



## SUBMISSION FORM

All submission forms must include the following information. Separate submission forms must be turned in for each eligible program. **Deadline: July 1, 2022.** Please include this submission form with the electronic entry. If you do not receive an email confirming receipt of your entry within 3 days of submission, please contact Gage Harter.

### PROGRAM INFORMATION

County: Loudoun County  
Program Title: Presenting the People's Records: Building Community Awareness of Historic Legacy  
Program Category: Communications

### CONTACT INFORMATION

Name: Gary M. Clemens  
Title: Clerk of the Circuit Court  
Department: Historic Records Division  
Telephone: 703-777-0277 Website: https://www.loudoun.gov/clerk  
Email: Gary.Clemens@loudoun.gov

### SIGNATURE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR OR DEPUTY/ASSISTANT COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Name: Tim Hemstreet  
Title: County Administrator  
Signature: [Handwritten Signature]

## **Sharing Local History Via Virtual Tools and Trading Cards**

In response to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, Gary M. Clemens, Clerk of the Circuit Court and his dedicated Historic Records Division developed virtual and novel approaches to share information related to the valuable historic artifacts in the Clerk's Office. When large gatherings of people was ill-advised or simply not feasible, the Clerk's Office develop a series of virtual education programs. To broaden the educational value of the virtual programs, the Clerk's Office developed public and private partnerships with several Loudoun-based organizations involved in local historic preservation and interpretation. These partnerships resulted in the presentation of four virtual programs. As professional baseball games resumed with spectators permitted back in the stadiums, the Clerk's Office decided to capture the enthusiasm for the return of baseball by creating a series of local history trading cards, reminiscent of baseball trading cards. The Clerk's Office created twelve (12) unique trading cards that reflect interesting local history based upon actual court records retained in the Clerk's Office. These trading cards provide information on records, people and events that reflect key aspects of Loudoun County's 260-year history.

### **Criteria for the Award**

- Provide an inexpensive solution for the delivery of public programs.
- Promote awareness of and encourage research of the Clerk's unique collection of historic court records.
- Promote historic records preservation and local heritage for the citizens of Loudoun County.
- Provide a model for other Virginia county governments and courts to promote historic preservation to their citizens.

### **Clerk of the Circuit Court's Historic Records**

Loudoun County's Clerk of the Circuit Court has one of the most complete and diverse collections of historic court records in Virginia. The Clerk's Office retains a vast collection of all court records dating back to its formation in 1757. In contrast, the majority of Virginia's counties have lost portions of their court records by virtue of the Civil War or other disasters. By statute, Clerks of the Circuit Court in Virginia are guardians of the court records and are responsible for proper storage, conservation and public access. Few residents understand, appreciate or realize the wealth of historic documents maintained by their local Clerk of the Circuit Court. The Clerk's Office in Loudoun

County developed a community outreach program to connect more people to the valuable historic resources in the Clerk's Office.

### **Overcoming Challenges to Conventional Education Programs**

Since 2015, the Clerk's Historic Records Division ("the team") has presented numerous in-person programs to build awareness of Loudoun's rich history and heritage found in its historic records. The COVID-19 pandemic changed the dynamics of these public programs that had been highly successful prior to COVID-19. The last in-person education program was conducted in October 2019. To avoid another year without any education programs, the team developed a virtual approach to presenting relevant local history information and connecting with local residents to keep them engaged with these programs. These programs were made possible by virtual technologies and using information from local historic preservation partners in Loudoun County.

The virtual programs were created in a collaboration with multiple local government agencies and historic preservation organizations. The expansion and utilization of these partnerships resulted in unique topics and programs that embraced greater diversity. The team and their partners worked together to identify unique collections of documents and artifacts to be discussed during these presentations. Additionally, individuals who had specialized and expert knowledge of these unique collections were the featured speakers during these presentations. The team and their partners shared their respective media resources and community connections to promote the programs in Loudoun County and in the greater Metropolitan -DC region. Our program partners, including the following agencies, groups or organizations:

- Loudoun County Public Affairs and Communications
- Loudoun County Public Libraries
- Loudoun County Planning and Zoning
- The Thomas Balch Library
- Edwin Washington Project
- Loudoun Heritage Farm Museum
- Black History Committee of the Friends of the Thomas Balch Library

## **Virtual History Education Programs**

Understanding the “online fatigue” that local residents likely experienced with teleworking, the last thing the team wanted to do was lose potential interest in potential audience members by hosting long virtual programs. Conventional in-person programs were typically offered in a 3-hour window on an open house basis. A three-hour open house approach in a virtual environment simply would not achieve the intended goals so the team decided that 1.5 hours was sufficient. Each presenter created their own PowerPoint program that was supported by records, artifacts, and photographs from their collections. Each virtual program was recorded so any resident who was not available to participate in the virtual live program could watch the program at a later date on the Clerk’s Office website. The PowerPoint programs were converted to PDFs which are easily available via download from the website. Using a historic preservation email distribution list, a mass email was disseminated to provide notice of the recorded program. Unlike in-person programs, which are singular one-time events, the virtual programs are typically available for viewing for several months on the Clerk’s Office website. These virtual programs included the following:

- *Expanded Access to History: Loudoun County’s Free Black and Enslaved Papers*-February Black History Month
- *The Udderly Fantastic Dairy Industry in Loudoun County*-June National Dairy Month
- *Back to School: Education in Loudoun’s Past*-September-New School Year
- *The Ground Holds Secrets*-October-Archeology Month

## **Using Trading Cards to Expand Awareness of History**

The team created twelve (12) history trading cards to succinctly share information related to interesting historic records retained in the Clerk’s Office. The design and size of the trading cards were based on traditional baseball trading cards. The twelve trading cards highlighted important court records, events and individuals that shaped Loudoun’s history since 1757. Each card includes an image of a portion of an actual court record on the front and a brief history of relevance of that court record on the back. Each card was printed in batches of 1,000 for distribution through a variety of local government agencies and historic preservation group partners. Two to three trading cards were released for dissemination on cycles based upon monthly themes as follows:

## **February-Black History Month**

- *Loudoun County Emancipation Association*
- *Clerk of the Circuit Court Historic Records Division Background*

## **May-Preservation Month**

- *“Red Tape”Term and Relevance to Government Programs*
- *Clerk George K. Fox’s Protection of Records During Civil War*

## **July -Independence Day Recognition**

- *Reading of the Declaration of Independence in Loudoun County - 1776 Court Order Book*
- *Daniel Coleman (Free Black) Revolutionary War Pension Request*

## **September-New School Year**

- *Margaret Mercer: Educator and Opponent of Slavery*
- *The English Reader: Early Education in Loudoun*

## **October-Archeology Month**

- *Courthouse Archaeology and Artifacts from Courthouse Grounds*
- *The 1757 Plan of Leesburg*

## **November-Veterans’ Day and Elections**

- *1902 Loudoun County Poll Book*
- *Muster Roll in the War with Germany*

## **Program Promotion**

The team promoted the virtual programs and trading cards through the Loudoun County Public Affairs and Communication Office. Press releases were sent to local media and posted the events on the County’s Facebook and Twitter sites. The team sent mass emails to local history supporters groups and worked with local historic organizations and partners to post information on their social media sites. Clerk Clemens presented information regarding the trading cards and disseminated cards to local groups such as Rotary Clubs, the Loudoun County Chamber of Commerce and other local civic groups. The Clerk’s Office also requested several key government agencies and local groups who receive large groups of visitors to assist with trading card distribution. These agencies or groups include the following:

- Loudoun County Public Libraries
- Loudoun County Economic Development
- Loudoun County Parks and Recreation
- Loudoun County Public Affairs and Communications
- Loudoun County Planning and Zoning
- Loudoun Chamber of Commerce
- Visit Loudoun
- The Thomas Balch Library

- Daughters of the American Revolution
- Edwin Washington Project
- Loudoun Heritage Farm Museum
- Black History Committee of the Friends of the Thomas Balch Library
- Library of Virginia

### **Program Results: Worthiness of a VACO Award**

The 2021 virtual programs were so successful and the feedback so incredibly positive that numerous groups requested that the Clerk's Office continue these offerings in 2022. In February 2022, a new and expansive Black History Month virtual event was provided. The 2021 trading cards were intended as a one-year project but based upon the positive reception from the community and the popularity of these trading cards, the Clerk directed the team to develop a whole new series of trading cards for 2022. This combination of virtual programming and trading cards in 2021 presented opportunities for the Clerk of the Circuit to pursue new partnerships with other historical organizations which have provided mutually beneficial results by combining resources. The Clerk's office and our partners (Black History Committee of the Friends of the Thomas Balch Library and Loudoun Freedom Center), were invited to provide a presentation at the Virginia Association of Museums Conference in March 2022. During this presentation, the Loudoun team provide helpful information to other museum and history groups that can be replicated and implemented in their respective jurisdictions.

The virtual history education programs and trading card programs provide an example of the power of creating and utilizing local public/private partnerships, creating unique tools such as virtual history lessons and trading cards to engage and attract more interest in local history and most importantly empowering citizens we serve in local government. The development and nurturing of key partnerships, the development of unique education programs and the deployment of creative marketing/outreach programs can be easily adopted by other local government agencies to promote awareness of resources and information, inspire residents to expand their knowledge of valuable historic resources and provide a unique learning experience.

# Supporting Document Links

## Historic Trading Cards

The trading cards are arranged in a grid and include the following titles and descriptions:

- Margaret Meason: Educator and Opponent of Slavery**: A portrait of Margaret Meason and a document snippet.
- Reynolds House**: A photograph of the Reynolds House in Leesburg, Virginia.
- David Coleman, Revolutionary War Soldier**: A portrait of David Coleman and a document snippet.
- David Coleman: Revolutionary War Soldier**: A portrait of David Coleman and a document snippet.
- George K. Fox Jr., Clerk of County Court**: A portrait of George K. Fox Jr. and a document snippet.
- George K. Fox Jr., Clerk of County Court**: A portrait of George K. Fox Jr. and a document snippet.
- John M. Allen to the Board of Health**: A document snippet.
- The Plan of Leesburg**: A map of Leesburg, Virginia.
- The Plan of Leesburg**: A map of Leesburg, Virginia.
- The Loudoun County Emancipation Accusation**: A document snippet.
- Declaration of Independence**: A document snippet.
- Reading of the Declaration of Independence**: A document snippet.
- 1762 Loudoun County Voters Poll Book**: A document snippet.
- Loudoun County Voter Poll Book**: A document snippet.
- Clerk of the Circuit Court Historic Records Division**: A photograph of the Historic Records Division.
- Historic Records Division - Foundation**: A document snippet.
- Master Hall in the War with Germany**: A photograph of the Master Hall.
- Loudoun's World War I Service**: A document snippet.
- The English Reader: Early Education in Loudoun**: A document snippet.
- The English Reader: Early Education in Loudoun**: A document snippet.
- The English Reader: Early Education in Loudoun**: A document snippet.
- Courthouse Archaeology**: A photograph of archaeological artifacts.
- Courthouse Archaeology**: A photograph of archaeological artifacts.
- Courthouse Archaeology**: A photograph of archaeological artifacts.

### Declaration of Independence

*transcribed from the Latin Annual Log of 1776*

*The Declaration of Independence by the Hon. Congress was read at the Courthouse Doors by the Sheriff pursuant to an order of the Governor & Council of Virginia.*

*Annus Independentiae delatus 12 die Augusti 1776*

*"The Declaration of Independence by the Hon. Congress was read at the courthouse door by the sheriff pursuant to an order of the Governor & Council of Virginia."*

### Reading of the Declaration of Independence

Year: August 12, 1776  
Where: Leesburg, Virginia

On August 12, 1776 Josias Clapham, George West, Francis Peyton, Thomas Lewis and Samuel Love were given the official Oath as Justices for Loudoun County, Commonwealth of Virginia in the United States of America. After the Oath was administered, the Declaration of Independence was read by the Sheriff on the Courthouse steps in accordance with an Order from the Governor and Council of Virginia.

Gary M. Clemens, Clerk of the Circuit Court  
Historic Records Division  
Court Order Book G: 1776-1783



## **Virtual Programs**

Historic Records Website <https://www.loudoun.gov/2173/Events-Research-Tips-Exhibits>

2021-Virtual Programs <https://www.loudoun.gov/5677/2021-Online-Exhibits>

## **News Articles**

[https://www.loudountimes.com/news/loudoun-county-circuit-court-clerk-unveils-history-trading-cards-praises-local-dar-chapter-for-8k/article\\_c72491e4-efc5-11eb-9eb6-1b7e30140ea8.html](https://www.loudountimes.com/news/loudoun-county-circuit-court-clerk-unveils-history-trading-cards-praises-local-dar-chapter-for-8k/article_c72491e4-efc5-11eb-9eb6-1b7e30140ea8.html)

<https://loudounnow.com/2021/08/03/clemens-highlights-historic-records-introduces-collectable-cards/>



