

HAMPDEN- SYDNEY COLLEGE



Tiger Tracks

Studies and career options for
Hampden-Sydney students
interested in public history

I've known for a long while that I wanted to go into the history field, either as a teacher or as a museum worker. It was through my time at Hampden-Sydney that I settled on museum work as a public historian. The professors and staff supported my career goals and gave me tools and experiences that I carry with me today. Going to H-SC gave me opportunities not afforded at other larger schools. The Rhetoric program provided a strong basis for writing, which is essential to success in the modern workforce."

—NATHAN RYALLS '11

PREPARING FOR A CAREER IN Public History

MINDSET

"Public historians come in all shapes and sizes. They are called historical consultants, museum professionals, government historians, archivists, oral historians, cultural resource managers, curators, film and media producers, historical interpreters, historic preservationists, policy advisers, local historians, and community activists, among many other titles. All share an interest and commitment to making history relevant and useful in the public sphere."

- The National Council on Public History

The fields of public history and historic preservation are dynamic and diverse. Professions in these fields cover a wide range of governmental, private, and collaborative work environments, sharing in common a love of history and the desire to preserve and interpret historical resources for the public. Given the abundance of historical resources and sites in Virginia, and the strong history program at H-SC, students with an interest in public history careers are well placed to explore and find success in these fields.

COURSES

Students should take a range of history classes to provide a broad base of historical knowledge, focusing much coursework on American history. Independent study courses allow students to focus research on a specific interest area and allow for special opportunities, such as designing an exhibit for the Atkinson Museum or presenting a paper at a professional conference. Students with a special interest in historic preservation should consider appropriate classes in visual arts. In addition to courses in American history, students might also want to take: Introduction to Historical Methods (HIST 299), Public Finance (ECON), Philanthropy (INDS), Public Speaking (RHET), and Topics in Art History (Virginia Domestic Architecture).

PROGRAMS AND EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

The Hampden-Sydney Atkinson Museum offers students many opportunities to gain skills and knowledge in public history, including volunteering, serving on the Student Museum Board or, in consultation with H-SC Museum Director Angie Way working on special exhibits. Students are also urged to join the Architectural Society, which regularly focuses on activities surrounding historic buildings.

Nearby, students can volunteer at the Moton Museum, the Museum of the Confederacy at Appomattox, or Sailor's Creek National Battlefield Site, or any of the other local historical sites and museums. Volunteering not only provides useful experience, but also develops professional contacts in the field. The Virginia Association of Museums and the National Council on Public History also provide students with a discounted member rate and a vast array of professional development activities.

PREPARATION FOR EMPLOYMENT

Hampden-Sydney students have interned at many area historic sites and museums, including the Museum of the Confederacy, Colonial Williamsburg, and the Museum of the Civil War Soldier at Pamplin, among others. The History Department webpage has a list of internship opportunities, and students should consult with their academic advisor when searching for internships. Students interested in Historic Preservation should consider internship or volunteer opportunities at the many regional historic buildings and homes.

ENTERING THE PROFESSIONAL CONVERSATION

Volunteer opportunities, internships, and other summer opportunities are invaluable when seeking a career in public history. It is never too early to seek out opportunities for hands-on experience, such as archaeological digs and museum internships or jobs. Museums offer many ways to explore the public history field, such as exhibit openings and installations, conservation reviews, or development of interpretive materials.

Networking with alumni and friends of the College can also be very useful in gaining industry knowledge. Many alumni of Hampden-Sydney work in the fields of public history and historic preservation, and are happy to conduct informational interviews with interested students. The Career Education Office, Alumni Relations, and faculty and staff, such as Dr. Emmons, Dr. Coombs, Professor Prevo, and H-SC Museum Director Angie Way can help connect interested students to alumni for networking opportunities.

Examples of opportunities to gain experience in public history:

A Yorktown historian is planning to attend a meeting on the progress of exhibits at Yorktown's new facility. He would obtain permission, if required, to invite an H-SC student to attend with him and prepare a short general description of the meeting. The student will do light research on the organization and materials to be discussed. After attending the meeting, the student will write a short description of the experience and offer input on its value to him and his future career.

Another example: Appomattox's Confederate Museum branch plans on loaning items to another Museum. The student would visit for one day and assist with the outgoing inventory, packing, or overseeing of loading of the materials to achieve an understanding of safe museum practices for the transportation of objects.

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Forming good
men and
good citizens
since 1776

GRAHAM DOZIER '88

Managing Editor of Publications at the Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, VA

The Virginia Historical Society is a major repository, research, and teaching center for the deep history of Virginia. Graham has continuously worked in the field of public history since graduating from Hampden-Sydney, even while completing a Master's in Library Science. He started his career at the Virginia Historical Society (VHS) as a manuscripts assistant and an archival assistant in the library of the Museum of the Confederacy. Graham then moved on to work as a project archivist, and then a research assistant at VHS. Since 2008 Graham has served as managing editor of publications at the Historical Society. He credits the Hampden-Sydney Rhetoric program, and many papers for his B.A. in History, for preparing him for this challenging work. While at Hampden-Sydney, Graham was inducted into two honor societies, Phi Alpha Theta (history) and Phi Beta Kappa (liberal arts). In 2015, Mr. Dozier was honored with the Founders Award for Outstanding Editing from the American Civil War Museum. His most proud work to date is the publication in 2014 of a collection of Civil War letters that he edited, entitled *A Gunner in Lee's Army: The Civil War Letters of Thomas Henry Carter*.



CARTER C. HUDGINS '00

President and CEO for the Drayton Hall Preservation Trust, Charleston, SC

Drayton Hall Preservation Trust, a 501c3 responsible for the operation and administration of Drayton Hall, is an historic site of the National Trust for Historic Preservation in Charleston, S.C., and among the finest examples of American architecture to survive from the colonial period. Dr. Hudgins has worked in the fields of archaeology, history and historic preservation for over 18 years. Prior to coming to Drayton Hall, he worked as a senior staff archaeologist for the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities Jamestown Rediscovery Project. He has completed archaeological field work throughout southeastern North America and the Caribbean, in addition to instructing undergraduate and graduate students. After graduating with a B.A. in history from Hampden-Sydney College, Hudgins received his M.A. and Ph.D. degrees in history and material culture from Royal Holloway, University of London. He has lectured and published extensively on the history, archaeology, and material culture of early America and post-medieval England with a particular focus on the 17th and 18th centuries. Hudgins is a board member of the Porter Gaud Alumni Association, an advisory member of the Charleston World Heritage Coalition, an advisory member of the American College of the Building Arts, an advisory member of The Mayor's Walled City Task Force in Charleston S.C., and a project member of the First Colony Foundation.

JEFFERY A. "FREE" HARRIS '90

Independent Historian and Historic Preservation Consultant

Jeffrey worked tirelessly at the National Trust for Historic Preservation for many years and through several positions before launching his career as an independent consultant in the fields of historic preservation and public history. Jeffrey's journey began with Hampden-Sydney and his involvement in several campus organizations, including UPLS, Phi Sigma Iota (foreign language honor society), and the Brothers of Hampden-Sydney. With a double major in History and Spanish, Jeffrey received a strong education from both departments, and credits the History faculty and strong Rhetoric program as essential building blocks to his work, including writing, public speaking, and historical analysis. After graduating from Hampden-Sydney, Jeffrey began studying at Clemson University and began working as an intern at the National Trust for Historic Preservation (NTHP). Jeffrey stayed with the NTHP for six years, moving from intern, to Program Coordinator, to the organization's first Director for Diversity. He traveled the country and worked with historic sites and preservation organizations on issues ranging from expanding the audiences that they served, historic site interpretations for the public, as well as programmatic ideas that enhanced diversity related outreach (programmatic, personnel or audience development), with a particular emphasis on African American, LGBT, Hispanic and Asian/Pacific Islander, military and U.S. sport related historic preservation issues. In 2008, Jeffrey embarked on the next chapter of his career as an independent consultant.



NATHAN RYALLS '11

Interpretive Program Development Associate at the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, Williamsburg, VA

Nathan currently works at Colonial Williamsburg, and the foundation for his success began at Hampden-Sydney. Nathan was active with many organizations on campus, but he is most proud of his work with the Atkinson Museum. He curated several exhibits as a student, among them Honor This Hill, and a special presentation on the history of Hampden-Sydney by presidential years for the inauguration of President Christopher B. Howard in 2010. Nathan was also active on campus as chairman for the Committee on Sustaining Traditions, and organized, and spoke at the "Honoring the Brotherhood" symposium. While studying history and rhetoric during the academic year, he used his summers to gain valuable work experience. Nathan interned at the Museum of the Confederacy, the Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation, as well as in several roles at Colonial Williamsburg. Before graduating in 2011, Nathan was honored with the Bowman Bliss Award (dedicated service to the Museum), the Eta Sawyer Bliss Award, and inducted into two honor societies – Phi Alpha Theta (history), and Omicron Delta Kappa (leadership). In 2013, Nathan completed an M.A. in Public History from James Madison University, and is an adjunct history instructor at Thomas Nelson Community College while also working at Colonial Williamsburg.

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO SPEAK WITH MEN LIKE THESE, PLEASE CONTACT THE CAREER EDUCATION AND VOCATIONAL REFLECTION OFFICE AT (434) 223-6105 OR VISIT WWW.HSC.EDU/CAREER-EDUCATION.HTML