

Richmond City Directories are available at the Richmond Public Library (RPL), Virginia Museum of History and Culture (VMHC), Library of Virginia (LVA), Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU), and www.ancestry.com. In some cases, more than one publisher may have created a directory in a particular year; in other cases, directories may cover a two-year span. No directories were produced for Richmond during the years of the Civil War. Some of the later directories may be telephone books. RPL's holdings are bound books; the holdings of the other institutions consist of a combination of bound books, microfiche, and microfilm. Ancestry.com, obviously, is online, and searching by name is easy, but searching by address is tricky.

See page 2 of this document for further details about what can and cannot be located in the city directories.

RPL	VMHC	LVA	VCU	ancestry.com
1819		1819		
			1845	
			1845/1856	
		1850/51	1850/1851	
1852		1852	1852	
	1855	1855	1855	
1856	1856	1856	1856	
1858/59	1858		1858/59	
1859	1859			
	1860	1860	1860	
1866	1866	1866		1866
1869	1869	1869		1869
1870	1870	1870		1870
1870/71				
1871/72	1871	1871/72		1871
	1872	1872/73	1872	
1873/74	1873	1873/74		1873
1874/75	1874			1874
	1875			1875
1876/77	1876	1876/77		1876
1877	1877	1877	1877	1877
1877/78		1877/78		
	1878			
1879/80	1879	1879/80		1879
	1880			
1881	1881			1881
1882/83	1882	1882	1882	1882
	1883	1883	1883	1883
1883/84	1884	1884	1884	
1885	1885	1885	1885	1885
1886/87	1886	1886	1886	1886
	1887	1887	1887	
1888	1888	1888	1888	1888
	1889	1889		
1889	1889	1889	1889	1889
1890/91		1890	1890	
1891	1891	1891	1891	1891
	1892	1892	1892	1892
1893/4	1893	1893	1893	1893
	1894	1894	1894	1894
	1895	1895/96	1895	1895
	1896		1896	
	1897	1897-1927	1897	1897
			1898	1898
	1899		1899	1899
	1900		1900	1900
1901-1911, 1914-1919, 1920-1922, 1924-1933, 1935-1937, 1940, 1941-1944, 1947, 1950, 1953, 1955, 1959, 1960, 1963-1964, 1966-1969, 1971-1974, 1978-1986, 1990-1992, 1997, 1999, 2000+	1901-1944, 1946-1951, 1953-2008		1901, 1908, 1913, 1930-1940, 1942, 1944, 1946-1949, 1951, 1953-1993, 1995-1998, 2002+	1901-1904, 1905-1948, 1950-1951, 1953-1960

The directories contain a lot of miscellaneous information in addition to just the names of Richmond residents and where they lived. For example:

- Persons racialized as Black were first identified as “colored” in the 1866 directory; the parenthetical “(col’d)” appeared after their name (significantly, this was just after the close of the Civil War). The most common way which was used to denote racialized persons over the decades, however, was the use of an asterisk before a name. A parenthetical “[c]” or “(c)” was used at the end of a name in a few early, and later, directories. In 1873, “colored” residents were listed in a separate section of the directory. The last year in which racialized designations appeared was 1951.
- Manchester residents were sometimes included in the Richmond directory: in 1871/72 Manchester appeared as a separate directory at the end of the book. It may have disappeared for a while, but reappeared again in 1910 after Manchester was annexed to Richmond.
- A business section is in most of the directories (though perhaps not in the earliest). If you know the business a person is associated with, it is useful to look it up because sometimes there is other information there.
- The first “reverse” city directory section (which listed addresses with names following instead of the other way around) was published as part of the 1879 city directory and appeared in all directories after that time, although where the section appeared in a given book floated for a few years.
- Telephone numbers first appeared in 1904 but were inconveniently provided in numerical order, meaning to find a person’s phone number it is necessary to skim through the list. If you know a person’s telephone number, it is useful to search on it through the local papers – sometimes there is very interesting information associated with it.
- Streetcar routes and the names of the suburbs they served appeared in several of the directories starting in about 1910.
- A discussion of recently-made street name changes appeared in 1921.
- There are overviews of Richmond history, culture, governance, and business in many of the books (most often written in overly-rosy terms by the Richmond Chamber of Commerce).
- Maps of the city, though not very detailed, appeared in many of the books.

A note about street names and addresses in Richmond:

When Richmond was first laid out as a city in 1737, the east-west streets were given alphabetic letter names. In 1808, the city governing body gave names to the streets, resulting in the changes noted in the table. Numbering of houses was not provided for until August 1819 by the Common Hall, a precursor of the city council. The street numbering system was subsequently reformed in 1866. Some street numbers, and even street names, have changed over the years even since 1866, though this is more often true for Henrico County. (For more information about street names, see also “[When the Streets Had No Names](#),” Church Hill People’s News [online].)

A	Arch	G	Giles, later Grace
B	Byrd	H	Broad
C	Canal	I	Marshall
D	Cary	K	Clay
E	Main	L	Leigh
F	Franklin	G	Giles, later Grace