

The Gloucester Historical Society would like to announce the publishing of a new book by Genevieve V. Brei, 1820 Court Minute Book of Gloucester, VA. She states “Gloucester, Virginia, is a fascinating county steeped in culture and history. As part of an archaeology internship with The Fairfield Foundation, I started taking a closer look at the documents that enable historians, archeologists, and genealogists to understand Gloucester’s early years. Unfortunately, Gloucester experienced what the Library of Virginia deems “a catastrophic loss” of records twice: once in 1820 and again in 1865. The first fire took place in April 1820

at the Gloucester Clerk's Office, and it destroyed most of the county's official records. The second fire occurred in Richmond where official county records from across Virginia were moved to keep them safe during the Civil War. Among the only surviving documents from these fires are the county court's minute books.

In general, minute books contain court proceedings. The 1820 Minute Book is extraordinary as it also attempts to mitigate the devastation of the 1820 Clerk's Office fire. Beginning in June, it contains transcriptions of original documents such as indentures and land transactions as well as ongoing debt cases, appointments, and county financial information. The vast majority of the Minute Book deals with lawsuits and debt cases.”

Genevieve Brei is an undergraduate at the College of William and Mary, in Williamsburg, Virginia. This is her first publication. Her interests range from history to geology, always with an emphasis on understanding the past.

Her book can be purchased at the Museum of History or the Visitor’s Center for \$20.

