



The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation

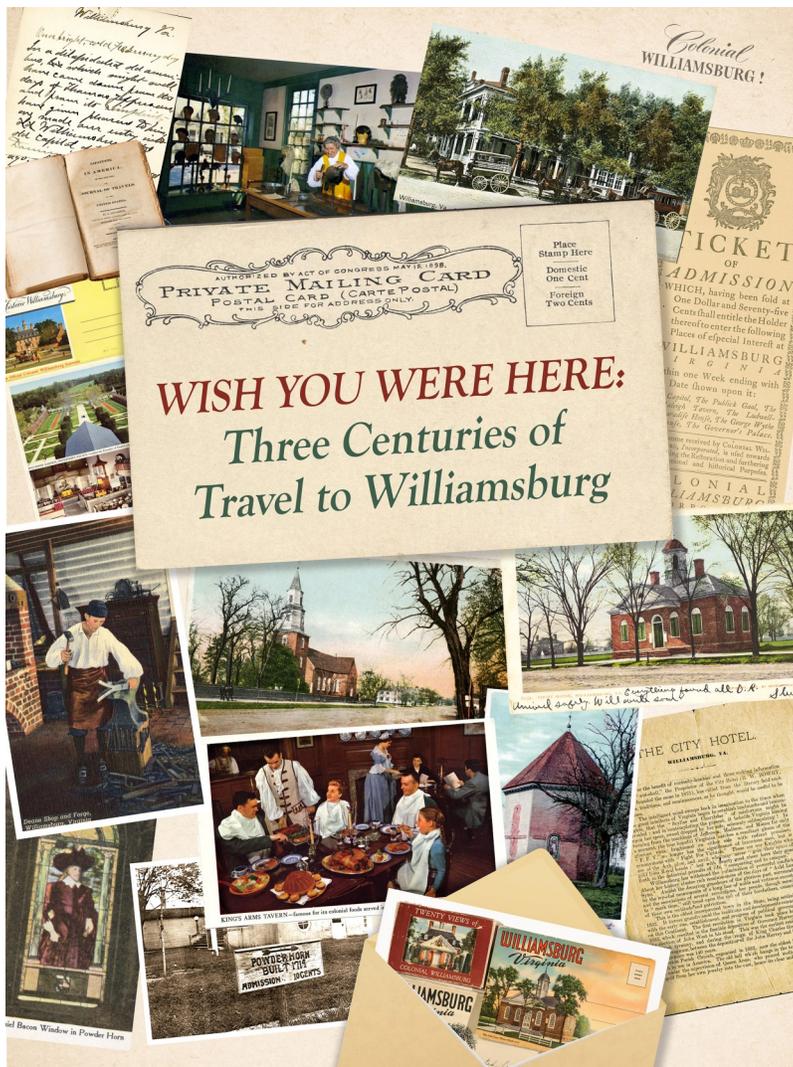
JOHN D. ROCKEFELLER, JR LIBRARY

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NEWSLETTER

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NEW LIBRARY EXHIBIT



The Rockefeller Library is pleased to announce the opening of its new exhibition, "Wish You Were Here: Three Centuries of Travel to Williamsburg" on January 12, 2024. Curated by the exhibition committee, consisting of Donna Cooke, Doug Mayo, Marianne Martin, Sarah Nerney, and Jenna Simpson, the exhibit traces the evolution of Williamsburg from a colonial capital into an historic landmark. Two chapters in Williamsburg's history have been pivotal in transforming the town into a destination for travelers – the period when it served as the colonial capital of Virginia and the commencement of its restoration in the late 1920s. During the eighteenth century, many travelers passed through Williamsburg due to its role as the capital of colonial Virginia and the center of government, education, and business for the colony. They came to attend sessions of the courts and the General Assembly, to shop for goods and re-stock supplies at Market Days, and to enjoy such entertainments as fairs, plays, musical

IN THIS ISSUE

New Library Exhibit:	p. 1-2
Media Collections Attends AMIA Conference:	p. 3
Home Movie Collection Presented :	p. 4
Architects Visit:	p. 5
Virginia Gazette Acquisitions:	p. 6-7
Library Welcomes New Staff:	p. 8-10
Volunteers Transcribe Newspapers:	p. 11-12

Introductory poster for the Rockefeller Library's latest exhibit.

NEW LIBRARY EXHIBIT

(continued)

concerts, and sporting events. After the move of the capital of Virginia to Richmond in 1780, the stream of travelers subsided, and the town experienced an economic decline and did not have as many of the cultural attractions as its eighteenth-century counterpart. Nevertheless, Williamsburg did host a few prominent guests, such as the Marquis de Lafayette during his return visit to the United States in 1824.

The celebrations of America's centennial in 1876 and of the Yorktown centennial in 1881, along with the construction of the C&O railroad on the peninsula, helped reignite interest in Williamsburg's historic heritage. During the late nineteenth-century, the tourist industry slowly began to grow, and Williamsburg's business owners sought to promote the town's historic associations to get train passengers to consider stopping for a day trip or overnight stay. At the same time, the town's preservation-minded citizens joined groups such as the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities to save surviving structures, such as the Powder Magazine, and to excavate and commemorate the remains of others, such as the Capitol. The Jamestown Tercentennial Exposition of 1907 offered an opportunity to draw attention to these and other historic sites in Williamsburg to passengers who stopped in town along their way to Norfolk. 1907 also marked the completion of an initial restoration of Bruton Parish Church overseen by the Rev. W.A.R. Goodwin, who returned to Williamsburg in the early 1920s to take a position at the College of William & Mary. His passion for Williamsburg's historic past as Virginia's colonial capital led him to launch a campaign to raise funds for the acquisition and restoration of additional structures in Williamsburg. He found a dedicated benefactor in John D. Rockefeller Jr., who initially agreed to work as a silent partner with Goodwin in 1926 and later, in November 1927, agreed to fund a large-scale restoration of the town's overall historic district. Five years later, in the early 1930s, restored and reconstructed exhibition buildings began opening to the public launching a new era for Williamsburg as a place to immerse Americans in an authentic, carefully restored recreation of Virginia's colonial capital.

A variety of objects held by Special Collections, Corporate Archives, Visual Resources, and Media Collections, illustrate the story of Williamsburg's rebirth as an important destination for travelers. Four exhibition cases focus upon the themes of Pre-Restoration Williamsburg, Transportation, Accommodations, and Community Remembrances. A few highlights of items on exhibit include an original edition of Lafayette's account of his return visit to America in 1824, late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century souvenir guidebooks and postcards, early photos, postcards, brochures and flyers for Colonial Williamsburg's hotels, drawings of concepts for handling transport of tourists in and around Williamsburg, and a series of scrapbooks and letters chronicling tourists' experiences at Colonial Williamsburg from the 1930s to the 1980s. Five exhibit panels examine the topics of Williamsburg's tourist homes and wartime lodging, the Green Book and the Black tourist's experience, Williamsburg restaurants, Colonial Williamsburg taverns and dining rooms, and Colonial Williamsburg recreational activities. A monitor in the exhibit space allows guests to view segments from several home movies taken by tourists to Colonial Williamsburg that have been acquired by Media Collections staff for addition to its moving footage archives. They offer a fascinating glimpse into the experiences of visitors in 1949, 1957, and the 1960s and complement the items on display by bringing to life the exhibition buildings, streets, and gardens that visitors encountered during these formative decades in Colonial Williamsburg's development.

"Wish You Were Here": Three Centuries of Travel to Williamsburg" is free and open to the public during library hours from Monday – Friday, 9am – 5pm, through December 2024. Within the next few months, an online version will be launched that will include additional content beyond what could be fit into the exhibition space.

MEDIA COLLECTIONS ATTENDS AMIA CONFERENCE



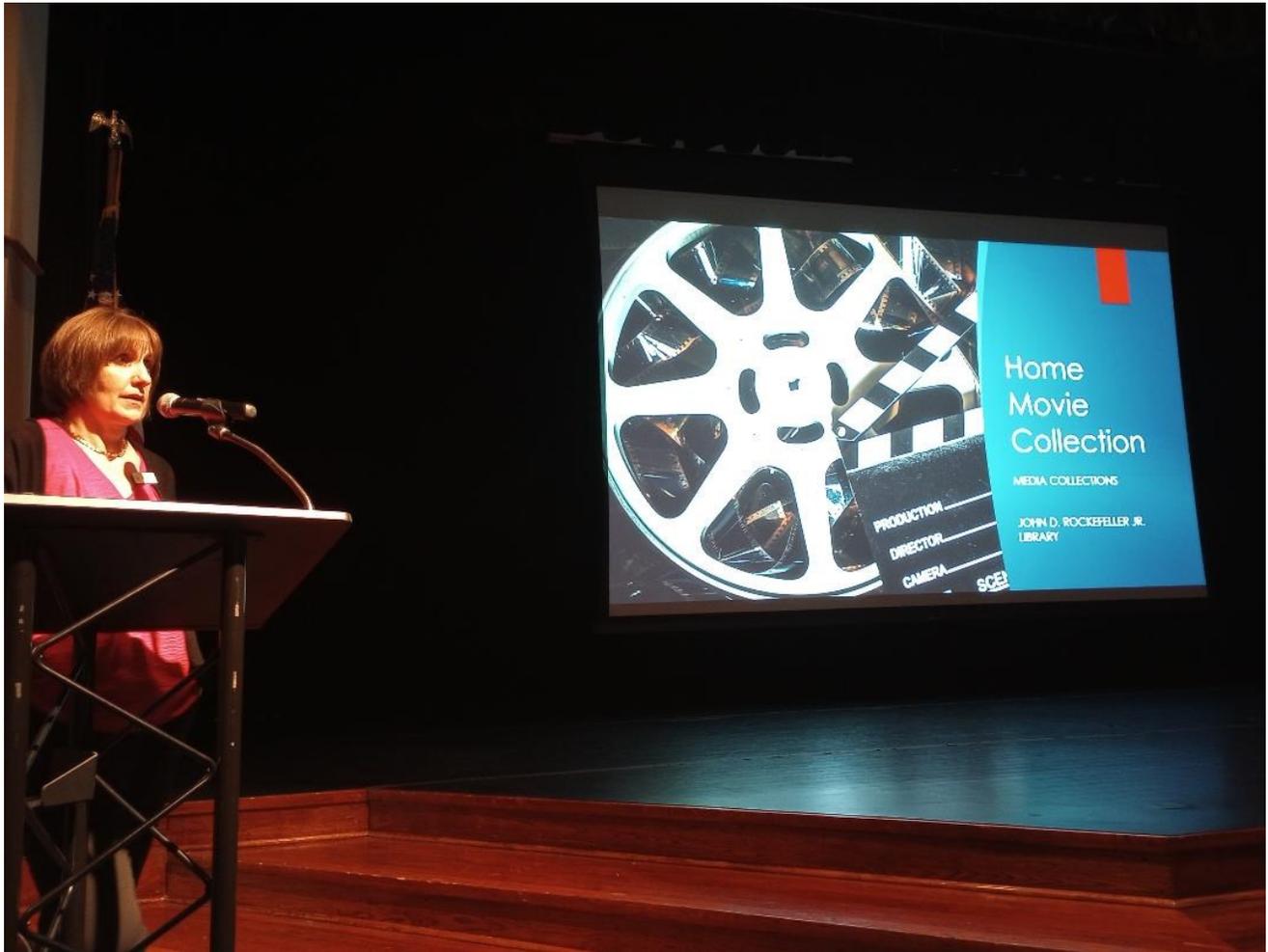
Jenna Simpson at the AMIA conference in Tulsa.

In November, Media Collections' Jenna Simpson represented the Rockefeller Library at the annual conference of the Association of Moving Image Archivists (AMIA) in Tulsa. The trip was made possible by a grant facilitated by GBH (Boston Public Media) and PB Core and was centered around attendance at a 2-day workshop on the PB Core metadata standard.

PB Core – the “PB” stands for “public broadcasting” – is a system for cataloging audiovisual materials, taking into account the special characteristics of time-based media. Therefore, it involves fields not used in other library or visual archiving catalogues: things such as frame rate, data rate, media format, and broadcast information. While attending the workshop, Jenna learned about this system and got hands-on experience using the PB Core cataloging tool. Jenna and the rest of the Media Collections team look forward to putting this new knowledge to use as they work to digitize and catalogue the many audio and video files in our collections here at Colonial Williamsburg.

While at the conference, Jenna was also able to attend talks on many other subjects of interest, including the development of the American Archive of Public Broadcasting, the work of the Audiovisual Media Preservation Initiative at the Smithsonian, legal questions around online library “virtual reading rooms,” and the challenges faced by other institutions as they work to preserve and catalogue their audiovisual collections. In addition, she appreciated the opportunity to visit the Greenwood Rising museum in Tulsa, as well as to make personal connections with other archivists stewarding home movie collections – a type of audiovisual resource which the Rockefeller Library is just beginning to collect.

HOME MOVIE COLLECTION PRESENTED



Tracey Gulden gives a presentation at the Williamsburg Regional Library.

On October 11, Tracey Gulden and Jenna Simpson of the Rockefeller Library’s Media Collections department gave a talk at the Williamsburg Regional Library about a new initiative to collect home movies. The Library is particularly interested in collecting films that show what the visitor experience was like in the mid-20th century. This is a period from which we have many photographs and some educational films, but very little “informal” motion picture footage. Home movies provide valuable information because they are personal expressions of what an individual tourist found interesting and noteworthy, and they often capture the small daily moments which would otherwise be lost to time. Our early collecting has already revealed footage of several such noteworthy (in hindsight) scenes, such as cars and carriage rides sharing the road.

In their presentation, clips from several films dating from the 1940s through the 1960s were shown, and tips were offered for those interested in cataloging and preserving their own home movie collections. The talk will be presented again at the Hennage Auditorium (in the Art Museums of Colonial Williamsburg) on March 25 at 1pm.

If you have home movies that you think would be of interest to the Rockefeller Library, please reach out to Tracey Gulden at tgulden@cwf.org.

MCWB ARCHITECTS EXAMINE ARCHITECTURAL HANDBOOKS



Former Colonial Williamsburg architectural historians Jeffrey Klee, center, and Mark R. Wenger, far left, brought their team from the Williamsburg office of MCWB Architects to Special Collections to examine a variety of rare books relating to architecture on October 26, 2023.

The Rockefeller Library was pleased to welcome former Colonial Williamsburg architectural historians Mark R. Wenger and Jeffrey Klee, and staff members of the Williamsburg office of MCWB Architects, to Special Collections on October 26, 2023. The group examined and discussed a selection of rare books to learn about the role architectural handbooks played in the design of exterior and interior features of eighteenth-century buildings. The Rockefeller Library is fortunate to hold a collection of architectural handbooks assembled by A. Lawrence Kocher, a distinguished architect who contributed his expertise to Colonial Williamsburg in two separate decades and helped to guide both the initial restoration effort and the post-World War II expansion.

Architectural handbooks became common after 1700 and combined text concerning contemporary design practices of the period with many illustrated plates offering ideas for exterior facades, floor plans, and exterior and interior details. Some of these handbooks served as practical “how-to” manuals, such as William Pain’s *The Practical House Carpenter, or, Youth’s Instructor*, 1796. Others served the purpose of providing potential clients with design prototypes to choose from, such as Batty Langley’s *The City and Country Builder’s and Workman’s Treasury of Designs*, 1740. Others focused upon the design and construction of specific architectural details, such as John Crunden’s *Chimney-piece Makers Daily Assistant*, 1766. Evidence that builders and designers in Virginia owned and consulted such handbooks can be found in the *Virginia Gazette*, where advertisements list specific architectural books available for sale by merchants.

VIRGINIA GAZETTE ACQUISITIONS



One of the 134 issues of the Virginia Gazette acquired by the John D. Rockefeller Library since 2018. This issue was printed by John Pinkney on December 8, 1774.

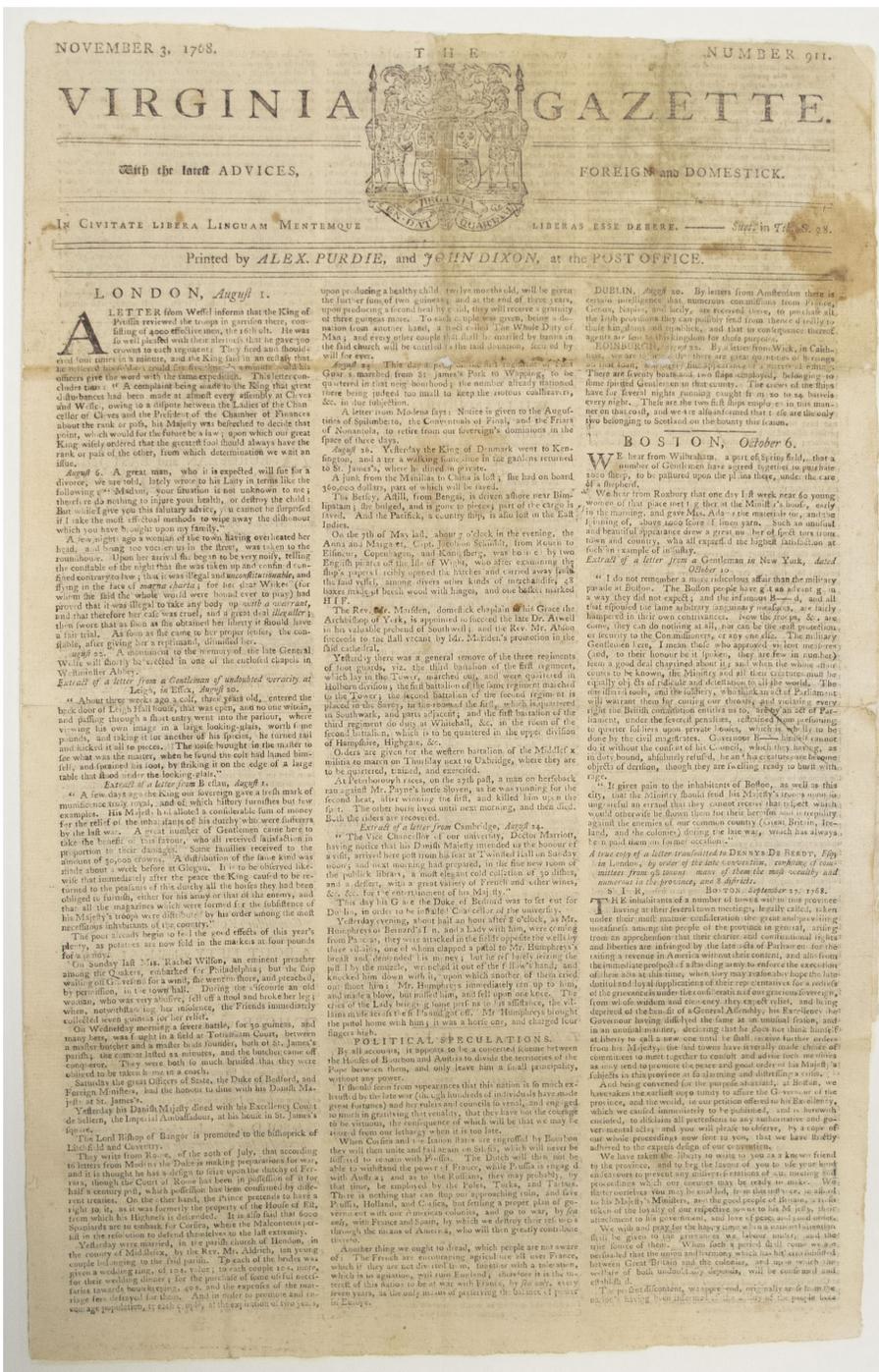
The John D. Rockefeller Jr. Library is pleased to announce that it has completed the purchase of 134 issues of the *Virginia Gazette* which first came to our attention in 2018. We would like to thank the donors whose generous contributions over the last six years made this possible. We also extend our thanks to the seller for allowing us the time to acquire the funds necessary to complete this transaction. The *Gazettes* acquired from these recent purchases were printed in 1774-1775 by all the printers active in Williamsburg and Norfolk during those years. They increase our ability to share the story of the Williamsburg and the American Revolution through primary sources.

With these recent purchases, the Rockefeller Library now owns almost six hundred issues of the *Virginia Gazette* printed in the eighteenth century. The oldest of these issues was printed by Williamsburg's second printer, William Hunter, on January 10, 1751. Only the third and fourth pages of the issue remain, and they have suffered significant loss. Colonial Williamsburg made its first purchase of a *Virginia Gazette* from a resident of Alexandria, Virginia in 1928. That issue from November 3, 1768, and over fifty other issues are currently out for digitization. They should be available online this April.

With these most recent acquisitions, the Rockefeller Library holds original copies of approximately 25% of all the *Virginia Gazettes* printed in the eighteenth century. So, while we celebrate these most recent additions to our collection, we continue to be on the lookout for more issues to add to our growing collection.

VIRGINIA GAZETTE ACQUISITIONS

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The first newspaper acquired by Colonial Williamsburg was this issue acquired nearly one hundred years ago.

ROCKEFELLER LIBRARY WELCOMES NEW STAFF



Rockefeller Library is delighted to welcome its new Reference & Outreach Librarian, Emily Petermann.

After double-majoring in History and Anthropology at Kansas State University, Emily earned a Master's in Library and Information Science from Simmons University in Boston. Before joining the team at the Rockefeller, she was a Library Assistant II at the Massachusetts Historical Society. Her academic background, experience with historical research using primary sources, and commitment to making history accessible to all make her a wonderful addition to our team.

Her focus at "the Rock" will be assisting library users with their research, leading library tours and outreach events, and providing training sessions on library resources.

ROCKEFELLER LIBRARY WELCOMES NEW STAFF

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The Rockefeller Library is pleased to welcome its new Records Management Program Manager, Brenda Grow.

She has a B.A. in Business Administration and over 35 years of records management experience. Before joining the team at the Rockefeller, she was the Records Manager at James City County.

Her new role at “the Rock” will be developing records management training, consulting on records-keeping best practices, and overseeing the operation of our records center.

ROCKEFELLER LIBRARY WELCOMES NEW STAFF.

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The Rockefeller Library is happy to introduce its new Associate Archivist, Rivi Feinsilber.

Rivi received her B.A. from Washington College with a major in History and minor in Anthropology. From there she earned her M.A. in History at Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU), followed by a Master's in Library and Information Science with a concentration in Archives Management from Simmons University. Before joining the team at the Rockefeller, she was an Assistant Archivist at The Mary Baker Eddy Library. Her academic research work includes Jewish colonial religious history, with an emphasis in the British North American colonies.

Rivi will use her research and archival skills to process collections and help with research requests.

VOLUNTEERS TRANSCRIBE NEWSPAPERS

Rockefeller Library volunteers do a lot of work behind the scenes to make materials more accessible to researchers. In Special Collections, volunteers are busy transcribing 18th century issues of the *Virginia Gazette* to make them keyword searchable. We greatly appreciate the time and energy they dedicate to this important work. Two of our volunteer transcribers do a lot more than just work on the *Virginia Gazette* project as you will see from their brief introductions below.



Special Collections volunteer Helene Kriner.

Helene Kriner graduated from Bowling Green State University with a BA and MA in American Studies. Her major areas of focus were eighteenth century history and literature. Given those interests, it should come as no surprise that she moved to Williamsburg from Cincinnati, Ohio, to be closer to eighteenth century historical sites. Since her move, Helene has been one of the Rockefeller Library's most dedicated volunteers. In addition to her work transcribing newspapers, Helene assists with interlibrary loan, shelving, inventorying, book repair, photograph identification, audio visual collection research, transcribing Colonial Williamsburg stage and musical performances, and indexing files.

VOLUNTEERS TRANSCRIBE NEWSPAPERS

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Special Collections volunteer Jack Baer.

After a thirty-two plus year career with the Federal Government, Jack Baer moved to Williamsburg in the summer of 2010 and immediately signed up to volunteer with Colonial Williamsburg. There, he trained to give tours of Wetherburn's Tavern and the Thomas Everard House. Jack served in this capacity for ten years and his goal quickly became to have young children on his tours that he was able to interest in colonial history. After ten years Jack began to search for another volunteer experience and began working in the John D. Rockefeller Jr. Library transcribing *Virginia Gazettes*. He says that the transcription project not only feeds his interest in finding out what goes on in day-to-day life in eighteenth century Williamsburg, but also gives him pleasure, knowing that he is enabling historians and those interested in colonial history to access the pages of 18th century *Virginia Gazettes* online. Jack has also been helping the Rockefeller Library staff inventory and document the audio-visual collection.

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](#) for information on how you can help support the Library and don't forget to like and follow us on Facebook: [Rockefeller Library at CW](#).