

THEN

NOW

NEXT

**LIBRARY OF VIRGINIA**

FIVE-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN







## LIBRARY OF VIRGINIA FIVE-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN

In 2023, the Library of Virginia will be an open, inclusive, and empowering force in the life of every Virginian.

**From the Library Board and the Library of Virginia Foundation Board**

**Dynamic. Engaging. Ambitious.  
Visionary. Inviting. Inclusive.**

These are just a few of the key words that leap from the pages of the Library of Virginia's new strategic plan. They capture the energy and excitement that we expect will infuse everything the Library does between now and 2023, when the Library marks its 200th anniversary.

The Library Board and the Library of Virginia Foundation Board are pleased to endorse this exciting plan. We stand ready to assist the management team and staff in carrying out the plan's key initiatives. Working together, we pledge to deliver the Library's rich historical content in innovative and meaningful ways and to offer the best possible service to all Virginians, whether they access our collections within the Library's walls or from the far distant corners of the state and the world.

We invite all Virginians—and friends of the Library wherever they reside—to join us on this exhilarating journey.



M. David Skiles, Chair  
Library Board



Steve Rogers, Chair  
Library of Virginia Foundation Board

## From the Librarian of Virginia

I am delighted to share with you the Library of Virginia's 2018–2023 Strategic Plan.

This exciting, forward-looking document is more than the culmination of nearly a year's work led by a determined team of staff members. It also reflects all that is best in our nearly 200-year-old institution. Our planning team challenged us to consider our origins in 1823 and our evolution to who we are today, as well as to think boldly and honestly about who we want to be. The group coached the Library and its stakeholders through activities designed to capture as many ideas and perspectives as possible, always with a nod to our legacy and eye toward the Virginia of the future. Our road map is clear and we are ready to take the journey with you.

We hope that readers will feel the energy in this plan, which includes our dedication to all citizens of the commonwealth, our passion for our mission, and our ambition to set the Library on a course for its next two centuries. By the time the Library celebrates its 200th anniversary in 2023, we will be an open, inclusive, and empowering force in the life of every Virginian.

We pledge to do this by:

- **building** our collections to reflect Virginia's demographic and cultural breadth
- **reimagining** our services to facilitate access to our people and resources
- **connecting** in new and meaningful ways with all Virginians, whose stories inform not only our understanding of the past but our collective future as well

We have already begun the work outlined here, and we are eager to tell you of our progress along the way. Please continue to share your thoughts, insights, and suggestions for improvement. Help us make sure that the Library has much to celebrate in 2023, as we prepare to enter our third century of service to Virginians.

  
Sandra Gioia Treadway



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# THEN

Since its official founding in 1823, the Library of Virginia has responded to the needs of a changing commonwealth. The Library has its roots in the colonial-era governor's Council library, which contained not only statutes and law books but also reference works on a range of subjects. Throughout its history, the Library has continued to collect materials that both record our past and inform our present.

The Library's first catalog included works of history, biography, agriculture, and horticulture. Following the Civil War, the Library's collecting changed in response to an evolving mission. In 1873, the General Assembly authorized the Library to expand its collections to include "any book, pamphlet, or manuscript, work of art, or relic relating to the history of Virginia," making the Library a popular destination for locals and visitors alike.

In 1800, Governor James Monroe requested that the General Assembly take action to prevent the decay and loss of the manuscript records documenting Virginia's early legislative history, a decision that served as the catalyst for the Library's preservation and conservation efforts that continue to this day. The Library acquired many record groups, such as those of the Board of Public Works, the Land Office, and the Virginia War History Commission, during the first half of the 20th century. Following a 1940 statute that authorized most state agencies to deposit old records in the state archives, the state's records management program was transferred to the Library in 1959.

By the early years of the 20th century, the Library began to serve more Virginians than ever before. Interlibrary loans, a lending program for the blind and sight-impaired, and traveling libraries reached citizens who were far from Richmond or whose communities did not have libraries of their own. As new technologies developed, the Library adapted to manage them. Photographs became important resources for researchers. Microfilming in the 1940s not only supplemented the Library's strong holdings in family history materials, but also preserved vital public documents. In the 21st century, Library of Virginia staff members have tackled born-digital materials, leading the way in archiving records such as governors' emails.





The Library's 2012–2017 Strategic Plan recognized that our story is continually evolving. It began early in the 19th century and will go on long after we're gone. The opportunity that our plan highlighted then continues to resonate today.

That plan identified four strategic outcomes: to strengthen our collections and access to them, to advocate for sound and open government record keeping on behalf of the citizens of Virginia, to inspire citizen learning and engagement with Virginia's history and culture, and to create a nimble organizational structure that would be the key to our success. Our achievements in the five years since that plan's inception are many and they have moved us along toward our goals.

# NOW

- Reconceived customer service and physical spaces with the guiding principles of “the right things in the right places” and “service where you need it”
- Embarked on replacing the systems and technologies that manage and provide access to our collections
- Expanded user engagement with the collections
- Pioneered the use of assistive technologies to revolutionize the processing of electronic records in partnership with the University of Waterloo
- Began working toward a more aligned, consistent marketing strategy, rather than solely public relations
- Ensured that staff members take seriously the need to communicate with each other, to challenge assumptions that could lead to stagnation, and to embrace opportunities for growth and advancement

With these successes come new and exciting challenges. As we anticipate our 200th anniversary in 2023, we can look back on our years of expansion and adaptation and feel pride in the collections entrusted to our care. We will also strive toward a future vision for the next 200 years and ask ourselves what materials will help us tell the stories of a new Virginia, where one in eight residents was born outside the United States. How do we connect new Virginians to the collections of an old state and invite them to shape its future?







In 2023, the Library of Virginia will be an open, inclusive, and empowering force in the life of every Virginian.

The Library of Virginia belongs to the Virginia of today and the Virginia of the future. We must respond to the changes in who and what define our commonwealth and help the people of Virginia contextualize their lives today with the lives of those from the past. Regardless of the changes and challenges we face—now and in the years to come—the Library of Virginia remains the library and archives of the people of Virginia, and the key to greater understanding and empowerment among all citizens.

We will accomplish this vision guided by a 2018–2023 Strategic Plan that plan celebrates the cornerstone of the Library—the collections—and pushes us to build upon our long-standing traditions of free public access to those collections and outreach programming that connects Virginians to their past and to each other.

# NEXT

OUR THREE KEY FOCUS AREAS ARE:

## **COLLECTIONS**

Proactively build the preeminent collections of the new Virginia, allying with community partners to reflect the demographic and cultural breadth of the commonwealth

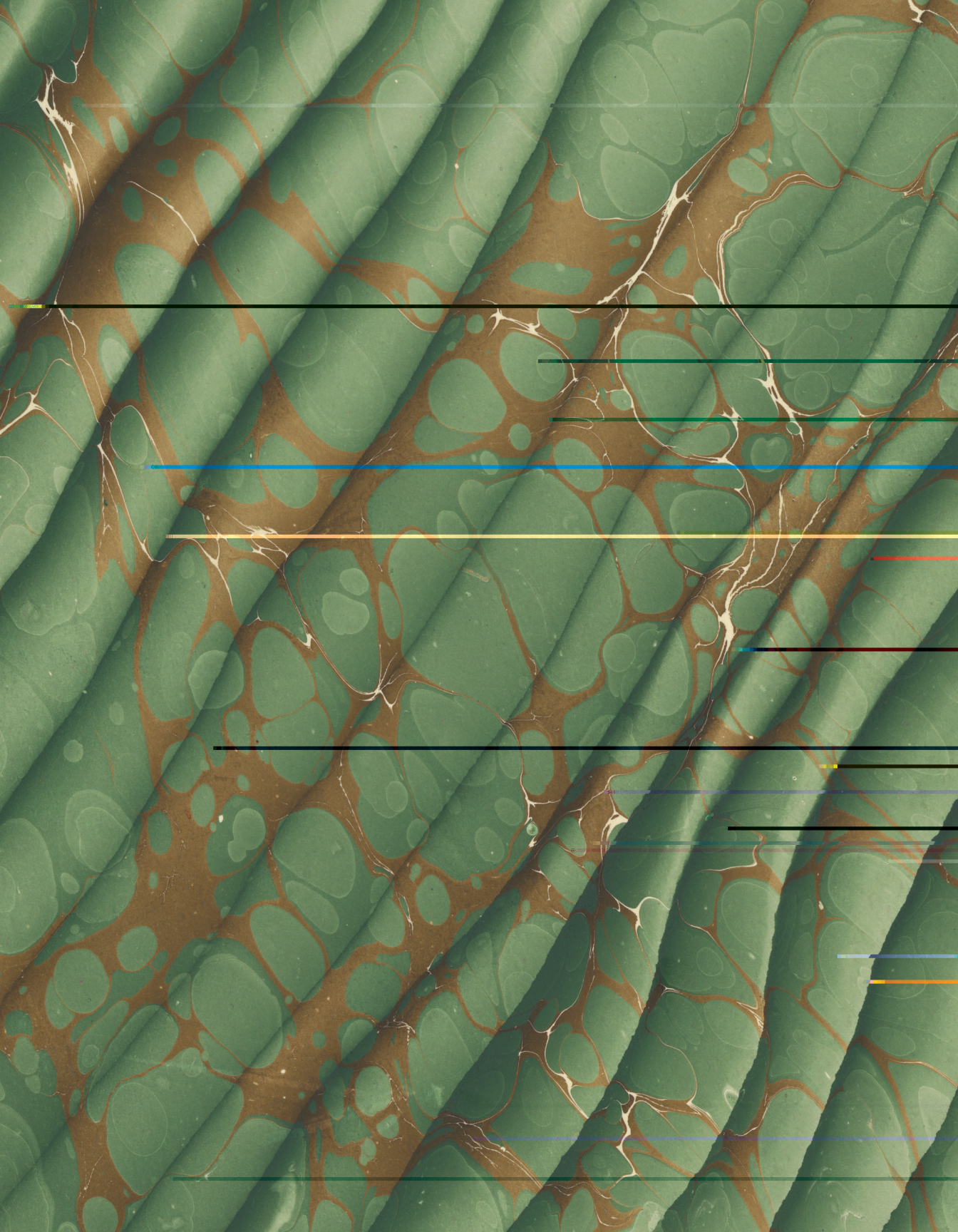
## **ACCESS**

Reimagine access as any process or service that makes collection access flexible and open, empowering citizens to become active participants in the future of the commonwealth

## **CONNECTIONS**

Meaningfully engage Virginians around the stories and work of the Library of Virginia through renewed outreach, varied partnerships, and broadened communication

While each of these subjects stands on its own, the measure of our success will lie in the connections we make between them. To that end, we have identified five major initiatives to help make those connections and move the Library of Virginia toward 2023 and beyond.





## INITIATIVE 1

### Collecting the New Virginia

Reimagine a collecting model that is cooperative and proactive, establishes relationships that bring value, helps build capacity where possible, and reflects those who are shaping 21st-century Virginia.

#### STRATEGY

Create a future-focused policy with provisions for expanding collections in the areas of family and community history, civic life, government, and literature in Virginia, along with provisions for refining existing collections.

#### STRATEGY

Plan and begin expansion and improvement of collections storage facilities at the State Records Center as part of the Library's responsibility to ensure trustworthy and secure management of the state's public records and cultural heritage.



# SPOTLIGHTS

## SPOTLIGHT 1

### Virginia Untold: The African American Narrative

Uncover their stories! #VaUntold

How do you tell a story that has been hidden? Virginia Untold: The African American Narrative ([www.virginiamemory.com/collections/aan](http://www.virginiamemory.com/collections/aan)) sets out to answer that question by highlighting the voices of Virginia's free and enslaved African American residents buried within administrative, estate, property, and court records. Since 2013, the Virginia Untold project has addressed the historic lack of documentation of African American lives by making available online over 10,000 individual documents. Within these items are the names and snippets of stories of more than 100,000 people of color living

in Virginia. The records have also been used in our Transcribe project, resulting in indexing and transcription data that opens our collections for the next generation of research. The project grew in 2019 when the Library joined forces with the Virginia Museum of History and Culture to incorporate "Unknown No Longer," its database of names of free people of color and enslaved Virginians in the period before 1865.

Virginia Untold is made possible by funding from Dominion Resources and the Institute of Museum and Library Services.







## INITIATIVE 2

### Dynamic Digitization

Set the Library's collections free through a robust digitization program that includes data sharing, citizen engagement, cross-collection connections, and attention to the research goals and issues of importance to the people of Virginia and beyond.

#### STRATEGY

Create digital resources that connect personal narratives, newspapers, and archival, photographic, geographic, and architectural materials to promote a fuller picture and greater understanding of family, community, and civic life in Virginia.

#### STRATEGY

Expand public access to the electronic archival records of Virginia's government, continuing our leadership among state archives and ensuring that citizens are able to engage knowledgeably and fully as civic actors in their communities.

#### STRATEGY

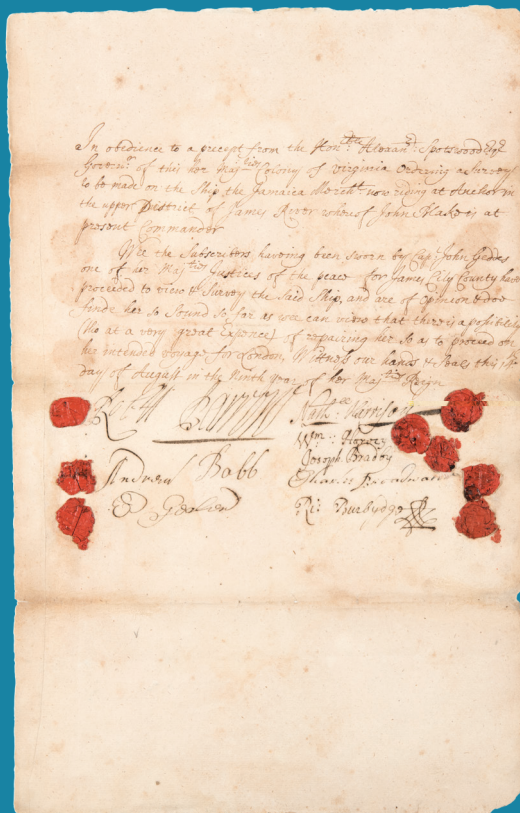
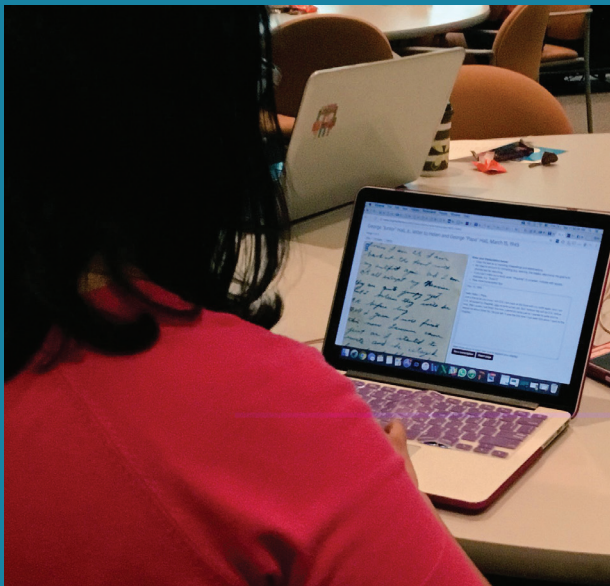
Continue to grow our legions of devoted volunteers for Making History: Transcribe, expanding their opportunities to enhance our digital collections and encouraging them to create their own meaning and stories from the collections while facilitating access and understanding for others.





# makinghistory transcribe

LIBRARY OF VIRGINIA



# SPOTLIGHTS

## SPOTLIGHT 2

### Making History: Transcribe

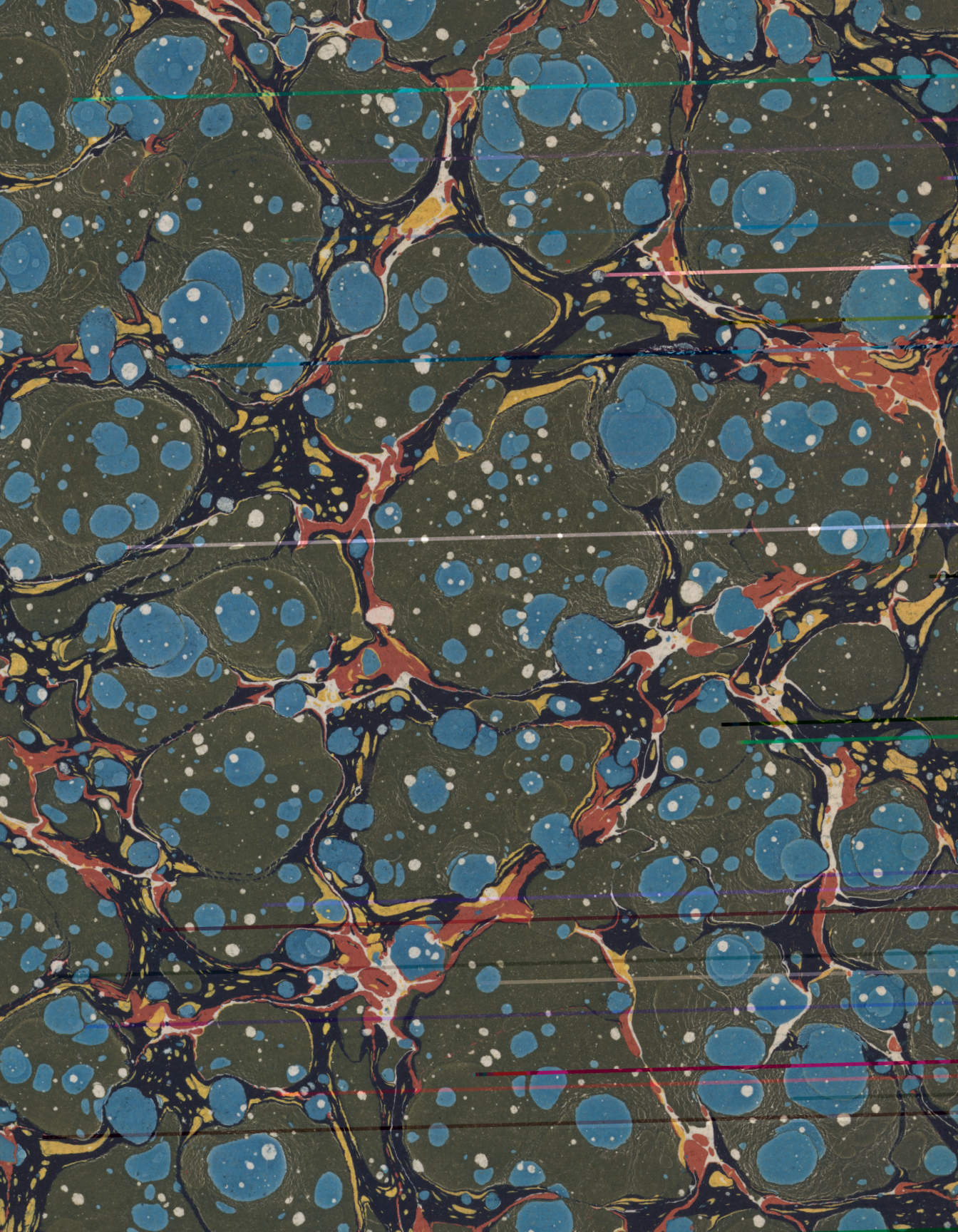
#### Get involved! #LVAtranscribe

Twice a month, volunteers gather at the Library for an unlikely activity—transcribing old documents. Since August 2014, the Making History: Transcribe project ([www.virginiamemory.com/transcribe](http://www.virginiamemory.com/transcribe)) has enlisted the help of the public translating items such as 17th-century order books, 19th-century naturalization records, and 20th-century WPA (Work Projects Administration) Life Histories into searchable text. Volunteers work both in person at transcribe-a-thons and remotely

through the project webpage, enabling contributions from across the state and country. The result? Over 70,000 pages transcribed, digital collections made more searchable for researchers, and participants who understand the complex history of Virginia through their interaction with primary sources.

Presented in partnership with HandsOn Greater Richmond, this project is made possible by the Institute of Museum and Library Services.





# INITIATIVES

## INITIATIVE 3

### Civic Leadership

Foster civic engagement throughout the commonwealth by collaborating to facilitate civil public discourse, build stronger communities, and realize the power of democracy.

#### STRATEGY

Make civic engagement a focus of the Library of Virginia's programming and outreach across a diverse range of opportunities.





[DIGITAL COLLECTIONS](#)
[READING ROOM](#)
[EXHIBITIONS](#)
[ONLINE CLASSROOM](#)
[ABOUT VIRGINIA MEMORY](#)

[HOME » COLLECTIONS » KAINE](#)

### KAINE EMAIL PROJECT @ LVA

Welcome to the Library of Virginia's Kaine Email Project, where we make accessible the email records from the administration of Governor Timothy M. Kaine, Virginia's 70th governor (2006–2010). Users can search and view email records from the Governor's Office and his Cabinet Secretaries; learn about other public records from the Kaine Administration; go behind the scenes to see how the Library of Virginia made the email records available; and read what others are saying about the collection. The Library of Virginia received approximately 1.3 million email messages from the Kaine Administration. We are processing and releasing these records in batches, so please check back often for new content.

[Search the Collection](#)

[Related Content](#)

[Look Under the Hood](#)

[What's the Buzz](#)

This project is made possible by federal funding provided through the Library Services and Technology Act program administered by the Institute of Museum and Library Services.





## SPOTLIGHT 3

# The Kaine Email Project

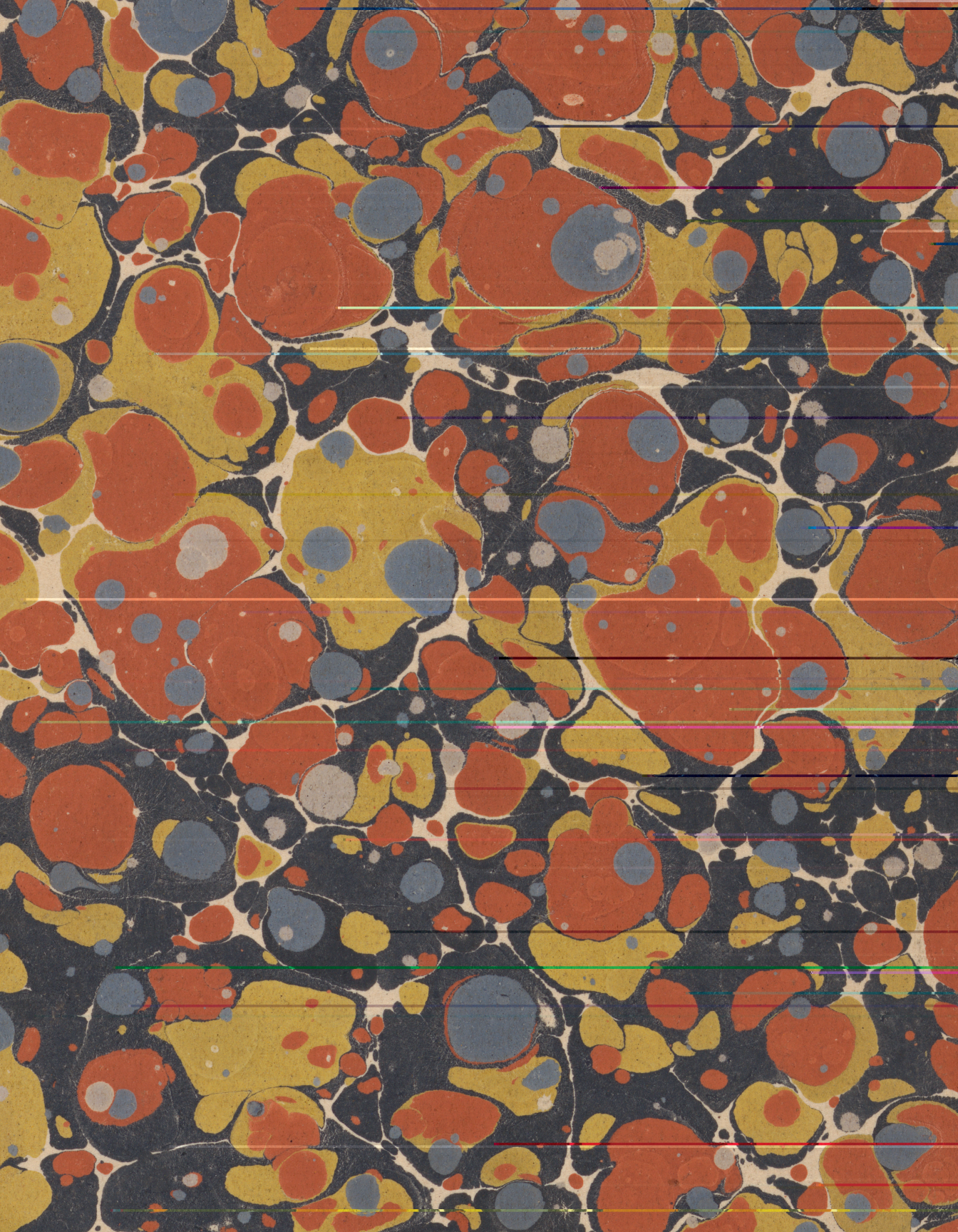
Examine government in action! #KaineEmail

The next time you attempt to organize your inbox, imagine if you had approximately 1.5 million emails. That was the dilemma faced by the Library of Virginia when Governor Timothy M. Kaine, Virginia's 70th governor, left office in 2010. The Kaine Email Project ([www.virginiamemory.com/collections/kaine](http://www.virginiamemory.com/collections/kaine)) provides unprecedented access to the email records of the Kaine Administration, shedding light on the challenges of modern government and society in early 21st-century Virginia. Users can search and view email records from the Governor's Office and those of his Cabinet Secretaries, learn about other public records from his administration, go behind the scenes to see

how the Library is making the email records available, and read what others are saying about the collection. With outgoing Virginia governors transferring increasing numbers of electronic records to the Library, it is crucial for us to find a new approach to archival processing. In partnership with scholars, we have been exploring the use of artificial intelligence to process electronic records more efficiently. Our goal is to empower citizens with the resources they need to understand their government.

The Kaine Email Project is made possible by the Institute of Museum and Library Services.







## INITIATIVE 4

### Library as Place

Create inviting, comfortable, safe, and enjoyable environments throughout the Library's public spaces where people can explore the collections and engage in meaningful interactions.

#### STRATEGY

Develop a comprehensive space plan for the first two floors of the Library that maximizes accessibility, visitor experience, engagement, and interaction.

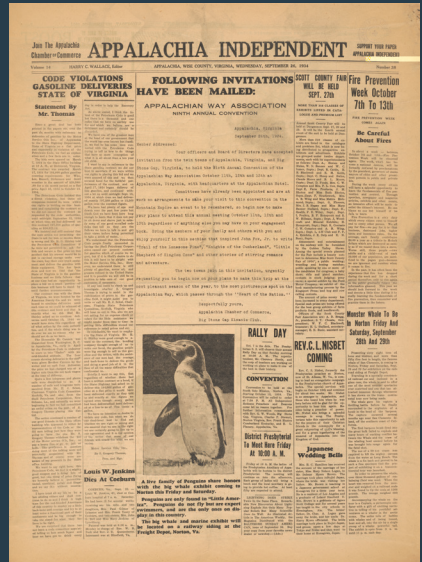
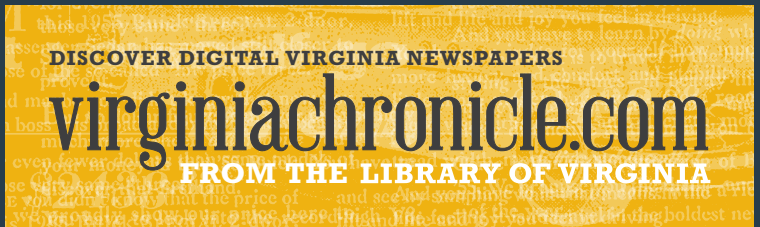
#### STRATEGY

Identify and implement short-term opportunities to reconfigure the Library's first and second floors in order to increase public access and provide semi-private work and study spaces for the public and staff.

#### STRATEGY

Explore new ways to activate the first and second floors in order to engage the public and amplify our collections, exhibitions, and expertise.





# SPOTLIGHTS

## SPOTLIGHT 4

### Virginia Chronicle

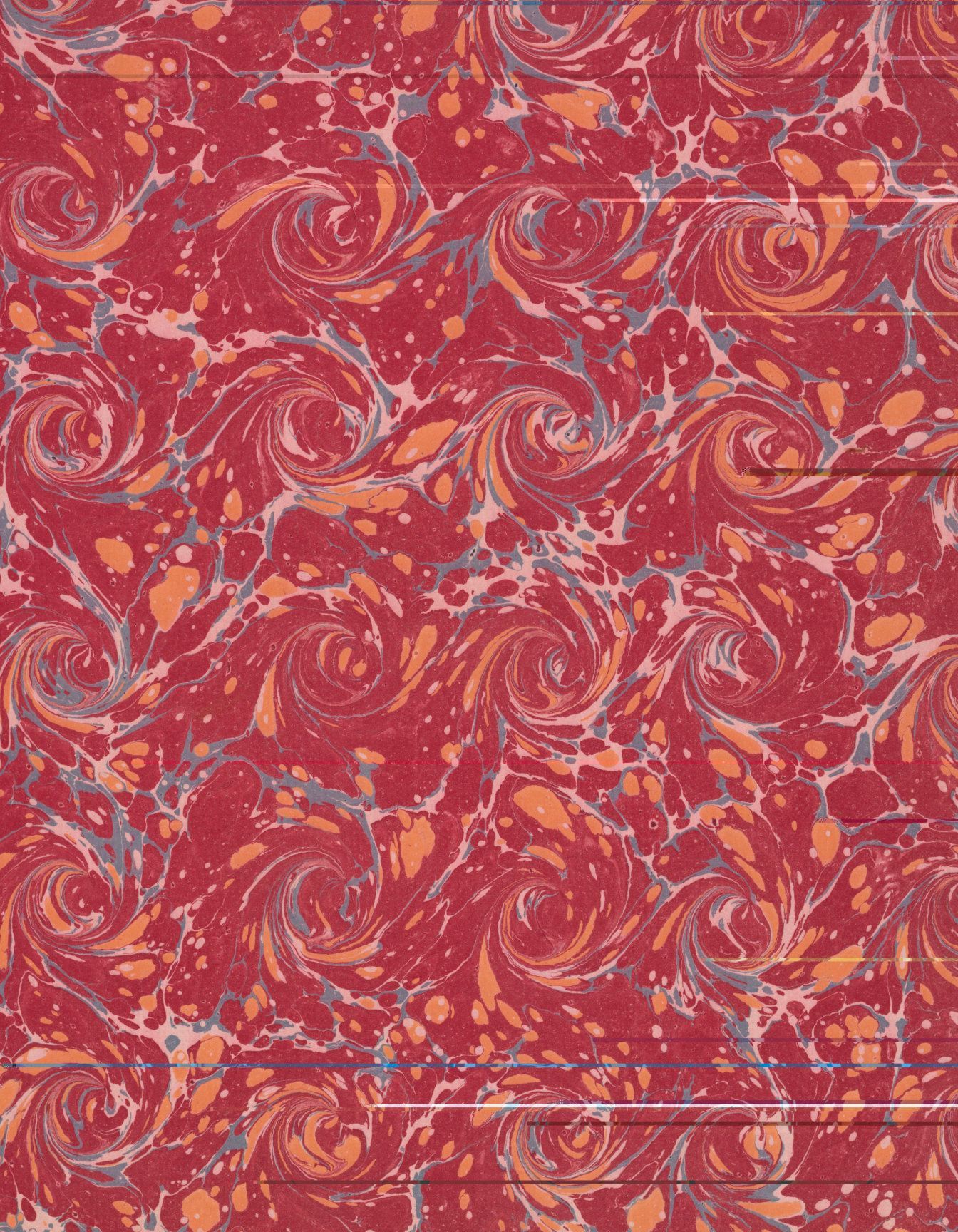
#### Read all about it! #VaChron

From the *Abingdon Virginian* to the *Wytheville Dispatch*, Virginia Chronicle ([viriniachronicle.com](http://viriniachronicle.com)) provides free access to over a million newspaper pages from the commonwealth and beyond. These full-text searchable and digitized images give glimpses into the lives of Virginians from 1787 to 2013, outlining everything from local politics to community happenings to notable moments in American history. Volunteers help correct the text of articles from 140,241 issues comprising 183,885 articles, making searches more accurate. Virginia Chronicle is a product of the Virginia Newspaper Project, which works

to locate, describe, inventory, preserve, and provide public access to United States imprint newspapers housed at the Library of Virginia and throughout the commonwealth. Virginia Chronicle contributes images to Chronicling America, the national version of this database. Yesterday's news, tomorrow's research!

The Virginia Newspaper Project is funded by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Institute of Museum and Library Services.







## INITIATIVE 5

### Library Beyond Place

Bring new life to the Library of Virginia's web presence, encompassing our services, collections, programs, and projects in ways that open our collections and expertise to our users, allowing them to learn, grow, question, and be active in their communities.

#### STRATEGY

Leverage our overall web presence in ways that expand the discovery and use of our physical and digital collections.

#### STRATEGY

Improve our resources and services to help users achieve their research, learning, and professional goals.

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# CHALLENGES | OPPORTUNITIES

Fast-paced change—social, cultural, economic, technological—can overwhelm and paralyze; cultural heritage institutions can and should be wayfinders for citizens navigating frequently disruptive change. Complex times, complex conversations, rapid technological change, and information explosions all result in constant noise that can drown out civil discourse and understanding. The Library of Virginia is determined to see these challenges as opportunities to respond in a way that is relevant, brings cohesion, and enhances people's lives.

While Virginians have always valued their history, that history has not always reflected all Virginians. It is estimated that one in every eight Virginians today is foreign-born, one in eleven has at least one immigrant parent, and the state's population under age 30 is projected to be majority minority by 2040. With changing demographics come exciting opportunities to preserve new stories of Virginians for future generations. Records that have been in the Library's care for well over a century are yielding new insights because they are read with fresh eyes and more fully informed thinking. With these factors in mind, the Library will be an organization that reflects the changing face of Virginia and what it means to be a Virginian, becoming an organization that honors inclusion and reflects diversity in its staffing, collections, services, and programming.

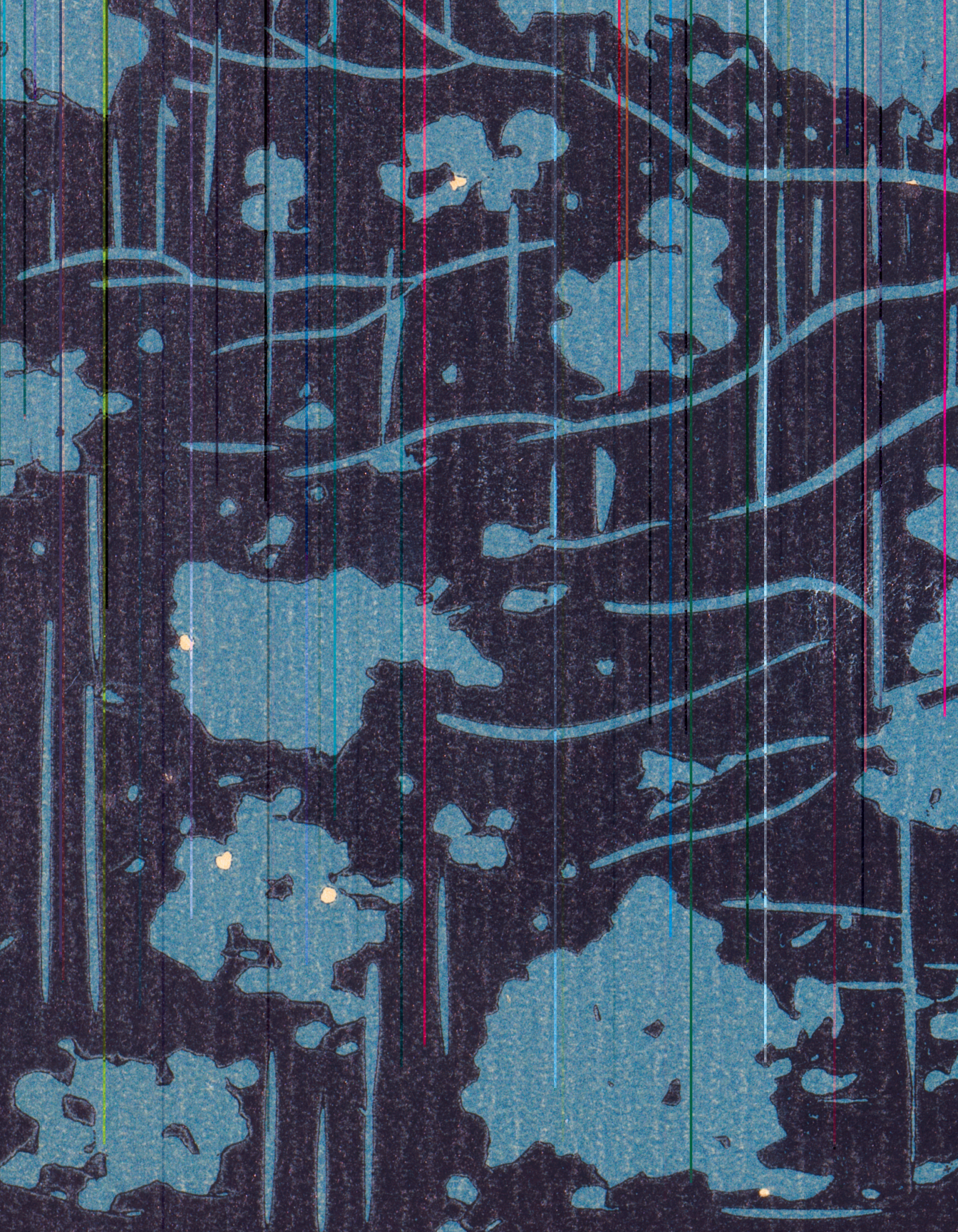
To meet these challenges head on, the Library must be sure of its identity, goals, and priorities. We must tell our story in a clear and compelling way so that every Virginian understands the relevance and value of the Library to the citizens of the commonwealth. With that awareness, staff, leadership, and our boards will embrace a culture of institutional advancement, acting as active ambassadors of our mission, vision, and strategic initiatives.

The Library will also articulate development and fundraising strategies that extend our ability to make proactive decisions and maximize potential. These efforts, aligned with the focus areas and strategies laid out in this plan, will set clear and attainable goals and help to develop a broad base of support for and within the Library of Virginia.

The Library's past, present, and future are not three separate things, but a continuum. The Library is uniquely placed to help contextualize and lead conversations that raise all citizens above the noise, toward greater participation, learning, and understanding.

In 2023, the Library of Virginia will be an open, inclusive, and empowering force in the life of every Virginian.







# OUR VISION

The Library of Virginia will inspire learning, ignite imagination, create possibilities, encourage understanding, and engage Virginia's past to empower its future.

# OUR MISSION

As the Commonwealth's library and archives, the Library of Virginia is a trusted educational institution. We acquire, preserve, and promote access to unique collections of Virginia's history and culture and advance the development of library and records management services statewide.

# OUR PLANNING PROCESS

When the Library and its consultant began developing a new strategic plan in the summer of 2018, we knew that inviting stakeholder participation would be crucial. In August and September, we held six focus groups across the region to gather the insights of members of the library, genealogy, civic engagement, literary, and nonprofit communities along with representatives from state and local government. The participants discussed their connections to the Library, what they love about the work we do, and the opportunities they see for improving the organization. Within the same period, staff conversations encouraged all Library employees to brainstorm about what they thought the public wanted us to keep doing, do more of, or start doing.

Once themes emerged from these initial conversations, the Library hosted a daylong charrette to seek input from a wider portion of the public. After viewing displays and listening to presentations outlining the proposed areas of strategic focus, participants provided extensive feedback that we used to refine our direction. By early November, we pulled together staff from a variety of departments in order to look at areas such as collections and access from diverse perspectives and identify key projects and initiatives. In January 2019, work sessions allowed a second group of staff members to use their knowledge and expertise to develop the supporting strategies for implementing the initiatives.

# PEOPLE

## STRATEGIC PLANNING TEAM

**Vincent Brooks**, SENIOR LOCAL RECORDS ARCHIVIST

**Paul Casalaspi**, DIRECTOR OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SERVICES

**Sonya Coleman**, DIGITAL ENGAGEMENT & SOCIAL MEDIA COORDINATOR

**Kathleen Jordan**, DIGITAL INITIATIVES & WEB SERVICES MANAGER

**John Metz**, DEPUTY OF COLLECTIONS & PROGRAMS

**Dale Neighbors**, VISUAL STUDIES COLLECTION COORDINATOR

**Meghan Townes**, VISUAL STUDIES COLLECTION REGISTRAR

**Catherine Fitzgerald Wyatt**, EDUCATION & OUTREACH MANAGER

## EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT TEAM

**Sandra G. Treadway**, LIBRARIAN OF VIRGINIA

**Michael Strom**, STATE ARCHIVIST & DIRECTOR GOVERNMENT RECORDS SERVICES

**Vanessa Anderson**, HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGER

**Nan Carmack**, DIRECTOR OF LIBRARY DEVELOPMENT & NETWORKING

**Paul Casalaspi**, DIRECTOR OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SERVICES

**Gregg D. Kimball**, DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC SERVICES & OUTREACH

**John Metz**, DEPUTY OF COLLECTIONS & PROGRAMS

**Connie Warne**, DEPUTY OF ADMINISTRATION

Detail images are taken from the following collections: Rare Books (pages 10, 14, 18, 22, and 26), Visual Studies (6, 8, 30), Private Papers (4), and Local Government Records (28). Back cover photograph © Ansel Olson.



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