

The Newsletter of Virginia's Circuit Court Records Preservation Program ■ No. 18 ■ Fall 2025

CCRP NEWS



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CCRP NEWS

No. 18 ■ Fall 2025

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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Changes to the CCRP Grant Program

Since 2015, there has been a dramatic increase in the number of localities participating in the Circuit Court Records Preservation grant process. Between 1992 and 2014, an average of 25 localities participated in the grants program. Since 2015, however, the number has increased exponentially, with in recent years:

- \$4,722,256 awarded to 101 localities through 115 grant applications/projects in fiscal year 2022.
- \$4,100,706 awarded to 99 localities through 125 grant applications/projects in fiscal year 2023.
- \$3,204,869 awarded to 102 localities through 124 grant applications/projects in fiscal year 2024.

Given the increase in participation, as well as the 50% decrease in revenue (via the circuit court land recordation fees) since FY2021, the amount awarded this past grant cycle was lower than in past years:

- \$2,000,492 awarded to 114 localities through 140 grant applications/projects in fiscal year 2025.

This funding decline has led to some administrative changes going forward. This year, as with last year, no more than five items or no more than 1,000 leaves of loose paper (or a combination thereof) can be submitted for a conservation grant. There will no longer be funding for back indexing-only projects. Grant funding for reformatting, essential equipment and storage, and security systems will be limited to no more than \$10,000 per project.

And finally, going forward, the grant timelines will be adjusted to more accurately reflect the current fiscal year model. Dates to remember for the upcoming 2027 fiscal year grant cycle:

- Nov. 3, 2025 – The grant cycle opens
- Jan. 30, 2026 – Grant application deadline
- March 2026 – Grant Review Board meets to review grant applications
- April 2026 – Grant awards announced
- July 1, 2026 – Disbursement of grant funds may begin for completed grant projects
- June 30, 2027 – Grant projects to be completed

Cover images: Top row, left to right: Caroline County Courthouse, June 30, 2026; Caroline County Courthouse Records Room, June 30, 2016; Culpeper County Courthouse, Sept. 17, 2016; Culpeper County Courthouse Records Room, June 24, 2021. Second row from top, left to right: King George County Courthouse, March 1, 2006; King George County Courthouse, June 12, 2025; Louisa County Courthouse, March 8, 2017; Louisa County Courthouse, Feb. 28, 2023. Third row from top: Louisa County Courthouse, Feb. 28, 2023. Bottom row, left to right: Orange County Courthouse Records Room, Feb. 23, 2024; Spotsylvania County Courthouse, Nov. 28, 2017; Stafford County Courthouse, Nov. 13, 2019; Stafford County Courthouse Records Room, April 5, 2022. (King George County Courthouse photograph, courtesy of Jessica Mattingly, King George County Circuit Court Clerk. All other photographs Local Government Record Collection, Library of Virginia.)

Mold: Active vs. Inactive

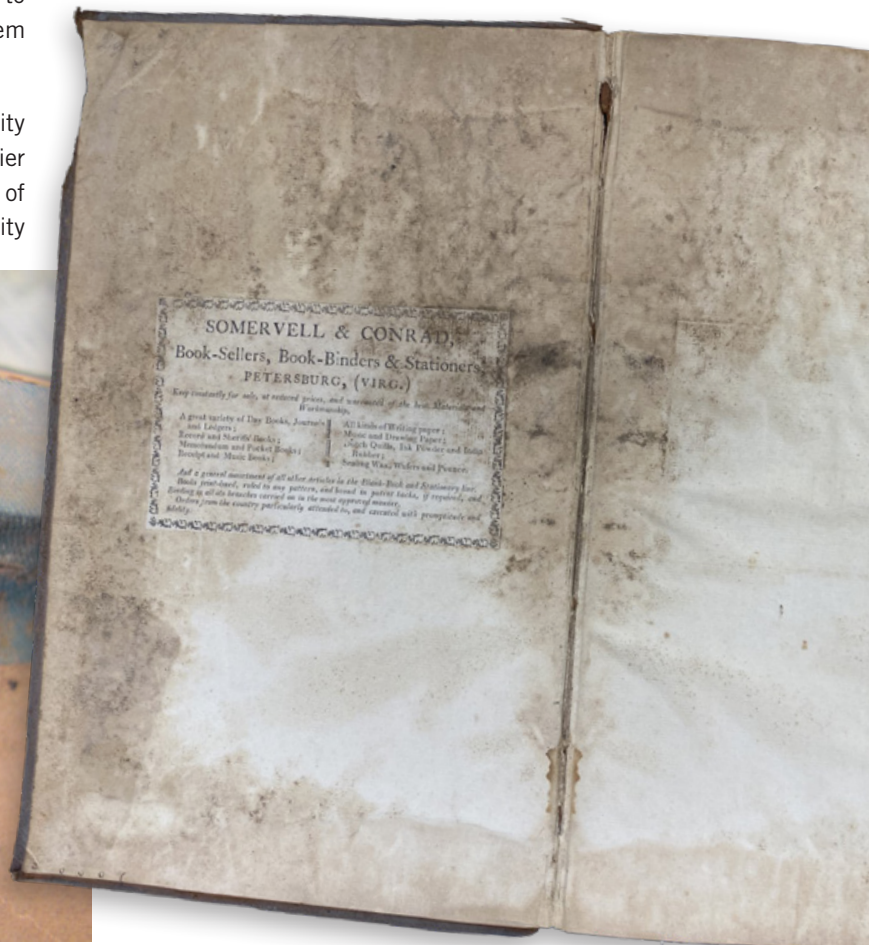
Mold is usually easy to identify, and many circuit court clerks have had run-ins with this common fuzzy fungus in their records rooms. Mold can develop quickly in archives when both the temperature and humidity levels are high, making the environment warm and damp, which is a perfect breeding ground for mold. This is why it's important to keep records rooms and other archival storage areas climate controlled at a constant temperature somewhere below 70 degrees with a relative humidity around 30–50%.

While it can be difficult to control the humidity in records rooms and archival storage areas, maintaining constant cooler temperatures with the building's HVAC system can be the first step in counteracting the effects of high humidity and the growth of mold. Maintaining a constant temperature, however, can be challenging, because numerous factors contribute to fluctuations, such as a records room with open access to other areas, doors opening and closing, and building HVAC systems that routinely shut down nightly and/or on weekends when the building is closed. A bonus to the cooler temperature provided by an HVAC system is that mold growth increases in stagnant air, so the constant flow generated by conditioned air can inhibit its progress. Unfortunately, air conditioning condensation can also be a contributing factor to mold growth, so any moisture generated by an HVAC system should be monitored.

As mold requires moisture to grow, getting a handle on the humidity in records rooms and archival storage areas with a dehumidifier can be the most cost-effective investment for the preservation of court records. With that said, fluctuating temperature and humidity



Top: Court Order Book, 1831–1838, May 14, 2025; Bottom left: Property Tax Books, 1909–1911, Oct. 23, 2024; Bottom: Processioners Returns, 1808–1824, May 8, 2024.



levels and vacillating between warm and cool and moist and dry can deteriorate and embrittle documents over time, turning them into soft, fine paper that falls apart when handled.

Mold is a natural part of the environment and can be found everywhere. Mold spores are microscopic and constantly present in the air, only becoming visible when they form colonies while active. These colonies are the fuzzy outbreaks seen on paper and other documents, and frequently found on book covers and end sheets. Active mold can come in various colors, including black, green, yellow, white and gray. When growing, it radiates or blooms outward from its central starting point. It can look and feel wet and moist, or soft and fuzzy with fine hairlike filaments that smear when touched. Active mold can also have a damp, strong and musty or earthy odor. All of these are indications of active mold.

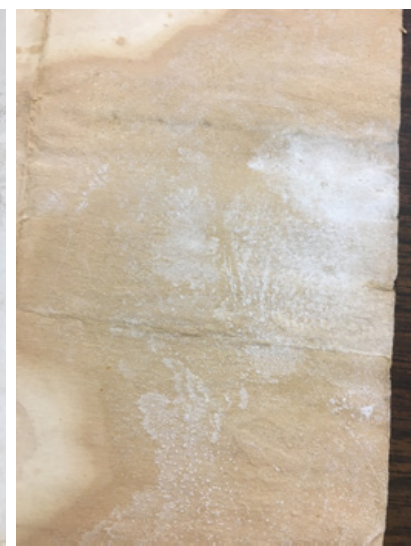
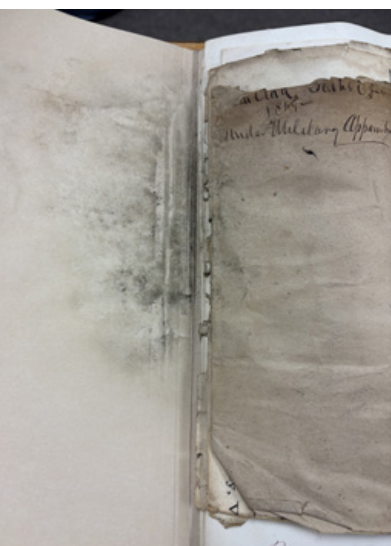
Inactive mold, sometimes referred to as dormant or dead mold, however, usually does not have that hairy appearance. Inactive mold occurs when active mold has been placed in an environmentally controlled space, with a constant temperature and humidity in the optimal range (below 70 degrees with a relative humidity around 30–50%). The most important factor in stopping mold growth is preventing moisture. While active mold might be strongly attached to documents, inactive mold, which is dry and lighter, can usually be brushed off. Unfortunately, when mold is brushed off it can be dusted up and spread through document handling and air currents. So if the conditions for mold growth return, there are more opportunities for development. Additionally, when inactive mold is brushed off or removed, it may leave a stain. Whether the mold leaves a stain or the microscopic mold spores cannot be seen, they are there either way.

Dealing with a mold outbreak is less a process of removing the mold and more a process of managing it. The most important response to a mold outbreak is remediation (as best as possible) and creating a stable climate-controlled environment in the records room or archival storage area where mold cannot grow. Inactive mold, while not desirable, is not the end of the world as long as favorable environmental conditions for its development do not return. ■

Top: Issue Docket at Law No. 4, 1847-1869, May 10, 2022; Second from top: Court Order Book 1, 1842-1843, July 9, 2024; Third from top: Property Tax Books, 1900-1902, Oct. 23, 2024; Bottom, left to right:



Ironclad Oaths of Office, 1869, Oct. 24, 2024; General Index to Deeds – Grantor L-Z, June 7, 2022; Marriage Licenses 1853-1858, Sept. 29, 2021; General Index to Deeds – Grantor L-Z, June 7, 2022.



Connis Brown's Surveys of the Mid-Central Virginia Circuit Court Clerks' Offices

Past issues of the CCRP News have mentioned Connis O. Brown, Virginia's first local records archivist. In many ways, Brown was responsible for establishing the local records program, from which the Circuit Court Records Preservation Program is an offshoot. In the early 1970s, Brown traveled across the Commonwealth of Virginia interviewing circuit court clerks and surveying the records, their completeness and condition, their storage conditions, and the clerks' offices and courthouses. He often evaluated the competency and even the personalities of the clerks themselves. His surveys offer a wealth of information including rudimentary inventories and hand-drawn diagrams of the records rooms and/or vaults.

Brown tape-recorded his surveys as he wandered through the clerks' offices, courthouses and courthouse grounds. The tapes were then transcribed verbatim (with two-word sentences as well as run-on sentences for as far as the eye can see) as he described what he saw and whatever caught his eye. While this descriptive documentary narrative is probably not the best for inventorying records, it works very well when describing other aspects of the circuit court clerks' offices and courthouses. Because he tries to cover so much, the surveys have an uneven quality. However, all of them are informative, and they're often entertaining.

Because of the large number of surveys (one for every one of the 120 clerks' offices), an article in the Fall 2024 (No. 16) issue of the CCRP News about Brown's surveys grouped a few localities by geographic region to provide a sense of the state of circuit court records preservation prior to the establishment of the local records branch/department around 1972. That article focused on nine counties in central western Virginia, all of which are served by CCRP consulting archivist Eddie Woodward. In this issue, the

geographic area might be described as "mid-central" Virginia, encompassing the counties of Caroline, Culpeper, King George, Louisa, Orange, Spotsylvania and Stafford, all of which are represented by CCRP consulting archivist Tracy Harter.

In his July 9, 1971, survey, Brown described the **Caroline County** circuit court clerk's office as a new, "handsome building" with "fireproof construction" and a slate roof, to the left of the well-maintained 1830 courthouse "on old U.S. 301 in the middle of Bowling Green." The one-year-old building that Brown described was an addition to the 1907 clerk's office with its "old clerk's vault" that "is a true vault in that there is a metal door and appears to be fireproof." As with most of his surveys, Brown appears to stroll through the records storage areas reading off the titles of the records in a stream of consciousness narrative. For example, in the basement vault in the new portion of the clerk's office, "Immediately as you open the door is one cardboard carton of records. I see 1 Census 1870, loose papers galore. Here is one bundle, county court reports of overseers of the poor, 1871–1884, another bundle of suit papers, 1886, a certificate of account of funeral expenses of Confederate pensioners not dated, one bundle of memorandums well-worn and eaten at some time by book worms dated 1847, memorandums." While Brown was impressed with the vault area, which he described as a new, "nice clean comfortable room kept dry by a dehumidifier," he was not so impressed with the condition of the records and their



Above: This photograph of the 1835 Caroline County Courthouse was taken in the 1960s. (Leveque Collection of Virginia Courthouses, Visual Studies Collection, Library of Virginia.) Left: This photograph of the Caroline County Courthouse was taken on June 13, 1967. (The Nichols Collection of Virginia Courthouses, Visual Studies Collection, Library of Virginia.)



Left: This postcard of the 1874 Culpeper County Courthouse was printed in the 1960s. (Visual Studies Collection, Library of Virginia.)

storage situation: "This stuff is just piled into the boxes here without consideration of its value or use," and many of the volumes "badly need rebinding." Brown confessed that, with his casual assessment, "There is really no way of telling what is here and what is not." Despite what he thought about the condition of the records, he appeared to have a positive interaction with the clerk, "Mr. Campbell," who gave him a tour of the office on the morning that he arrived. Because the clerk had no inventory and the records were "simply stacked into the shelves in random order," Brown discussed with the clerk "the possibility of having people from the state come in and inventory his records." Brown found the clerk to be "very cooperative in the entrance interview."

"I am now in the old vault of the **Culpeper County** clerk's office," Brown noted not long into his Sept. 17, 1971, survey of that locality. "This is a true vault in that only steel fire doors at one time admitted entrance to." Throughout the narrative Brown paints an unfavorable picture of the records, their condition and the storage situation. "The old records here are in pretty tough shape." He went on, "Some of the old books are badly in need of repair" and, except for some document files, are "in random order." "I located a Powhatan historical records survey and the dust did fly. This is a dusty area.

Certainly enough filth to last a lifetime." Brown stated bluntly that it was "impossible to get to the old books," and "the old material is not in a condition to be inventoried or accessed." Brown's narrative put the situation in an unfavorable light, describing a clerk's office as in near disarray: "There are a number of ancient volumes here that are poorly labeled. Here is an index to judgment dockets, and an index to an unidentified docket that I am unable to determine, but going back before 1900. Apparently these are old JP dockets. Also crammed in here are deed book FF of Culpeper Co., apparently too large to go outside or something." And later, "Many of the labels have been defaced and torn off so that [it] is really not possible to have a complete inventory of the records in this vault." Brown had little to say about the clerk, whom he never mentions by name, other than to say that the clerk was perhaps "thinking more of retirement."

In his **King George County** survey (undated but ca. 1971), Brown provides a detailed summary of the landscape and county government buildings' placement. The survey begins, "The courthouse is in the village of King George on Route 3." After describing the one-story brick 1923 courthouse as a "rather small-appearing courthouse" with "four white pillars" and "wings each side of the courthouse proper," he provides the locations and descriptions of nearby service stations, the courthouse green, the treasurer's office, sheriff's office, commonwealth's attorney's office, public library, a Confederate monument and the clerk's offices (both old and new), and mentions that the "public restrooms," a "masonry plaster stucco affair with tin roof," are "located behind the courthouse." He later notes that "the public restrooms are still open to the public." Brown was impressed with the neatness and orderliness of the "well maintained operating office." The clerk's vault was a "true vault" with a "large iron door with closing bars and concrete ceiling, roof," and "concrete sides." As to the records, "All of the papers here are in document files and are well maintained." That said, Brown took issue "with the present method of recording maps," which was to "cement glue" them into



Above: This photograph of the 1923 King George County Courthouse was taken on Aug. 14, 1967. (The Nichols Collection of Virginia Courthouses, Visual Studies Collection, Library of Virginia.)

the plat books “as submitted.” Brown thought there was “a good chance that the glue will deface in a very short time the instruments submitted for recordation.” Brown had a favorable impression of the clerk, who accompanied him “throughout the survey.” According to Brown, the unnamed clerk “feels that the state should begin a program of inventorying and sorting out and making available the old papers.” Unfortunately, Brown pointed out, “this county has no real old papers,” as they had “disappeared long ago. Apparently, there was no major fire, rather they simply disappeared.” The older volumes “are well preserved,” but again, “the loose papers have disappeared.” At the end of the survey, Brown proclaims, “This is not a model clerk’s office, but it is certainly one of the better that I have surveyed so far during this County Records Survey.”

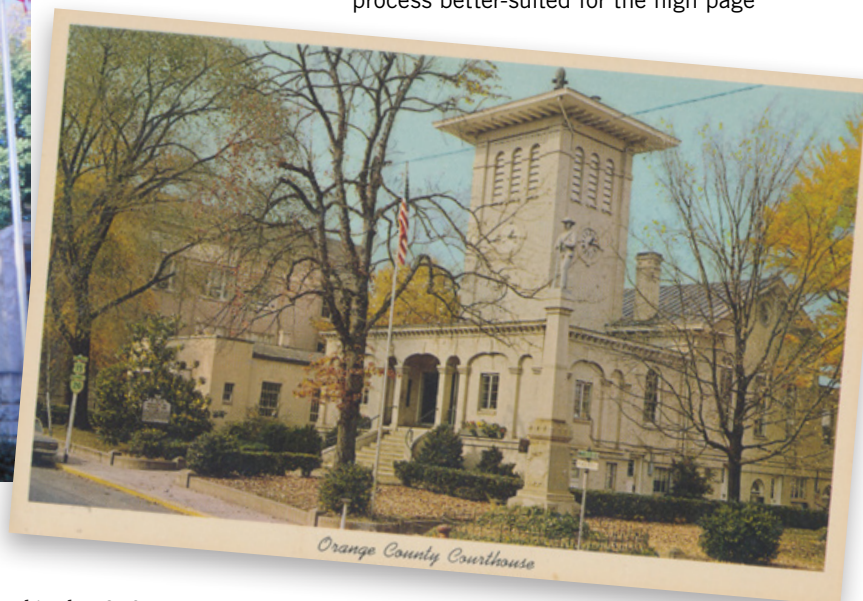
“I am now in the clerk’s record room,” begins Brown’s 20-page, July 30, 1971, survey of the **Louisa County** circuit court clerk’s office. He notes that it was a new room “of fireproof construction” that had been added “onto the rear of the old courthouse.” Regarding the vault, he noted that, because it had “interior wooden doors,” it was “not a true vault.” He then began the physical inventory of the records in his familiar rambling conversational style: “The next section of document cases under the roller shelving have seven volumes of personal property books, three cubic feet of unidentified material in a bankers box, a transfer case and one handbag of court exhibits, unidentified, and behind the court exhibits is another box of unidentified papers. The papers here are not arranged in any order and in the next section again the many volumes and, of the original papers and rough dockets of the clerk of court, approximately 8 cubic feet. There are three rolled-up blueprints of maps of unidentified origin and closed suits in chancery, original census for 1860 and more personal property books and rough minutes of the clerk of court in the courtroom that are subsequently transferred, one volume labeled blotter K, commencing November 18, 1813. These are the clerk’s blotters that are normally transferred to the bound volume.

There are many other unidentified volumes bundled with these originals. Also we have one manila folder expandable, labeled births and deaths, 1870, and 1870–1872. So two folders of births and deaths. These are original papers.” Brown notes that several order books were in “terrible shape and would have to be not only rebound but repaired by the Barrow process and rebuilt essentially,” and later acknowledged that some volumes had already “been repaired by the Barrow process.” While Brown found the clerk, Mr. Keller, to be “very generous,” he did discuss “with him the poor condition of the original volumes stored in his office, and the poor storage conditions under which the original papers are kept,” and that they were “being mangled and mistreated by use by the public.” Brown laments that the records are “disorganized as far as arrangement and there is really no real control of the records.” “The old original papers are in bad shape, and a number of the older books are badly in need of repair.”

During his lengthy inventory monolog in his Sept. 9, 1971, **Orange County** circuit court survey, Brown mentions a section of roller shelving with “old order books that have been photostated [sic] by the State Library and some that have been rebound by the Barrow process.” Among the other records Brown notes that had been cellulose acetate laminated are marriage bonds that had been interleaved and bound into a “total of 16 volumes,” which was a common way for the Barrow Shop to conserve loose records. Brown also mentions that another laminated volume had “cracked” and had to be “replaced or redone by the Barrow people in Richmond.” This presumably was from the deterioration of the cellulose acetate lamination, which eventually occurs with records that were conserved using this process. Brown notes that the clerk was not happy. Additionally, he identifies some volumes that had been “repaired by the silk screen process,” and bound in “wooden binders.” He was undoubtedly talking about the silking process, a form of document conservation promoted by the Emery Records Preservation Company. This was a popular but pricy form of conservation from the 1890s to the mid-1930s, when it was superseded by cellulose acetate lamination, a less expensive process better-suited for the high page



Above: This photograph of the 1905 Louisa County Courthouse was taken on Oct. 17, 1966. (The Nichols Collection of Virginia Courthouses, Visual Studies Collection, Library of Virginia.)

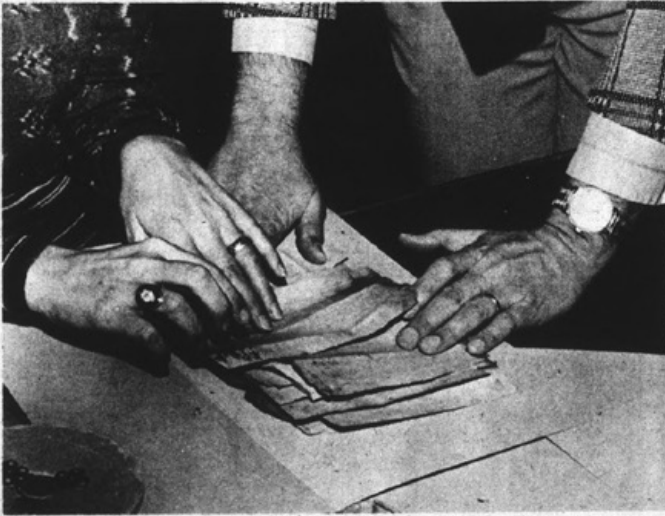


Right: This postcard of the 1859 Orange County Courthouse was printed in the 1960s. (Visual Studies Collection, Library of Virginia.)

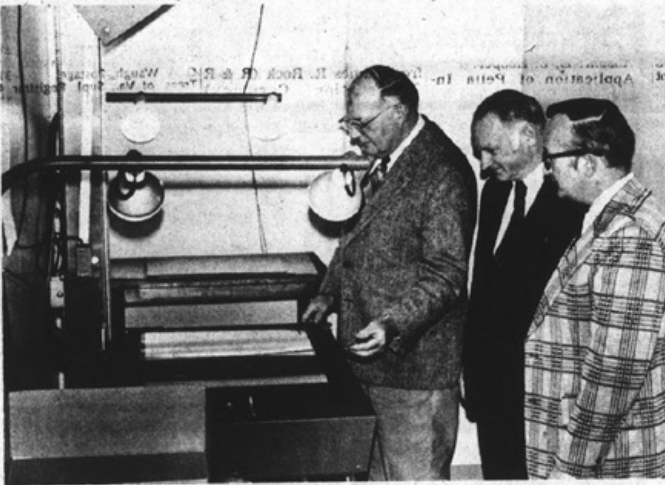
County Historical Records Going on Microfilm



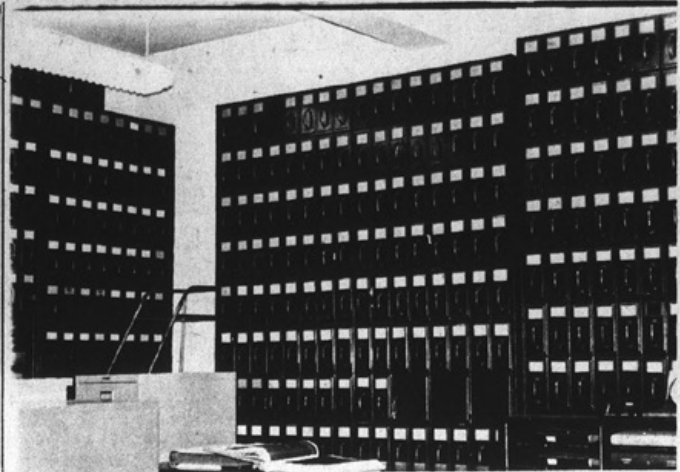
STATE ARCHIVIST Dr. Louis Manarin shows Mrs. Susan Tucker, left, and Mrs. Brenda Seay how the old ink used 200 years ago was slowly destroying county documents at the local Clerk's Office. Acid in the paper is also causing the original records to deteriorate.



THE PAPERS shown here date back to 1742 and include much history of Orange County during that period. The hands are those of State Archivist Dr. Louis Manarin, right, who is teaching Mrs. Susan Tucker how to handle the old documents.



ORANGE COUNTY CLERK H. C. DeJarnette, left, is overseer of the microfilm project now underway in the Clerk's Office. With him in above photo on Monday are Bicentennial Chairman William H.B. Thomas, center, and Virginia State Archivist Louis Manarin.



OLD ORANGE COUNTY documents dating back to 1734 have always been stored in these metal drawers in the local Clerk's Office. Because they were the original and only copies, it has been impossible for the general public to view them. All are now being placed on microfilm.

Orange County's oldest records, some dating back to 1734, are now being placed on microfilm in the local Clerk's Office. County Clerk H. C. DeJarnette announced this week that two full-time employees are working in his office under a federal grant to preserve the historical papers and documents, some of which were carefully wrapped and tied with string over 200 years ago and are now being opened for the first time.

Virginia State Archivist Dr. Louis Manarin and his assistant were in Orange Monday to direct the beginning of this project that will continue through June when the federal program terminates. Under this timetable, Dr. Manarin estimates that records through 1843 will have been placed on microfilm and it is hoped that a future grant will continue the project.

Mrs. Susan Tucker of Madison County and Mrs. Brenda Seay of Orange County have been trained to handle the old documents and microfilm them in groups. The original film will be stored in the Virginia State Archives at Richmond and duplicate reels of microfilm will be available for public inspection on an electronic reader at the Clerk's Office.

Every document will be photographed front and back, Dr. Manarin explained, and each "image" will be num-

bered and prepared for an index. Because of security reasons, the general public has been unable to see these records in past years. Although they have been carefully stored in metal drawers at the clerk's office, Dr. Manarin said they are still undergoing a continuous deterioration because of acid in both the paper and the ink that was used in early days of Orange County history.

After the original documents have been recorded on microfilm, they will be carefully stored in air-tight, acid-free boxes, available for inspection only in rare cases to the needs of future historians. Mr. DeJarnette said that Orange County is fortunate in that its records were not destroyed during the Civil War as was the case for many Virginia counties. The County Clerk here during the war was ordered to take his records to Richmond but for some unknown reason, the order was not fulfilled. Had they been taken there, all would have been destroyed when Richmond was burned by Union soldiers.

Included in the singles category are unmarried people and those who have been divorced or widowed and have remained single since then.

In the local area, based upon the findings, the number of one-person households has now

to the latest updated figures from the Department of Commerce, approximately 18.3 percent of the dwelling units are occupied by singles. In 1960 it was 13.1 percent. Throughout the nation as a whole, 22.2 percent are one-person households. In the South Atlantic States, it is 19.6 percent and, in the State of Virginia, 18.2 percent.

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STATE ARCHIVIST assistant Connis Brown demonstrates how the microfilm reader and copier works in the Orange County Clerk's Office. The old document that is seen on the projection screen is a microfilm copy that dates back almost 240 years.

Above: Local 1976 newspaper article reporting that "Virginia State Archivist Louis Manarin," and "State Archivist assistant Connis Brown," were at the Orange County circuit court clerk's office training

the staff with the preservation, processing and microfilming of the records there. Orange County Review, Volume 45, Number 52, Feb. 26, 1976. (Virginia Newspaper Project, Library of Virginia.)

count of government records. Brown also evaluated the facilities and the condition of the records. The clerk's office, "to the left of the courthouse," and "on the main street here in Orange, is separated from the street by a courthouse green of probably 20 yards," Brown noted. The fireproof vault was "an old vault, a true vault," with metal doors and "no openings to the outside." "There appears to be very little danger of anything other than a collapse of the bank on the left side of the clerk's office really threatening the security of the records." Brown notes that the clerk's records in the vault were "well kept, in order, and have a considerable amount of reconstruction and preservation done to them."

Brown began his July 9, 1971, survey of the **Spotsylvania County** circuit court clerk's office with a buildings and ground introduction: "The Spotsylvania Courthouse green is located at Spotsylvania Courthouse at the intersection of state highways 613 and 208 ... The courthouse green is well maintained ... The courthouse itself proper is a light-colored brick building with marble pillars in front" and the fireproof 1964 clerk's office and records room "is a pleasing appearing building." He then turned his attention to the circuit court clerk himself: "I have met Mr. Cary Crismond, clerk of the Spotsylvania Circuit Court, and a crusty old character he is. He is outgoing, speaks his mind ... and has some rather positive feelings about many things." The clerk told Brown that, "because many of the old records are going bad because of neglect and mistreatment," he thought that "a law should be passed to require that all books prior to the Civil War at least should be transferred to the State Library for safekeeping and that they should be replaced by film." Stored at the State Library, they would be "preserving the old papers away from the dangers of poor storage conditions in the courthouses." The clerk was "satisfied that his old books are adequately preserved, but still is convinced that even his books should be transferred to the State Library for safekeeping." The clerk hoped that Brown's surveys would "point out to the General Assembly that the valuable historical records of the state are decaying." Possibly overwhelmed by the clerk's chattiness, Brown notes that perhaps the clerk "should look at his books more and talk less." After his in-depth coverage of the clerk, Brown confesses, "I have not inventoried the records on the tape in that this is my last tape, and I wanted to get in the preceding information."

Brown's Oct. 1, 1971, four-page survey of the **Stafford County** circuit court clerk's office was unusually brief, only touched on the county facilities and real estate, had little to say regarding the clerk, and included no inventory. "The courthouse green stands here on U.S. 1 in Stafford at the intersection of state road 630," and the courthouse, with its "large columns," was "a two-story brick structure with slate roof." "Attached to the left side of the courthouse" was the clerk's office and records room, which he considered "relatively fireproof." With its wooden floors and ceiling and windows, it "is not a true vault." Nevertheless, he declared it "one of the more secure record rooms." Brown met with the clerk, "Mr. Alexander," a "likeable, quiet gentleman," who informed him that he was in favor of a local records program, and that he would "support the program in the coming session of the General Assembly by contacting the members from his area." ■

Right: This photograph of the 1923 Stafford County Courthouse was taken on Feb. 15, 1967. (The Nichols Collection of Virginia Courthouses, Visual Studies Collection, Library of Virginia.)



Top: This photograph of the 1859 Orange County Courthouse was taken in the 1960s. (Leveque Collection of Virginia Courthouses, Visual Studies Collection, Library of Virginia.)

Second from top: This photograph of the 1840 Spotsylvania County Courthouse was taken in the 1960s. (The Nichols Collection of Virginia Courthouses, Visual Studies Collection, Library of Virginia.)



A Virginia Untold Update

By Lydia J. Neuroth, Project Manager for Virginia Untold: The African American Narrative

Reprinted from the Library of Virginia's *UncommonWealth* blog, Aug. 27, 2025.

In today's blog post, I want to share some new material available in [Virginia Untold](#): The African American Narrative, the Library's digital project featuring records of enslaved and free Black and multiracial people.

This spring I traveled to three different Virginia localities to pick up and return "Free Negro Registers" to digitize for our free register project, including volumes from Charlotte, Louisa and Nelson counties. After scanning the registers here at the Library of Virginia, I traveled back to each locality to return the records and deliver digital images to the clerk. Some of these registers are now in Virginia Untold, while others are available on our crowdsourced transcription site, [From the Page](#).

- Charlotte County (Va.) Register of Free Negroes, 1794–1865
- Louisa County (Va.) Bonds Recorded and Register of Free Negroes, 1754–1837
- Nelson County (Va.) Register of Free Negroes and Affidavits for the Valuation of Formerly Enslaved Persons, 1853–1867

This summer I traveled to Northumberland County to pick up two volumes of free register books documenting the years 1803–1858. Our digitization staff is currently working to scan these volumes, so this locality will be available soon.

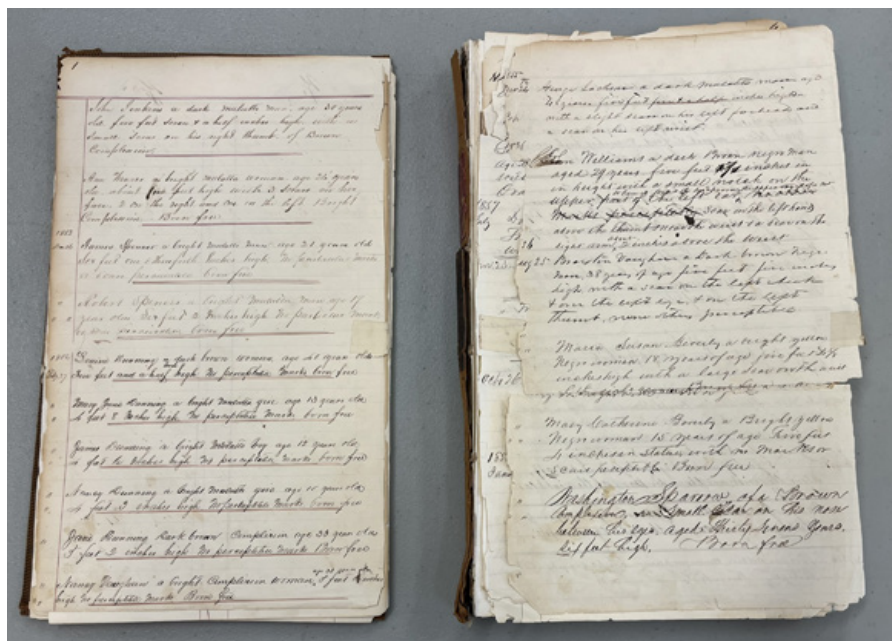
In addition to taking trips around the state, we've worked this spring to make several other volumes available through Virginia Untold, including [the localities we digitized last fall](#):

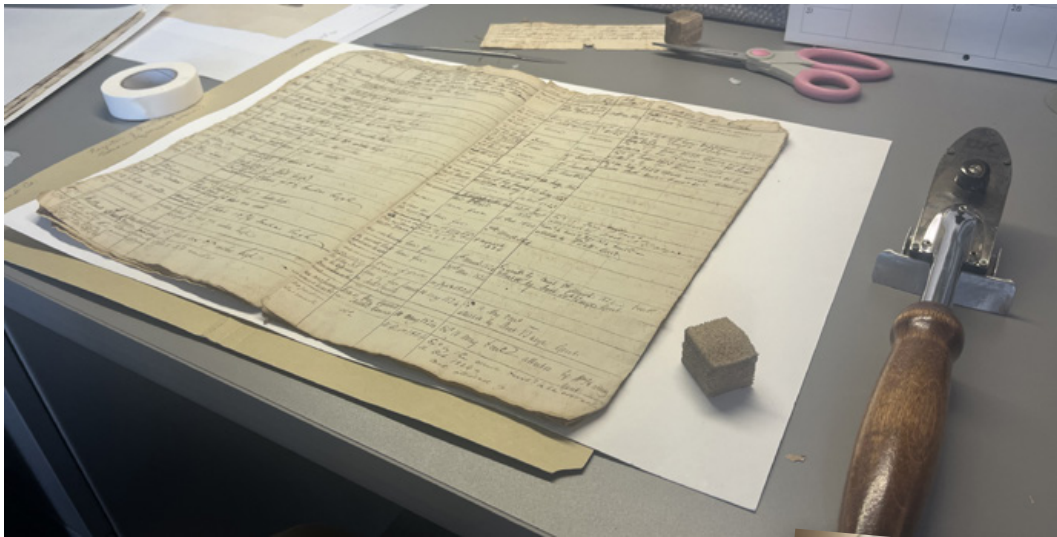
- Fluvanna County (Va.) Register of Free Negroes, 1851–1864
- Mecklenburg County (Va.) Register of Free Negroes, 1809–1841
- Mecklenburg County (Va.) Register of Free Negroes, 1841–1865
- Montgomery County (Va.) Register of Free Negroes and Mulattoes, 1823–1847
- Montgomery County (Va.) Register of Free Negroes and Mulattoes, 1848–1863
- Northampton County (Va.) Register of Free Negroes, 1853–1861
- Orange County (Va.) List of Free Negroes, 1803–1850
- Pulaski County (Va.) Register of Free Negroes, 1851–1864

When I last checked Virginia Untold, I was delighted to learn that we now have a total of 87 "Free Negro Registers" available through the project website. We've added nearly 40 volumes to the original set of "Free Negro Registers" in our collections that [we digitized as part of a National Historical Publications and Records Commission grant](#) completed in spring 2023. They are not completely indexed, but we are getting there, with new volunteers joining us all the time. Since we first launched the "Free Registers" collection on [From the Page](#) in March 2022, we've indexed 72 registers equaling approximately 12,500 pages with over 47,000 names. The public can help us index even more pages from these registers by signing up for a free account on [From the Page](#) and then [navigating to Virginia Untold: Free Registers \(indexing\)](#).



Left: Photo of the front entrance of the historic Nelson County courthouse taken during my visit in April 2025. Right: The Nelson County free register lays flat on a table due to a broken spine. I often show up to a courthouse not knowing exactly the physical state of the register. I try to do my homework by reading locality notes and files and looking at a microfilm copy if we have one. But these records were microfilmed in the 1970s and 80s, and time and wear have taken their toll.





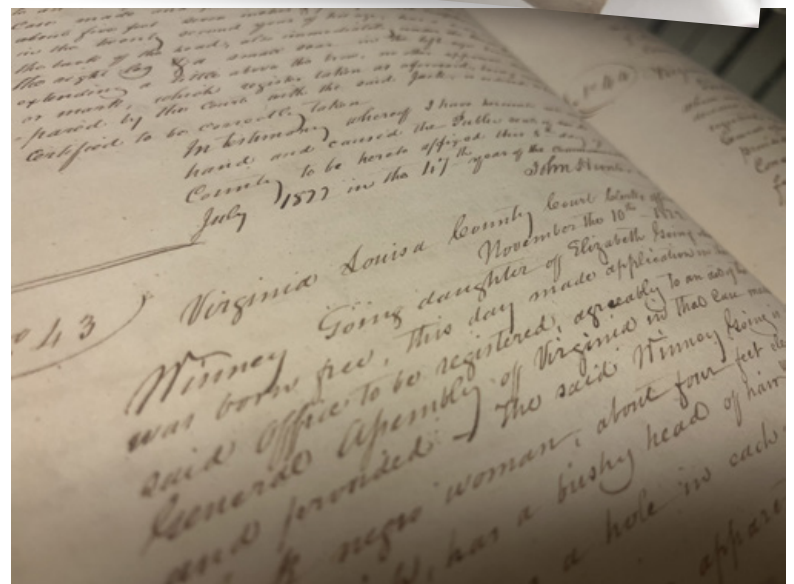
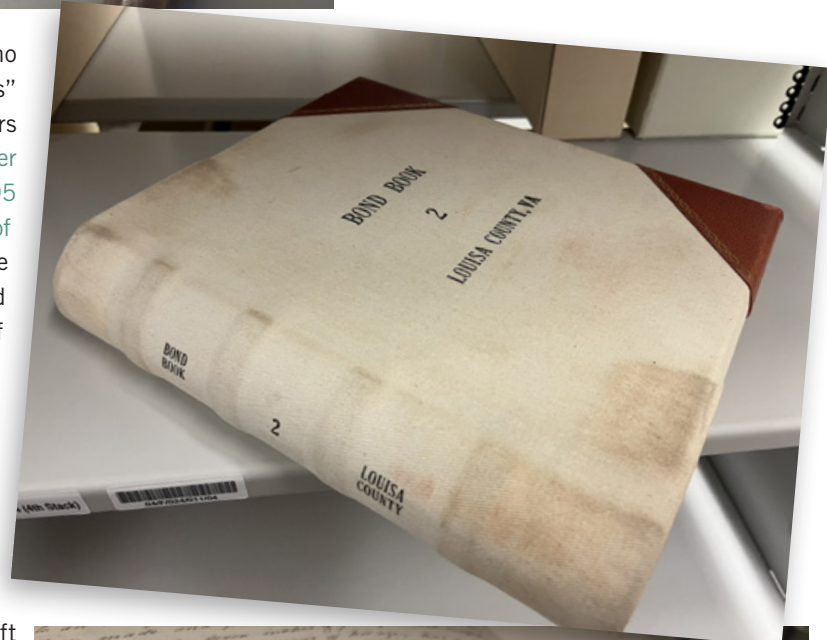
Left: Northumberland register conservation. Middle: The registration entries are nearly invisible via the outside cover, which underscores the importance of locating these record books, digitizing them and describing them with proper metadata through resources such as Virginia Untold. Below: The Louisa County Free Register is included in the back of “Bond Book No. 2” for Louisa County. The clerk recorded bonds for various years concerning estate settlements and the probate of wills, then flipped the book over and used it to record free Black and multiracial men and women.

Statistics we’ve collected from both Google Analytics and Primo (our library catalog layer) reveal that the “Free Negro Registers” collection is regularly in the top five collections accessed by users when searching Virginia Untold. In June, the [Carroll County Register of Free Negroes and Mulattoes and Election Record, 1846–1895](#) was requested 77 times and the [Arlington County \(Va.\) Register of Free Negroes, 1797–1841](#) was requested 63 times. We compare these figures with other record types that are frequently requested less than ten times in a month or quarter. This makes sense if you think about it: these records contain hundreds of names in a single digital object, making them very useful for potentially many different types of users. Similarly, Cohabitation Registers are also a frequently accessed record type. This is good information for us — it supports using resources to finish this project and encourages us to think about similar records to digitize in the future.

Folks often ask me, “What about [my locality’s] register?” It’s disheartening to learn that many registers were lost to fire, theft or other types of damage over the years. Some were known to exist up until several years ago; they were microfilmed sometime in the 1970s to the 1990s, but the physical volume is nowhere to be found. For those localities, we plan to digitize the images from the microfilm. If you’re researching free Black or multiracial ancestors, we also suggest looking at the minute or order books for a locality to see if the clerk wrote down any registration details alongside other daily activities of the court. In some localities, the clerk never recorded registrations in a separate register. Instead, he just copied down registration entries in the court order book as another court transaction of the day. We believe this to be the case for the City of Richmond.

We’ve been digitizing this set of records for about four years, and I am still shocked and intrigued by the mere glimpses into the lives of free Black Virginians. Below I will share just a few that I’ve run across in recent days while indexing them on From the Page.

Malinda Russell, only 25 years old, traveled from Washington County, Tennessee, to be registered in Montgomery County, Virginia. These two locations are approximately 150 miles apart. Travel would have taken days. Was she migrating toward family? Looking for better

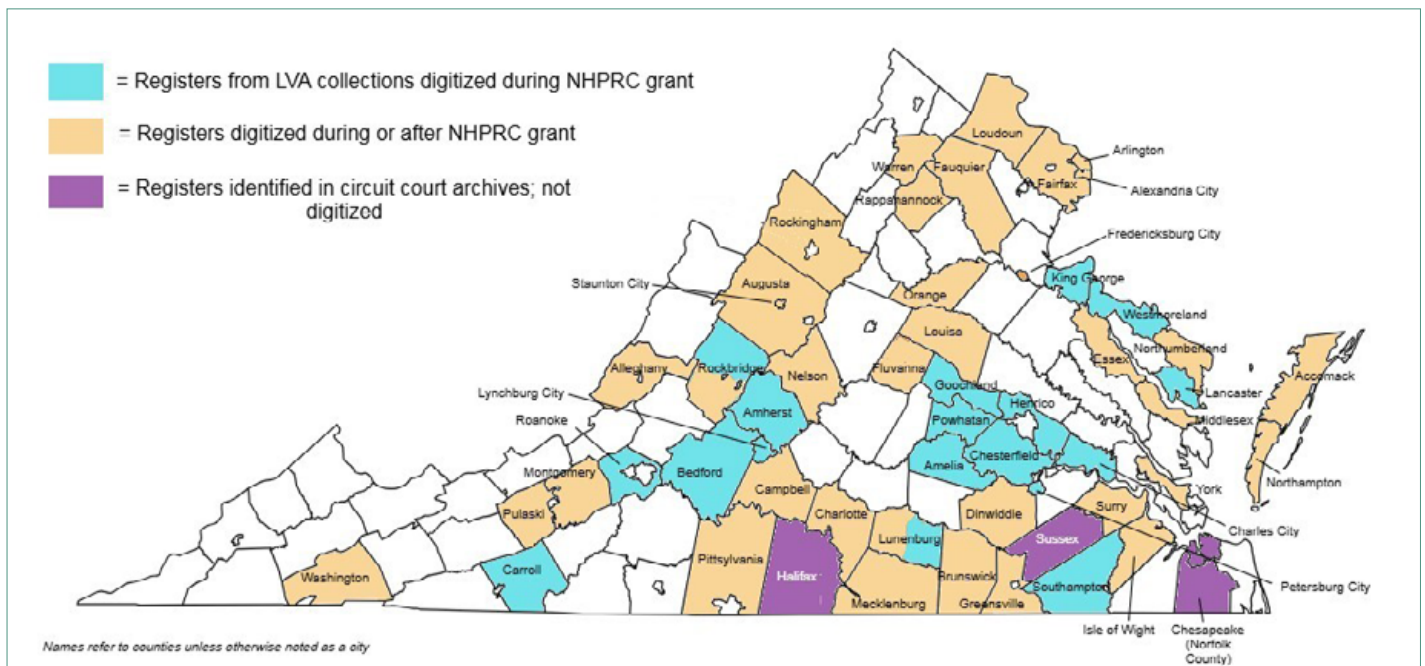


living and working conditions? Or trying to get away from something in Tennessee? It would be interesting to research the registration laws and records from that state to find out more about Malinda Russell’s journey.

Malinda
Ruffell

At a Court of quarterly session continued &
held for Montgomery County the 2d day of
August 1844.
Malinda Ruffell a free woman, produced
in court her register made in the county court
of Washington in the State of Tennessee, revea-
ling her as being at the time said register
was made, a dark mulatto with dark
curley, kinky hair about 24 years of age.
On her motion she is registered in this court
as being about the age of 25 years at this
time, dark mulatto, dark curly kinky
hair, about five feet, three inches high
with a scar over the left eye.

There are a few more new records in Virginia Untold as well. See the [recent](#)



Directly above: This map created using Pixlr Editor illustrates the localities in which free registers have been digitized for Virginia Untold. The map serves as a guide rather than an exact representation of how the localities in Virginia break down. Please note that this is a 2024 map (from the resource [Vectordad.com](https://www.vectordad.com)) illustrating pre-1865 records.

social media post about the “Gladwin Record,” which volunteers helped us index this spring. There are other records available at the Library that document census numbers during the Freedmen’s Bureau administration. We are looking to add those records to Virginia Untold in the coming year. Additionally, a set of church records documenting the biracial history of [Cumberland Baptist Church](#) is fully indexed and now available in Virginia Untold. A big thank you to [The Life Church](#) in Richmond for hosting Library staff members on one of their 5th Sunday Outreach volunteer days. Thirty-two individuals participated in this transcribe-a-thon, and thanks to them this record now has a full transcription in Virginia Untold. We’ve got our eye on a few other church records that document such a storied history of Black and white congregants worshipping under the same roof. Stay tuned for what’s next! ■

Top right: Registration entry for Spencer Bright in the Montgomery County “Register of Free Negroes,” 1848–1863. In 1863, Spencer Bright had to return to the Montgomery County court to have a new copy of his registration made because it was “taken from him by the enemy while in Kanawha Valley.” Middle right: Registration entry for Charlotte Findly in the Pulaski County “Register of Free Negroes,” 1851–1864. Charlotte was likely related to Rachel Findley, whom Library staff members have researched and written about as having won her freedom through a freedom suit. In 1858, Charlotte Findly was described as “having obtained her freedom many years since by suit in Wythe County.” While Rachel fought for freedom in Powhatan, Charlotte fought for freedom in Wythe.

Bottom: Registration entry for Benjamine Franklin in the Pulaski County “Register of Free Negroes,” 1851–1864, in which his weight is recorded as “one hundred and sixty nine pounds.” In Pulaski County, the clerk recorded not only the height of each individual, but also their weight, an unusual measurement that Library staff haven’t seen recorded in other free registers.

Virginia
At a Court held for Montgomery County at the
Sight Court House on Monday the 3rd day of August
1863.
N. 137. Spencer Bright a free man of color, having
been registered as such in this County in the year
1862, and having produced to the Court satisfactory
evidence that the copy furnished him was taken
from him by the enemy while in the Kanawha
Valley. It is ordered that he be re-registered in this
Court as being at this time about 29 years of age,
five feet nine inches high, black, large stature with
a scar on the little finger of the left hand, and
the ring finger on the same hand broken, with
a small scar over the right eye, (who was emancipated
in this County by a deed executed by Mary Findley
on the 5th day of November 1858 which was at-
tested & recorded on the same day) and that the clerk
of this Court furnish him with a copy of this register.

No. 5.
Virginia: Pulaski County, to wit:
I Lynock Murrin Clerk of the County
Court of Pulaski County in the State of Virginia
do hereby certify that, Charlotte Findly a free
black woman, fifty two years of age, five
feet nine inches high, having obtained her
freedom many years since, by suit in Wythe County,
Virginia, was this day registered & numbered
in the Clerk's Office of said County, pursuant
to an order of said Court, and the act of
assembly in such case made and provided.
As Witness Lynock Murrin Clerk of

I Lynock A. Murrin Clerk of the
County Court of Pulaski County do hereby
certify that Jacob Pear, now aged thirty four
years, five feet eight inches high, colour
darker than a dark copper colour, with
a scar on the right cheek weighs about
one hundred & fifty pounds, was this

THE CIRCUIT COURT RECORDS PRESERVATION PROGRAM ANNUAL REPORT

GRANTS CONSULTING PROGRAM

During FY2025, CCRP consulting staff members conducted 77 site visits. They examined 811 items and 3.80 cu. ft. of loose records and created 483 condition reports and 578 Statement of Work documents for Item Conservation grant candidates. They also examined 573 post-conservation items at the vendor to verify that work was performed correctly.

The Circuit Court Records Preservation Grants Review Board met once in FY2025 to consider 140 grant applications submitted from 105 localities totaling \$3,030,049.70. The amount budgeted for this grant cycle was \$2,000,000. After a thorough discussion, the Board approved partial or full funding for 114 grant projects with all awards totaling \$2,000,492.93 for the following grant categories: Item Conservation, Reformatting/Indexing, and Equipment/Storage.

IN-HOUSE RECORDS PROGRAM

Work continues to reduce the backlog of unprocessed circuit court records collections housed at the Library with a concentration on records series having a high research value covering a wide geographic area. Staff members continue to flat-file, folder, index, conserve and re-box materials, incorporating in-depth arrangement and description of court records of higher-research potential. The collections are made more accessible to the public with the creation of catalog records and electronic finding aids. The professional staff continues to process and index chancery records as well as process other important loose papers having high research value. In addition, indexed chancery records data (names, cause of action, topics, etc.) is entered into the Chancery Indexing Processing System (CHIPS), the data entry system used by Library staff. CHIPS allows for uniform searching of records by the public and staff through the web-based Chancery Records Index.

The processing staff were also assigned with transcribing and approving transcriptions of circuit court records found on the Library's crowdsourcing project, [From the Page](#). Once approved, the transcribed records will be added to the Library of Virginia's Digital Collection website.

Most-viewed localities on the Chancery Records Index:

1. Albemarle County - 8,156 views (-57.48%)
2. Augusta County - 7,391 views (-21.73%)
3. Halifax County - 7,382 views (-20.68%)
4. Bedford County - 6,772 views (-9.14%)
5. Fauquier County - 5,797 views (-9.39%)

Most-viewed individual chancery causes:

1. Giles County: 1809-001 Isaac French vs. Matthew French ETC – 158 views
2. Montgomery County: 1803-010 James Payne vs. David McComas etc. – 131 views
3. Amelia County: 1832-019 John Martin vs. ADMR OF Joshua Rucker BY ETC – 117 views
4. Wythe County: 1842-018 George Stuart & WIFE vs. HEIR(S) OF William Hay ETC – 87 views
5. Rockingham County: Gabriel Becks ETC vs. St Clair D Kirtley ETC – 84 views

The following localities have been subjects of archival work this year:

- Accomack Co. Chancery Causes - descriptive access
- Accomack Co. Declarations for Revolutionary War Pensions - processing & indexing
- Accomack Co. Military and Pension Records - descriptive access
- Accomack Co. Free and Enslaved Records - descriptive access
- Albemarle Co. Business Records - descriptive access
- Albemarle Co. Declarations for Revolutionary War Pensions - processing & indexing; descriptive access
- Albemarle Co. Deeds of Emancipation - descriptive access
- Albemarle Co. Naturalization Records - descriptive access
- Albemarle Co. Free and Enslaved Records - descriptive access
- Alexandria City Business Records - descriptive access
- Alleghany Co. Chancery Causes - processing, indexing, and mending
- Alleghany Co. Naturalization Records - descriptive access
- Alleghany Co. Free and Enslaved Records - descriptive access
- Amelia Co. Business Records - descriptive access
- Amherst Co. Business Records - descriptive access
- Amherst Co. Coroner's Inquests - processing, indexing, & descriptive access
- Amherst Co. Declarations for Revolutionary War Pensions - processing & indexing; descriptive access
- Amherst Co. Ended Causes - minimal processing
- Amherst Co. Ended Causes - minimal processing
- Amherst Co. Free and Enslaved Records - descriptive access
- Arlington Co. Apprenticeship Indentures - descriptive access
- Arlington Co. Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands Records - descriptive access
- Arlington Co. Certificates of Importation - descriptive access
- Arlington Co. Declarations for Revolutionary War Pensions - descriptive access
- Arlington Co. Deeds of Emancipation - descriptive access
- Arlington Co. Naturalization Records - processing, indexing & descriptive access

- Arlington Co. Petitions to Remain - descriptive access
- Augusta Co. Business Records - descriptive access
- Bath Co. Digital Chancery Causes - indexing
- Bath Co. Naturalization Records - descriptive access
- Bedford Co. Business Records - descriptive access
- Bedford Co. Coroners' Inquisitions - indexing
- Bedford Co. Naturalization Records - descriptive access
- Bland Co. Business Records - descriptive access
- Botetourt Co. Business Records - descriptive access
- Botetourt Co. Coroners' Inquisitions - indexing & descriptive access
- Brunswick Co. Business Records - descriptive access
- Brunswick Co. Coroners Inquests - processing, indexing, & descriptive access
- Brunswick Co. Naturalization Records - descriptive access
- Campbell Co. Business Records - descriptive access
- Campbell Co. Coroners' Inquests - processing, indexing, & descriptive access
- Caroline Co. Business Records - descriptive access
- Caroline Co. Coroners' Inquests - processing, indexing, & descriptive access
- Charles City Co. Business Records - descriptive access
- Charles City Co. Coroners' Inquests - processing, indexing, & descriptive access
- Charlotte Co. Business Records - descriptive access
- Charlotte Co. Coroners' inquests - processing, indexing, & descriptive access
- Charlottesville Coroners' Inquests - processing, indexing, & descriptive access
- Charlottesville Naturalization Records - descriptive access
- Chesterfield Co. Business Records - descriptive access
- Chesterfield Co. Chancery Causes - processing, indexing, and mending
- Chesterfield Co. Coroners' Inquests - indexing; descriptive access
- Clifton Forge Naturalization Records - descriptive access
- Craig Co. Business Records - descriptive access
- Craig Co. Naturalization Records - descriptive access
- Cumberland Co. Business Records - descriptive access
- Cumberland Co. Coroners' Inquests - processing, indexing, & descriptive access
- Cumberland Co. Military and Pension Records - descriptive access
- Cumberland Co. Naturalization Records - descriptive access
- Dinwiddie Co. Business Records - descriptive access
- Dinwiddie Co. Coroners' Inquests - indexing
- Dinwiddie Co. Naturalization Records - descriptive access
- Elizabeth City Co. Naturalization Records - descriptive access
- Fauquier Co. Business Records - descriptive access
- Fauquier Co. Naturalization Records - descriptive access
- Fluvanna Co. Business Records - descriptive access
- Fluvanna Co. Free and Enslaved Records - descriptive access
- Franklin Co. Coroners' Inquests - indexing & descriptive access
- Frederick Co. Business Records - descriptive access
- Frederick Co. Coroners' Inquests - descriptive access
- Frederick Co. Naturalization Records - descriptive access
- Fredericksburg Business Records - descriptive access
- Giles Co. Coroners' Inquests - indexing, descriptive access
- Giles Co. Declarations for Revolutionary War Pensions - descriptive access
- Giles Co. Naturalization Records - descriptive access
- Gloucester Co. Coroners' Inquests - indexing, descriptive access
- Gloucester Co. Naturalization Records - descriptive access
- Goochland Co. Coroners' Inquests - indexing, descriptive access
- Goochland Co. Declarations for Revolutionary War Pensions - processing & descriptive access
- Grayson Co. Coroners' Inquests - descriptive access
- Greene Co. Chancery Causes - descriptive access
- Greene Co. Coroners' Inquests - indexing, descriptive access
- Greene Co. Military and Pension Records - descriptive access
- Halifax Co. Naturalization Records - descriptive access
- Hampton City Coroners' Inquests - indexing
- Hanover Co. Coroners' Inquests - descriptive access
- Henrico Co. Chancery Causes - processing, indexing, and mending
- Henrico Co. Declarations for Revolutionary War Pensions - processing & indexing; descriptive access
- Henrico Co. Military and Pension Records - descriptive access
- King William Co. Naturalization Records - descriptive access
- Lancaster Co. Naturalization Records - descriptive access
- Lee Co. Chancery Causes - processing, indexing, and mending; descriptive access
- Lunenburg Co. Declarations for Revolutionary War Pensions - descriptive access
- Lunenburg Co. Naturalization Records - descriptive access
- Lynchburg City Declarations for Revolutionary War Pensions - processing & indexing; descriptive access
- Lynchburg City Ended Causes - minimal processing
- Lynchburg City Free and Enslaved Records - descriptive access
- Madison Co. Naturalization Records - descriptive access
- Mathews Co. Business Records - descriptive access
- Mathews Co. Chancery Causes - processing, indexing, and mending
- Middlesex Co. Chancery Causes - orphans processing, indexing, and mending
- Montgomery Co. Military and Pension Records - descriptive access
- Montgomery Co. Naturalization Records - descriptive access
- Nelson Co. Chancery Causes - processing, indexing, and mending
- New Kent Co. Naturalization Records - descriptive access
- Newport News City Chancery Causes - processing, indexing, and mending
- Norfolk Co. Chancery Causes - processing, indexing, and mending; descriptive access
- Norfolk Co. Coroners' Inquests - indexing
- Norfolk Co. Naturalizations - descriptive access
- Northampton Co. Apprenticeship Indentures - descriptive access
- Northampton Co. Declarations for Revolutionary War Pensions - descriptive access
- Northampton Co. Free Registrations - descriptive access
- Northampton Co. Military and Pension Records - descriptive access
- Nottoway Co. Freedman's Bureau - descriptive access
- Nottoway Co. Naturalization Records - processing, indexing, & descriptive access
- Organizational Records (all localities) - descriptive access
- Page Co. Business Records - descriptive access
- Petersburg City Chancery Causes - descriptive access
- Petersburg City Declarations for Revolutionary War Pensions - processing & indexing
- Petersburg City Military and Pension Records - descriptive access
- Pittsylvania Co. Chancery Causes - descriptive access
- Pittsylvania Co. Declarations for Revolutionary War Pensions - descriptive access
- Pittsylvania Co. Naturalization Records - descriptive access
- Powhatan Co. Chancery Causes - processing, indexing, and mending; descriptive access

- Prince Edward Co. Chancery Causes - descriptive access
- Prince Edward Co. Declarations for Revolutionary War Pensions - descriptive access
- Prince Edward Co. Naturalizations - descriptive access
- Prince George Co. Chancery Causes - descriptive access
- Prince George Co. Naturalization Records - descriptive access
- Prince William Co. Chancery Causes - descriptive access
- Princess Anne Co. Chancery Causes - descriptive access
- Princess Anne Co. Declarations for Revolutionary War Pensions - descriptive access
- Princess Anne Co. Naturalization Records - descriptive access
- Pulaski Co. Chancery Causes - descriptive access
- Rappahannock Co. Business Records - descriptive access
- Rappahannock Co. Chancery Causes - descriptive access
- Richmond City Building Permits - descriptive access
- Richmond City Chancery Causes - processing, indexing, and mending
- Richmond City Engineers Office - descriptive access
- Richmond Co. Business Records - descriptive access
- Richmond Co. Chancery - indexing
- Roanoke City Naturalization Records - descriptive access
- Roanoke Co. Business Records - descriptive access
- Roanoke Co. Chancery Causes - descriptive access
- Roanoke Co. Naturalization Records - descriptive access
- Rockbridge Co. Chancery Causes - descriptive access
- Rockbridge Co. Naturalization Records - descriptive access
- Russell Co. Business Records - descriptive access
- Russell Co. Chancery Causes - descriptive access
- Scott Co. Business Records - descriptive access
- Scott Co. Declarations for Revolutionary War Pensions - descriptive access
- Scott Co. Chancery Causes - processing, indexing, and mending
- Shenandoah Co. Business Records - descriptive access
- Shenandoah Co. Chancery Causes - descriptive access
- Smyth Co. Chancery Causes - descriptive access
- Southampton Co. Chancery Causes - descriptive access
- Southampton Co. Chancery Causes - processing, indexing, and mending
- Southampton Co. Naturalization Records - descriptive access
- Spotsylvania Co. Chancery Causes - descriptive access
- Staunton City Business Records - descriptive access
- Staunton City Chancery Causes - descriptive access
- Staunton City Free and Enslaved Records - descriptive access
- Surry Co. Chancery Causes - descriptive access
- Sussex Co. Naturalizations - descriptive access
- Tazewell Co. Business Records - descriptive access
- Tazewell Co. Chancery Causes - descriptive access
- Tazewell Co. Naturalization Records - descriptive access
- Warren Co. Business Records - descriptive access
- Warren Co. Chancery Causes - descriptive access
- Washington Co. Chancery Causes - descriptive access
- Westmoreland Co. Business Records - descriptive access
- Westmoreland Co. Chancery Causes - descriptive access
- Westmoreland Co. Naturalization Records - descriptive access
- Winchester City Declarations for Revolutionary War Pensions - descriptive access
- Winchester City Military and Pension Records - descriptive access
- Winchester City Naturalization Records - indexing & descriptive access
- Wise Co. Business Records - descriptive access
- Wise Co. Chancery Causes - descriptive access
- Wythe Co. Chancery Causes - processing, indexing, and mending
- York Co. Chancery Causes - descriptive access
- York Co. Military and Pension Records - descriptive access

STATISTICS FOR JULY 1, 2024–JUNE 30, 2025

Cubic footage examined	174
Cubic footage processed	105.20
Chancery causes indexed and entered	1,542
Chancery causes edited	2,913
Items mended	4,184
EAD (Encoded Archival Description) records created	111
EAD (Encoded Archival Description) records edited	340
ALMA (LVA catalog) records created	87
ALMA (LVA catalog) records edited	3,268
Database edits (Infolinx, digital projects, etc.)	7,821
Database entries (Infolinx, digital projects, etc.)	5,096
Cubic footage accessioned	61.27
Items/volumes accessioned	49
Cubic footage deaccessioned	112.3
Items/volumes deaccessioned	18
Transcription pages approved – Circuit Court records	6,314
Transcription pages transcribed – Circuit Court records	6,339
Chancery Records Index total sessions	75,864
Chancery Records Index event count	2,246,797
Chancery Records Index search total page views	491,225

Chancery Records Index new users	25,131
Total indexes available on the Chancery Records Index	106
Digital chancery images scanned	250,328
Total images available on the Chancery Records Index	13,613,252

Digital images were added to the Chancery Records Index for: Accomack Co., Albemarle Co., Amherst Co., Grayson Co., Greene Co., Greenville Co. and Wythe Co.

VIRGINIA UNTOLD PROJECT

[Virginia Untold: the African American Narrative](#) provides digital access to records that document some of the lived experiences of enslaved and free Black and multiracial people in the Library of Virginia's collections. Traditional description, indexing, transcription and digitization are major parts of this effort. However, and perhaps more importantly, this project seeks to encourage conversation and engagement around the records, providing opportunities for a more diverse narrative of the history of Virginia's communities. The site currently has 28,311 records from 24 record types. The vast majority of the records are local court records.

We continue to collaborate with circuit courts to scan "Free Negro Registers" stored in their records rooms. Currently, 88 "Free Negro Registers" from 42 Virginia localities are now available through Virginia Untold. Many of the registers available through Virginia Untold include fully searchable indexes thanks to the work of many volunteers and Library of Virginia staff members who have contributed to their crowd-sourced indexing on the [From the Page](#) site.

MEDIA INVENTORY

The Imaging Services Branch continues to provide services to the localities, such as providing photo prints of missing pages, inspecting microfilm and digital images, retrieving microforms upon request, and delivering microfilm to our vendor for duplication. Imaging Services continues to maintain media in security storage by inspecting it for content and deterioration, replacing deteriorating film, and describing all media in our internal content management system, ShelfLife.

Imaging Services processed 32 requests from 14 circuit court clerks' offices to replace a total of 114 pages of missing records in their offices using security film housed at the Library of Virginia's State Records Center. One circuit court clerk made a request for film to be sent to their vendor for scanning, totaling 74 reels.

Imaging Services received, inspected, entered and stored 119 new reels of security microfilm from circuit court clerks' offices. Imaging Services continues to store and swap media tape backups from circuit court clerks' offices compiled by the Supreme Court of Virginia.

Imaging Services inspected 1,606 reels of older film for deterioration as well as content to improve metadata for nearly 380,000 pieces of media in security storage to the Infolinx database. Imaging Services

sent 14,894 reels to Backstage Library Works for inspection and duplication as part of the replacement project for deteriorating microfilm. Backstage Library Works duplicated and returned 12,148 reels.

CONCLUSION

The CCRP program continues to work toward the preservation and access of historical circuit court records stored at the Library of Virginia and circuit court clerks' offices around the Commonwealth. Previously unprocessed chancery causes are now accessible online to the circuit court clerks and the public. Circuit court clerks and the public have expressed their gratitude to the Library through emails and social media for making this possible. Staff members also identified, processed, cataloged and promoted through blogs and social media other record types of historical significance such as coroners' inquisitions and naturalization records. Circuit court records continue to be a rich resource for records added to the Virginia Untold: The African American Narrative Digital Collection. Thousands of circuit court records that contain the history and narratives of thousands of enslaved and free people of color have been added to Virginia Untold, such as freedom suits, deeds of emancipation, and commonwealth causes.

CCRP staff assisted circuit clerks around the Commonwealth with preservation needs in their offices — identifying records for item conservation grants, encouraging proper storage conditions in records rooms, and ensuring conservation work was done properly by vendors. Our work in the clerks' offices has encouraged increasing participation in the CCRP grant process. There were a record number of grant applications submitted in FY2025.

Finally, recordings in circuit courts that fund the CCRP program have been stagnant over the past three years. The driving force for this stagnation is the weak housing market. Moreover, the cost for item conservation and reformatting have increased over the last three years due to high inflation. The combination of stagnant revenue and high inflation has made it difficult to fully fund grant requests. Nevertheless, the Library of Virginia will continue to strive to balance the needs of the clerks, our patrons and the preservation requirements of the records. ■



Wednesday, Oct. 22 | 6:00–7:00 p.m. | Free
Webinar | A Hands-On Approach to the History of Photography

Place: Online

Registration required: lva-virginia.libcal.com/event/15210989

Join us for an engaging webinar on the history of photography as we celebrate this year's Virginia Archives Month theme, "Oh Snap! Photography in the Archives." Wendy Castenell of Washington and Lee University will discuss how the history of photography can introduce researchers and students to the medium's cultural significance, technological advancements and the evolving debates on its role as both a truth-telling tool and an art form. She will explore the value of visiting special collections and archives, which allow people to experience firsthand the textures and uniqueness of historical photographs, making abstract ideas more tangible. For more information, contact Mary Ann Mason at maryann.mason@lva.virginia.gov.



VIRGINIA ARCHIVES MONTH EVENTS



Saturday, Oct. 25 | 10:00–11:30 a.m. & 2:00–3:30 p.m. | Free
Tour of the Library of Virginia

Place: Lobby | Registration required

Morning: lva-virginia.libcal.com/event/15220138

Afternoon: lva-virginia.libcal.com/event/15220144

Explore an archival institution near you in October for Archives Month, starting with a tour of the Library of Virginia! Archives Month celebrates the enduring value of archives and the people and organizations that help preserve these important records and make them accessible. This year's Virginia Archives Month theme is "Oh Snap! Photography in the Archives." After the morning tour and before the afternoon tour, attendees will have the opportunity to get creative at our makers station using images found in archival collections from across the Commonwealth. For more information, contact Mary Ann Mason at maryann.mason@lva.virginia.gov.



Thursday, Oct. 16 | 6:00–7:30 p.m. | Free
Webinar | Coming Together Through Archives: Archiving Underrepresented Virginia History
 Place: Online
 Registration required: lva-virginia.libcal.com/event/15358419

Join us for a virtual panel discussion about archiving underrepresented Virginia history. How can archives build community? What is the value of seeing your experience represented in history? What role do archivists play in advocating for previously hidden stories? A panel of speakers will explore these questions and more and describe their work as archivists and memory workers who preserve and share the histories of traditionally marginalized communities. For more information, contact Mary Ann Mason at maryann.mason@lva.virginia.gov.

BIT.LY/VAARCHIVEMONTH25

LIBRARY OF VIRGINIA

MARAC
 Mid-Atlantic Regional Archives Conference



Follow the QR code to Archives Month event list and registrations

Programming assistance is provided by the Friends of the Virginia State Archives, <https://friendsvirginiaarchives.org>, a 501(c)(3) organization.