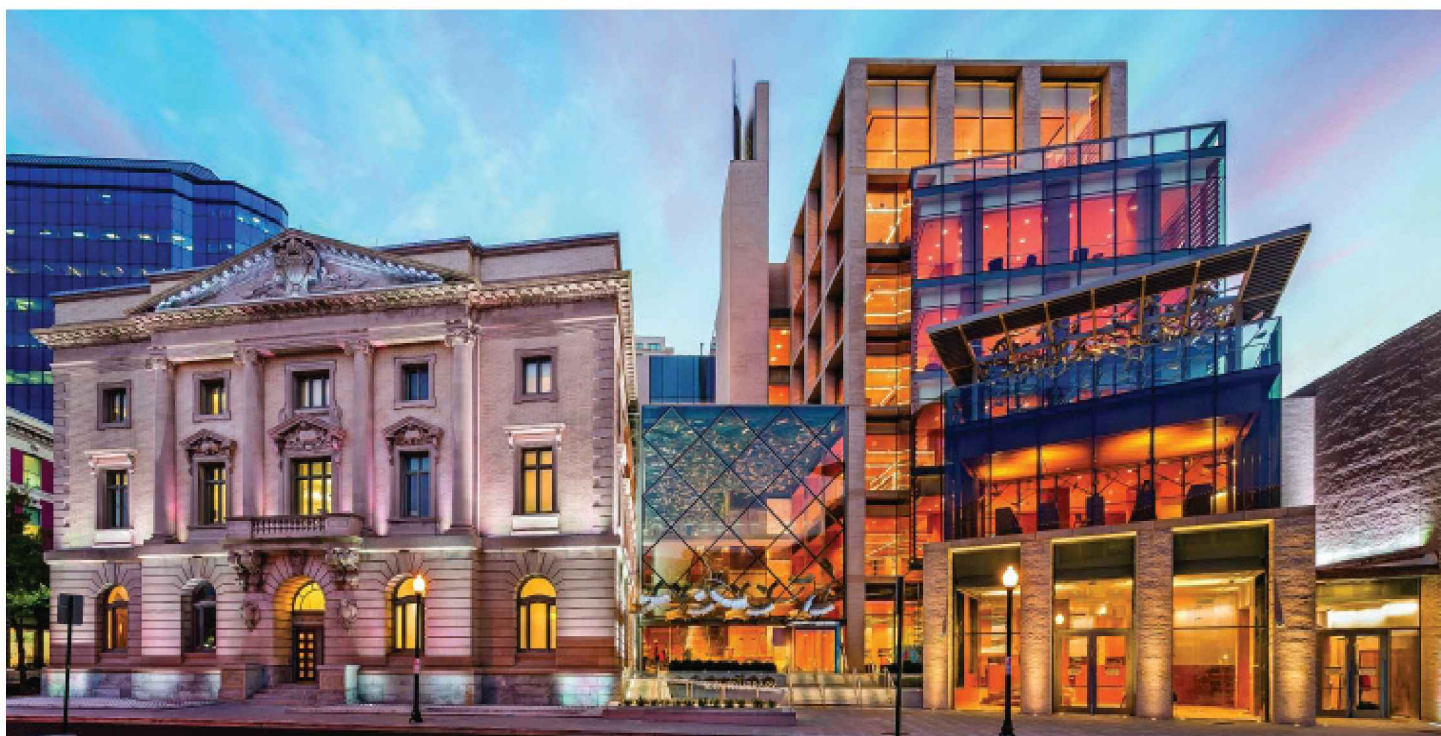


NGS 2023 Family History Conference

Specialized Research Facilities in Virginia

Teresa Kelley



Slover Library in Norfolk, photo by Peter Aaron

Richmond, Virginia, will be the site of the NGS 2023 Family History Conference, from 31 May to 3 June. Stay tuned for more information about the program, tours, workshops, and other activities.

Attending a national conference offers many opportunities including networking with fellow genealogists, attending lectures and workshops to learn about record sources and research methodologies, and researching in repositories with resources found nowhere else.

The July-September 2020 issue of *NGS Magazine* highlights repositories in and around Richmond. Numerous repositories with specialized local history collections are scattered throughout Virginia. So, whether you're arriving before the conference or planning to stay after the conference to research, we hope you'll take time to visit one or more of Virginia's unique repositories.

Teresa Kelley, a Virginia native and the past president of the Virginia Genealogical Society, recently retired from federal government service. She now focuses on increasing her working knowledge of DNA and its uses in combination with traditional genealogical research.

Thomas Balch Library

Located at 208 West Market Street in Leesburg, the Thomas Balch Library collects and preserves printed, manuscript, photographic, cartographic, and genealogical documentation of Leesburg, Loudoun County, and the surrounding region. The archives includes Loudoun town and county records, personal papers, and business, organizational, and club records as well as diaries, correspondence, and account books. An alphabetical index to the archive and manuscript collections is available on its website under the Research and Reference Services tab. The website includes several databases available off-site such as the Loudoun Cemetery Database, Genius of Liberty Runaway Slave Advertisements, and Loudoun Discovered Index.

Visit the library's website at <https://www.leesburgva.gov/departments/thomas-balch-library> to learn more about its collections, hours, policies, and research services.

Sargeant Memorial Collection (SMC)

SMC is housed in the Slover Library in downtown Norfolk at 235 East Plume Street. This collection includes books and periodicals about Norfolk and Virginia, Norfolk maps and photographs, high school yearbooks, and city directories for the Hampton Roads region. Nearly two hundred years of Norfolk newspapers are available on microfilm. SMC's genealogy collection encompasses Virginia, North Carolina, Maryland, and other nearby states and is considered one of Virginia's finest local history and genealogy collections. The library staff will answer basic research requests via an online form, email, or traditional mail correspondence.

SMC online collections include Norfolk and Portsmouth city directories from 1851 to 1931, fifty-six digital maps of the local area, and Flight to Freedom (runaway slave ads and American



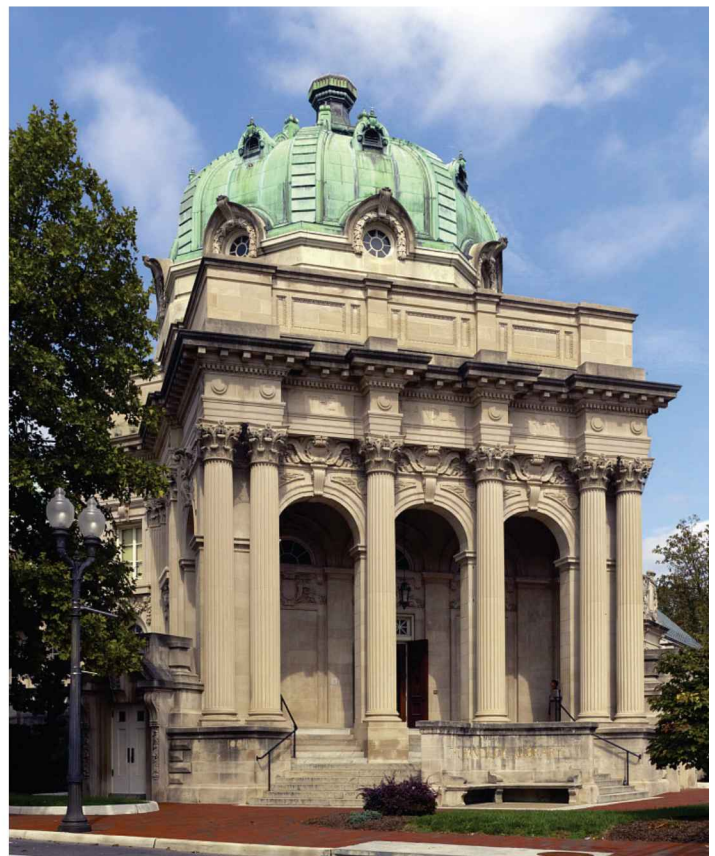
Tutweiler, "Thomas Balch Library, Side View," 2015, Wikimedia Commons (CC BY-SA 3.0)

Colonization Society ads in Norfolk newspapers). You'll also find research guides on topics such as Norfolk and Portsmouth annexations, World War I in Hampton Roads, and African American resources at SMC.

For more information on the library's holdings, hours, policies, and research services, visit its website at <https://www.norfolkpubliclibrary.org/learning-research/local-history-genealogy>.

Stewart Bell Jr. Archives

This facility is a local history and genealogy center jointly operated by the Handley Regional Library and the Winchester-Frederick County Historical Society. The archives are housed within



Carol M. Highsmith, Handley Library, Winchester, Virginia, 2011, Library of Congress (<https://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2012630251>)

the Handley Regional Library located at 100 West Piccadilly Street in Winchester. Holdings document the history of the Lower Shenandoah Valley from 1732 to the present with an emphasis on the City of Winchester and Frederick County. The archives frequently receives donations of historical materials, genealogical sources, and other items.

An alphabetical list of inventories for the manuscript collections is available on the website. Archives staff will provide limited research for a fee. The research request form is online at <https://www.handleyregional.org/services/departments/archives/research>.

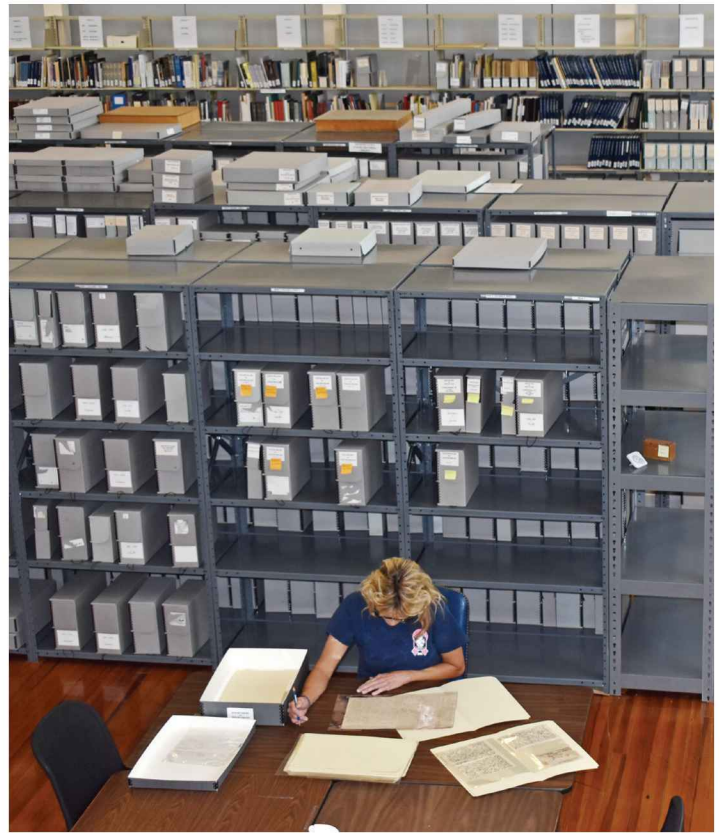
The digital papers of John Walter Wayland contain a variety of material including four volumes of tombstone inscriptions collected by this historian between 1928 and 1941, mostly from cemeteries in the Shenandoah Valley, and four volumes of family Bible records belonging to families who lived in the Shenandoah Valley. Another valuable digital collection has the account books, record books, and business ledgers of a variety of businesses that operated in the Winchester-Frederick County area between the late 1700s and the late 1800s.

All the information you need to plan your visit, including details about the Archives' digital and onsite collections, hours, policies, and research services, is online at <https://www.handleyregional.org/archives>.

Central Rappahannock Heritage Center

This non-profit, all-volunteer organization is located at 900 Barton Street, Suite 111, in Fredericksburg. The Heritage Center archives and preserves historical documents and photographs pertaining to the history of the people of the city of Fredericksburg and the counties of Caroline, King George, Spotsylvania, and Stafford in Virginia. An overview of the records for Fredericksburg and the counties is online at <https://www.crhcarchives.org/collections>.

The Heritage Center founders believed the area's grassroots history was being lost, so they began collecting historical and genealogical materials such as family correspondence, diaries, photographs, and business ledgers. Materials in this archive also include books, church records, club records, fraternal



Courtesy of Central Rappahannock Heritage Center

organization records, newspapers, and original court records. The Heritage Center's catalog is online and searchable. Many of its photographs are digitized and available on the website.

Staff will conduct research in the Heritage Center materials and provide digital copies for a fee. Additional information about the Heritage Center, its holdings, hours, policies, and research services is online at <https://www.crhcarchives.org>.

Conclusion

We look forward to meeting you in 2023 for the NGS Family History Conference, where you can network with other researchers and further your knowledge by learning from experts. Although Virginia has much to offer genealogists and historians in the repositories in and around Richmond, we hope you'll spend time exploring repositories that are a little further afield. Perhaps you'll discover some one-of-a-kind resources to help you tell the story of your ancestors' lives. 🌳