

# Finding Your Virginia Roots at the Library of Virginia



# Library of Virginia

Established in 1823 by the  
General Assembly

Holds 129 million manuscripts

Holds 3 million printed  
resources

Open Monday –Saturday 9:00  
am -5:00 pm

Check our website for closings,  
directions and programs



# Library of Virginia's Website

**LIBRARY OF VIRGINIA**

Search

☒ LVA Website ☐ Catalog [search options]

## Virginia Memory

Explore our vast and varied collections of print materials, manuscripts, archival records, newspapers, photographs and ephemera, maps and atlases, rare books, and fine art.

[Learn More](#)

**For the Public**

- [Using the Collections →](#)
- [Virginia Memory →](#)
- [Search the LVA Catalog →](#)
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- [The Virginia Shop →](#)
- [Order Materials →](#)
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**For Localities and State Agencies**

- [Records Management →](#)
- [Circuit Court Records Preservation →](#)
- [State Publications Depository Program →](#)
- [Library Services and Resources →](#)

**For Libraries and Educators**

**For Everyone**



# Using the Collection

## Guides and Indexes

Guides and Indexes include bibliographies and descriptive research notes to our print, newspaper, manuscript, and archival collections. Created over many years by staff subject experts and continually updated and added to, these valuable research tools are arranged by topic.

+ African American and Native American resources

+ Biographical and Genealogical

+ Births, Deaths, Marriages (Vital Records)

+ Business and Economics

+ County and City Research, including Virginia, West Virginia, and Kentucky

+ Early Printed Works

+ General Reference and eBooks

+ Government Information and Legal Resources

+ Historic Virginia Government Records

+ Maps and Architecture

+ Military Service

+ Newspapers and Magazines

+ Photograph Collections

+ Tax Records

+ Virginia History and Culture

+ Virginia Land Office Patents and Grants

+ Women's History

## Using Vital Statistics Records in the Archives at the Library of Virginia

Laws requiring the recording of births and deaths in Virginia were enacted as early as 1632, when a law directed ministers or churchwardens in each parish to present a “register of all burials, christenings, and marriages” yearly at the June meeting of the court. A similar act passed in 1659 stated that “enquiries are often made for persons imported into the collonie, of whose death no positive certificate can be granted for want of registers.” Few records survive from these early decades.

In 1713 the General Assembly noted that earlier acts had “for a long time been disused” and once again directed the recording of births and deaths by the minister or clerk of each parish. A return made the same year noted that the list of births and deaths was not complete since many parishes failed to make returns “for tis a thing so new to the people that neither they care to Register their Births and Burials, nor are the Parish Clerks yet brought into a regular method of transmitting them.”

The recording of vital statistics continued to be an ecclesiastical function throughout the colonial period. With the disestablishment of the Anglican church after the American Revolution and the rise of other religious denominations, the record-keeping process for vital statistics fell more and more to the individual family. By the mid-nineteenth century, medical science began to recognize the advantages of accurate birth and mortality information in controlling and treating communicable diseases. Pressure from local and national health organizations and medical professionals resulted in the passage of vital statistics registration laws. Virginia was one of the earliest states to pass such a law.

A law requiring the systematic statewide recording of births and deaths was passed by the General Assembly on April 11, 1853. Every commissioner of revenue registered births and deaths in his district annually, at the same time that personal property subject to taxation was ascertained. The commissioner recorded births and deaths that had occurred prior to December 31 of the preceding year and returned the record to the clerk of court by June 1. Information was obtained from heads of family, physicians, surgeons, or coroners. The law imposed penalties for failing to furnish or collect the information.

The clerk of court in each locality entered the information supplied by the commissioner into registers and prepared an accompanying alphabetical index. A copy of each register was forwarded to the auditor of public accounts. The law went into effect on July 1, 1853, and continued until 1896, when an economy-conscious legislature repealed the recording provisions.

Birth and death registers in the Library of Virginia are copies of those records made by local clerks from the lists compiled by the commissioners and forwarded to the auditor of public accounts. The auditor turned the lists over to the Bureau of Vital Statistics in 1918, and the registers were later transferred to the state archives.

## Using County and City Court Records

Local records are the most basic resources for investigating Virginia's past. These records document the daily activities of the courts in Virginia's counties and cities. While original county and city records are often held in local courthouses, the Library of Virginia has a substantial collection of records for some localities. These records are divided into eighteen broad categories:

- **Board of Supervisors Records:** minutes of meetings of the administrative branch of local government.
- **Bonds/Commissions/Oaths:** qualifications for office and apprentice indentures.
- **Business Records/Corporations/Partnerships:** records of businesses, such as ledgers, daybooks, and accounts, usually submitted as exhibits in cases before the court.
- **Census Records:** local copies of the federal census.
- **Court Records:** minute and order books, judgments, chancery records, clerk's correspondence, execution books, memorandum books, and docket books.
- **Election Records:** poll books and lists of voters.
- **Fiduciary Records:** appraisals, inventories, estate accounts and audits, estate sales (only when recorded in separate volumes), guardian accounts and bonds, and administrator's and executor's bonds.
- **Free Negro and Slave Records:** free negro registers, lists, and certificates.
- **Justice of the Peace Records:** executions by justices and constables.
- **Land Records:** deeds, processioners' returns, plats, and surveys.
- **Marriage Records and Vital Statistics:** marriage bonds, ministers' returns, and local copies of birth, marriage, and death registers.
- **Military and Pension Records:** militia returns, Revolutionary War and Civil War pension records, and muster rolls.
- **Organization Records:** minutes and accounts for non-business and non-government institutions, including churches, granges, and fraternal societies.
- **Road and Bridge Records:** accounts for building and maintaining roads and bridges.
- **School Records:** lists of students and textbooks used.
- **Tax and Fiscal Records:** local copies of land and personal property tax books and lists of tithables.
- **Wills:** wills and probate records recorded in will books.
- **Miscellaneous Records:** overseers of the poor records, estrays, and lists of physicians.

## WILLS

In October 1776, *entail* was abolished, thereby prohibiting the automatic passing of estates through multiple generations. On 1 January 1787, the English system of primogeniture ceased in Virginia. These two events affected the content of probate records. Under *primogeniture*, Virginia wills may not always name the wife or the

# Genealogical Databases

Virginia Military Dead Index

Virginia Untold & Unknown No Longer

Making History: Transcribe

Virginia Chronicle

From the Page

Chancery Record Index

Legislative Petitions Digital Collection

Public Library Photograph Collection

WPA Life Histories

Virginia Yearbook Digital Project

Virginia Land Office Patents and Grants  
& Northern Neck Grants and Surveys  
Database

Lost Records Localities Digital Collection

Military Pension and Disability Records  
Database

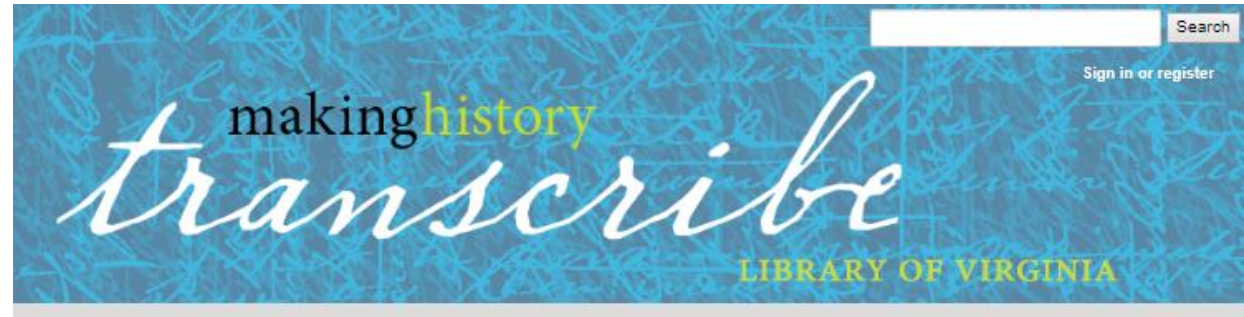
Petersburg Newspaper Index, 1797-1877

Wills & Administration, 1632-1800

World War I History Commission  
Questionnaires

# Making History: Transcribe

*Making History: Transcribe* is the Library of Virginia's collaborative online workspace where the public can participate in enhancing access to many of our amazing collection documenting over 400 years of Virginia history, people, and culture.



Making History: Transcribe is made possible in part by federal funding provided through the Library Services and Technology Act program administered by the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

Help improve access to historic documents by transcribing handwritten pages and reviewing transcriptions. Browse the items in each collection ("Browse all") to see which ones need work.

## Mary-Cooke Branch Munford Correspondence [\(browse all\)](#)



## Virginia Untold: African American Narrative [\(browse all\)](#)





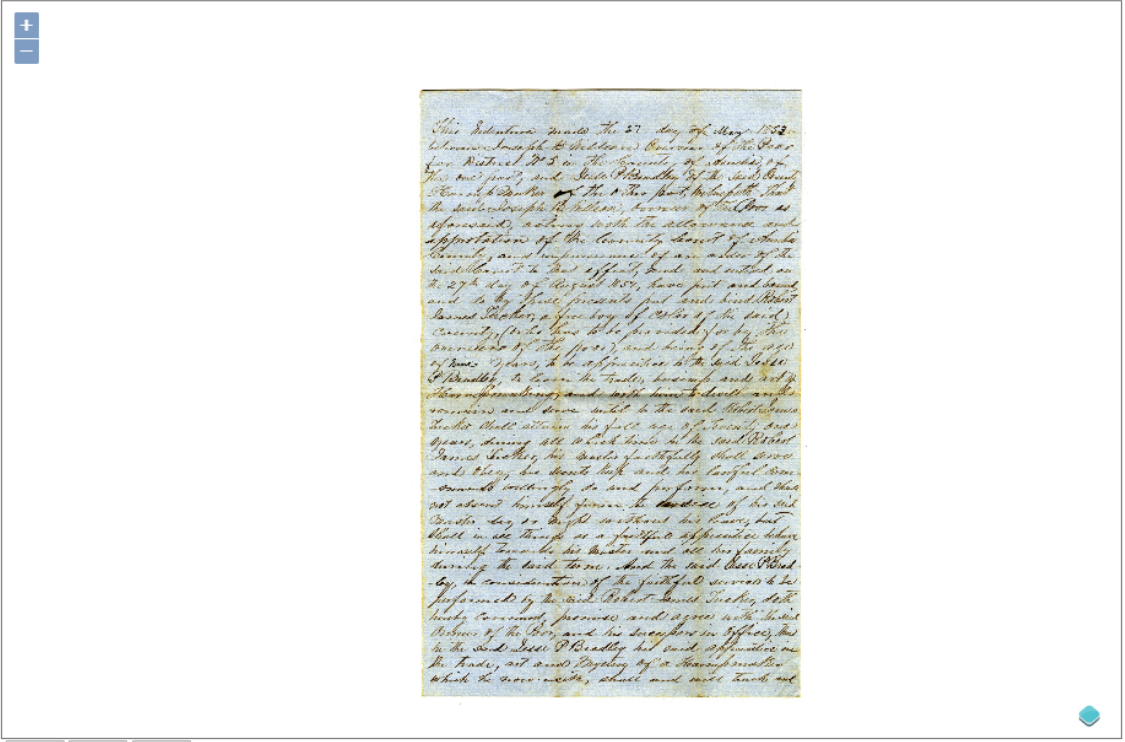
# Tucker, Robert James (M, 9): Indenture of Apprenticeship, Amelia County

image 1 of 2

next | all pages | history

Zoom in to read each word clearly.

Some images may have writing in several directions. To rotate an image, hold down shift-Alt and use your mouse to spin the image so it is readable.



This Indenture made the 27 day of May 1853 between Joseph B. Willson Overseer of the Poor for District No 5 in the County of Amelia, of the one part, and Jesse P. Bradley of the said County harness maker of the other part, Witnesseth: That the said Joseph B. Willson, Overseer of the Poor as aforesaid, acting with the allowance and approbation of the County Court of Amelia County, and in pursuance of an order of the said court to that effect, made and entered on the 27th day of August 1852, have put and bound, and do by these presents put and bind Robert James Tucker, a free boy of color of the said county (who has to be provided for by the overseers of the poor), and being of the age of nine years, to be apprentice to the said Jesse P. Bradley, to learn the trade, business and art of harness making, and with him to dwell and remain and serve until he the said Robert James Tucker shall attain his full age of twenty one years, during all which time he the said Robert James Tucker, his master faithfully shall serve and obey, his secrets keep and his lawful commands willingly do and perform, and shall not absent himself from the service of his said master day or night without his leave, but shall in all things as a faithful apprentice behave himself towards his master and all his family during the said term. And the said Jesse P. Bradley, in consideration of the faithful service to be performed by the said Robert James Tucker, doth hereby covenant, promise and agree with the said overseer of the poor, and his successors in office, that he the said Jesse P. Bradley his said apprentice in the trade, art and mystery of a harness maker which he now useth, shall and will teach and

- Enter your transcription above:
- Copy the text as is, including misspellings and abbreviations.
  - No need to account for formatting (e.g. spacing, line breaks, alignment); the goal is to provide text for searching.
  - If you can't make out a word, enter "[illegible]"; if uncertain, indicate with square brackets, e.g. "[town?]"
  - View more transcription tips
  - Want more space to type? See how to expand your display!

Save transcription

# Virginia Untold: The African American Narrative




# Virginia Chronicle

An archive of historical Virginia newspapers that provides free access to full-text and digitized images of a million newspaper pages

virginia**chronicle**  
LIBRARY OF VIRGINIA

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FEATURED IN THIS COLLECTION



Roanoke Daily Times 31 December 1895

SEARCH THE COLLECTION

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[See the Help section for more details.](#)

ABOUT THIS COLLECTION

Virginia Chronicle is a historical archive of Virginia newspapers, providing free access to full text searching and digitized images of over a million newspaper pages.

This collection contains 145,755 issues comprising 1,085,780 pages and 183,885 articles.

**December 2017:** We have made a slight change to accessing PDFs. Now, in order to download a PDF, you must be logged in to the site. The change was made in order to provide improved security to the images and data held in the Virginia Chronicle database. Once logged in, you can download as many PDFs as you need during that session. If you are not a registered member of the VA Chronicle community, we encourage you to register in order to take advantage of all available features.

In addition to the growing collection of newspapers found at Virginia Chronicle, the Library of Virginia offers access to a wide array of resources for researching newspapers, from its broad collection of over 3,000 Virginia and West Virginia imprints, both in original ink press copy and on microfilm, to a suite of online resources that provide gateways to a significant range of historical newspapers.

Please refer to the Project's Research Guides and Indexes on the [Library of Virginia](#) site for a comprehensive overview of the available resources for newspaper research. To search specific newspaper titles and holdings here at the Library, as well as holdings at select repositories, visit the [Newspapers in Virginia Bibliography](#)

The [Virginia Newspaper Project \(VNP\)](#), established in 1993, has worked to locate, describe, inventory, preserve, and provide public access to United States imprint newspapers housed not only at the Library of Virginia but throughout the commonwealth.



# Virginia Untold: The African American Narrative

This project aims to provide greater accessibility to pre-1865 African American history and genealogy found in the collections at the Library of Virginia



## VIRGINIA UNTOLD

THE AFRICAN AMERICAN NARRATIVE

The Library of Virginia's collections are rich with records documenting the lives of African Americans in Virginia. However, access to those materials dating from before the American Civil War is limited at best. These limitations are the result of period perspectives on the identities of enslaved and disenfranchised populations, as well as sheer volume. Due to this, the individual stories form a narrative of a people that has not been fully told.

The Library's African American Narrative project aims to provide greater accessibility to pre-1865 African American history and genealogy found in the rich primary sources in its holdings. 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 grassroots and diverse narrative of the history of Virginia's African American people.



[Search the Narrative](#)



[Join the Narrative](#)



[About the Narrative](#)

The processing of local court records found in Virginia Untold was made possible through the innovative [Circuit Court Records Preservation Program](#) (CCRP), a cooperative program between the Library of Virginia and the [Virginia Court Clerks Association](#) (VCCA), which seeks to preserve the historic records found in Virginia's circuit courts. The scanning, indexing and transcription of the records were made possible through the generosity of [Dominion Resources](#) and funding provided by the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA), administered by the [Institute of Museum and Library Services](#) (IMLS).





# RECORD

Of Slaves that have escaped to the enemy during the war, from the district of Dorothy W. Burnley Commissioner of the Revenue for Albemarle county, made in pursuance of the 11th section of an act entitled an act imposing taxes for the support of government, passed March 15, 1861.

Name of the Slave or Slave's Legals		Name of Slave that have escaped, age, sex, and the date they escaped					REMARKS
		Name of Slave	Male	Female	Age	Date of escape	
John T. Antmon	Robert	1			21	July 14 <sup>th</sup> 1862	Escaped from Culpeper County
Same	Maria	1			45	Aug 16 <sup>th</sup> "	"
Same	Sarah	1			14	" " "	"
D <sup>r</sup> GBS Bowcock	Stewart	1			17	June "	Albemarle
Rev W <sup>d</sup> J. Broadus	Louisa	1			17	1862	Fredericksburg
Same	Louis	1			21	"	King & Queen Co
Same	Patry	1			23	"	Stafford
Same	My 2 children	2			3 & 3	"	"
Same	Caroline	1			16	1863	Richmond Am
Geo S. Gola	Richard	1			26	Aug 1 <sup>st</sup> 1862	Albemarle Co
Same	Chesley	1			24	July "	Orange
David Ganslet	Tom	1			21	Decr 30 <sup>th</sup> "	Albemarle
Same	Hudson	1			19	" " "	"
Parrell H. Elliott	Thomson	1			30	Aug 11 <sup>th</sup> "	"
James Hart	William	1				1862	"
David F. Hox	Charles	1			43	March 4 <sup>th</sup> 1861	Fauquier
Same	Peter	1			30	March "	"
Same	David	1			45	"	"
Same	William	1			45	"	"
Same	Isaac	1			24	"	Howard
Henry Jenkins	Edmond	1			35	Aug 1861	Fairfax
Same	Harriet	1			30	" "	"
Same	Nora	1			38	" "	"
Mrs. Martha W. Kake	Washington	1			19	Aug 1 <sup>st</sup> 1862	Albemarle
Mrs. Mary A. Minor	Nelson	1			21	Decr 31 <sup>st</sup> "	"
John G. Page	Sam	1			25	May "	Gloucester
Major M. F. & Mary Page	19 of both sexes from 18 to 25 years old returned to Union 1863						
Samuel J. Tello	Maryann	1			78	March 14 <sup>th</sup> 1861	Escaped from Orange
Same	Sandy	1			57	April "	London
Same	Mary	1			26	" " "	Fauquier
Same	George	1			4	" " "	"
Same	Unknown				2	" " "	"
Same	John	1			21	Aug "	Albemarle
Same	Lack	1			21	" "	"
D <sup>r</sup> Geo R. Woods	Enoch	1			24	Apr 1862	"
Same	Henry	1			27	May 7 1863	"
		27			4		

D. W. Burnley Comr Rec  
Albemarle

Albemarle County  
Record of Slaves that have escaped to the  
enemy during the war (1861-1863)

# Unknown No Longer

Launched by The Virginia Museum of History & Culture in 2011

The mission of the project was to make accessible biographical details of enslaved Virginians from unpublished historical records in its collect

Beginning in 2019 the unique content of Unknown No Longer is available through the Library of Virginia



## [Unknown No Longer](#)

[The Virginia Museum of History & Culture](#) launched Unknown No Longer in 2011 to make accessible biographical details of enslaved Virginians from unpublished historical records in its collections. The site provided researchers with the ability to discover information on ancestors not found in other sources.

Beginning in 2019 the unique content of Unknown No Longer is available through the Library of Virginia's Virginia Untold: African American Narrative, providing users with access to an expanded collection of resources for researching African American history in Virginia. View the archived version of Unknown No Longer's [Message Board](#).

Unknown No Longer is sponsored in part by a generous grant from [Dominion Energy](#), a Fortune 200 energy company headquartered in Richmond, Virginia.

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Know all Men by these presents that I. John McDonald of  
the State of N Carolina for and in Consideration of the Sum of  
Three hundred & twenty five Dollars to me in hand paid by Elizabeth  
Cromline of Norfolk Borough have bargained & sold & do by these  
presents sell & deliver to Elizabeth Cromline a Negro Woman named  
Rose & her two female Children.

To have & to hold the & Negroes to the said Elizabeth Cromline her  
heirs & assigns for ever & whereby warrant & defend the said  
Negroes from any Claim hereafter myself my heirs & assigns  
my hand & seal this 17<sup>th</sup> day of May 1811.

Witness  
John McDonald  
Elizabeth Cromline  
L. B. Allen

Bill of Sale  
For the Purchase of an African  
American Slave, Rose and her  
Children




# Upcoming Genealogy Workshop

November 15: How to Trace  
Your Virginia Roots  
(Intermediate Workshop)


## Genealogy Workshops


The Library of Virginia houses a vast collection of materials and records documenting the lives of Virginians. Delving into those records to explore your family's history can be an immensely satisfying and rewarding experience. We are now offering an ongoing series of workshops to help you with your quest. Geared to all levels of expertise, the workshops will explore our collections and offer advice on how to organize your research.




### BEGINNER GENEALOGY WORKSHOP

**Finding Your Family History: An Introduction to Genealogical Research**

 **Friday, April 5, 2019 from 9:30 AM–12:30 PM**

 **Conference Rooms**

 **\$25 (\$20 for Semper Virginia Society members)**

Are you interested in exploring your family tree, but don't know where to begin? Join Library staff members Ginny Dunn (archives and library reference services manager) and Nathan Verilla (reference archivist) to learn about basic research strategies, useful websites, and helpful resources found at the Library. No experience necessary. Plan to arrive early to sign up for a Library of Virginia card at the circulation desk before the workshop begins. For more information, contact [ashley.ramey@lva.virginia.gov](mailto:ashley.ramey@lva.virginia.gov) or 804.692.3001.

# Finding Your Virginia Roots

[www.facebook.com/groups/FindingYourVARoots/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/FindingYourVARoots/)

**Ashley Ramey**  
Admin · July 24 at 12:49 PM

Thank you for joining the Library of Virginia's Finding Your Virginia Roots genealogy group. The purpose of the group is to spark conversations on different genealogical topics. Group members are welcome to make posts and share information related to genealogy. In the upcoming posts, we will highlight the Library's collections, upcoming events, and tips on genealogical research and answer brief questions relating to the Library's collections.



 68

19 Comments 2 Shares

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