

THE HISTORY OF THE LIBRARY OF VIRGINIA



1942 Ida Mae Thompson (right) donated the Equal Suffrage League collection to the Virginia State Library.



1948 World War II History Division formed.

1948 Records of the Land Office were transferred to the Library. They constitute the oldest continuous series of state records held in the Archives.



1951 The first issue of *Virginia Cavalcade* was published, the Library's quarterly, illustrated magazine of Virginia history and culture.



1952 Records from Tredegar Iron Works were donated to the Library. These letter books, journals, and financial records document the everyday labors of workers.

1955 The Virginia Colonial Records Project began surveying and copying Virginia records in British repositories.



1959 The State Library became fully air-conditioned through the governor's discretionary funds.

1971 Four additional floors of stack space were added to the roof of the State Library building.

1976 Gov. Mills E. Godwin Jr. formed the State Historical Records Advisory Board.

1987 The Virginia State Library was renamed the Virginia State Library and Archives.

1993 Ground was broken for the new State Library and Archives building at 800 East Broad Street.

1994 The Virginia State Library and Archives was renamed The Library of Virginia by act of the General Assembly.

1997 The new Library of Virginia opened to the public in a facility with ten acres of floor space and fifty-five miles of shelving.

2001 The Library received the business records of WRVA, one of the earliest radio stations in Virginia.



2005 The Warner Web Archive made its debut. Governors' records at the Library date to 1776, making them the second-oldest continuous series of state records in the Archives.

All images are from the collections at the Library of Virginia, except Ida Mae Thompson, courtesy of Special Collections and Archives, James Branch Cabell Library, Virginia Commonwealth University.



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Preservation of Virginia's records is especially important because of the richness of her history and the high quality of her contributions to the formation of the nation.

—Gov. Mills E. Godwin Jr.

1823 The General Assembly provided public funds to purchase books for a reference library at the seat of government.

1828 The first catalog of the State Library's books was published. Of the 1,582 volumes in the collection, about a hundred had been inherited from the library of the colonial governor's Council.

1832 The governor directed that archival records be delivered to the Secretary of the Commonwealth for arrangement and filing.

1865 Fire during the Confederate evacuation of Richmond destroyed the state's courthouse in Capitol Square. The blaze destroyed a large body of colonial-era state papers and numerous county records brought to the capital during the Civil War for safekeeping.

1895 The first legislative appropriation was made for copying local records for the Virginia State Library.



1895 Convicts from the State Penitentiary moved the State Library's books and archives from the Capitol into the first State Library building (formerly known as the Old Finance Building and renamed the Oliver W. Hill Sr. Building in 2005).

1903 The Virginia State Library began functioning as a separate state agency under the supervision of The Library Board.

1904 Electric lights were installed.

1905 The Virginia Library Association was founded.



1906 The Division of Traveling Libraries was formed.

1907 The Virginia State Library adopted the new Library of Congress cataloging system.

1907 Documents, books, paintings, and sculpture from the Library were exhibited at the Jamestown Ter-Centennial Exposition.

1912 Hamilton J. Eckenrode's *List of Revolutionary Soldiers of Virginia* was published.



1916 State Archivist Morgan P. Robinson invited female students from Westhampton College to work as archives apprentices.

1916 A fire broke out in the State Library's basement, destroying some records from the auditor's office and damaging others. The *Richmond News Leader* called for a new fireproof building.

1919 Gov. Westmoreland Davis created the Virginia War History Commission.

1921 The state librarian requested that the state adopt uniform standards for paper, ink, and typewriter ribbons to ensure the permanency of public records.

1921 The Library received 1,005 books from the estate of suffragist Lila Meade Valentine.

1924 The Virginia State Library acquired its first Photostat machine.

1929 The Virginia Ordinance of Secession (taken from the Capitol by a Union soldier in 1865) was returned to the Library.

1931 William Clayton Torrence's *Virginia Wills and Administrations, 1632–1800*, was published.

1933 The Civilian Conservation Corps was created to give young men a chance for productive work and an income during the Great Depression. The Library of Virginia holds a sizable collection of Virginia's CCC newspapers.



1936 The General Assembly created a State Library Building Commission to prepare for the construction of a new building.

1936–1938 The Virginia Writers' Project gathered information about the experiences of Virginians during the Great Depression. These records and those of other Works Progress Administration projects are housed at the Library of Virginia.

1939 Virginia was one of twenty-two states represented in the Court of States at the New York World's Fair in 1939. Visitors perused an array of 227 photograph albums prepared by the Virginia State Chamber of Commerce.



1940 The Virginia State Library moved into its second building, which it shared with the Virginia Supreme Court of Appeals. The Library's 40 staff members, along with Work Projects Administration workers, moved 350,000 volumes and between 2 and 3 million documents through the tunnel under Capitol Square.



1940 The manuscript journal of the Virginia Convention of 1776 (taken from the State Library in 1865 by a Union officer) was restored to the Library.

(continued on reverse)

All images from the Library of Virginia, unless otherwise noted:

Cover, from the top:



The first state library.



Watercolor of the second state library by Denby T. Hird, a draftsman for Carneal, Johnston, and Wright, the architectural firm that supervised the building's construction.



Construction of the second state library, November 1939.



Laying the cornerstone of the second state library, February 22, 1940.



The Library of Virginia today.

History of the Library Collage:

Left column, from the top:



List of slaves working at Glenwood Furnace, Tredegar Iron Works Records, 1863 (Accessions 23881, 24808).



William Allason Ledger Book (Accession 13).



"And she cooked happily ever after," VEPCO advertisement from 1955 (Accession 37345).

Right column, from the top:



Plans for Baptist Church, Waynesboro, by M. J. Dimmock, 1891 (Accession 36569).



James Skelton Gilliam Journal, 1816 (Accession 13946).



Ex-Slave Mutual Relief Bounty and Pension Association of America, Charter, 1897 (Accession 37678).



George W. Reid, Letter and Sketches, 1881 (Accession 34276).

Timeline:



The first state library.



U.S. Army Signal Corps Photograph Collection, Hampton Roads Point of Embarkation.



A state library bookmobile. Virginia Chamber of Commerce Collection.



Turkey round-up in Urbanna, 1951. Virginia Chamber of Commerce Collection.



State archivist Morgan P. Robinson.



Archives stacks circa 1948.



Construction of the second state library, November 1939.



Archives Reading Room in the second state library.



Gov. James H. Price during National Bill of Rights Week, 1941. Virginia Chamber of Commerce Collection.



Al Zahlout Family, WRVA Radio Collection (Accession 38210).



Moving Land Office books from the Capitol to the Library, 1948.



Ida Mae Thompson. Courtesy of Special Collections and Archives, James Branch Cabell Library, Virginia Commonwealth University.