

Dear Legislator,

Please preserve Virginia's history and make it accessible to researchers!

The Senate and House approval of the Library of Virginia's budget amendments 240#1s and 240#1h to allow the Library to re-open 6 days per week is greatly appreciated.

Your support of House budget amendment 239#1s for \$294,250 for four key staff positions is also needed now.

One of these is a private papers archivist. The Library used to have six private papers archivists; it now has zero. New private materials (wartime letters, bible records, diaries, private business records, research notes, etc.) continue to flow into the Library, but are now inaccessible. There are approximately 4,500 cubic feet of private papers now inaccessible and waiting to be made available once a private papers archivist is hired.

The General Assembly is now considering funding to help start to clean up Evergreen Cemetery, an historic private African-American cemetery in Richmond. The Library of Virginia has the surviving burial records from Evergreen Cemetery, but without a private papers archivist, these will effectively be inaccessible to researchers attempting to identify burials or families at Evergreen Cemetery.

The Library of Virginia has pre-1912 birth and death records, and pre-1936 marriage records, which need to be indexed, digitized and put online, probably through a partnership with a vendor like Ancestry, but there is currently no staff available to design an RFP, manage a scanning and digitization contract, and put these records online.

The Library of Virginia is the most heavily visited state archives in the United States, and one of the leading historical research destinations in the country, but it has been badly harmed by losing 40% of its staff over the last ten years.

The Library needs to have the 4 critical mid-level technical positions filled in order to continue to make new materials available to researchers.

Please continue to keep Virginia a national leader in historic preservation and a destination for researchers.

Sincerely,