a fully functioning city. Fun, engaging experiences transport guests back in time and highlight the relevance of America’s founding era to contemporary life. The Colonial Williamsburg experience includes more than 600 restored or reconstructed buildings, historic trade shops, renowned museums of decorative arts and folk art, extensive educational outreach programs for students and teachers, lodging, culinary options from historic taverns to casual or elegant dining, the Golden Horseshoe Golf Club featuring 45 holes designed by Robert Trent Jones Sr. and his son Rees Jones, a full-service spa and fitness center managed by Trilogy Spa, pools, retail stores and gardens. Philanthropic support and revenue from admissions, products and hospitality operations sustain Colonial Williamsburg’s educational programs and preservation initiatives. The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation is a 501 (c)(3) nonprofit organization; philanthropic support and revenue from admissions, products and operations sustain its educational programs and preservation initiatives.

About William & Mary

Founded by Royal Charter in 1693, William & Mary is the second oldest institution of higher learning in the country. The Alma Mater of the Nation is a preeminent university, combining the depth and breadth of a liberal arts and sciences education with the disciplined exploration and innovation of a leading, global research university. A vibrant and inclusive community, William & Mary cultivates creative thinkers, principled leaders, and compassionate global citizens equipped for lives of meaning and distinction. As a "Public Ivy," the university convenes great minds and hearts to meet the most pressing needs of our time. William & Mary's graduate program in U.S. colonial history was recently named the best in the country, according to [rankings](#) by U.S. News & World Report.

About Omohundro Institute of Early American History & Culture

Founded in 1943, the Omohundro Institute of Early American History & Culture (OI) is an independent research organization located in Williamsburg, Virginia, sponsored by William & Mary and Colonial Williamsburg. We support the scholars and scholarship of vast early America—a term we use to describe the capacious histories of North America and related geographies, including foundational histories of indigenous peoples, the scale and impact of transatlantic slavery, and multidimensional European colonization and settlement, from the 1450s to the 1820s. We publish the leading scholarly journal in the field of early American history, the William and Mary Quarterly, as well as a series of prize-winning books in conjunction with partner the University of North Carolina Press. In addition to funding fellowships for researchers from predoctoral graduate students to senior career scholars and digital projects including a web app (the OI Reader at <https://oireader.wm.edu>), we host conferences, workshops, and public lectures annually both in person and online. You can read more about us at <https://oieahc.wm.edu> or sign up to attend one of our online programs at OIEvents (<https://oievents.wm.edu>).

– CWF –

If you no longer wish to receive news releases from the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation or William & Mary, please reply to this message with UNSUBSCRIBE in the subject line. Thank you.