





**Virginia Historical Society**  
 428 N Arthur Ashe Boulevard  
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## Virginia Historical Society

428 N Arthur Ashe Boulevard,  
Richmond, VA 23220

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These functions are better for more specific searches.

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Keywords

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### Welcome to the Library Collections Catalog

The Virginia Museum of History & Culture's library collections includes both printed materials, such as books, journals, broadsides, sheet music, and manuscript materials, such as family and personal papers, diaries, company records, military records, and genealogies.

Use the "Basic Search" if you have a keyword or several words that represent your research question. Please note that you can also limit your keyword search to author, title or subject.

Your search results will appear as a browse list. To see a full record, click on the "Call Number", "Return to list" will take you back to your results.

If you are looking for a specific author, use the "Browse Authors" option. If you are looking for a specific subject, such as a topic, location, battle or other event, use the "Browse Subjects" option.

Choose "Browse Images" will pull up all records containing images. From there you can conduct a keyword search.

If your "Basic Search" results are inconclusive, or if you have more complex inquiry, choose "Advanced Search". Here you can use a combination of keyword, "begin with" and "exact" searches to search across author, title, subject, material type/format, etc. The arrow means that there are options for each type of search.

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This is mainly used for broad keyword searching, but can also be used to search for titles, authors, etc.

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And	Keywords	Keyword	
And	All Titles	Keyword	
And	Title	Begins with	
And	Author (Options)	Begins with	
And	Subject	Keyword	
And	Publication Date	Range	To
And	Limit by Material Type	Exact	
And	Limit by Collection	Exact	
And	Image	Exact	

Useful for searching for correspondence from one "Author" to another "Subject," for example.

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Enter your search criteria below

And v	Keywords	v	Keyword	v
And v	All Titles	v	Keyword	v
And v	Title	v	Begins with	v
And v	Author (Options)	v	Begins with	v
And v	Subject	v	Keyword	v
And v	Publication Date	v	Range	v
And v	Limit by Material Type	v	Exact	v
And v	Limit by Collection	v	Exact	v
And v	Image	v	Exact	v

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- Electronic Subscription
- Manuscript cartographic material
- Projected medium
- Musical sound recording
- Two-dimensional nonprojectable graphic
- Computer file/Electronic resource
- Manuscripts
- Maps
- Sheet Music
- Not Applicable
- Newspapers/journals
- Three-dimensional artifact or naturally occurring object
- Serial/Integrating resource
- Manuscript language material

useum Collections Catalog

Clear Search

Clear Search

We hold materials in a wide variety of formats; this is useful for limiting searches to only published (books/articles) or manuscript materials, for example

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Show Terms Near:

smith, john

Q Search

**Subjects**

**Term**

- Smith, John
- Smith, John (Confederate soldier), 1826-
- Smith, John (Gypsy)
- Smith, John 1701-1783
- Smith, John 1701-1783 Family
- Smith, John A
- Smith, John A. W
- Smith, John A., 1800-1863
- Smith, John Adams Washington, 1781-1832
- Smith, John Adams Washington, 1781-1832 Finance, Personal
- Smith, John Adams, 1802-1864
- Smith, John Ambler
- Smith, John Ambler, 1847-1892
- Smith, John Anthony, b. 1837
- Smith, John Archer
- Smith, John Augustine, 1782-1865
- Smith, John B
- Smith, John Bealy, b. 1897
- Smith, John Blair, 1756-1799
- Smith, John Bull Davison, -1839

**Results**

This is for browsing our subject heading specifically, but the same principles apply for author headings; by clicking each heading, you'll see the records of material pertaining to them

You'll see they're arranged alphabetically by last, then first names, then by middle and the life dates, if known.

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Show Terms Near:

henrico county

Search

**Subjects**

- Term**
- Henrico County (Va.)
- Henrico County (Va.) Church history
- Henrico County (Va.) Administrative and political divisions History
- Henrico County (Va.) Anniversaries, etc
- Henrico County (Va.) Antiquities
- Henrico County (Va.) Bibliography
- Henrico County (Va.) Biography
- Henrico County (Va.) Biography Pictorial works
- Henrico County (Va.) Biography Portraits
- Henrico County (Va.) Buildings, structures, etc
- Henrico County (Va.) Buildings, structures, etc. History 20th century
- Henrico County (Va.) Census, 1850
- Henrico County (Va.) Church history
- Henrico County (Va.) Church history 18th century
- Henrico County (Va.) Church history 19th century
- Henrico County (Va.) Church history 20th century
- Henrico County (Va.) Civil defense
- Henrico County (Va.) Claims vs. U.S

**Results**

As with author headings, you'll see subject headings arranged alphabetically too; the broadest headings first, then the more specific headings following



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Keywords v "Col. Meriwether Smith and his time, 1730-1794." Search

Print Save to C Found 1 record(s)

Click the little gray clipboard to get a link to the specific catalog record you're viewing—the link in the search bar will take you back to the main landing page

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Collection	Call #	Copy #	Vol/Iss.	Part Number	Barcode
General Collection	F 222 E7 E23 v.21	1			CA-15R85819-N01

Full Record View

Call Number F222 E7 E23 v.21  
 Author Carlton, Emory Linwood, 1906-  
 Title "Col. Meriwether Smith and his time, 1730-1794."  
 Subjects Smith, Meriwether, 1730-1790  
 Smith family Genealogy  
 Smith, Nicholas  
 Essex County (Va.) History Colonial period, ca. 1600-1775

Other than for General Collection (like this), always note if it's "Rare" or "oversize," etc. This helps us find the material in our stacks

Host Title In: Essex County Historical Society. Tappahannock, VA, v.21 (Nov. 1982), p. 1-5  
 Unique Record Number 85914

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Found 1 record(s)					
Collection	Call #	Copy #	Vol/Iss.	Part Number	Barcode
Rare Books O.S.	F 229 57 G3 1624	1			681026

[Full Record View](#)

Call Number	F229 57 G3 1624
Author	Smith, John, 1580-1631
Title	The Generall Historie of Virginia, New England, and the Summer Isles: with the Names of the Adventurers, Planters, and Governours from their first beginning, Anno 1584, to this present 1624. With the Proceedings of those Several Colonies and the Accidents that befall them in all their Voyages and Discoveries. Also the Maps and Descriptions of all those Countries, their Commodities, people, Government, Customs, and Religion, yet knowne. Divided into six Bookes. By Captaine Iohn Smith sometimes Governour in those Countries & Admirall of New-England.
Published	London, Printed by J. D. and I. H. for Michael Sparke, 1624.



**BOOK**

VIRGINIA MUSEUM OF HISTORY & CULTURE		
Manuscripts, Maps, Rare Books, etc.		
Collection/Call #	Requester	Date
RARE BOOKS O.S. F 229 57 G3 1624	P. HENRY	8/18/22
Item Requested: THE GENERALL HISTORIE OF VIRGINIA BY JOHN SMITH		



**MANUSCRIPT**

VIRGINIA MUSEUM OF HISTORY & CULTURE		
Manuscripts, Maps, Rare Books, etc.		
Collection/Call #	Requester	Date
MS 1 K5R23 a FA1	P. HENRY	8/18/22
Item Requested: GEORGE H. S. KING PAPERS "HENRY" FOLDER		



**MAP**

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Manuscripts, Maps, Rare Books, etc.		
Collection/Call #	Requester	Date
MAPS O.S. MRP F234 R5 1913:1	P. HENRY	8/18/22
Item Requested: MAP 20 MILES AROUND RICHMOND, VA.		

**VIRGINIA MUSEUM OF HISTORY & CULTURE**

## MANUSCRIPT GUIDELINES



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- Handle all manuscripts with care.
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- Please use a pencil when taking notes. No pens are permitted on reading room tables.
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# Searching for People

The Virginia Museum of History & Culture (VMHC) is pleased to have you use our family history materials such as published abstracts of official records, compiled genealogies, Bible records, research notes, etc. It should be noted, however, that the principal center for genealogical research in Virginia is the [Library of Virginia](#), located in Richmond at 800 East Broad Street.

Genealogical resources located at the Library of Virginia include:

- County records (including wills, deeds, and marriage bonds)
- Military service records
- Church records
- Land Office records (patents and grants)
- Tax records
- Census records
- Genealogical notes and charts

Nevertheless, the VMHC does have numerous materials helpful to genealogists:

- [Photographs and portraits of individuals](#)
- [Photographs and portraits of groups](#)
- [Recommended Online Resources](#)

Additional resources include:

- [Ancestry.com](#)
- [Indexes](#)
- [Census records](#)
- [Land records](#)
- [Ship passenger lists and immigration lists](#)
- [Military records](#)
- [Wills](#)
- [Marriage and obituary records](#)
- [County court records](#)
- [Bible records](#)
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- [Family papers](#)
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- [Birth and death records](#)
- [Newspapers](#)
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- [African American genealogy](#)

It should be noted that most of our collections have not been digitized and thus are not available for viewing online.

Please note that we have closed stacks. This means that researchers must fill out call slips in order to request and examine materials from the library collections. [Learn more about our library procedures.](#)

Listed below are some of the resources we have to offer at the VHS to help you with your genealogical research.

Ancestry.com

The VMHC has a subscription to the genealogical database, [Ancestry.com](#). Thanks to the *National Society Daughters of Colonial Wars*, visitors to the VMHC Research Library will now have the opportunity to use Ancestry.com.

Indexes

Virginia Historical Index (Swem's Index)

Index to several publications in the VMHC, including:

- *Tyler's Quarterly Historical and Genealogical Magazine*, 1919–1929
- *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, v. 1–38, 1893–1930
- *William and Mary Quarterly*, series I and II, 1892–1930

Census records

The VMHC has indexes to all Virginia census records from 1810 through 1920. The census records are on microfilm.

The 1790, 1800, and 1890 records were destroyed by fire; however, there is a list of taxpayers for 1787 (Ref. HA 683 C81 v. 1–3). Other substitute census records include:

- *Early Virginia* (Ref. HA 682 E3)
- *Virginia in 1740: A Reconstructed Census* (Ref. HA 683 T11 1740).

The only Virginia census of the seventeenth century was taken in 1624/25. It is published in *Adventures of Purse and Person Virginia 1607–1624/5* (Ref. F229 J4 1987) and names 1,218 persons who were living in Virginia at that time; it also lists four generations of descendants of those settlers.

Land records

The records of the Virginia Land Office, which oversaw land transactions in the colonial era, are located at the [Library of Virginia](#), which has now made many of those records available online. [A description of the records may be found on the Library of Virginia's website.](#)

During most of the seventeenth century and until approximately 1715, the "headright" system was the common method of obtaining land in Virginia. Each individual who paid the transportation costs of an emigrant received fifty acres of land. The term "headright" refers both to the imported

person and the claim. Headright lists constitute almost the only record of early emigration to Virginia. (NOTE: The patent was not necessarily issued the year the immigrant arrived.)

The headright system was not used in the Northern Neck (the area lying between the Potomac and the Rappahannock rivers). Beginning in 1690, land grants in the Northern Neck were issued by agents and maintained separately. The abstracts of land grants from 1690 to 1692 are published in the supplement to *Cavaliers and Pioneers*. Some important published sources based on these records, and available in the reading room of the Virginia Museum of History & Culture, are:

- Nugent, Nell Marion. *Cavaliers and Pioneers: Abstracts of Virginia Land Patents and Grants, 1623–1782*. 8 vols and supplement (vols. 4–8 published by the Virginia Genealogical Society, Dennis Hudgins ed.) (Ref. F225 N841)
- Gray, Gertrude. *Virginia Northern Neck Grants, 1692–1862*. 4 vols. (Ref. F225 N841 G79)

### Ship passenger lists and immigration lists

Before 1820, the arrival of immigrants was not documented. Very few authentic records of passenger arrivals in Virginia exist. The list of headrights mentioned above constitutes a record of immigrants, but it does not give the date or place of origin or arrival or the name of the ship. Not all headrights were immigrants, and some arrived long before the patentee entered the claim for the land.

- Coldham, Peter. *The Complete Book of Emigrants* (4 vols.) (Ref. E 187.5 C7). These four volumes covering 1607–1776 contain virtually every reference to English emigrants of the colonial period that can be found in England. They identify only 100,000 emigrants, a small fraction of the total number.
- Coldham, Peter. *The Complete Book of Emigrants in Bondage, 1614–1775* (Ref. E 187.5 C6 1988). Lists names of approximately 50,000 Englishmen who were sentenced by legal process to be transported to the American colonies between 1614 and 1775.
- Coldham, Peter. *More Emigrants in Bondage, 1614–1775* (Ref. E 187.5 C61 2002). Lists 9,000 additions and amendments to the earlier work, compiling names of Englishmen sentenced to be transported to the American colonies.

### Military records

The VMHC has a variety of materials related to military history, but it doesn't have copies of the service records of individuals, often called "compiled service records." The [National Archives](#) holds extant compiled service records for all wars in which the United States has fought. The [Library of Virginia](#) has microfilm copies of the compiled service records for Virginians in Confederate forces during the Civil War. The following published materials, available in the VMHC reading room, include registers of Virginians who served in various wars.

### Colonial wars

- Bockstruck, Lloyd D. *Virginia's Colonial Soldiers*. Baltimore, 1988. (Ref. E197 B67)

## American Revolution

- Abercrombie, Janice. *Virginia Publick Claims*. (The Virginia Revolutionary War Public Service Claims Court Booklets) (Ref. E255 A48). These booklets, arranged by name of county, contain names of Virginians who requested compensation for supplies and services furnished to the army chiefly during the years 1779–81. Not everyone who supplied articles to the armies is listed in the surviving records, and not everyone who supplied articles to the armies did so willingly. Also see *Index to the Virginia Revolutionary Public Claims County Booklets* (Ref. E255 A49 1992).
- Brumbaugh, Gaius M. *Revolutionary War Records*. Vol. 1, Virginia. Washington, D.C., 1936 (Ref. E263 V8 B8).
- Burgess, Louis A. *Virginia Soldiers of 1776*. Richmond, 1927–29. (3 vols.). Contains information on bounty land. (Ref. E263 V8 B9).
- Dorman, John F. *Virginia Revolutionary Pension Applications, Abstracted* (51 volumes to date covering A–Har). (Ref. E206 D85). Index vols. 1–51. 4 vols. (E206 D85 Index).
- Eckenrode, H. J., ed. *Virginia Soldiers of the American Revolution* (and supplement). Richmond, 1989 (Ref. E263 V8 E232 1989 v. 1–2).
- Gwathmey, John H. *Historical Register of Virginians in the Revolution*. Richmond, 1938 (Ref. E263 V8 G9).
- Hopkins, William L. *Virginia Revolutionary War Land Grant Claims, 1783–1859 (Rejected)*. Richmond 1988 (Ref. E263.8 V8 H77).
- McAllister, J. T. *Virginia Militia in the Revolutionary War*. Bowie, Md., 1989. Almost no records have survived for those men who served in the county militia units. This book contains names of officers of some county militia units and some Virginia militia pensioners. (Ref. E263 V8 M1 1989).
- National Geographic Society. *Index of Revolutionary War Pension Applications in the National Archives*. Washington, D.C., 1976 (Ref. CS42 N44 no. 40).
- Pierce, A. T. *Selected Final Pension Payment Vouchers, 1818–1864*. Virginia. Athens, Ga., 1996 (Ref. E255 P61 1996).
- Sanchez-Saavedra, E. M. *A Guide to Virginia Military Organizations in the American Revolution, 1774–1787*. Richmond, 1978. Lists regiments and companies and a brief history of each unit. Deals with the Virginia Continental Infantry and Militia, Virginia State Line, Va. Militia, etc.; not a register. (Ref. E263 V8 S25).
- Wardell, Patrick G. *Virginia/West Virginia Genealogical Data from Revolutionary War Pension and Bounty Land Warrant Records* (6 vols.) Bowie, Md., Heritage books, 1988–98 (Ref E263 V8 W21). Genealogical data extracted from Revolutionary War pension records at the [National Archives](#).

## War of 1812

- Butler, Stuart Lee. *A Guide to Virginia Militia Units in the War of 1812*. Athens, Ga., 2011. Contains information about units; not a roster. (Ref. E359.3 V8 B971 2011).
- Butler, Stuart Lee. *Virginia Soldiers in the United States Army, 1800–1815*. Athens, Ga., 1986 (Ref. E359.5 V8 B97).
- *Muster Rolls of the Virginia Militia in the War of 1812 . . .* Richmond, 1852 (Ref. E359.5 V8 V82).
- *Pay Rolls of Militia Entitled to Land Bounty Under the Act of Congress of September 28, 1850*. Richmond, 1851 (Ref. E359.5 V8 V8).
- Wardell, Patrick G. *War of 1812: Virginia Bounty Land and Pension Applicants*. Bowie, Md., 1987 (Ref. E359.5 V8 W21).

## Mexican War

- Johnson, William Page. *Off to War, the Virginia Volunteers in the War with Mexico, or Fuera de Guerra, la Virginia Voluntarios en la Guerra con Mexico*. Westminster, Md., 2002 (Ref. E409.5 V8 J71 2002).
- White, Virgil D. *Index to Mexican War Pension Files*. Waynesboro, Tenn., 1989 (Ref E409.4 W589 1989).
- Service records are at the [National Archives](#).
- A card index of Virginia Mexican War soldiers is at the [Library of Virginia](#).

## Civil War

Microfilm copies of military service records for Virginians who fought in the Civil War are located at the [Library of Virginia](#). These records often include such information as date and place of enlistment, date of birth, occupation, and listing of wartime duties.

- *Roster of Confederate Soldiers 1861–1865*. Wilmington, N.C., 1995–96 (16 vols.) (Ref. E548 R83 1995)  
This cumulative index to the compiled military service records of all Confederate soldiers is based on the records at the [National Archives](#). The *Roster* lists only the name and unit in which the soldier served.
- If you don't find the name you're looking for in the published roster cited above, you should check the card index called [Confederate Rosters located at the Library of Virginia, which is now available online](#), and following the prompt to "Index to Virginia Confederate Rosters." This list was generated by the state of Virginia and includes some names that aren't in the records at the [National Archives](#).
- Regimental histories can be searched through the [online catalog](#) by entering the name of the unit (for example: "28th Virginia Infantry") in the subject box.
- Military service records for Confederate soldiers from Virginia can be searched through [Fold3](#) (a subscription database).

Other sources which may be helpful are:

- *Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies in the War of the Rebellion*. Washington, 1901 (128 vols.) (Ref. E464 .U6 1985). A compilation of all field reports, correspondence, military orders, memoranda, etc. Indexed.
- *Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies in the War of the Rebellion*. Washington, 1922 (31 vols.) (E591 .U58). Indexed.
- To look up a regiment in the index of the *Official Records*, look up the state and find the designation "Troops" followed by (C.) or (U.) indicating Confederate or Union. Individual names are also indexed.
- *Supplement to the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*. Wilmington, N.C., 1994–2001 (Ref. E464 .U6 1985 Suppl.). Part I. Reports, vols. 1–12 (Index, vols. 11, 12). Part II. Record of Events, vols. 1–69, serials 13–81. Arranged by name of state and unit. These volumes are also located in the reading room.
- *Confederate Veteran, 1893–1932*. The official publication of the United Confederate Veterans, the Confederate Southern Memorial Association, and the Sons of Confederate Veterans. Includes reminiscences of soldiers and civilians, reports on southern patriotic organizations, reunions, etc. Genealogical information is often included, and many obituaries of veterans are published. See also: *Cumulative Index to the Confederate Veteran* (Ref. E482 C74 and E482 C74 Index).
- *Southern Historical Society Papers, 1876–1959* (52 vols.) The *S.H.S.P.* include official reports, personal recollections, unit rosters, correspondence, etc. (Ref. E483.7 S76)



- Robertson, James I., Jr., *An Index-Guide to the Southern Historical Society Papers, 1876–1959*. Millwood, N.Y., 1980 (2 vols.) (Ref. E483.7 S76 R62)
- Wallace, Lee A. *A Guide to Virginia Military Organizations, 1861–1865*. Lynchburg, Va., 1986. Identifies Virginia regiments, battalions, and companies that existed during the Civil War. Not a roster (Ref. E581.4 W25 1986)

## Wills

The VMHC has a limited number of wills in its collection. They can be searched under the subject heading "wills" followed by the name of the county. Virginia wills before 1800 are listed in Clayton Torrence's *Virginia Wills and Administrations, 1632–1800* (Ref. F225 T85). There are a few omissions in Torrence, and the [Library of Virginia](#) has a card file of these. Virginia wills during the period 1800–65 are listed in *Index to Virginia Estates, 1800–1865* compiled by Wesley E. Pippenger (Virginia Genealogical Society, Ref. F225 P665 2001). Wills are county records and are on microfilm at the [Library of Virginia](#).

## Marriages and obituaries

A card index to Virginia marriages and obituaries from Virginia newspapers, 1736–1820, is located in the reading room at the far end of the card catalog. The drawers have yellow labels. This index is approximately 50 percent complete. Genealogical information is copied in full on the cards.

Published indexes to marriages and obituaries in Virginia newspapers are shelved together in the reading room next to the Swem Index.

Published lists or abstracts of marriage records can be found under the subject headings MARRIAGE LICENSES or MARRIAGE RECORDS in the card or online catalog.

## County court records

Microfilm copies of all county court records (wills, deeds, marriage bonds, and court orders) are at the [Library of Virginia](#). Many court records, however, have been abstracted and published. They are cataloged under the subject heading COURT RECORDS—VIRGINIA, followed by the name of the county.

- *Surname Index of Antient Press Publications* (Ref. Z232 A62 S73) is a name index to 214 books containing abstracts of records (deeds, wills, and orders) of sixteen Virginia counties and two cities. (The counties are: Albemarle, Caroline, Culpeper, Essex, Fairfax, King George, Lancaster, Loudoun, Madison, Middlesex, Northumberland, Orange, Prince William, Old Rappahannock, Richmond, Spotsylvania, and Stafford; cities: Fredericksburg and Petersburg.) The abstracts cover varied spans of years.

## Bible records

In the reading room, there is a separate card index for all entries in Bibles in our collection. The index is in the last row of the card catalogs. Patrons can check the [online catalog](#) for Bible records by conducting a search with the surname (entered as "smith family") in the subject box, with the

phrase "bible records" in the keyword box. It should be noted, however, that Bible records have not been digitized and thus are not available for online viewing.

### Genealogical notes

Some researchers have donated research notes to us, which are often cataloged with our manuscript collections. Patrons can check the [online catalog](#) for genealogical notes by conducting a search with the surname (entered as "taylor family") in the subject box, with the phrase "genealogical notes" in the keyword box. It should be noted, however, that genealogical notes have not been digitized and thus are not available for online viewing.

### Birth and death records

Early records of births and deaths in Virginia are almost nonexistent. Official records of births and deaths were not kept until 1853. An index to birth records between 1853 and 1896 is available on microfilm at the [Library of Virginia](#). Death records are not indexed. Microfilm copies of birth and death records from 1853 to 1896 are at the [Library of Virginia](#).

From 1896 to 1912, there was no statewide recording of births and deaths. Records of births and deaths after 1912 are available from the [Virginia Department of Vital Statistics](#) (2001 Maywill St., Richmond, VA 23230)

### Newspapers

In the reading room, there is a card index to newspapers in the "Special Catalogs" row. The index is arranged by year, then alphabetically by place. Patrons can consult the [online catalog](#) to check our newspaper holdings. It should be noted that the phrase "Dates of Publication" does not indicate that we possess every issue within that time span. Only the phrase "VHS Holdings" in the citation indicates the issues of the newspapers the VHS possess. Moreover, as mentioned above, we have not digitized the vast majority of our holdings—including newspapers. The most efficient means for searching the online catalog for newspapers is by entering a place of publication—such as "richmond (va)"—in the subject box with the title of the newspaper—such as "enquirer"—in the keyword box and restricting the search to "newspapers" by checking the box toward the bottom of the search screen.

### Maps

In the reading room, there is a section of the card catalog devoted to maps. It begins immediately after the manuscripts catalog section, and cards are arranged by locality (city, state, county, etc.) and then by date.

### African American genealogy

African American genealogical research should be approached initially just as any genealogical research is begun: start with your immediate family and work backward, generation by generation. African Americans are usually able to trace their ancestry back to the end of the Civil War without

too much difficulty by using census records, county court records (deeds, marriages, wills, etc.), church and cemetery records, and vital statistics (birth and death).

Before the Civil War, free blacks were documented in public records, such as those listed above. Pre-1865 slave families, however, seldom appear in public records because they could not own property and had few legal rights.

- [Unknown No Longer](#) (online database of the names of enslaved Virginians found in VHS documents)
- [Guide to African American manuscripts in the collections of the VHS](#)

## Slavery in Virginia

Slavery was legalized in Virginia in the 1660s. Between 1700 and 1773, 80,000 or more slaves were imported into the colony. After 1773, Virginia virtually stopped importing slaves. Because of the natural increase of slaves, many Virginians became active slave traders, and many slaves were sold to states farther south, particularly in the nineteenth century. In 1808, Congress outlawed the importation of slaves into the United States, thus making the domestic slave trade much more important. The two groups of people who dominated interstate slave trade were professional slave traders and southern planters.

Deeds were one means of transferring ownership of slaves. Recording of slave sales was not required in Virginia, however, so very few deeds for sales exist. Some deeds have survived in collections of family papers. These are useful only if the name of the slaveowner is known. Occasionally slave sales are recorded as part of land deeds or estate settlements. Slaves are not named in personal property tax records after 1810.

Identifying slaveowners is very difficult. Sometimes collateral research (whole families including spouses and in-laws) can lead to the name of the slaveowning family. If you are able to identify the owner of your ancestor, you might be able to find records pertaining to the slaveowners as well as to the slaves (such as plantation records, wills naming slaves, etc.). Searching for slave ancestors always requires a thorough investigation of the white slaveowning family in all records. You should also investigate the slaveowner's extended family including their spouse's family.

At the time of emancipation, slaves adopted surnames. They did not usually take the surname of their most recent owner but sometimes took the given name of their father or the surname of an earlier owner, a prominent local citizen, or a prominent American (such as Washington or Lincoln). For this reason, it is usually not profitable to try to match black surnames with those of plantation masters. One should try instead to trace a freed slave to his or her mother. The slave mothers' owner usually has a different surname than the freedman. Records to use in order to find a slave mother are census records for 1870, birth records (after 1853), and marriage records (after 1865). Marriage records of black couples following the Civil War usually provide the names of their parents. The VMHC has only the census records.

If a slave was born after 1852, his or her name, birth date, and mother's name might be recorded in the register of births, which is available on microfilm at the [Library of Virginia](#). (NOTE: We do not

have birth records at the VMHC.) Not all slave births after 1853 were reported. Many were reported but do not name the child or mother.

#### Census records

The first listing of all African Americans by name in a federal census was in 1870. In 1850 and 1860 slaves were counted in separate slave schedules, but the census schedules did not list slaves by name; they were listed, usually unnamed, in age and sex categories under the name of the owner. If the slaveowner is known, these schedules are useful, however, as evidence that a slave of a certain age and sex was the property of a particular owner in 1850 (Mss 10: no. 45) and 1860 (Mss 10: no. 383).

Free blacks who were heads of households were listed by name from 1790 to 1840 and the names of all free household members were included in the 1850 and 1860 census schedules.

#### Wills and inventories of estates

Slaves are often mentioned in wills because slaveowners frequently made wills specifying the distribution of their property, including slaves, among their heirs. If the owner died without a will, the court appointed an administrator to compile an inventory of the estate and arrange for the sale or distribution of property. These estate records often listed the slaves. Most wills and inventories are at the [Library of Virginia](#). Those at the VHS may be found by looking in the catalog under the subject headings WILLS and INVENTORIES OF ESTATES, followed by the name of the county and the property owner.

#### Plantation records

The VMHC has many collections of family papers that contain plantation records. Often these include references to slaves, such as registers or lists of slaves, family Bible records of slave births and deaths, and deeds of slave sales. Although the number of these collections is very small when compared with the large numbers of slaveholders in Virginia, they are useful if the name of the slaveowner is known. The [Guide to African American Manuscripts in the Collection of the Virginia Historical Society](#) contains a description of, and index to, these records. They are more fully described in the manuscript catalog.

#### Books

The library has an extensive collection of state and county histories, genealogies, and published records. Until recently, these sources only occasionally included the names of African Americans. These sources may include information on slaveowning families and plantations. In addition to looking up names and localities in the book catalog, other useful subject headings include AFRICAN AMERICANS—GENEALOGY and AFRICAN AMERICANS—VIRGINIA.

A good starting point for patrons new to African American genealogical research is the book *Finding a Place Called Home: A Guide to African-American Genealogy and Historical Identity* (Ref. E185.96 .W898 1999).

## Using the Virginia Historical Index (Swem)

One of the most important research guides for Virginia historical and genealogical researchers is the *Virginia Historical Index* compiled under the direction of Dr. Earl Gregg Swem (1870-1965). It is a comprehensive index to several publications concerning Virginia history and genealogy.

Earl Gregg Swem was a historian, bibliographer, and librarian who began his career as chief of the Catalog Division at the Library of Congress. He was named Virginia's assistant state librarian in 1907 and worked at the Virginia State Library (now the Library of Virginia) for twelve years. In 1919, he joined the staff at the College of William and Mary, where he served as librarian until his retirement in 1944. Working with seven female researchers (including his wife, Lilia), Swem set to indexing selected Virginia journals and published records, recording the information on typed cards. He included references to people and society, as well as political events, believing that "the complexity of colonial life" could be best understood through "the history of individuals and families."

Swem indexed the following publications and volumes: *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, volumes 1-38 (1893-1930); *The William and Mary College Quarterly Magazine*, first series, volumes 1-27 (1892-1919), and second series, volumes 1-10 (1921-1930); *Tyler's Quarterly Historical and Genealogical Magazine*, volumes 1-10 (1919-1929); *Virginia Historical Register and Literary Advertiser*, volumes 1-6 (1848-1853); *The Lower Norfolk County Virginia Antiquary*, volumes 1-5 (1895-1906); *Hening's Statutes at Large*, volumes 1-13 (1619-1792); and the *Calendar of Virginia State Papers*, volumes 1-11 (1652-1869).

The *Virginia Historical Index* is published in four volumes, and entries are alphabetically arranged. Abbreviations for publications indexed in Swem are:

- C *Calendar of State Papers*
- H *Hening's Statutes at Large*
- N *Lower Norfolk County Antiquary*
- R *Virginia Historical Register*
- T *Tyler's Quarterly Magazine*
- V *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*
- W(1) *William and Mary Quarterly, first series*
- W(2) *William and Mary Quarterly, second series*

All entries in the index are referenced in the same way: volume number, abbreviation of publication title, and page number. Sample entries would read "Nicholas, Wilson Cary 11V295" or "Cape Henry 7T22." Explanations of these abbreviations are found at the bottom of each page.

The various volumes indexed contain a wealth of Virginia data. The *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, the *William and Mary Quarterly*, and *Tyler's Historical Quarterly* contain articles on all facets of Virginia history, chiefly on the period prior to 1865, as well as genealogical information on many prominent families.

The *Virginia Historical Register* was the official publication of the Virginia Historical Society in the mid-nineteenth century. The *Lower Norfolk Antiquary* contains abstracts of records related to Norfolk City and Norfolk County. William Waller Hening's *Statutes at Large* are an important compilation of extant acts of the Virginia General Assembly (1619-1792). The *Calendar of State Papers* contains abstracts and transcriptions of the Virginia Colonial Papers (1652-1775) and selected correspondence received by Virginia governors (1776-1865).

While the arrangement of the index is easy to understand, a few features should be noted. Names of individuals are printed in full, with life dates, profession and title, if known. Otherwise, references to persons of the same name are grouped together. Researchers are urged to search all variant spellings of surnames when looking up individuals.

Many "see also" references have been added to provide cross-references to subjects, making the index more comprehensive. For instance, after "ships," a "see also" reference will give the names of all ships listed in the index.

Copies of the *Virginia Historical Index* and all the volumes cited are available in the East and West Reading Rooms.

An examination of Swem's *Virginia Historical Index* will provide invaluable information concerning almost any aspect of Virginia history and genealogy.

Compiled by Minor T. Weisiger  
Revised June 2000

## Civil War in Virginia Published & Primary Sources

This page is intended as a guide to some of the basic published sources that can help researchers identify subjects of interest and possibly open avenues to deeper study.

War came to Virginia shortly after its leaders voted to secede from the United States on April 17, 1861. For the next four years the Old Dominion was the major battleground of the Civil War. Its geographical location, being so near Washington, D.C., and the fact that Virginia's capital city of Richmond also served as the southern capital, guaranteed that Union armies would try to end the war quickly by capturing the seat of the Confederate government. By the end of the war in April 1865, Virginia had hosted more than 2,000 military engagements, including twenty-six major battles. The presence of so many soldiers marching and fighting across the state also devastated the economy of the Old Dominion. Farms and towns suffered under the weight of occupying armies. The war also ended slavery forever. Thus Virginia, home to the largest population of slaves in the country, experienced a difficult transition.

Anyone conducting research on the Civil War in Virginia is faced with a daunting task. Thousands of books have been written about America's bloodiest war, and many of those focus entirely, or at least in part, on the war in Virginia. Almost every aspect of the state's wartime experience has been written about. Studies on the economic, military, social, and political effects of the Civil War fill the shelves of bookstores and libraries across the country. Biographies of major military and political leaders also account for a large portion of the Civil War library.

### Primary Sources

For those interested in primary source materials, the VMHC has published the following guide to Civil War documents in its manuscripts collection:

- Dozier, Graham T., comp., *Virginia's Civil War: A Guide to Manuscripts at the Virginia Historical Society* (1998)  
[Browse the guide online](#)

Other basic primary sources for research on military aspects of the war are listed below. These volumes include official correspondence, battle reports, orders, and memoranda written by those who took part in the events described. Also included are sources containing postwar writings by veterans of the conflict:

- *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies* (128 volumes; 1880–1901)  
[Available online](#) (Making of America at Cornell University)
- *Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies in the War of the Rebellion* (31 volumes, 1894–1922)  
[Available online](#) (Making of America at Cornell University)
- *Supplement to the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies* (100 volumes, 1994–2001)  
Correspondence, reports, and other materials that did not appear in the Army Official Records cited above.

- R. U. Johnson and C. C. Buel, eds., *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War* (4 volumes, 1884–88)  
Though it does not contain official materials, this series of articles offers interesting eyewitness accounts of the war.
- *Confederate Veteran* (40 volumes, 1893–1932)  
This collection of bound magazines contains a wealth of biographical and historical information, written from the Confederate perspective.
- *Southern Historical Society Papers* (52 volumes, 1876–1959)  
The *SHSP* is a treasure trove of information on military events and individuals, written by former Confederates.

## Reference Books

The following books represent a good place to start for those seeking general summaries of events during the war throughout the country and in Virginia specifically:

- McPherson, James M., *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era* (1988)
- Roland, Charles P., *An American Iliad: The Story of the Civil War* (1991)
- Paul D. Escott, et al., *Encyclopedia of the Confederacy* (4 volumes; 1993)
- Boatner, Mark M., III, *The Civil War Dictionary* (Revised edition, 1988)
- Robertson, James I., Jr., *Civil War Virginia: Battleground for a Nation* (1991)
- Salmon, John S., *The Official Virginia Civil War Battlefield Guide* (2001)

## Biographies

These sources provide basic summaries of the lives of Civil War military and political leaders:

- Warner, Ezra J., *Generals in Blue: Lives of the Union Commanders* (1964)
- Warner, Ezra J., *Generals in Gray: Lives of the Confederate Commanders* (1959)
- Warner, Ezra J., *Biographical Register of the Confederate Congress* (1975)
- Allardice, Bruce S., *More Generals in Gray* (1995)
- Garraty, John A., and Mark C. Carnes, eds., *American National Biography* (24 volumes; 1999)
- Sifakis, Stewart, *Who Was Who in the Civil War* (1988)
- Wakelyn, Jon L., *Biographical Dictionary of the Confederacy* (1977)
- Krick, Robert K., *Lee's Colonels: A Biographical Register of the Field Officers of the Army of Northern Virginia* (4th edition; 1992)
- Krick, Robert E. L., *Staff Officers in Gray: A Biographical Register of Staff Officers in the Army of Northern Virginia* (2003)

## Military Topics

For those conducting research on specific military topics in Virginia, there are a number of basic sources available. Also listed below are printed materials that will help locate names of individual soldiers and the military units in which they served:

- Long, E. B., *The Civil War Day By Day* (1971)
- Bowman, John Stewart, *The Civil War Almanac* (1983)
- Hewett, Janet B., ed., *The Roster of Confederate Soldiers, 1861–1865* (16 volumes; 1996)



- Wallace, Lee A., Jr., *A Guide to Virginia Military Organizations 1861–1865* (2nd ed., 1986)
- Sifakis, Stewart, *Compendium of the Confederate Armies: Virginia* (1992)
- *The Virginia Regimental Histories Series* (ongoing series of regimental histories published by H. E. Howard, Inc., Lynchburg, Va. Each volume includes a detailed roster of soldiers who served in that particular unit)
- *The Virginia Civil War Battles and Leaders Series* (ongoing series published by H. E. Howard, Inc., Lynchburg, Va., that centers on the battles, leaders, cities, and significant events associated with the history of the Civil War in Virginia)
- Kennedy, Frances H., ed. *The Civil War Battlefield Guide* ([1990; 2nd ed., 1998] a good brief history of the many campaigns and battles of the Civil War; the significantly expanded 2nd edition includes descriptions of 384 battles of the war)

### Homefront Studies

This brief list consists of selected studies that focus on the lives and experiences of men and women who inhabited the homefront in Virginia during the Civil War:

- Gallagher, Gary W., *The Confederate War* (1997)
- Sutherland, Daniel E., *Seasons of War: The Ordeal of a Confederate Community, 1861–1865* (1995)
- Greene, A. Wilson, *Civil War Petersburg: Confederate City in the Crucible of War* (2006)
- Ayers, Edward, *In the Presence of Mine Enemies: War in the Heart of America, 1859–1863* (2003)
- Faust, Drew Gilpin, *Mothers of Invention: Women of the Slaveholding South in the American Civil War* (1996)

## Using the *Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies in the War of the Rebellion (OR/ORs)*

This set is arranged in two parts, each having its own index:

*War of the Rebellion Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies* (Serial Nos. 1-130).  
Index is Serial No. 130.

The *OR* is divided into four series—I, II, III, and IV—represented by Roman numerals. Each series is then divided into volumes, represented by Arabic numerals. A "+" after an entry indicates that additional information is available in the *Supplement*.

For example:

O'Rorke, Patrick H. I, 2, 6; III, 1, 2.

Entries pertaining to O'Rorke are in Series I, volumes 1, 2, and 6, and Series III, volumes 1 and 2. Each volume then has an index at the back listing page numbers for the entries.

Orient Ferry, Black River, Ark.  
Skirmish, July 8, 1862, I, 13 +

Entries pertaining to Orient Ferry are in Series 1, volume 13 and in the *Supplement* (see below). The entry for Orient Ferry in I, 13 will be found at the beginning of the volume in the section arranged chronologically.

*Supplement to the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies* (Serial Nos. 1-100).  
Index in Serial Nos. 95-100.

The *Supplement* was published in two runs. The first ten volumes published soon after the *OR* with an accompanying index (volumes 11 and 12). Subsequently, 88 volumes were added, the last five being an index covering the entire *Supplement* (volumes 1-95).

For example:

Orem, J. Bailey, Capt. (4th Md.); **Ser. 38**, 577-578.

Orient Ferry, Ark.;

Skirmish, **Ser. 3**, 6, 15, **Ser. 80**, 41-42, 44-45.

The bold text—**Ser. 38**—refers to Serial No. 38 (in our collection, this number may be hidden beneath the call number). The numerals 577-578 indicate the page references.

**Virginia Museum of History & Culture**

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# VIRGINIA MUSEUM OF HISTORY & CULTURE

## Professional Genealogists

This list is provided by the Library staff of the Virginia Museum of History & Culture (VMHC) for the convenience of our patrons. The Library and the VMHC are components of the Virginia Historical Society, a private, non-profit organization.

The researchers listed establish their own rates for their services and work independently of the Virginia Historical Society. Any agreement entered into is a contract between private parties and does not include the Virginia Historical Society. We do not make referrals; patrons should contact the researcher directly for information concerning their fees and services.

For your reference, each researcher has been certified by one or more of the following: the Board for the Certification of Genealogists, the Association of Professional Genealogists, and the International Commission for the Accreditation of Professional Genealogists.

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Virginia ancestry, land platting, brick  
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complete genealogies, problem-  
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**Marc D. Thompson**

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