

Untold Virginia
Episode One Transcript
“Introducing Untold Virginia From VPRS”

Elizabeth: Is it on?

Ruth: The light is on. So, yes?

Elizabeth: I wish Frank would just let us use Garageband.

Ruth: Frank said these Sennheisers are way better.

Elizabeth: I don't know how to use a Stein-howser. I know how to use Garageband.

Ruth: And soon you'll learn how to use these. Don't worry. I've been studying. You'll pick this up in no time.

Elizabeth: Okay. Whatever you say. Okay. Ready?

Ruth: To stop?

Elizabeth: Stop?

Ruth: Aren't we going to have to edit this out?

Elizabeth: No, no, no. Having the casual moments? Super important. Marc Maron does it all the time. And so does Sarah Koenig. And Alix Spiegel. And PJ Vogt, Jon Lovett -

Ruth: Fine. But we should still have a legit show intro. Just like a 'hey welcome!'

Elizabeth: On the count of three.

Ruth/Elizabeth: One, two, three.

Elizabeth: Welcome to The Undiscovered History of Virginia's Forgotten World.

Ruth: Absolutely not.

Elizabeth: What?

Ruth: This is way too long. Also, I hate it.

Elizabeth: That's okay. I have backups. Welcome to the Secrets of Williamsburg That You Don't Know.

Ruth: That's not better.

Elizabeth: What about just Secrets of Williamsburg.

Ruth: So clearly, we should have come up with the title together.

Elizabeth: Not even Secrets of Williamsburg?

Ruth: No!

Elizabeth: Fine. What about Welcome to Untold Virginia.

Ruth: Alright, okay. Yeah, we're getting there. It's a good work in progress -

Elizabeth: We're getting there? Ruth, we're in the studio. We're recording today. Hello. Okay. Untold Virginia?

Ruth: Yeah, cool.

Elizabeth: Okay. Hold on. Welcome to Untold Virginia.

Ruth: Nice. Okay.

Elizabeth: Welcome to Untold Virginia, a new podcast brought to you by VPRS. Williamsburg, Virginia's number one public radio station.

Ruth: Technically, it's also the first podcast brought to you by VPRS.

Elizabeth: I'm your host, Elizabeth Miller.

Ruth: And I'm also your host, Ruth Morgan. The first thing you need to know about Elizabeth and I is that we are huge history nerds.

Elizabeth: We are.

Ruth: Elizabeth came up with the idea to host a podcast with the local radio station and when I was coming up with potential topics and show ideas.

Elizabeth: Well, we both did that.

Ruth: Right. But for me, it was a history podcast from the get go, because it's something that we both love and have fun with. And now, Untold Virginia is our way to bring that fun to you.

Elizabeth: But it's also going to be so much more than that. Like I said earlier, we're coming to you from Williamsburg, Virginia, which is basically the heart of American history. It's not like history is a niche topic anymore. Like anyone can cover the Boston Tea Party. Anyone can talk about Washington crossing the Delaware.

Ruth: Obviously.

Elizabeth: But. Who can bring you a grounded podcasting experience that focuses on the overlooked and underappreciated parts of American history? Elizabeth Miller and Ruth Morgan. Virginia history is

the cornerstone of all American history. But that doesn't mean that we're going to talk about the Mayflower or the Revolutionary War or Pocahontas -

Ruth: Although we could. That Disney movie has some problems.

Elizabeth: Totally. But. This podcast is going to go way past that basic stuff. We're getting into the actually cool stuff.

Ruth: We're talking Old World.

Elizabeth: Witch trials.

Ruth: Day-to-day life of early immigrants and how the traditionally English and European cultures came together and simultaneously bridged the divide between settlers and the Native American tribes that already inhabited the land.

Elizabeth: No matter how massive.

Ruth: Or tiny.

Elizabeth: We're here to dive into it. This is Untold Virginia.

[beat]

Elizabeth: I'm not sure what else we should do right now.

Ruth: Well, we've done the show intro, what the show is going to cover. Maybe we go into us as hosts and why we should be the people you want to listen to?

Elizabeth: Yes, yeah, very smart. So we mentioned briefly that I had the idea to make a podcast and Ruth was a major part in selecting the focus on history. But Ruth and I go way back. We have been friends for years.

Ruth: Good segue.

Elizabeth: Ruth and I met at college. We actually were roommates for part of the time which feels like forever ago. In total, we've been in Williamsburg for almost a decade, which is crazy.

Ruth: It makes me feel so old. I hate it.

Elizabeth: Though we met in class or, or was it at the newspaper? I can't remember.

Ruth: Both, I think?

Elizabeth: Well, we met at college. We became roommates a little while after, and that was that.

Ruth: Outside of this podcast. I work as a small business consultant.

Elizabeth: And I work in digital marketing.

Ruth: Hey, Liz. I have a question for you.

Elizabeth: Hey, Ruth, I have an answer for you.

Ruth: What made you want to start a podcast?

Elizabeth: Great question. I guess, well, I've listened to a bunch of them and it kind of became like, whoa, I think maybe I could do this. So even though this is our first podcast, we've been practicing a lot and studying up and listening to a lot of great other shows. So you know, it's gonna be so great. Sorry in advance for any technical difficulties. Ruth's been working really hard -

Ruth: But I'm new. So.

Elizabeth: They'll work themselves out eventually.

Ruth: Now what?

Elizabeth: Oh, maybe you interview me or something?

Ruth: What do you mean?

Elizabeth: You asked me a question before, and it was so good.

Ruth: I mean, yeah, yeah, I thought it was good.

Elizabeth: Right. So maybe ask me more questions, and then we'll get more sound bites out of that. You know, like they have to fall in love with us to fall in love with the show.

Ruth: Oh, sure? Yeah, that makes sense. And then you interview me back?

Elizabeth: Sure.

Ruth: Cool. So for our viewers at home, what was the moment that you realized you were so interested in local history?

Elizabeth: So I originally grew up outside of Boston and on weekends, my mom and I would walk different parts of the Freedom Trail. For those of you who don't know, the Freedom Trail is a path throughout Boston, Massachusetts that leads you to a lot of historical sites. It's about two, two and a half miles and it takes you to the Old State House, Paul Revere's house. Et cetera.

Ruth: When you and I walked it, what was that place? Remember the one with all the food?

Elizabeth: All the food? Oh, yes. Ruth came one time, and we walked to Quincy Market.

Ruth: Yes, that was it.

Elizabeth: Yeah. But that's not really on the trail.

Ruth: Gotcha. Gotcha. Gotcha. So was there a specific site that you liked best?

Elizabeth: I'm really, really loved the old corner bookstore. It opened in 1718 and was home to Ticknor and Fields one of the largest publishing companies of the 19th century. They did "Walden" by Henry David Thoreau. Oh, "The Scarlet Letter." They also printed one of America's most popular pieces, "The Midnight Ride of Paul Revere."

Ruth: My God, that makes me so nostalgic. When I was in third grade, we all took turns reading stanzas in front of the class, it was so fun.

Elizabeth: Listen, my children, and you shall hear.

Ruth: Of the Midnight Ride of Paul Revere.

[laughter]

Ruth: So if you grew up surrounded by all that history in Boston, why here? Why stay in Williamsburg?

Elizabeth: I mean, I like living here. But I really do think that Virginia is the center of all American history. Like, of course, you have Jamestowne, but even before that the name 'Virginia' actually applied to everything the British found in North America. There's a very probable alternate timeline where we never got 13 different colonies with different names. We just had one big colony called Virginia. You don't get the chance to feel like you've added to the fabric of America but that's essentially what I'm trying to do with this podcast.

Ruth: What we're trying to do with this podcast?

Elizabeth: Right. Right. Right. What we're trying to do. Oh, do you remember when we went to go see 'The Witch'?

Ruth: The one from a few years ago?

Elizabeth: Yeah, yeah. With the girl from 'Split'

Ruth: Oh, yeah. What about it?

Elizabeth: So like, when you and I went to go see that movie we couldn't stop talking about it the entire time. Remember that? Like, like the clothes were too clean. And the animals should have been different, right? The house was way too big. It was just so inaccurate.

Ruth: Right.

Elizabeth: They could have easily filmed something more historically accurate.

Ruth: So you're saying that 'The Witch' isn't historically accurate.

Elizabeth: We're in the middle of an amazing place and have all of this stuff to uncover, to dig up. It's our chance to expand upon how history is viewed through a modern lens.

Ruth: Hmm. Fascinating. Very insightful. Very riveting stuff. Thank you so much for joining me today, Elizabeth.

Elizabeth: Thank you, Ruth Morgan. It has been my pleasure.

Ruth: Okay. Do you want to switch?

Elizabeth: Um, what time is it?

Ruth: Quarter of the hour?

Elizabeth: We should probably go get Frank. Don't you think?

Ruth: You think so?

Elizabeth: Yeah, yeah. I don't want to make him wait on us.

Ruth: I mean, I don't think he's gonna mind.

Elizabeth: How about this? I'll interview you after and we can bring the whole thing full circle.

Ruth: I mean, if you think that's the best thing to do. Yeah, no problem. Can you stop recording?

Elizabeth: Oh, yeah, totally. This button?

Ruth: Yeah, I think so.

[button click]

Elizabeth: Woah. Woah, woah, woah.

Ruth: No, no, no, not that button. Try the edge of the row.

Elizabeth: This one? I don't know if -

[button click]

Ruth: Do you care what chair you're sitting in?

Frank: Here's just fine.

Ruth: Do you want a bottle of water? Tea? Anything?

Frank: I really am fine. Thank you.

Ruth: You know, we're just doing our best to be good hosts while also being good hosts.

Frank: Did you girls find a music track you liked?

Elizabeth: Yes, we found it off of one of those stock music CDs. It's like kind of distorted, but in a cool way. Listeners will love it,

Frank: if you say so. The whole podcast trend is still very new to me.

Elizabeth: It's become mainstream enough, I think. It's basically digital radio.

Frank: Well, I'm happy to try it. It's always nice to expand the station's footprint.

Elizabeth: Exactly. You can easily get millions of listeners once you hit the iTunes charts.

Ruth: Millions? We'll be lucky if we get a thousand.

Elizabeth: This is going to be big, Ruth.

Ruth: Since when?

Elizabeth: Since we decided to do a podcast.

Ruth: Let's talk about a analytics strategy later. Right now, let's just, you know. We want to make a good show. Ready to get started?

Frank: Absolutely.

Elizabeth: So Ruth and I are going to do super quick intro, back into the studio, blah blah blah blah blah. And then we'll introduce you and then we'll just see where it takes us.

Ruth: If you feel uncomfortable at all, you want to stop, take a breather, redo a sentence, ask another question, whatever. Don't worry about it. We'll just edit that out later. And then you know, we'll go from there. But we just want you to feel comfortable. So whatever you got to do.

Frank: That I can do.

Ruth: Great. Liz, do you want to kick it off?

Elizabeth: Moi?

Ruth: Yeah, you can do it.

Elizabeth: Okay, cool. And we're recording?

Ruth: Yeah, yeah, we are.

Elizabeth: Okay. Three, two, one. Welcome back to Untold Virginia, listeners. So. Now that you know about me and about Ruth, we wanted to introduce you to our very first guest.

Ruth: Frank Gansevoort! He is the general manager for VPRS. Native of Williamsburg, Virginia. His first radio experience was as an operations intern at the local ESPN affiliate. Fancy. He has a BA in communications with a concentration in radio broadcasting, as well as a Master's in History from the College of William and Mary. Hey, that's where we went.

Elizabeth: Go Griffs go.

Ruth: What, what.

Frank: Great minds.

Ruth: Upon graduation, Frank entered the field of public radio and joined the Virginia Broadcasters Association. In 1998. He joined VPRS as both a producer and operational associate. Wearing many hats, I see. Frank has been at VPRS since. Did we get everything?

Frank: Everything that's fit to air.

Elizabeth: Frank, welcome to the show.

Frank: Thank you very much for having me.

Elizabeth: Frank, before we get into your history, can you tell us a little bit about your relationship with our show?

Frank: Um, well, I've been in Williamsburg all my life and have always prided myself and being an active member of the community. Ruth's family is also active in the local community and so we've always been very close. Ruth's parents did some business abroad when she was younger and while they traveled, she stayed with me.

Elizabeth: And how long were they away?

Ruth: A few years, give or take some months. I've known Ruth since she was very little and I'm very excited for her and you, Elizabeth, to go on this journey together.

Elizabeth: Thank you, Frank.

Ruth: I'd say that's all pretty accurate. Um, but let's talk more about you. Is this the first podcast you've ever partaken in?

Frank: It is.

Ruth: One of the reasons we wanted to have you on the show is because while our goal with Untold Virginia is to focus on the history of the area and share little-known stories, you're very familiar with a lot of these stories. Can you tell us a little bit about that?

Frank: I would say that my, my interest in history and Virginia history peaked pretty early. I spent much of my high school career not on the football field or hanging out with other kids drinking beers in the park. I spent a lot of my time wearing heavy cotton overcoats, volunteering at the local Historical Society doing some reenactments. That was a lot of fun for me.

Elizabeth: Do you have a favorite moment of that? Like, can you think back? I know it's a long time ago. But can you think back to -

Frank: Well, not too long ago. Let's not date myself here. So occasionally, we would reenact a few witch trials.

Ruth: Ooh, spooky.

Frank: And I remember a dear friend of mine at the time, Linda Whitman, was a very talented actress and she was playing the witch in question. And she gave a spectacular performance of a human being being burnt alive and to this day, one of the greatest acting pieces I've ever seen. And, this is true, just last week, I saw Linda in a Crest WhiteStrips commercial. So.

Ruth: Wow.

Frank: Linda, if you're listening -

Elizabeth: Her acting skills have paid off.

Frank: You still have a fan.

Ruth: That's really cool.

Elizabeth: Very cool. And you mentioned that these things were happening at the Historical Society. And I know that ,Ruth, your parents were also involved.

Ruth: Yeah, I mean, but like it's not about them like you.

Elizabeth: Sure.

Ruth: Speak to your experience.

Frank: Of course.

Elizabeth: Sure, sure, sure. Of course. sure. Of course, right.. It's Frank Time.

Frank: Talking about the society. Now that's ancient history.

Ruth: Frank, you're full of them today.

Frank: Don't get me started. But if I may suggest some topics to dive into, it would be really great to talk about the life and how great Williamsburg really is. Because I think when you do something like you go on a tour or you visit an old battle fort, you really get to live the history. You get to put on the

jacket, you get to experience it in a more genuine way. It was a lot of fun, a lot of fun living history. We read about history, we can listen to a great podcast.

Ruth: Right.

Frank: But so rarely do we get to firsthand experience it be with the buildings, wear the traditional clothing, speak the traditional language. So that's, that's how I really fell in love.

Elizabeth: Yeah, I think -

Frank: With history and with Virginia history, Williamsburg history.

Ruth: Now I know you've talked about Linda a little bit, but what was your role in that? In that particular reenactment?

Frank: I was a tour guide. Yeah, I held the record for most tours in a day.

Ruth: Wow. And what, what's the record?

Frank: Four. Well, they were long tours.

Ruth: Yeah, sure.

Elizabeth: Absolutely.

Frank: By the end, I lost my voice. As we can as we can tell I, I found it again.

[laughter]

Elizabeth: So Frank, where are some of the places that our listeners can go in order to immerse themselves in the Virginia history? I know, are those tours still available? And if not, where are other locations that our friends who are listening can go?

Frank: They are still doing tours, which I'm very happy to hear. I would suggest starting with going to Colonial Jamestowne. My friend Deidre is one of the National Park Service rangers there.

Elizabeth: Wow.

Frank: And works in the area and is very familiar with many of the local stories, the witch trials, ghost stories, and some more concrete and, you know.

Ruth: Factual.

Frank: More factual.

Ruth: Yeah, exactly.

Elizabeth: And actually, Ruth, are there stories between Frank and your parents? And any moments that like, jump -

Ruth: I mean, Frank, you can talk about that?

Frank: Nothing you'd want to put in a history book, I'll tell you that.

Ruth: Yeah, I mean, I, let's keep it about you, the history. Um.

Elizabeth: But they were involved.

Ruth: Yeah. Yeah.

Elizabeth: Cool. I mean, that's such a good connection, right? Like, that's such a special thing to have your parents and then Frank who's this dear family friend all participating and preserving the history of Jamestowne and Williamsburg and all that.

Frank: And that's what's great about Virginia is the community.

Ruth: Yeah.

Frank: The community stretches outward and we're all we're all a part of it.

Elizabeth/Ruth: But I mean -

Frank: We can all we can all do something. We can volunteer, we could go on a tour. We could write a blog post, you know. I'm a little bit technically challenged in my, my advanced years. But.

Frank: You're doing great, Frank, on this podcast.

Frank: Thank you so much. Is this, is this on?

Elizabeth: Yes. I mean, you mentioned about how much life there is here. So the more, the more people that are preserving our history and exploring it, the more it will grow. So I totally agree with you. I think that's wonderful. Diving into what our listeners today can do to be more involved in history or our history, or how they can experience it more. Are there any recommendations you have for our listeners to get out there and explore the history?

Frank: Sure, I would definitely recommend starting with Colonial Jamestowne, as I mentioned.

Elizabeth: Right.

Frank: My friend Deidre is one of the National Park Service rangers. I can set everything up for you, in fact. She'll be more than happy to let you in and, and divulge some of our our shared secrets.

Elizabeth: We get a private tour? Oh, my gosh, that'd be amazing.

Ruth: That'd be really cool.

Elizabeth: Yes! Thank you so much.

Ruth: We can get, like, field audio and everything. Where can listeners find you on social media?

Frank: Oh, I'm not on any social services. Just come down to VPRS. I'm always around.

Elizabeth: Thank you so much for joining us today. Your experience and insights are invaluable to Untold Virginia.

Frank: So are we done?

Elizabeth: Oh, yes, Frank, my gosh, thank you so much for everything.

Ruth: Seriously, this is going to be a great first episode.

Elizabeth: Yeah, Ruth, what do you think? I mean, I was thinking we could edit some of the audio and listen to it. And then Frank, we could send you our first draft so you can review?

Frank: Oh, I'm just happy I could help as a guest. No need to review the episodes or anything, just send me regular updates with what you're doing, how you're feeling what, your plans are. I wouldn't want to have to tap my spy network for this.

Elizabeth: Will do. Thanks again, Frank.

Frank: I won't be far.

[Frank leaves]

Elizabeth: Want to just get right back into it?

Ruth: Yeah. Sure.

All right. That was Frank Gansevoort, the station manager of VPRS. Be sure to check out our next episode in a week.

Ruth: Oh, yeah, a week.

Elizabeth: Where we'll start to dive into some of Frank's suggestions. I'm Elizabeth.

Ruth: And I'm Ruth. Thanks for listening.

Elizabeth: See you soon.

[sighs/laughter]

Elizabeth: I think that went well.

Ruth: Yeah, it was solid.

Elizabeth: What are you thinking?

Ruth: Well, we did talk about you interviewing me. And we didn't really get to that.

Elizabeth: Oh, we could do that in a later episode though.

Ruth: Sure. But it's the principle of the thing. I want us to be able to get everything we want to in a recording session and then we can edit it however we want to. Then if we want to save something for later, we can.

Elizabeth: But the plan is that I'm editing the episode still. Right?

Ruth: Yeah. But like, from an engineering perspective, it would be good.

Elizabeth: Yeah, that's fair.

Ruth: The other thing, and I know we never really talked about this or whatever, but I just don't really want to talk about my parents on air.

Elizabeth: Why not? It could just be really great. I mean, the connections you have to the exact stuff that our show is about -

Ruth: No but Liz, it's just, I get that, but it's just private stuff and I want to keep it private. Is that cool? And like, besides, they barely talk to me. It's just a whole thing. You know that.

Elizabeth: Yep, I can do that. No more parent talk.

Ruth: Thank you. Good. Cool. That was it, really. I mean, do you have any notes?

Elizabeth: Um, no. I thought it was great. Maybe after I listen to the tape. So Frank is going to reach out to us with the Dierdre details.

Ruth: The ranger?

Elizabeth: Yeah.

Ruth: Oh, yeah.

Elizabeth: What?

Ruth: I don't want to make Frank pull favors for us.

Elizabeth: You don't want to go to Jamestowne?

Ruth: No, I do. But we can just go we don't have to have like a private tour or whatever.

Elizabeth: Ruth! She is a park ranger. It'll be awesome.

Frank: It's just a little weird. I don't know why. It's just a vibe I get.

Elizabeth: You're just being overcautious, which is great. But I think you have to ignore the vibe.

Ruth: Liz, you say overcautious, I say thorough.

Elizabeth: We can still go to Jamestowne and be cautious.

Ruth: I don't know.

Elizabeth: Please, please, please, please.

Ruth: Promise me We won't do anything too weird.

Elizabeth: Well, it's a historical site tour. There's nothing weird about that.

Ruth: Still.

Elizabeth: Why don't you want to bug Frank?

Ruth: Because! Because he already like, gave us a show without having us like formally apply and he did it as a favor to me and he was like, it'll be great to have you close by. You know, I just don't want to put a burden on him or anything.

Elizabeth: But he's not like mad though, right? Like he's like an uncle. He practically raised you for however many years.

Ruth: Yeah, I mean, it's not my fault that my parents straight up ditched their child. Besides, I just don't want to bug him. I trust him completely. It's literally just a vibe.

Elizabeth: What's the worst that could happen?

Ruth: What's the worst that could happen? What's the worst that could happen?

Elizabeth: Yes.

Ruth: There's a soul sucking demon or blood sacrifice or Michael Myers or -

Elizabeth: Oh, I did invite Michael to be our guest next week,

Ruth: Liz, come on.

Elizabeth: But seriously! it'll be fine. Ruth. Trust me.

[button click]

End of episode.