



# *The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation*

JOHN D. ROCKEFELLER, JR LIBRARY

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NEWSLETTER

VOL. 4, NO. 4

## DONALD MACDONALD-MILLAR COLLECTIONS AID BRAY SCHOOL RESEARCH



***Front elevation of the Digges House, originally located on Block 23. Building 18 and moved to Block 24, Building 32, Williamsburg, Virginia.***

### IN THIS ISSUE

Millar Collection:	p. 1-4
Ferrari Family Gift:	p. 5-7
Meet Brendan Sostak :	p. 7-11
Albert Durant Volunteer Portrait and Project Update	p. 12

Photographs, architectural drawings, and field notes housed in the Rockefeller Library's Special Collections Department are providing valuable visual clues that will aid the Architectural Preservation and Research staff's restoration of the Bray School structure to its eighteenth-century appearance. They form part of a group of archival materials created by Donald MacDonald-Millar during the early twentieth century. A pioneer in the fledgling field of architectural history in America, Donald MacDonald-Millar con-

## MILLAR COLLECTION

(continued)



***Gable end elevation of the Digges House, originally located on Block 23. Building 18 and moved to Block 24, Building 32, Williamsburg, Virginia.***

tributed his expertise to some of the earliest research and planning for Williamsburg's restoration in the late 1920s. He received his training in his hometown of Nashville, Tennessee, where he worked for a firm of architects. As one of the founding members of the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities, he became interested in recording the measurements and architectural details of colonial structures and published two books, *Measured Drawings of Some Colonial and Georgian Homes* (1916) and *Measured Drawings of Some Colonial Furniture* (1925), as well as articles in the *Architectural Record* and the *Pennsylvania Museum Bulletin*.

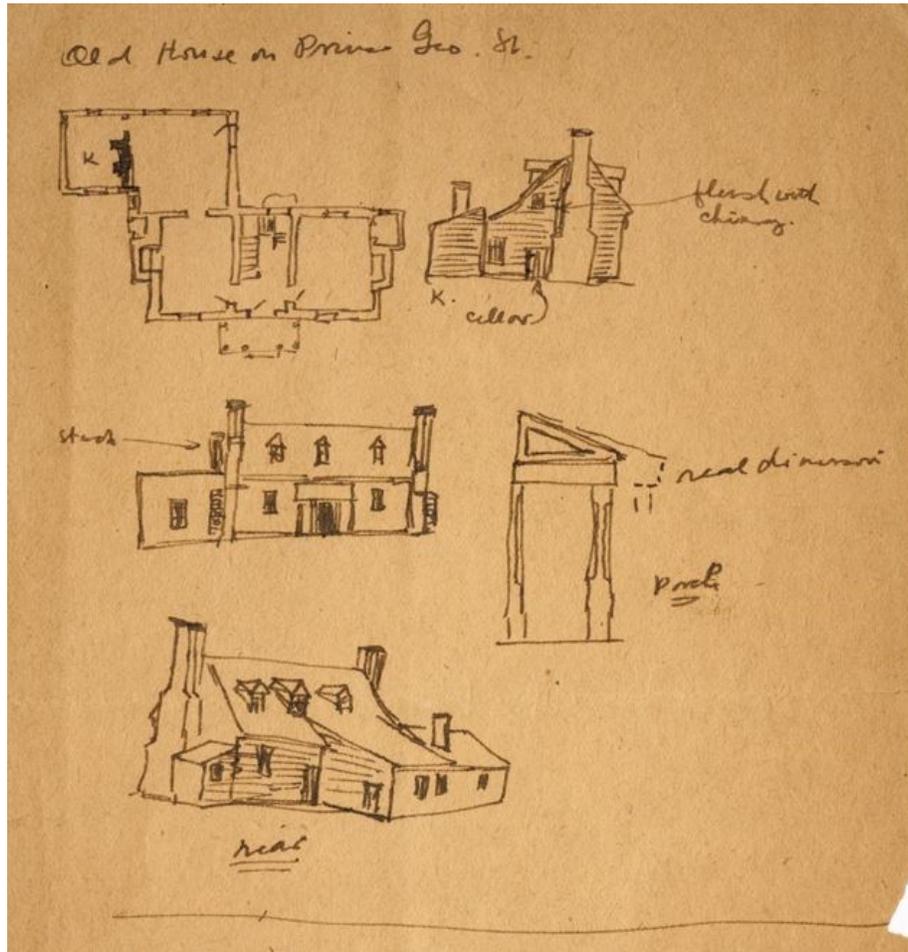
A visit to Williamsburg in 1919 as part of this phase of his career led to the compilation of a small sketchbook with field drawings and notations about several historic structures in Williamsburg that he examined. Sketches include architectural details of the Mary Cary House, Ludwell-Paradise House, Powell-Hallam House, Dudley Digges House (today identified as the Bray School) and the Robert Carter House. MacDonald-Millar also took a series of black and white photographs that complement the sketches and provide additional visual evidence of exterior architectural features which are part of the Donald MacDonald-Millar Photograph Collection. Both the sketchbook and the photographs are significant as a record of the condition of the buildings in the second decade of the twentieth century, nine years before John D. Rockefeller Jr. agreed to fund the commencement of in-depth

restoration work on some of Williamsburg's colonial structures. They also illustrate the growing interest in Williamsburg's architectural history among early pioneers in the field of historic preservation.

Two pages within the sketchbook document various elevations, the floor plan, and a gable end with chimney of the Bray School, while associated photographs offer more detailed evidence of the clapboard siding, dormer windows, cornice, and chimney brickwork. Together, they are important because they show the structure prior to 1924, when the Methodist Women's Association built a large addition to create a dormitory for Methodist women attending the College of William & Mary. According to

## MILLAR COLLECTION

(continued)



**Page two, Elevations and Floor Plans for the Dudley Digges House, today known as the Bray School, Williamsburg, Virginia by Donald MacDonald-Millar.**

Architectural Historian Jennifer Wilkoski, "At that time the house was largely unchanged from its eighteenth-century form except for the addition of a nineteenth century wing off the back. In concert with other photos taken around the same time period, we are able to verify features such as closets, dormer windows, and a cellar. All of these architectural features are now gone due to the twentieth century renovations and the building's move in 1930. Using the photos and sketches, we'll be able to put back these lost elements when the building is restored."

Donald MacDonald-Millar also contributed to other aspects of Williamsburg's restoration. A call to the ministry led Millar to the Theological Seminary in New York City and he became an Episcopal clergyman. His acquaintance with Dr. W.A.R. Goodwin, another Episcopal minister with a keen interest in historic architecture, and William Graves Perry, a partner in the firm Perry, Shaw, and Hepburn, brought him to the attention of Colonel Arthur Woods, who sent him an invitation on May 28, 1928, to "...do research work in England and France for the Williamsburg project." MacDonald-Millar received a six month leave of absence from his position as assistant to Rev. Frederick Burgess of St. Matthew's and St. Timothy's churches in New York City to undertake the assignment. With the help of several assistants, he traveled through the two countries to gather information about the types of building materials that would have been available to colonial Virginians and to record

## MILLAR COLLECTION

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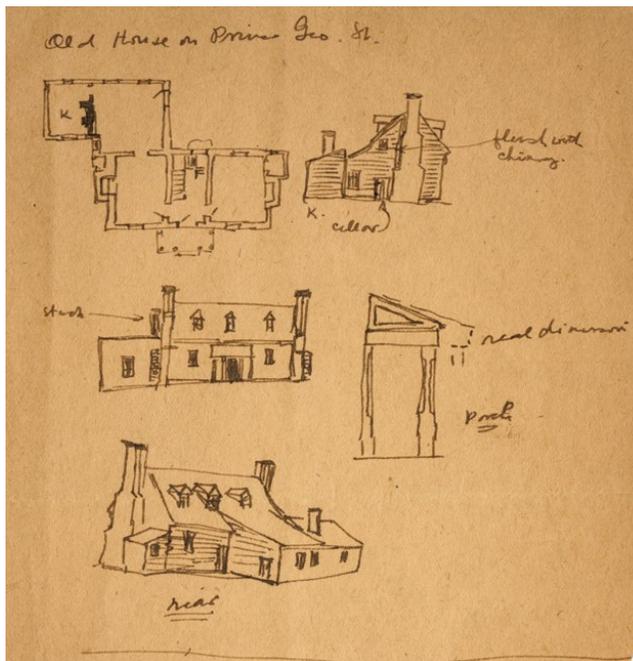
architectural precedents to assist in the reconstruction of Williamsburg buildings. His investigations contributed to the discovery of the Bodleian copperplate whose engraved illustrations of the Governor's Palace, Capitol, Wren Building, President's House, and Brafferton Building provided critical visual evidence for their accurate restoration.

Both the Donald MacDonald-Millar Photograph Collection, AV2009.30, and the Donald MacDonald-Millar Sketchbook, MS1989.5, are available for viewing online via these links:

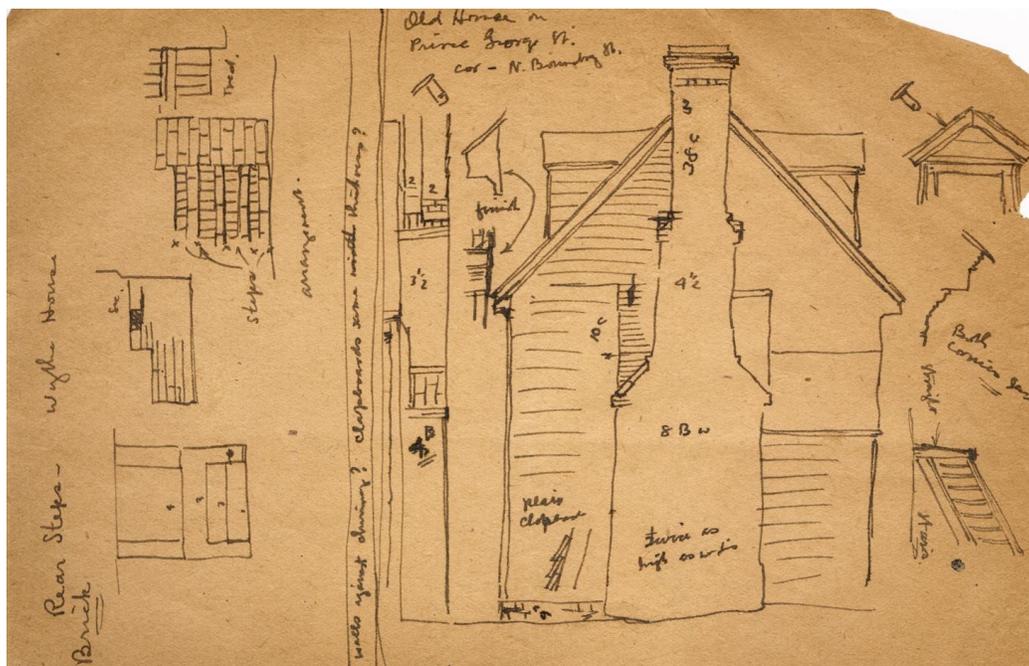
<https://rocklib.omeka.net/collections/show/54>

<https://rocklib.omeka.net/collections/show/40>

Thank you to our new Media Collections Photographer, Brendan Sostak, for digitizing the Donald MacDonald-Millar Sketchbook!



**Front elevation of the Digges House, originally located on Block 23. Building 18 and moved to Block 24, Building 32, Williamsburg, Virginia, by Donald MacDonald-Millar.**



**Page three, top: Rear Steps, Wythe House; bottom: Side Elevation with Chimney, Dudley Digges House, today known as the Bray School, Williamsburg, Virginia, by Donald MacDonald-Millar, 1919.**

## FERRARI FAMILY GIFT



***The Ferrari family donates records and objects belonging to Ferrante Ferrari, ornamental blacksmith for Colonial Williamsburg circa 1930s. L-R: Erik Goldstein, Dani Jaworski, Matt Webster, Neil G. Ferrari, Ken Schwarz, Ann Ferrari Partlow, Donna Cooke, J. Michael Tuccori, and Carl Childs.***

On May 25th, Colonial Williamsburg received an important donation from the descendants of Ferrante "Fred" Ferrari and Ugo Tuccori, two of the ornamental blacksmiths who played a key role in the restoration of Williamsburg in the 1930s. The collection consists of records and photos compiled by the Ferrari business venture in addition to metalwork objects, design models, and tools. The objects will be cared for by the Foundation's Museums, Preservation, and Historic Resources (MPHR) division, including items used to design and make the Governor's Palace balcony and weathervane, and ironwork in the Peninsula Bank (now DoG Street Pub). The collection items received by the Rockefeller Library includes such items as a signed letter from Dr. W.A.R. Goodwin discussing a handle Ferrari was making for the Restoration, newspaper clippings, design blueprints and drawings highlighting items he made for Williamsburg, and some photographs.

Ferrari, a native of Pistoia, Italy, near Florence, had such a reputation for metal artistry that word of his craftsmanship had reached Dr. Goodwin in Williamsburg while planning the Restoration. Ferrari received a personal visit from Mr. Rockefeller at his home in Hampton where he was commissioned to do blacksmith work for various buildings. He also did work for Bruton

## FERRARI FAMILY GIFT

(continued)



***Governor's Palace balcony, in progress. Crafted by Ferrante "Fred" Ferrari, an early contractor hired during the Restoration of Colonial Williamsburg.***



***Sketch of center for Governor's Palace balcony. Drawn on reverse of stationery for F. Ferrari Metal Crafts.***

Parish Church and the National Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham (formerly St. Bede) in Williamsburg in addition to his many works across Hampton Roads.

The Ferrante Ferrari-Ugo Tuccori Collection (Accession 2022-028) is currently closed for archival processing but will be available to researchers when that work is complete. The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation is immensely grateful to the Ferrari, Partlow, and Tuccori families for this incredibly generous donation.

## FERRANTE FAMILY GIFT

(continued)



***Governor's Palace balcony, completed. People are Ferrante "Fred" Ferrari, Ugo Tuccori, Fred Ferrari and Daniel Franceshi. Ferrante "Fred" Ferrari was an early contractor hired during the Restoration of Colonial Williamsburg.***

## MEET BRENDAN SOSTAK

The Media Collections team at the Rockefeller Library is pleased to welcome a new member, photographer Brendan Sostak. Brendan joined the Foundation in April and is already hard at work visually documenting the Historic Area and its events for the Library, as well as aiding in our ongoing efforts to digitize archival materials. In just the last few months, he's already produced around 1,000 images! His photography will provide a lasting record of Colonial Williamsburg, as well as being used across the Foundation to support programming, publicity, and research. Brendan comes to the Foundation from Evergreen Enterprises, where he worked as a product photographer.

Recent projects he's completed include shooting the fife and drum corps in action at Drummers Call, documenting the work of the Bob and Marion Wilson Teacher Institute, capturing the celebrations for Juneteenth, photographing Historic Area programs such as "Faith, Hope, and Love" on the Charlton Stage, and digitizing archival negatives from the historic Frank Dementi collection (showing Williamsburg in the early years of the Restoration). This photography is available to employees and volunteers through an in-house database. You may also see his work as it begins to appear on our social media and starts to be used throughout the Foundation in publications and online.

## MEET BRENDAN SOSTAK

(continued)



***Brendan Sostak, Colonial Williamsburg photographer.***

Asked about his experiences here at Colonial Williamsburg, Brendan expressed his appreciation for how very welcoming and accommodating everyone has been. He is currently most excited at the prospect of pursuing more photography of the Trades in action. He recently shot Master Blacksmith Ken Schwarz creating a chisel (search The Source for D2022-BES-0616 and D2022-BES-0617 to see the photos) and is eager to capture the work in other shops.

Brendan has a strong interest in science, with a BS in Biology and a MS in Environmental Studies from Virginia Commonwealth University. However, his interest in and talent for photography comes naturally: when he was growing up, his grandmother had a passion for the art and was never without her camera. Like Brendan, she loved taking photographs - but not being in them. So when Brendan first had the opportunity to pursue photography professionally, he jumped at the chance. Brendan also enjoys gardening, baking, and playing with his dogs, Zelda, and Hattie.

Welcome, Brendan!

MEET BRENDAN SOSTAK

(continued)



*Colonial Williamsburg Fife and Drum Corps.*

*Image by Brendan Sostak*

MEET BRENDAN SOSTAK

(continued)



*Ken Schwartz, Colonial Williamsburg's master blacksmith.*

*Photograph by Brendan Sostak.*

MEET BRENDAN SOSTAK

(continued)



*A chisel being produced in the Blacksmith Shop.*

*Image by Brendan Sostak*

## DURANT VOLUNTEERS GROUP PORTRAIT



Since the Albert Durant Photography Collection's acquisition in 1992, many community members have donated their time and recollections to help the library assemble accurate captions for Durant's photographs. The effort is ongoing today and the library is fortunate that a group of Bruton Heights School alumni have attended a series of sessions held in a Bruton Height School classroom to examine additional photographs and use their collective reminiscences to assemble more identifications. This dedicated group recently posed for a portrait taken by Volunteer Photographer Jerry McCoy. Pictured are, front row, left to right, Lafayette James, Edith Heard, June Ross, and Jackie Gardner; back row, left to right: James Lee, George Wallace, Connie Harshaw, Vernon Ross, and Dennis Gardner. We invite anyone interested in helping to contact us at [rocklibrary@cwf.org](mailto:rocklibrary@cwf.org).

The *John D. Rockefeller Jr. Library Newsletter* is a publication of Colonial Williamsburg's John D. Rockefeller Jr. Library.

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Please visit [Friends of John D. Rockefeller Jr. Library](https://www.friends-of-john-d-rockefeller-jr-library.org/) for information on how you can support the Library.

To contact the library directly, please call 757-220-7249; 757-565-8510 or email us at [rocklibrary@cwf.org](mailto:rocklibrary@cwf.org).