

Virginia Convention of 1776 Records

Conservation project will preserve founding documents in time for the nation's 250th anniversary

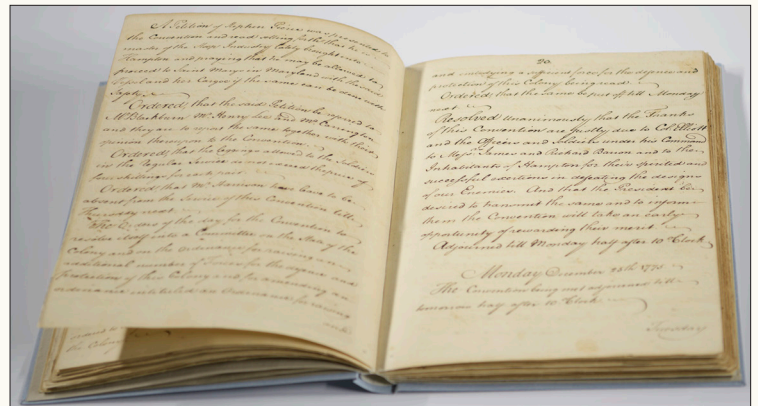
Founded in 1823, the Library of Virginia is one of the oldest state agencies and the oldest cultural organization in the commonwealth with the mission to collect, preserve and make accessible Virginia's history. The Library cares for the most comprehensive collection of materials—more than 130 million items—on Virginia government, history and culture in the world. Among these treasures are some of our nation's most influential legal documents, such as Virginia's 1789 copy of the proposed U.S. Bill of Rights, Jefferson's Act for Establishing Religious Freedom, George Mason's copy of the Virginia Declaration of Rights and the records of the Virginia Convention of 1776.

The Virginia Convention of 1776 Records Collection consists of five boxes and two journals that provide historical insight into Virginia's five Revolutionary Conventions held from Aug. 1, 1774, to July 5, 1776. The collection contains accounts, correspondence, journals and minutes from such notable founding fathers as Patrick Henry, George Mason, Thomas Jefferson and James Madison.

The correspondence and journals contain some of the most momentous decisions made in Virginia's and the nation's history, such as the earliest-known full text of the resolutions instructing Virginia's representatives to the Continental Congress to introduce a declaration of independence and the earliest-known full text of George Mason's Virginia Declaration of Rights, which was unanimously adopted.

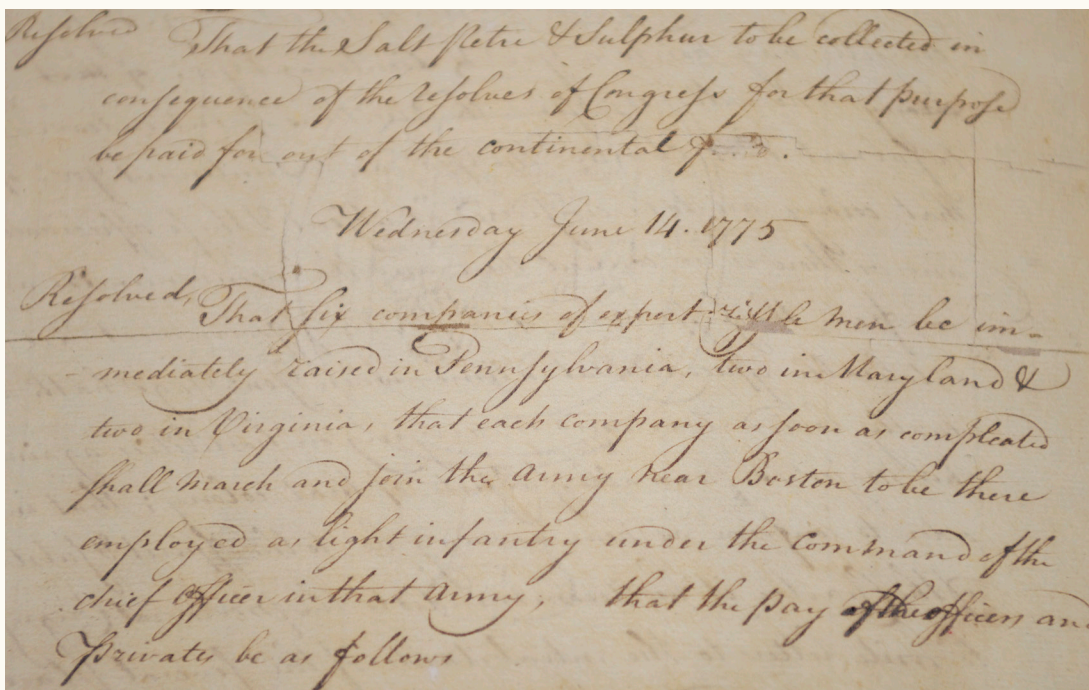
As our nation approaches its 250th anniversary, institutions like the Library of Virginia and collections such as the Virginia Convention of 1776 Records will be center stage to provide the public with educational resources and programs to understand the founding of American independence. This timely conservation project will prepare the collection for increased engagement. Previously converted to microfilm, the collection has remained largely untouched until now. The materials require professional conservation and digitization for use in student and teacher resources, scholarly research, public programs, community outreach and exhibitions.

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CARING FOR FOUNDING-ERA DOCUMENTS

Items such as this convention journal covering the period of Dec. 1, 1775 to Jan. 16, 1776 (ABOVE), and this 1775 letter from Robert Carter Nicholas to delegates in the Continental Congress (LOWER LEFT) are being repaired and preserved as part of the Virginia Convention of 1776 Records Collection conservation project.



HELP US CONSERVE THESE NATIONALLY IMPORTANT RECORDS!

Through the help of generous partners and donors, the Library of Virginia Foundation has received more than 50 percent of the funds needed to complete the conservation. If you are interested in helping us reach our goal, please contact Elaine McFadden at 804.692.3592 or elaine.mcfadden@lva.virginia.gov. You may also make your contribution online at www.lva.virginia.gov/donate. This is a once-in-a-generation chance to make these documents and insights from Virginia's Revolutionary Conventions available to the world.

Thank you to our partners
and donors who have
contributed to the
1776 Records Project*

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To learn more about how you can help
the Library preserve and share Virginia's
history and culture, please contact
Elaine McFadden at 804.692.3592.

*as of September 16, 2022



PRESERVATION SUPPORTERS

The Virginia Law Foundation Board of Trustees recently visited the Library to view some of the items from the Virginia Convention of 1776 conservation project.

Thank You to Our Donors

Virginia Law Foundation

Founded in 1974, the Virginia Law Foundation was established to promote, through philanthropy, the rule of law, access to justice and law-related education. The Library of Virginia Foundation was honored to receive a grant on behalf of the Library from the Virginia Law Foundation to help conserve the Virginia Convention of 1776 Records Collection.

“The Virginia Law Foundation is proud to support the work of the Library of Virginia with our recent grant,” said John D. McGavin, president of the Virginia Law Foundation. “Our mission is to support the rule of law, access to justice and legal education. Our grant to the Library is part of our charitable effort to support that mission. We look forward to continuing to support the Library of Virginia in future projects.”

The Virginia Law Foundation has generously supported previous Library projects, and we are incredibly grateful for their continued partnership.

National Society Daughters of the American Revolution, James River Chapter

The National Society Daughters of the American Revolution, founded in 1890 and headquartered in Washington, D.C., is dedicated to promoting patriotism, preserving American history and securing America's future through better education for children.

The Library recently partnered with the organization's James River Chapter on a DAR Historic Preservation Grant application. The Library of Virginia Foundation is very grateful to receive a grant on behalf of the Library from the DAR to support the conservation of the Virginia Convention of 1776 Records Collection.

“The James River Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution, was honored to support the grant application to our National office for the Virginia Constitutional Convention 1776 project,” said chapter officer Deborah Clayton, who is also an individual donor to project. “It is of incredible importance that we protect our history so that we may continue to teach and learn the principles that Virginia and our nation were founded upon. I love having the opportunity to support conservation projects, especially those that highlight what occurred during the Revolutionary War era. The Virginia Constitutional Convention was an unexpected joy.”