



IMAGE COURTESY OF THE LIBRARY OF VIRGINIA

1 Jean Miller Skipwith (1748–1826)

MECKLENBURG COUNTY
BOOK COLLECTOR

Jean Miller Skipwith, Lady Skipwith, assembled one of the largest libraries owned by a Virginia woman early in the nineteenth century.

NOMINATED BY:
ALYSON L. TAYLOR-WHITE, CHESTER



IMAGE COURTESY OF THE LIBRARY OF VIRGINIA

2 Kate Mason Rowland (1840–1916)

RICHMOND
WRITER

Kate Mason Rowland is best known for her biography of her great-great-granduncle George Mason.

NOMINATED BY:
RASHAD HAIRSTON, IN PATRICIA COSTIS'S FOURTH-GRADE CLASS (2009), DREAMKEEPERS ACADEMY, NORFOLK

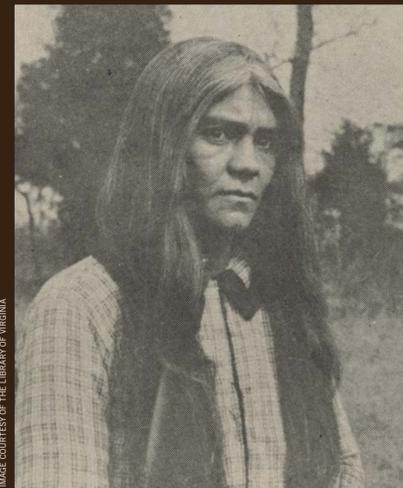


IMAGE COURTESY OF THE LIBRARY OF VIRGINIA

3 Mollie Holmes Adams (1881–1973)

KING WILLIAM COUNTY
UPPER MATTAPONI LEADER

Mollie Holmes Adams helped preserve the Upper Mattaponi heritage by passing on the almost-lost art of feather weaving and recording her herbal remedies.

NOMINATED BY:
ARLENE MILNER, KEYSVILLE



IMAGE COURTESY OF THE STOVALL FAMILY WITH THANKS TO THE DARRA GALLERY, INCHBURGH COLLEGE

4 Queena Stovall (1888–1980)

LYNCHBURG AND AMHERST COUNTY
ARTIST

Taking up painting early in her sixties, Queena Stovall created works that recalled her life in rural Virginia and earned her the title the "Grandma Moses of Virginia."



IMAGE COURTESY OF THE LIBRARY OF VIRGINIA

5 Ethel Bailey Furman (1893–1976)

RICHMOND
ARCHITECT

Ethel Bailey Furman was one of the earliest African American women to work as an architect in Virginia.



IMAGE COURTESY OF THE LIBRARY OF VIRGINIA

6 Edythe C. Harrison (1934–)

NORFOLK
CIVIC LEADER

Edythe C. Harrison's love of music led her to help found the Virginia Opera Association.



IMAGE COURTESY OF THE LIBRARY OF VIRGINIA

7 Marian A. Van Landingham (1937–)

ALEXANDRIA
CIVIC LEADER

Marian A. Van Landingham founded a one-of-a-kind art center in Alexandria.



IMAGE COURTESY OF THE LIBRARY OF VIRGINIA

8 Janis Martin (1940–2007)

DANVILLE
SINGER AND COMPOSER

Known as the "Female Elvis," Janis Martin was a pioneer rockabilly star.

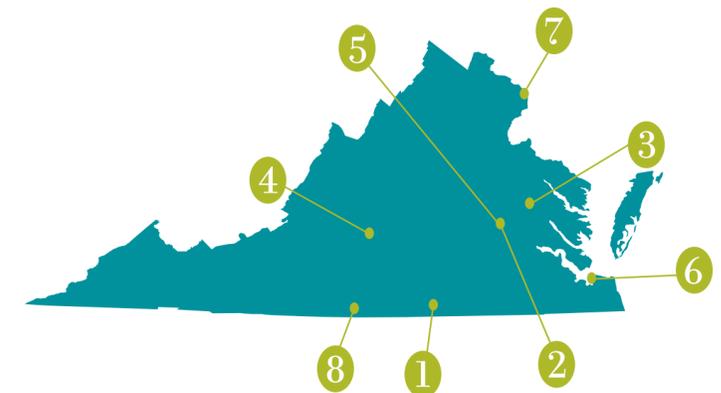
The Library of Virginia presents the 2010 Virginia Women in History project to honor eight women, past and present, who have made important contributions to Virginia, the nation, and the world. We encourage you to learn more about these fascinating women who saw things differently from their contemporaries, developed new approaches to old problems, served their communities, strove for excellence based on the courage of their convictions, and initiated changes in Virginia and the United States that continue to affect our lives today.

VIRGINIA WOMEN IN HISTORY 2010

Presented by:



LIBRARY OF VIRGINIA



www.lva.virginia.gov/vawomen



MEDIA SPONSOR



Women have played an integral part in Virginia from its beginnings, yet their contributions have often been overlooked in the history books. Until well into the twentieth century, written histories tended to focus on the historically male-dominated fields of government and politics, the military, and large-scale property ownership to the virtual exclusion of all other venues of leadership or achievement. They ignored women's critical roles as wives, mothers, educators, nurses, lay leaders, farmers, artists, writers, reformers, pioneers, business leaders, laborers, civic activists, and community builders.

Today, we recognize and celebrate women's accomplishments in all walks of life, particularly in March, which Congress has designated as National Women's History Month. The Library of Virginia presents the 2010 Virginia Women in History project to honor eight women, past and present, who have made important contributions to Virginia, the nation, and the world. We encourage you to learn more about these fascinating women who saw things differently from their contemporaries, developed new approaches to old problems, served their communities, strove for excellence based on the courage of their convictions, and initiated changes in Virginia and the United States that continue to affect our lives today.

This year's project marks the Library of Virginia's participation in the 2010 statewide program "Minds Wide Open: Virginia Celebrates Women in the Arts."

Jean Miller Skipwith
MECKLENBURG COUNTY
BOOK COLLECTOR

An avid book collector and amateur botanist, **Jean Miller Skipwith, Lady Skipwith** (February 21, 1748–May 19, 1826), assembled one of the largest libraries owned by a Virginia woman early in the nineteenth century.



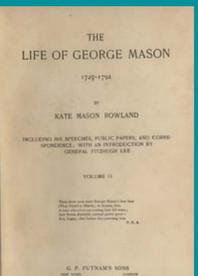
IMAGE COURTESY OF THE LIBRARY OF VIRGINIA

Born near Petersburg, Jean Miller began her lifelong passion for acquiring books after returning to Scotland with her family. She arrived back in Virginia at about age thirty and married Sir Peyton Skipwith, a widower, in the autumn of 1788. After 1795 they resided at Prestwoud, in Mecklenburg County. While managing a large household that included her four children, Lady Skipwith continued to buy books and eventually acquired more than 800 volumes. Her library contained numerous novels and other works of fiction as well as volumes on travel and history, along with encyclopedias, cookbooks, essay collections, and children's literature.

A devoted gardener, Lady Skipwith owned botanical books that she used when compiling her extensive lists of flowers, shrubs, trees, and other plants that she grew and hoped to grow. She designed the gardens at Prestwoud, including an orangery, a beehouse, and special beds where she could observe the growth habits of particular plants. She collected specimens locally and traded seeds with other gardeners in the United States and overseas, and her notes continue to be a valuable resource for historians and botanists in documenting early American gardens.

NOMINATED BY ALYSON L. TAYLOR-WHITE, CHESTER

Kate Mason Rowland
RICHMOND
WRITER



Kate Mason Rowland (June 22, 1840–June 28, 1916) was the great-great-grandniece of George Mason, author of the Virginia Declaration of Rights. She wrote *The Life of George Mason, 1725–1792, Including His Speeches, Public Papers, and Correspondence*, a two-volume work published in 1892. Five years later Rowland completed a two-volume *Life of Charles Carroll of Carrollton*,

IMAGE COURTESY OF THE LIBRARY OF VIRGINIA

1737–1832, profiling a Maryland signer of the Declaration of Independence.

Born in Detroit, Rowland later moved to Virginia with her family and lived in Richmond during the Civil War. Her experiences while tending to wounded soldiers influenced her later writing and work in memorializing the Confederacy. Rowland edited *The Poems of Frank O. Ticknor, M.D.* (1879), a southern lyric poet, and Charles L. C. Minor's book *The Real Lincoln* (1901). She also coedited *The Journal of Julia LeGrand, New Orleans, 1862–1863* (1911). Sensitive to negative portrayals of the Confederacy, Rowland contributed to many magazines and newspapers. She objected to northerners who described former Confederates as "Rebels" and insisted on referring to the conflict as the "War Between the States."

As corresponding secretary of the national United Daughters of the Confederacy for 1896 and 1897, Rowland lobbied for organizing new local chapters in northern and southern states. After living in Baltimore, by 1900 she had returned to Richmond and was serving as an honorary president of the Virginia Division UDC when she died in 1916.

NOMINATED BY RASHAD HAIRSTON, IN PATRICIA COSTIS'S FOURTH-GRADE CLASS (2009), DREAMKEEPERS ACADEMY, NORFOLK.

Mollie Holmes Adams
KING WILLIAM COUNTY
UPPER MATTAPONI LEADER

Mollie Wade Holmes Adams (October 8, 1881–December 14, 1973) grew up in King William County in the Adamstown (later the Upper Mattaponi) Indian community. She faced the same hardships as her neighbors, including poverty, difficulty in attaining education, and the racism of outsiders. In 1900 she married Jasper Lewis Adams, who served as chief of the Upper Mattaponi from 1923 to 1973. Mollie Adams joined her husband as a leader of the tribe as he facilitated the purchase and construction of the Sharon Indian School in 1919 and the Indian View Baptist Church in 1942.

Raising her twelve children, Adams faced the bigotry of Walter A. Plecker's management of the Virginia Bureau of Vital Statistics. Plecker systematically worked to reclassify all Virginia Indians as "Negro" or "colored" and therefore relegate them to the same racist laws to which African Americans were subject. In a counter move to Plecker's claims against the Indians, several white men signed a statement certifying Adams's Indian ancestry.

Despite this adversity, Adams was a tribal elder and passed on the almost-lost skill of feather weaving. She aided anthropologists by allowing her picture to be published in one study and by explaining her herbal remedies to researchers. Adams built a strong base for the modern Upper Mattaponi through her church and tribal activism. Her son Andrew Washington Adams was chief of the Upper Mattaponi from 1974 to 1985, and her grandson, Kenneth Adams, is the current chief.

NOMINATED BY ARLENE MILNER, KEYSVILLE



TURKEY FEATHER CAPE MADE BY MOLLIE HOLMES ADAMS. IMAGE COURTESY OF JAMESTOWN-YORKTOWN FOUNDATION.

Queena Stovall
LYNCHBURG AND AMHERST COUNTY
ARTIST

Dubbed the "Grandma Moses of Virginia," **Emma Serena Dillard "Queena" Stovall** (December 20, 1888–June 27, 1980) painted nostalgic scenes of people and activities in rural Virginia. Her grandmother gave her the nickname "Queena" based on a child's attempt to pronounce Serena. She married Jonathan Breckenridge "Brack" Stovall in 1908; they had five sons and four daughters. The Stovalls lived at various times in Lynchburg and nearby Elon.

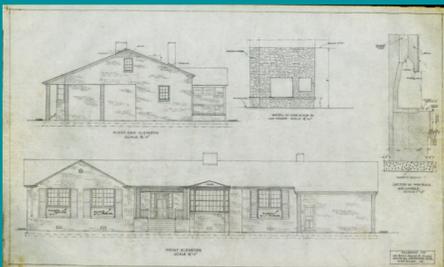
In 1949 Stovall enrolled in an art class at Randolph-Macon Woman's College, where

her instructor, the celebrated painter Pierre Daura, encouraged her to drop the class and develop her own unique painting style. In 1956 Stovall mounted a solo exhibition at the Lynchburg Art Center.

Stovall's approximately fifty paintings document her life on a farm, as well as events that occurred among her neighbors, both black and white. She combined careful detail with bright colors to produce nostalgic scenes of ordinary life. She occasionally used figures cut out of magazines to solve compositional problems. Largely self-taught, she maintained an informal connection to Daura. Stovall continued to paint until her health began to fail late in the 1960s. She completed her last composition, *Comp'ny Comin'*, in 1967. The collections of Lynchburg College, the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, and the New York State Historical Association hold examples of her work.

Ethel Bailey Furman
RICHMOND
ARCHITECT

The daughter of a Richmond building contractor, **Ethel Madison Bailey Carter Furman** (July 6, 1893–February 24, 1976) studied architecture privately in New York City. Returning to Richmond with her family in 1921, she began designing houses for local residents. She worked in partnership with her father, while also raising three children and holding a variety of other jobs to supplement her family's income.



RESIDENCE FOR MR. AND MRS. JUNIUS A. SNEAD, GLEN ALLEN. N.D. ACC. 41145. COURTESY OF THE LIBRARY OF VIRGINIA.

Furman surmounted the discrimination she faced as a black woman, often by submitting her building plans to local administrators through the male contractors with whom she worked. Late in the 1920s she was the only woman who attended the Hampton Institute's annual builders' conference. She continued her training in the 1940s with coursework in architectural drafting at the Chicago Technical College. Throughout her long career, Furman designed an estimated two hundred residences and churches in central Virginia as well as two churches built in Liberia. Her 1962 design for the educational wing of Richmond's Fourth Baptist Church was recognized on the National Register of Historic Places as part of the Church Hill North Historic District extension in 2000.

A leader in her community, Furman was recognized for her extensive civic work by the *Richmond Afro-American* in 1958. A Church Hill park was named in her honor in 1985.

Edythe C. Harrison
NORFOLK
CIVIC LEADER

Edythe Colton Harrison was born in Detroit, Michigan, on September 17, 1934. Her mother, a concert pianist, and her father, an opera devotee, instilled in her a love of music. Following her marriage to Stanley L. Harrison, a real estate executive, she moved in 1957 to Norfolk, where she raised two daughters and a son. Harrison became active in the arts community and in numerous civic causes, including advocacy for day care to aid working mothers, membership in the National Conference on Christians and Jews, and support for women's reproductive rights and the proposed Equal Rights Amendment. From 1980 to 1982 she served in the House of Delegates. In 1984 Harrison won the Democratic nomination for the United States Senate but lost in a Republican landslide. She taught a class entitled Women in Leadership at Old Dominion University.

A formidable leader who described herself as a professional volunteer, Harrison was the principal founder in 1974 of the Virginia Opera Association, which rapidly grew into a well-

Queena Stovall

IMAGE COURTESY OF THE STOVALL FAMILY WITH THANKS TO THE DAURA GALLERY, LYNCHBURG COLLEGE



recognized regional company that stages four operas each performance season in Norfolk, Richmond, and Fairfax County. She directed the campaign to raise \$10 million to convert an old Norfolk auditorium into a modern opera house, which opened in 1993 as the Edythe C. and Stanley L. Harrison Opera House. In 1979 President Jimmy Carter appointed Harrison to the Advisory Committee on the Arts at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, in Washington, D.C.

Marian A. Van Landingham
ALEXANDRIA
CIVIC LEADER

Marian A. Van Landingham (born September 10, 1937) encourages artistic spirit and volunteerism in her community. She was born in Albany, Georgia. In 1973, as the president of the Alexandria Art League, Van Landingham led a movement to renovate a dilapidated torpedo factory on the Potomac River and transform it into a center for artists' galleries, classrooms, and studio spaces. She not only handled much of the politicking but also pitched in on the manual labor of renovation. The Torpedo Factory Art Center opened in 1974 and has become an innovative space for working artists as well as the centerpiece of the revitalized historic downtown Alexandria.

In 1980 Van Landingham established the organization that became Volunteer Alexandria to match prospective volunteers with organizations in need of help. As a member of the House of Delegates from 1982 to 2005, she fought to increase funding for human services, education, healthcare, and aid for the homeless. Van Landingham was the first woman to chair the important Committee on Privileges and Elections. She has received numerous awards for her public service, and several annual service awards bear her name.

Always an artist at heart, Van Landingham still keeps a studio at the Torpedo Factory Art Center. One of her favorite themes is the depiction of pathways or doorways leading away into the distance. Of the theme she says, "On a path there is always the possibility of discovery."

Janis Martin
DANVILLE
SINGER AND COMPOSER

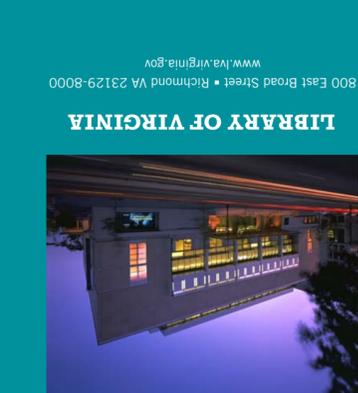
Janis Darlene Martin (March 27, 1940–September 3, 2007) began playing guitar and singing by age six. Her mother promoted the precocious girl, who won numerous talent contests before the age of ten. After appearances on radio stations in Danville and Martinsville, she began performing in Richmond on WRVA's well-known Old Dominion Barn Dance. A test pressing made there led to a recording session in Nashville for RCA Victor. Martin had a top-40 hit with the song "Will You, Willium," and the B side, "Drugstore Rock and Roll," became an enduring rockabilly classic. Martin combined her early country influences with a later appreciation for the singing of rhythm-and-blues artists. The resulting hybrid music, rockabilly, crossed musical and racial boundaries and was a major foundation for the emergence of rock and roll.

Record executives dubbed Martin the "Female Elvis." She recorded at six sessions from 1956 to 1958, enjoyed numerous industry accolades, and performed on *American Bandstand* and the *Tonight Show* and at the Grand Ole Opry. Martin's fall



IMAGES ABOVE AND LEFT COURTESY OF THE TORPEDO FACTORY ART CENTER, ALEXANDRIA. IMAGES BELOW WRVA RADIO COLLECTION (1925–2000), ACC. 38210, LIBRARY OF VIRGINIA.

stardom was just as dramatic as her meteoric rise to fame—she secretly married and became pregnant, so RCA Victor dropped their teenage star. Martin returned to Southside Virginia, raised her children, managed a country club, and occasionally played locally. A resurgence of interest in rockabilly music in the 1980s brought her international attention. Martin performed in Europe and at major rockabilly shows across the United States. She died of cancer in 2007, leaving a powerful legacy of recordings and fans worldwide.

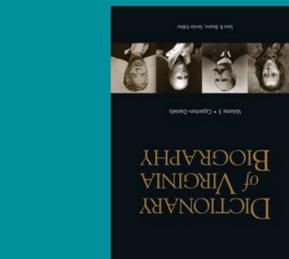


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Learn more about Virginia women in the *Dictionary of Virginia Biography* (Richmond: The Library of Virginia, 198–) and on the Library's Virginia Memory Web site (at www.virginiamemory.com. Instructional materials and nomination forms for the 2011 project are available at www.lva.virginia.gov/vaw2010.



VIRGINIA WOMEN IN HISTORY 2010

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