

CCRP NEWS



These photographs were taken from a series of surveys of the clerks' offices, circa 1916–1920, and are from the Collection of Materials Concerning County Courthouses, records, and Clerks of Court, 1916–1929, Office of the State Archivist, Library of Virginia. For more, see “The Courthouse Adventures of Morgan P. Robinson” on page 4.

CCRP NEWS

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This newsletter is published twice a year to keep circuit court clerks informed about the court records preservation program for the Commonwealth of Virginia. Reader participation is invited.

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The CCRP and the Newsletter

The Circuit Court Records Preservation Program is entering a new era in its long history. Founded by the Virginia General Assembly in 1990 as a partnership between the Library of Virginia and the county clerks of the Commonwealth of Virginia, the mission of the program is to preserve and make accessible the court records of the various (city and county) localities throughout the state.

Funded through clerk's office recording fees, the program seeks to preserve each locality's permanent court records using a four-pronged approach. First, the clerks can transfer their records to the Library of Virginia, where they are stored in archival-quality containers in a climate-controlled environment. Once deposited at the Library of Virginia, the records are cataloged to archival standards in order to make them accessible to the public. Second, the funding provides for the creation, maintenance, and duplication of security/preservation microfilm. Performed primarily in the 1970s and 1980s, the microfilming of the volumes at the courthouses is now fairly complete. The 250,000 reels stored at the Library of Virginia serve as the security master copies of the permanent records at the courthouses in the event of a catastrophic disaster at the localities. Additionally, since the mid-2000s, the Library of Virginia has been digitizing and making available online pre-1913 chancery court records sent to the Library for safekeeping. Currently, chancery records for approximately 80 counties totaling more than 10 million digital images are available online, with more being processed, indexed, digitized, and uploaded every day. These records provide a wealth of information to genealogists, historians, and other researchers. The fourth function of the CCRP is the allocation of preservation grants to the clerks' offices.

Within this phase the program enters a new era, with two new senior local records archivists, the launch of an updated CCRP newsletter, and a revamped grant guidelines application, submission, and monitoring process.

The two new consulting archivists have many years of archival experience and both have connections to the Library of Virginia. **Tracy Harter** has held various positions in academic and research libraries, including prior service at the Library of Virginia with Local Records Services, the Virginia Newspaper Project, and Information Technology between 1997 and 2004. She returns after serving nearly six years as a teacher at St. Margaret's School in Tappahannock and four years as the head of Special Collections in the Carrier Library at James Madison University, where she also taught an introductory course in archives and manuscript processing. Since 1990, **Eddie Woodward** has held various positions in academic, public, and research libraries. He began his archival career in 1998 as a processing archivist in Local Records Services at the Library of Virginia and served there until 2007, when he accepted the Heritage Protocol archivist position at Florida State University. He returned to Virginia in 2013 and was the digital projects coordinator and then archives coordinator at Norfolk Public Library before returning to the Library of Virginia in March of this year. Harter and Woodward are the CCRP liaisons to the clerks' offices and will work to guide and advise on all phases of the project, with a particular emphasis on the preservation of records and preservation grants. In the coming months they will be contacting each locality to schedule visits.

The Library of Virginia's *Recordatur* newsletter (www.lva.virginia.gov/agencies/ccrp/recordatur) ceased publication in 2010. The goals of this revamped CCRP newsletter include keeping the clerks' offices updated and apprised of grant guidelines and deadlines, as well as offering assistance in the grant process; keeping readers informed about conservation/preservation standards and best practices, and the project in general, while at the same time speaking to its accomplishments, both past and present; and offering insight on the importance of the preservation of the court records for their various users. ■

COURT RECORDS PRESERVATION PIONEERS:

Martha Woodroof Hiden

The naming of the local history and genealogy reading room at Newport News Public Library after Martha Woodroof Hiden is well deserved. Born in Orange County, Virginia, in 1883, Hiden graduated from Randolph-Macon College and went on to graduate school at the University of Chicago and the College of William and Mary. In 1909 she married Philip W. Hiden, who became the first mayor of Newport News, the city where she spent the rest of her life. She ran her husband's business after his death in 1936, and went on to serve as a member of the board of visitors at William and Mary, an executive at the Virginia Historical Society, and a board member of the Virginia State Library (now the Library of Virginia). An accomplished and scholarly researcher, she authored numerous reviews, articles, and books on Virginia history and genealogy.



Courtesy of Newport News Public Library.

With all those accomplishments, however, her work with Virginia city and county court records might be her most important achievement. More than most, she understood the historical significance of the records and their need to be preserved. Among her writing on Virginia history, she published essays on court records, outlining the importance of each of the “classes” or record groups, explaining their use and purpose as few had done before, and laying the groundwork for social historians of the future. In her aptly titled 1940 article “Virginia County Court Records,” she “confines” the discussion to “the paper, ink, and binding used in them, and the methods for their preservation.” Correspondence and other documents in the archives at the Library of Virginia demonstrate her commitment to the care and restoration of these records. Hiden worked hand in hand with the state archivist at the Library, serving as something of a field agent, examining volumes at the courthouses, and transporting them to and from the Library for treatment by its conservator. In a 1946 article, Hiden claimed that in 25 years of service she had visited more than 100 counties and cities, “examining the condition of the records, sorting over loose papers and carrying books and papers to the State Library. In coal sheds, musty basements, chilly disused jails, hot attics of old clerks’ offices and unused courthouses, the work of sorting, selecting, packing

and transporting has been carried on from year to year with the sole aim of preserving Virginia’s wealth of historical documents.” Then, as today, conservation treatment for these books and loose records could be expensive and funding was limited. Hiden sought out organizations with a shared appreciation for the historical significance of these court records, such as ladies’ patriotic societies, and looked to them to cover or defray the conservation cost. In time, she served as chair of the State Committee for the Preservation and Restoration of Virginia Court Records with the Daughters of the American Revolution.

Seventy years ago Hiden wrote: “Because of the devoted service of the justices and clerks we have a vast amount of source material from which an adequate history of the Commonwealth can some day be written.” She died in 1959, but would undoubtedly be pleased with the efforts made by the CCRP in partnership with Local Records Services staff at the Library of Virginia and the participating clerks’ offices throughout the commonwealth. The Martha Woodroof Hiden Virginiana Collection Reading Room is a fitting tribute to someone who worked so tirelessly in advocating the preservation of Virginia county court records. ■

THE COURTHOUSE ADVENTURES OF Morgan P. Robinson

In 1915, Richmond native Morgan P. Robinson became the chief of the Archives Department at the Virginia State Library (now the Library of Virginia); three years later he was appointed the first state archivist. Almost immediately after he arrived he began surveying the city and county courthouses to determine the completeness of their holdings. During these examinations he also rated the environmental conditions at each facility and noted whatever other observations he felt important. He was sometimes assisted in this endeavor by the clerks, who supplied him with inventories and other information about their records. Many times, however, he received field reports from Milnor Ljungstedt, a seasoned genealogist from New England who assisted him with his inspections. How Robinson and Ljungstedt began working together and what her official role was is something of a mystery.

Ranging from 1915 to 1929, these courthouse surveys make up a collection of files for each of the Virginia localities inspected for which there are surviving reports. Housed in the archives at the Library of Virginia, the surveys vary in size and completeness from little or nothing to huge inventories and everything in between. A typical file contains a brief report, either by Ljungstedt or Robinson, and a few photographs to document the inspection. Typically, Robinson's reports were scribbled on an envelope that presumably held the small photographs that were taken during the on-site visits.

Both Robinson and Ljungstedt eventually used their research for publications about the courthouse records. In 1916, Robinson published his important "Virginia Counties: Those Resulting from Virginia Legislation," and between 1921 and 1931, Ljungstedt published a periodical entitled *The County Court Note-Book*, which featured abstracts and information about Virginia, as well as other mid-Atlantic and northeastern county court records.

The original courthouse files offer a unique insight into the records, the courthouses, the clerks, and their offices. Look for some of these courthouse reports to be featured in coming issues of CCRP News.

Because of the long relationship between the Library of Virginia and the clerks in their shared mission to preserve city and county court records, the CCRP staff would like to document and share the history of this truly innovative and collaborative endeavor. If any of the clerks' offices have preservation-related

correspondence or other documentation between their predecessors and the Library of Virginia that they would be willing to share, please contact the CCRP staff at ccrp@lva.virginia.gov. ■



These items are from the Cumberland County Courthouse surveys, circa 1916–1918, and are from the Collection of Materials Concerning County Courthouses, records, and Clerks of Court, 1916–1929, Office of the State Archivist, Library of Virginia.

Conservation vs. Preservation

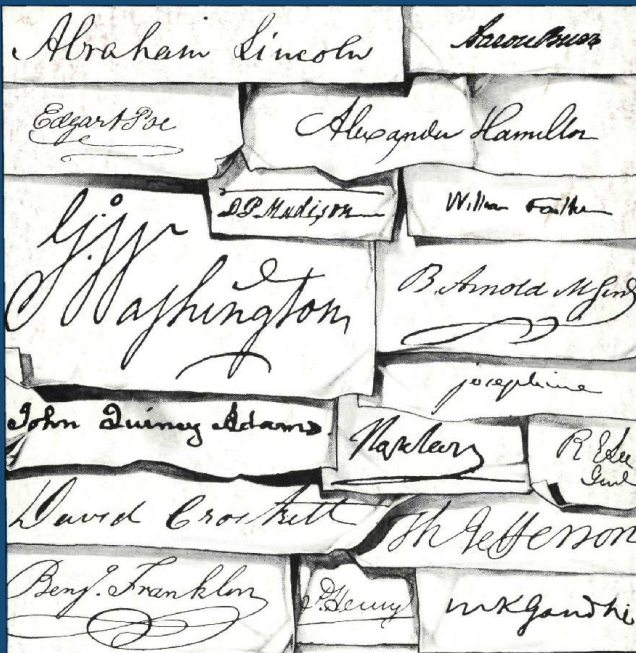
Conservation and preservation are two terms that are sometimes used interchangeably. In an archival context, however, the two words have different meanings. The simplest way to distinguish between them is that preservation is a long-term strategy, while conservation is a short-term or immediate fix. For permanent court records collections, a preservation strategy might include proper security and environmental conditions, archival-quality storage containers and materials (i.e., folders and boxes), and care and handling that adhere

to standards and best practices. These will all help to ensure the long-term viability of the records. And by these definitions, conservation, or sending items such as worn or damaged books or loose papers to a conservation lab, can be a critical component of an overall preservation strategy. The permanent records stored in courthouses are archival collections, and in order to ensure their sustainability as archival records, a long-term preservation strategy that includes these elements should be developed. Conservation efforts, such as those provided through CCRP

item conservation grants, complement the overall preservation strategy implemented by the clerk's office. Grants are also available for security, storage, and reformatting. Ultimately, if permanent records cannot be adequately cared for in the locality, they can be transferred to the secure and climate-controlled storage at the Library of Virginia. Please contact the Circuit Court Records Preservation Program staff (ccrp@lva.virginia.gov) for more information on preservation grants, as well as the transferring of permanent records to the Library of Virginia. ■

Lamination & Delamination

Noted paper and book conservator William J. Barrow opened the Barrow Restoration shop in the Virginia State Library in 1932. Shortly afterward he developed a cellulose acetate lamination process that became a standard treatment for conserving and preserving historic manuscripts, records, and books. In the late 1930s he invented a roller laminator machine that sandwiched the document between sheets of the acetate films. From 1940 until his death in 1967 he promoted and sold his Barrow Lamination Process to libraries and archives around the world, including the Library of Congress and many state archives in the southeastern United States. After his death, his lamination process remained popular until late in the 1980s, when it began to fall out of favor with conservators as they came to the realization that cellulose acetate was not a stable material over the long term. The image to the right is a 1980s-era advertisement touting the conservation effectiveness of the Barrow Restoration laboratory. Today, the “delaminating” of documents and books that were conserved using the Barrow method is considered to be a priority by the CCRP. ■



WE'VE HELPED THESE NAMES ENDURE.

Letters and papers of these famous names—and scores more—have been preserved by Barrow Restoration. The process of deacidification, and lamination that was pioneered by William J. Barrow has been used to halt the deterioration of some of America's most priceless documents, as well as county and state record books, early maps and a long list of valuable papers and clippings.

At Barrow Restoration, we continue his tradition of treating each individual document with care. And we develop customized treatment, taking into consideration the paper and ink characteristics and the use the document will receive after preservation.

If your documents deserve the finest and most experienced restoration, bring them to the world's best-known name in document preservation. Estimates may be obtained by phone or letter. Contact: Barrow Restoration, Inc., Virginia State Library Building, Richmond, Virginia 23219. (804) 786-2310.

BARROW
SINCE 1932
RESTORATION

**Virginia Circuit Court Records Preservation Grant Program
2016 SPRING (2016B) GRANT CYCLE AWARDS**

Accomack County	Security System	\$11,479.00
Albemarle County	Item Conservation	\$14,485.00
Amelia County	Item Conservation	\$12,726.50
Amherst County	Reformatting	\$9,150.00
Arlington County	Item Conservation	\$7,354.00
Augusta County	Item Conservation	\$12,791.00
Bath County	Item Conservation	\$13,875.20
Bedford County	Item Conservation	\$13,127.00
Caroline County	Item Conservation	\$14,393.00
Carroll County	Item Conservation	\$14,626.00
Charles City County	Item Conservation	\$9,443.00
Charlotte County	Item Conservation	\$14,006.00
Chesapeake City	Item Conservation	\$14,236.00
Chesterfield County	Item Conservation	\$13,460.00
Craig County	Item Conservation	\$11,845.50
Culpeper County	Item Conservation	\$13,604.00
Cumberland County	Item Conservation	\$18,795.40
Danville City	Item Conservation	\$14,060.00
Dickenson County	Item Conservation	\$13,840.00
Dinwiddie County	Item Conservation	\$13,003.80
Essex County	Item Conservation	\$11,361.00
Essex County	Storage	\$3,224.00
Fairfax County	Item Conservation	\$2,650.00
Fluvanna County	Item Conservation	\$14,052.00
Franklin County	Item Conservation	\$12,535.00
Fredericksburg City	Item Conservation	\$12,684.00
Giles County	Item Conservation	\$13,414.00
Goochland County	Item Conservation	\$12,103.00
Greene County	Item Conservation	\$5,276.00
Greensville County	Item Conservation	\$12,552.00
Greensville County	Security System	\$4,999.60
Halifax County	Item Conservation	\$12,673.00
Hanover County	Item Conservation	\$9,982.40
Highland County	Item Conservation	\$7,872.00
Isle of Wight County	Item Conservation	\$14,442.00
King and Queen County	Item Conservation	\$11,045.80
King George County	Item Conservation	\$14,080.00
King William County	Item Conservation	\$14,662.00
Lee County	Item Conservation	\$14,550.50
Loudoun County	Item Conservation	\$14,140.00
Lynchburg City	Reformatting	\$24,490.00
Madison County	Item Conservation	\$13,436.50
Mathews County	Item Conservation	\$14,563.50
Mecklenburg County	Item Conservation	\$14,152.00
Middlesex County	Item Conservation	\$14,675.20
Nelson County	Item Conservation	\$14,062.00
Newport News City	Item Conservation	\$12,824.00
Northampton County	Item Conservation	\$9,868.50
Northumberland County	Item Conservation	\$11,419.00
Nottoway County	Item Conservation	\$13,715.00
Page County	Item Conservation	\$16,673.00
Pittsylvania County	Item Conservation	\$13,398.00
Powhatan County	Item Conservation	\$13,467.00
Powhatan County	Reformatting	\$1,510.00
Prince George County	Item Conservation	\$16,856.50
Richmond County	Item Conservation	\$13,930.00
Roanoke County	Item Conservation	\$14,386.70
Rockbridge County	Item Conservation	\$13,361.00
Rockingham County	Item Conservation	\$13,940.00
Scott County	Item Conservation	\$10,944.00
Shenandoah County	Item Conservation	\$12,365.50
Smyth County	Item Conservation	\$7,770.00
Smyth County	Security System	\$6,300.00
Southampton County	Item Conservation	\$13,813.00
Suffolk City	Item Conservation	\$14,212.00
Surry County	Item Conservation	\$12,172.00
Sussex County	Item Conservation	\$10,084.00
Tazewell County	Item Conservation	\$13,534.00
Virginia Beach City	Item Conservation	\$11,536.00
Washington County	Item Conservation	\$11,808.00
Westmoreland County	Item Conservation	\$13,194.00
Wise County	Item Conservation	\$10,149.00
York County/Poquoson	Item Conservation	\$12,300.00

Total: \$899,508.10