

# A Guide to the research notes of State Librarian Randolph Church of the Virginia State Library, 1933-1986.

State Librarian research notes of the Virginia State Library,  
1933-1986.

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A Collection in the Library of Virginia 42846

Library of Virginia

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**Author:** LVA Staff

## History

**Processed by:** Staff.

## Title Statement

A Guide to the research notes of State Librarian Randolph Church of the Virginia State Library, 1933-1986.

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## Publication Statement

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## Profile Description

**Creation:** Machine-readable finding aid, 2026

**Language Usage:** Description is in English

## Descriptive Summary

### Unit ID

42846

### Unit Date

1933-1986.

### Creator

Virginia State Library. Office of the State Librarian.

### Extent

1.45 cu. ft. (3 boxes)

### Repository

The Library of Virginia

## Administrative Information

### Access Restrictions

There are no access restrictions.

### Acquisition Information

No acquisition information available.

### **Processing Information**

This collection has been processed using minimal processing standards. The original arrangement has been maintained, the container list is brief and simple, and the records have not been refoldered and fasteners have not been removed.

### **Preferred Citation**

Research notes of the State Archivist, Library of Virginia, [please note specific dates and accessions used], State government records collection, The Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia.

## **Arrangement**

Arranged by folder title.

## **Historical Information**

For many years, The Library of Virginia had no definitive home. Valuable early records were kept at Jamestown as early as 1676 and were then moved to the College of William and Mary for a brief period at the century's end. By 1780, extant records were moved to the Capitol in Richmond. Coincidentally, in 1779, the Virginia General Assembly was presented among its legislation, "A Bill for Establishing a Public Library" drawn up by Thomas Jefferson. The bill provided for 2000 pounds yearly to be expended to maintain a State Library in Richmond. The facility was to be a reference library only without books being lent for home use. Perhaps ahead of its time, the bill failed to pass.

The Virginia State Library was created by an act passed by the General Assembly on January 23, 1823, to establish a public library with funds derived from the sale of William W. Hening's *THE STATUTES AT LARGE*. From 1823 to 1828, the Library was under the control of the governor and council. In 1828, the General Assembly created a joint committee on the library (located in a room in the southeastern corner of the Capitol) to oversee its administration. Use of the State Library was restricted to members of the state government in a policy that continued until at least 1856. The Secretary of the Commonwealth served ex officio as state librarian from 1832 to 1903.

The growth of the State Library was somewhat erratic. Book holdings increased from 1,313 in 1828 to 17,480 in 1856. Lack of funds and politics frequently intermingled to slow library development. General W.H. Richardson, State Librarian in 1852, became embroiled in an effort to remove him "to make way for some politician of democratic principles." At the close of Reconstruction, Dr. George William Bagby, then State Librarian, was terminated and his position abolished at the hands of Readjusters.

Eventually, on May 15, 1903, the General Assembly passed an act that created a library board to administer the library, authorized the deposit of public records in the library, provided for the publication of historical records by the library, and established a library fund for the purchase of books and private papers. The Library Board, which was responsible for naming the State Librarian, was itself appointed by the Board of Education. The General Assembly passed an act on March 29, 1944, transferring the power to appoint the Library Board to the governor.

While many public records somehow survived the Commonwealth's early years, many losses occurred due to fires, the ravages of war and negligence. When the library was moved, for example, in 1895 to a building separate from the Capitol, "chutes were constructed from the upper story of the Capitol to facilitate the delivery of books to the wagons of the junk dealer who had bought them." The move was poorly planned and the library's contents suffered great loss at the hands of those very authorities assigned to protect them.

The new facility quickly was found to be inadequate and efforts were made both in 1910 and 1920 to construct a proper building for the State Library and its collections. Ground was broken for this facility on December 7, 1938. At last, on December 23, 1940, the newly completed Virginia State Library was opened to the public.

The Virginia State Library adopted the name, the Virginia State Library and Archives, in early 1987 to more adequately reflect its mission and purpose today. In July 1, 1994 the name was changed to The Library of Virginia.

Randolph W. Church served as state librarian for Virginia from 1 March 1947-30 June 1972.

## **Scope and Content**

Contains the research notes of State Librarian Randolph Church, 1933-1966. The majority of the research notes document Church's research on his unpublished book on Edgar Allan Poe and the Philadelphia Saturday Museum. Church began this research while working as Assistance Reference Librarian at the

University of Virginia. Includes correspondence relating to the tracking down extant issues of the newspaper at other institutions. Also includes correspondence to/from John Wyllie, Assistant Reference Librarian, University of Virginia. Church continued his research as Assistant Librarian at the Virginia State Library. There are photostat copies of the Philadelphia Saturday Museum containing biographical sketches of Poe.

Also includes notes, clippings, and a copy of his lecture before the Lynchburg Historical Society in 1953. There are also notes regarding Charles Dickens's visit to Richmond and an epitaph he wrote for Charles Irving, the infant son of Anthony Thornton and Mary Jane (Irving) Thornton who passed in Richmond in March 1842. There is a photocopy of the James Lyle Letter Book, 1810-1811. Also there are research notes regarding the Governor's House, Capitol Square, colonists (list with names, ship, English residence, occupation, etc.), an index to land patents, 1666-1732, and the Virginia Coat of Arms, 1704-1959.

These materials were collected, 1933-1972, though some research materials pre-date and post-date the collection date. These dates are indicated in the folder title.

## **Arrangement**

This collection is arranged in original order.

## **Contents List**

### **Research notes of State Librarian Randolph Church (Accession 42846), 1933-1986.**

#### **Crossing on the Fluvanna (Lynchburg Historical Society Lecture), 1953.**

**Box 1**

**Folder 1**

#### **Charles Dickens' epitaph for Charles Irving, undated.**

**Box 1**

**Folder 2**

#### **Governor's Home, 1952.**

**Box 1**

**Folder 3**

#### **Index to abstracts of land patents, 1966.**

**Box 1**

**Folder 4**

#### **James Lyle letter book (transcript), 1810-1811.**

**Box 1**

**Folder 5**

#### **Edgar Allan Poe - Checklist of letters to and from Poe, 1941.**

**Box 1**

**Folder 6**

#### **Edgar Allan Poe - Correspondence, 1933-1986.**

**Box 1**

**Folder 7**

#### **Edgar Allan Poe - Miscellaneous, 1942-1954.**

**Box 1**

**Folder 8**

**Edgar Allan Poe - Poe's connection to the Philadelphia Saturday Museum, undated.**

**Box 1**

**Folder 9**

**Edgar Allan Poe - Publications, 1938-1939.**

**Box 1**

**Folder 10**

**Alexander Spotswood, undated.**

**Box 1**

**Folder 11**

**Virginia Coat of Arms, 1704-1959.**

**Box 1**

**Folder 12**

**Edgar Allan Poe - Photostats, 1843.**

**Box 2 (Oversize)**

**Folder 1**

**Virginia Coat of Arms, undated.**

**Box 2 (Oversize)**

**Folder 2**

**List of colonists, undated.**

**Box 3 (Oversize)**

**Folder 1**

**Minutes - Council and General Court (1622) - Photostat with notes, undated.**

**Box 3 (Oversize)**

**Folder 2**

**Map of Great Britain with pencil notations, undated.**

**Box 3 (Oversize)**

**Folder 3**

**Resolution regarding Library Board member Woodrow Wilkerson, 1966.**

**Box 3 (Oversize)**

**Folder 4**

**Plat of Manchester - Photostat from 1876 Beers Atlas, 1876.**

**Box 3 (Oversize)**

**Folder 5**

**Original lots in the vicinity of Capitol Square, Richmond (1782) - hand-drawn by Randolph Church, undated.**

**Box 3 (Oversize)**

**Folder 6**

**Site plan excerpts for Jefferson Building on Capitol Square, Richmond - Plan of existing site and finished grading plan, 1955 c..**

**Box 3 (Oversize)**

**Folder 7**

**West Richmond - hand-drawn map in pencil by Randolph Church, undated.**

**Box 3 (Oversize)**

**Folder 8**

**City of Richmond - Bates Map (1835) - photostats of enlarged sections, 1835.**

**Box 3 (Oversize)**

**Folder 9**

**Richmond lots - hand-drawn Randolph Church, undated.**

**Box 3 (Oversize)**

**Folder 10**

**Plats and surveys in the vicinity of Five Mile Lock (Richmond), 1859, 1889, 1910.**

**Box 3 (Oversize)**

**Folder 11**

**Plat of Turpin's land - hand-drawn by Randolph Church, 19.**

**Box 3 (Oversize)**

**Folder 12**

**List referenced from Public Records Office MSS, Hening Statutes and Waverly Winfree Supplement and sorted by date, undated.**

**Box 3 (Oversize)**

**Folder 13**

**List of passengers onboard the Ship Ann and Ship Bonny Bess, sailed 1623, undated.**

**Box 3 (Oversize)**

**Folder 14**