

ANNE & RYLAND
BROWN | TEACHER
RESEARCH
FELLOWSHIP
AT THE LIBRARY OF VIRGINIA

The 2016 Anne and Ryland Brown Teacher Research Fellowship
Open to Virginia 4th–12th Grade History and Social Science Educators

The Library of Virginia is pleased to announce the Anne and Ryland Brown Teacher Research Fellowship. The goal of the program is to enhance knowledge and training in history and social science instruction in the commonwealth of Virginia by providing educators with an opportunity for in-depth study and the development of teaching materials in collaboration with members of the Library of Virginia’s professional staff. Over the course of the summer, Brown Fellows work with Library of Virginia staff members to pursue research on an approved topic and produce educational materials based on the results of their findings. Brown Fellows are also required to make presentations regarding their research and finished projects at educational conferences.

This year the Fellowship will focus on research and projects in support of ***First Freedom: Virginia’s Statute for Religious Freedom***, the Library of Virginia’s upcoming exhibition:



First Freedom: Virginia's Statute for Religious Freedom

Thomas Jefferson's "Act for Establishing Religious Freedom" is one of the most revolutionary pieces of legislation in American history and is justly celebrated as the "Great Charter" of conscience rights. No one familiar with today's public and political debates about religious liberty and the relationship of church and state can doubt that the statute holds lasting significance. The statute encouraged the growth of religious freedom and profoundly influenced the formulation and later interpretation of the First Amendment. But we know less about what it settled and more about what it left undecided. The arguments over the intent and interpretation of the statute included issues that are debated today.

The Virginia Act for Establishing Religious Freedom, adopted in 1786, made religious beliefs and practices private matters with which the state government could not interfere. No person could be excluded from any public office as a result of religious beliefs. The law did not prohibit discussion of religious beliefs in public debate about political issues. Nor did it clearly indicate whether laws to regulate certain behaviors, such as drinking and gambling, were prohibited because some people believed that their religious beliefs required them to avoid those behaviors.

The First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, ratified in 1791, guarantees the free exercise of religious liberty and prohibits the federal government from establishing a religion. Interpretations of the Virginia statute influenced interpretations of the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. In the twentieth century, federal courts have ruled that state governments also may not restrict religious liberty or establish religion. But what kinds of government actions might restrict the free exercise of religion? What does "establishment of religion" mean? What kinds of government actions might be regarded as establishing religion? Did the founding generation intend for the First Amendment to serve as a wall of separation between church and state, as Thomas Jefferson wrote? What is the proper role of religion in a country with multiple religious traditions?

First Freedom: Virginia's Statute for Religious Freedom will be on display at the Library of Virginia from April 18, 2016, through March 2, 2017. We are looking for a Fellow who is interested in developing teacher resources that examine the history of religious freedom in Virginia. The Fellow will be asked to create a set of documents to be added to the online primary resource collection [Document Bank of Virginia](#) (DBVa), the Library of Virginia's initiative to get documents into classrooms. Using primary sources, teachers and librarians can make history relevant to students while helping them learn and understand state standards. DBVa will teach students to be critical thinkers as they analyze original documents and draw their own conclusions about Virginia's past.

The Brown Teacher Research Fellowship includes:

- A stipend of \$2,000 for each recipient
- Up to \$500 reimbursement for travel to an approved conference as a presenter

Eligible candidates for the Brown Teacher Research Fellowship must:

- Be residents of Virginia
- Have a minimum of three years of teaching experience in history and/or social science
- Exhibit the use of creative and engaging teaching techniques in the classroom
- Demonstrate a commitment to the use of primary sources as a part of classroom instruction
- Be available to complete two weeks of research between June and September 2016

Applications must include:

- A résumé
- A statement of interest in 500 words or less outlining:
 - reasons for applying for the fellowship

- teaching philosophy
 - what he or she hopes to gain from the experience
- A letter of support from an immediate supervisor
- A sample lesson plan and/or narrative description demonstrating creative uses of primary sources, along with examples of student work based on the lesson, if available

DEADLINE: Complete applications should be e-mailed to the following address by **Friday, May 6, 2016:**
education@lva.virginia.gov

For additional information, please contact Catherine Fitzgerald Wyatt, Education and Programs Coordinator Senior, at catherine.wyatt@lva.virginia.gov or 804-692-3999. The selected Fellow will be notified by May 27, 2016.