As you transcribe, remember that one major goal is to provide text for searching. Full-text searching will be enabled within the Library of Virginia digital collections based on these crowdsourced transcriptions. Transcriptions also provide additional access to the contents of these documents for those who do not read cursive, both now and in the future. Those who are blind or visually impaired may use screen readers to access these documents via transcriptions. Computer-assisted analysis, as is used in digital humanities, is also enabled by this work.

Please follow the guidelines below when transcribing Library of Virginia documents.

Transcription Guidelines:

GENERAL GUIDELINES:

- Save your work frequently. If you don't save before you navigate away from the page, your work may be lost! Click "Save" as you work on a page.

- When you have transcribed all the words on the page, click the "Done" button in the upper right corner.

- Transcribe the text as is, including punctuations, misspellings, and abbreviations.

- Any text not in the original document should go within square brackets. They can be used to correct a misspelled word, such as Carlottesville [Charlottesville], or expand an abbreviation, such Wm [William].

- While you do not need to recreate the formatting of the original document, we ask that you hit return at the end of the line.

- You may come across outdated or offensive language in historical documents. Transcribe offensive language as it is written on the page.

HARD-TO-READ WORDS:

- If you aren't sure of a word but want to guess, indicate with square brackets and a question mark, e.g. [town?].

- If you can't make out a word at all, use [illegible]. If you spot [illegible] in an already started transcription, feel free to correct it if you know what the word is.

- For text that has been crossed out, if you can read it, type [struck: text]. If you cannot read it, type [illegible].

- Consider the context. If you're having trouble with a word or passage, read "around" it and think about what a likely word would be, or look for other letters and spellings in the document that are similar.

- Do your best, but don't spend too much time on any one word. Use [illegible] and return to it when you have finished the page or document. You might be surprised that you can now read the word after transcribing the rest of the page.

FORMATTING:

- Do not transcribe hyphens or spaces in words that occur at line breaks: type the whole word then hit return. Continue transcribing the next line starting with the first whole word.

- For lines or rows of dots, you do not have to transcribe them all, since this adds little value to the searchable text. Type a single _ or . as needed, followed by the text.

- For words that are inserted above or below the line, add information in brackets within or near the line. For example: [inserted above/below: text].

- When transcribing parts of the letter that were written around the edge of the paper or perhaps written cross-wise on the paper, add information in brackets to the end of the document. For example, add the transcribed information to the end of the letter and write [written at the top of page 1: text] or [written across page 1: text].

Thank you for joining us in Making History!

Contact us with any questions at makinghistory@virginiamemory.com.