

LIA at Work

Literacy InterActives, Inc.

A Nonprofit Organization www.literacyinteractives.org

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This issue of "LIA at Work" focuses on the initiative to stabilize and reconstruct the Parker Sydnor historic log cabin in Mecklenburg County, Virginia.

Newsletter Contributors

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Alexandria J. Reyes
Angelita Reyes
Douglas B. Sydnor
Carol Wrenn
Bernice Reyes-Akinbileje
With special thanks to
Egbet Abraha
Danelle Mallen
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VA Tech Design Team Unveils Master Plan for Historic Site



Members of the Virginia Tech State University Community Design Assistance Center at work on the master plan. Left to right: Lara Browning, Liam Smith, Elizabeth Gilboy, Harley Walker, and Arian Korkuti.

"A place to learn. A place to work. A place to play. A place to gather. A place to remember the past." Harley Walker, Landscape Architecture Designer with the Community Design Assistance Center (CDAC) of Virginia Tech State University, unveiled this powerful theme of the master plan for the Patrick Robert "Parker" Sydnor log cabin site at a public community meeting that was held at the County Administrative Office in

Boydton, Virginia.

The design team from the CDAC presented a final draft of the architectural plan to Literacy InterActives (LIA) stakeholders and community representatives from various Southside localities and beyond.

The June 2013 workshop presentation was the accumulation of town meetings, reconnaissance visits to the site, and four months of CDAC architectural team hours that brainstormed and engineered ways to stabilize, preserve, and rehabilitate the log cabin site for public opening in 2015.

"One of the important features that we have kept in mind is that the site is past, present, and future—it represents a continuum of people, events, and things," explains Arian Korkuti, Architecture Project Coordinator of the CDAC team. In addition to Korkuti and Walker,

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Uncovering an Antebellum Past

Long before the town of Clarksville became Virginia's only "lakeside town," a nineteenth-century log cabin stood inconspicuously at the intersection of Cabin Point "on the other side of the river" from Clarksville. The intersection was carved out of the wilderness as long ago as 1798. Did you know that Clarksville has a historic site with environmental, architectural, and diverse cultural significance? It's called the Patrick Robert "Parker" Sydnor log cabin site.

But, there is another noteworthy distinction. As a site already listed on the National Register of Historic Places and the Virginia Landmarks Register, the log cabin site is the only such designation in Mecklenburg County that commemorates African American history, culture, and continuum of economic development and achievement.

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Meet a Board Member

“When stories are not shared, we lose the rhythms of our past and our sense of place and connection to the communities that form our present.”

The Public Historian,
November 2012

“There’s a world of difference between truth and facts. Facts can obscure truth.”

Maya Angelou



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What’s happening in your area?
<http://www.vacivilwar.org/marketplace.php>

(Logo used with permission of the Virginia Sesquicentennial of the American Civil War Commission)



Inez Arnett-Ferrer recently retired from the New York Presbyterian Medical Center. She earned her Bachelor of Business Administration from Iona College in New Rochelle, New York. As a professional in project management, staff development and organizational leadership management, Mrs. Arnett-Ferrer has lived in New York and New Jersey. Through diligence and commitment to her profession, she attained a Six Sigma Black Belt in Business Management.

After a productive career of 39 years, Mrs. Arnett-Ferrer decided it was time for

a change of scenery (and weather) and moved to sunny Clarksville, Virginia. She now lives a contented life with her husband, Allan P. Ferrer, who is also retired.

Inez brings a skill set in management that inspires and sustains peak performance. In addition to being an avid reader, gardening her roses, and volunteering as a GED teacher at her church, Inez is enthusiastic about joining Literacy InterActives as a member of the Board of Directors. She wants to be a part of “bridging our communities” in her new home of Virginia.

Literacy InterActives, Inc., is a 501 (c)(3).
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Meet a Board Member



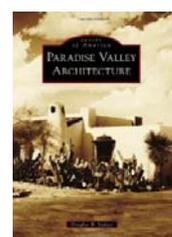
Douglas B. Sydnor, FAIA, grew up in Phoenix, Arizona, the son of an architect. He received a Bachelor of Architecture from Arizona State University (1976) and a Master of Architecture from Harvard University (1977).

Mr. Sydnor has practiced architecture exclusively in Arizona for the past 35 years and with his own Scottsdale-based practice, Douglas Sydnor Architect and Associates, Inc., for the past 20 years.

The firm’s services include a full range of architectural historic preservation, urban design, environmental graphics, and public art integration. He has completed 200 projects and studies and up to 500,000 square feet of facilities. Among his notable projects is the award-winning Scottsdale Community College Applied Sciences Classroom Building.

Mr. Sydnor also brings to the LIA Board experience as a columnist for the *Scottsdale Republic*. In addition, he has authored three books: *Images of America: Scottsdale Architecture* (2010), *Pluggger: The Architecture of Reginald Sydnor* (2011), and *Images of America: Paradise Valley Architecture*, (2013).

Doug is extremely active in the wider community, serving on over 200 commissions, boards, committees, subcommittees, task forces, and design charities. He is the recipient of numerous awards, including the Scottsdale Leadership Frank W. Hodges Alumni Achievement Award.



VA Tech Design Team, continued from page 1

team members include Lara Browning, Liam Smith, and Elizabeth Gilboy, Director of the CDAC.

With the assistance of a Virginia Department of Forestry grant, LIA commissioned the CDAC to create a unique site master plan that will be instrumental in actualizing the Sydnor project initiative.

—Angelita Reyes

The LIA Board of Directors expresses appreciation to the St. Matthew Baptist Church Board and to Mrs. Judy Sheffield of the County Administrative Office, Boydton, Virginia, for their assistance, to everyone from the diverse Virginia communities who attended the public meetings, and to the School of Social Transformation, Project Humanities, and the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at Arizona State University.

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“The log cabin site is named after my great-grandfather, Patrick Robert ‘Parker’ Sydnor,” explains Dr. Angelita Reyes of Tempe, Arizona. Born in 1854, Parker Sydnor was a stone mason and successful tombstone carver who lived in the cabin during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Dr. Reyes continues, “I was often in Virginia doing field work—research about the site and Southside counties. And every time I went there, I introduced myself to new people, especially the elderly. They were also ‘libraries.’ As an African proverb tells us, when the elders die, libraries are gone. And so, I often went to the elders—from all races and backgrounds—in order to learn more about the past through their memory-telling.”

Along with a team of diverse stakeholders and community supporters, Reyes is working to stabilize and reconstruct the log cabin so that it will be opened to the public in 2015. During the course of her efforts to research and promote the site, Reyes met two brothers, Brad Sydnor and Douglas Sydnor, who live in Scottsdale, Arizona. Their famous father, the late Reginald G. Sydnor, was an architect in Arizona, and Douglas Sydnor is an architect as well.*

“A remarkable discovery came about. The Sydnor brothers are descendants of a shared Sydnor lineage from Virginia,” explains Reyes. “I’m the descendant of a once-enslaved Sydnor (Parker Sydnor), and Brad and Doug are Anglo descendants of the same collateral Sydnor slaveholder from Halifax County, VA. We’re cousin descendants. We’ve crossed historical bridges and are

Literacy InterActives, Inc., announces three new members of the Board of Directors. We are extremely pleased to welcome Peter V. Bergstrom, PhD; Inez Arnett-Ferrer; and Douglas B. Sydnor, FAIA.

LIA takes this opportunity to give a tremendous thank you to Geneva Ichaka who served as a member of the Board for two years. We will miss Geneva’s commitment, talents as a dedicated teacher, and creative ideas. Geneva is headed to the beautiful landscape of Colorado in time to start the new school year as a Spanish teacher. We wish you all the best, Geneva!

now in collaboration on this fascinating project in Virginia that has another link to Arizona in a surprising and unusual way. It’s exciting to be working to create a really new sense of place—one that will build new bridges across cultures and shared histories.”

Portions of this article appear in ASU News, March 26, 2013. To learn more about Mecklenburg County, Virginia, and about some of the descendants of Cabin Point, read a captivating account at www.common-place.org in a piece titled “Not Even Past: Six Acres and a Mule or Searching for Vacey Skipwith.”

—Bernice Reyes-Akinbileje

**See the profile of Douglas Sydnor, a member of the LIA Board of Directors, on page 2 of this issue of “LIA at Work.”*

Coming Soon!
Virginia Historical Highway Marker dedication ceremony for the Parker Sydnor historic log cabin site

Visit our website at
www.literacyinteractives.org

"Bridging Our Communities"



Literacy InterActives, Inc.,

a nonprofit organization,
serves as a resource organization using technology, culture, and public history for new learnings, education, and for bridging communities. We promote and develop interactive and interpretative programming in diverse communities.

A place to learn. A place to work. A place to play. A place to gather. A place to remember the past. Community stakeholders in Southside Virginia participated in lively meetings with the Virginia Tech State University Community Design Assistance Center team to discuss conceptual ideas for the Patrick Robert "Parker" Sydnor historic log cabin site. The architectural plan will conceptualize the site for the appeal of living history tourism and economic development. The design plan will be completed in the summer of 2013.

Stay tuned for the historical highway marker public ceremony.

The Virginia Historical Highway Marker program commemorates facts, people, events, and places prominently identified with the history of the nation, state, or region. The VA Department of Historic Resources has approved statewide significance for the Patrick Robert "Parker" Sydnor historic log cabin site.

