

# TIMELINE

## Integration of Public Libraries & Schools in Virginia

1904

The **Norfolk Public Library** opens as the first public library in Virginia. Construction is funded by Andrew Carnegie. The library is segregated and serves whites-only.

In December, the George M. Jones Library Association files paperwork to incorporate for the purposes of establishing a public library in the city of Lynchburg.

1908

The **George M. Jones Memorial Library** officially opens in Lynchburg at 434 Rivermont Avenue. The building is constructed in the beaux arts style and overlooks downtown.

The library is privately financed by Mary Watts Jones but is the second public library in the state, with service for whites-only.



1913

The **Handley Library** opens in Winchester, Virginia. Also constructed in the Beaux Arts style, the library is funded by and named for a Pennsylvania judge. Library service is segregated for whites only.

The **Danville Library** opens whites-only public services at the Sutherland House.

1921

The **Roanoke Public Library** opens its first whites-only branch in May 1921. Rachel Davis Harris, from the Louisville (Kentucky) Free Public Library Western Colored Branch, travels to Roanoke to establish the **Gainsboro Branch**. Opened in December 1921, Gainsboro is the first branch library in Virginia to offer segregated services to African-Americans.

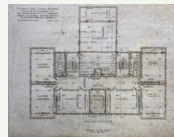
A few months later, Norfolk begins segregated services to African-Americans through the **Blyden Branch**.

**Charlottesville** opens its first public municipal library, for whites-only.

1924

Jones Memorial Library opens the **Dunbar Branch** at Dunbar High School. The branch serves students during the day and the wider African-American community in the evening. **(TLI)**

Public libraries for whites-only are opened in **Richmond** and **Petersburg**.



1925

Petersburg begins segregated services for African-American residents from the basement of the public library building.

Richmond begins segregated services for African-Americans at the **Rosa D. Bowser branch**.

1934

Charlottesville starts segregated services for African-Americans at the **Jefferson School Branch**.

1936

The **Alexandria Public Library** opens for whites-only.

1937

**Richmond Public Library** applies to the U.S. District Court to integrate its libraries. The court denies the application.



Learn more at Digital Jones

<https://digitaljones.omeka.net/exhibits/show/four-women--dunbar-branch>

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1940

Following a sit-in, the Alexandria Public Library opens the segregated **Robert H. Robinson** branch for African-Americans.

1947

The **Richmond Public Library** becomes the first public library in the state to integrate its services in 1947.

**Norfolk Public Library** integrates, but restrooms remain segregated.

1948

**Charlottesville Public Library** integrates services in 1948.

1950  
1953

The **Alexandria Public Library** integrates its services in 1950.

In October, the Alexandria librarian writes to Jones Memorial Library for advice on offering integrated services. Librarian Lucille Dickerson replies that Lynchburg services remained segregated. (TL2)

**Danville Public Library** begins segregated service for African-Americans at the Grasty Branch.

Winchester's **Handley Library** integrates in 1953.

1959

In February, **Arlington's Stratford Junior High School** becomes the first Virginia school to integrate.

**Norfolk** and **Charlottesville** public schools soon follow

1960

**Roanoke Public Schools** integrate.

Following a court order, the **Danville Public Library** begins "vertical integration" of services. Vertical integration involved removing tables and chairs from the library, meaning patrons could only use services while standing.

**Petersburg Public Library** integrates its services.

1963

**Petersburg** public schools integrate in 1963.

1964

**Alexandria** public schools integrate in 1964.

1966  
1967

The **Lynchburg Public Library** opens in 1966 on Main Street with David Rowland as director. **Winchester** public schools integrate in 1966.

In 1967, the city of Lynchburg begins to operate Lynchburg Public Library as the first racially integrated, taxpayer-funded public library, with Jane Black as director.

1969

Trustees of the **Jones Memorial Library** vote in August 1969 to integrate and begin specialized services. The library starts to deaccession its fiction holdings, donating thousands of books to the Lynchburg Public Library, Lynchburg City Schools, and area colleges. As a specialized library, the Jones will emphasize Virginia history and genealogy.

1970

A year after the Jones integrates, public schools in **Danville**, **Richmond**, and **Lynchburg** integrate.



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