



The Virginia Genealogical Society

NEWSLETTER

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GENEALOGICAL RESEARCH IN RICHMOND, VIRGINIA

There is a great concentration in Richmond of records useful for historical, including family, research. On the whole, the greatest variety and number of records are to be seen at the Virginia State Library and Archives, located at 12th and Capitol Streets. Public, on-street parking for this facility is critical at best and, at certain times, non-existent due to competition from the Governor's Mansion and the State Capitol. Those unfamiliar with the area are probably best advised to visit it by means of bus or taxi. While there is a multilevel parking garage adjacent to the Museum of the Confederacy, which is nearby, bureaucratic tactics have enveloped it in such a labyrinth of one-way streets and no left turns that the inexperienced visitor has small chance of discovering its location with any ease.

However, for those successful in surmounting the obstacles involved in reaching it, the Virginia State Library and Archives offers rich rewards in compensation. The Library has a catalogue of some 500,000 titles, a collection that puts at the visitor's disposal virtually everything printed on Virginia's historical and political heritage. The holdings of the Archives, official custodian of the public records of Virginia, first as colony and later as state, comprise some 20,000,000 manuscript items. Their numerous and important special collections, including Virginia newspapers and maps, should not be overlooked.

But the researcher is advised to arrive in Richmond with certain preliminary aspects of his job already completed. The holdings of a repository such as this are both too diverse and too large to make browsing profitable. Arrive with an organized plan: (1) by prior study, reduce your research objectives to specifics (for example, come prepared to look for a certain ancestor, living in a specific place, at a specified time), (2) have a preconceived idea what record groups could conceivably divulge useful particulars about that certain ancestor in which you are interested, and (3) ascertain before your arrival

requisite groups of records are actually to be found there. To assist those unfamiliar with its holdings, the staff has prepared a pamphlet entitled Genealogical Research in the Virginia State Library. To secure a copy of this helpful publication simply address a request to the Archives Branch, Virginia State Library, Richmond, VA 23219. The favor of a self-addressed, stamped business size envelope will speed your request.

A second important repository in Richmond is the Virginia Historical Society. Its headquarters, located at 428 N. Boulevard, lies outside the area of Richmond's greatest traffic congestion, and on-street parking is usually to be found nearby without great trouble. This institution is not state related, being instead a private foundation supported by its membership. Individual dues are currently available at \$15.00 per year, which includes a subscription to its prestigious quarterly, the Virginia Magazine of History and Biography. For further details, write the Society at P. O. Box 7311, Richmond, VA 23221.

The library and manuscript collection of the Virginia Historical Society, open to researchers, including non-members, is extensive, well-catalogued, and supervised by a helpful and knowledgeable staff. Printed titles exceed 250,000 volumes and its impressive manuscript collection numbers some 3,500,000 items. Being oriented primarily toward the general historian, the Society's collection is not, by its own admission, widely useful for the solution of everyday genealogical problems. While it does indeed contain many records about individual Virginians and about Virginia families, the tendency has been for the Virginia Historical Society to concentrate on material concerning individuals or families who themselves took an active part in creating the history of the Commonwealth. To this, however, there are exceptions. Certainly no definitive search worthy of the name could fail to make use of this superb collection

COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETIES IN VIRGINIA

Northumberland County Historical Society

Contributed by Mattie E. Jolly

- Organization: The Northumberland County Historical Society, organized in 1963, presently offers two memberships, an individual one at \$10.00 per year and a joint membership for husband and wife at \$15.00 per year. Current officers include Mrs. Bayne Palmer O'Brien, President, Miss Margaret Bray, Executive Secretary, and Mrs. Emeline Hall, Membership Chairman. Further information concerning the Society may be obtained by addressing one of the above officers each of whom may be reached in care of the Ball Memorial Library and Museum, Heathsville, VA 22473.
- Meetings: The Society regularly holds meetings four times a year at the Ball Memorial Library and Museum. Those interested in particulars concerning the schedule are invited to address the Executive Secretary listed above.
- Publications: The Bulletin of the Northumberland County Historical Society is published annually by the Society at Heathsville. The first volume appeared in July 1964. Back copies are available by writing to the Executive Secretary.
- Collections: The Society's library and document collections are maintained at the Ball Memorial Library and Museum which is regularly open to the public Tuesday through Friday from 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM. Since the Society is not prepared to handle correspondence on historical and genealogical questions, interested parties must arrange to visit the Library and Museum in person. The manuscript collection found here comprises a variety of items of historical and genealogical interest for the researcher interested in Northumberland County or, to take a larger view, in the Northern Neck itself, Northumberland being the oldest county in that large area lying between the Potomac and Rappahannock Rivers. Northumberland, it should be remembered, was the parent county of Lancaster and Westmoreland from which, in turn, Essex, Richmond, and King George ultimately derived.

Titles which may be of interest to researchers in Northumberland County include:

Crickard, Mrs. Owen. The 1810 Northumberland Co., Virginia, Census (1969); Duval, Lindsey O. Northumberland Co., Virginia, 1678 to 1713 [Virginia Colonial Abstracts, series 2, v. 1] (1979); Fleet, Beverley. Northumberland Co., Va., Records of Births, 1667-1810 [Register of St. Stephen's Parish, Northumberland Co., Virginia] (1937); Fleet, Beverley. Northumberland County Records, 1652-1655 [His Virginia Colonial Abstracts, v. 2] (1937); O'Brien, Mrs. Bayne Palmer. Northumberland Co., Virginia, 1850 Census (1972); Stratton, Nottingham. Marriage License Bonds of Northumberland Co., Virginia, 1783 to 1850 (1937).

ATTENTION HANOVER COUNTY RESEARCHERS

The Hanover County Historical Society has announced the publication of Old Homes of Hanover County, Virginia. Due to be released later this year, the book must be ordered by March 21, 1983 in order to be assured of a copy. More than 200 old homes, with photographs, are described, and the text includes much information about early owners and their families. Hardbound, 8 1/2 by 11 inches in size, the book is fully indexed and has an introduction by one of the Society's best known local historians, Mr. Robert E. Lancaster. A copy may be reserved by sending a check in the amount of \$22.00 (which includes postage and handling) to: Hanover County Historical Society, P. O. Box 91, Hanover, VA 23069.

