

A Guide to the Pittsylvania County (Va.) Judgments (Freedom Suits), 1793-1843

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Author: Greg Crawford

History

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Title Statement

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Profile Description

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Descriptive Summary

Barcode number

0007696168

Language

English

Collector

Pittsylvania County (Va.) Circuit Court

Physical Characteristics

.15 cu. ft.

Repository

The Library of Virginia

Administrative Information

Access Restrictions

There are no restrictions.

Use Restrictions

There are no restrictions.

Acquisition Information

These items came to the Library of Virginia in a transfer of court papers from Pittsylvania County.

Preferred Citation

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Adjunct Descriptive Data

Related Material

Additional Pittsylvania County court records can be found at the Library of Virginia.

Pittsylvania County (Va.) County Judgments (Freedom Suits), 1793-1843, are available at [Virginia Untold: the African American Narrative digital collection](#).

Historical Information

Pittsylvania County was named in honor of William Pitt, first earl of Chatham, the English statesman. It was formed from Halifax County in 1766. The county court first met on 26 June 1767. The county seat is Chatham.

Enslaved people sued for emancipation in freedom suits based on the following: they were descendant(s) of a free female ancestor, typically a Native American (Hening Statutes, volume 2, p.170); failure of enslaver(s) to abide by the 1778 "slave nonimportation act" (Henings Statutes, volume 9, pp. 471-472); or claimed to have been freed by enslaver(s) by deed of emancipation or last will and testament (Henings Statutes volume 11, pp. 39-40)

Scope and Content

Pittsylvania County (Va.) County Judgments (Freedom Suits), 1793-1843, consist of three suits: Roxanna Johnson versus Peter Perkins (1793), Nancy Day versus Moses Hodges (1812), and Henry Carter versus Isaac Brumfield (1843). Cases are identified by style of suit consisting of plaintiff and defendant names. Surnames of others involved in a suit, including secondary plaintiffs and defendants, witnesses, deponents and affiants, and family members with surnames different from the plaintiff or defendant are indexed. Also identified are names of enslaved and enslavers found in suit as well as whether enslaved won their freedom. Predominant documents found in freedom suits include petitions, records of suits, depositions, affidavits, wills, among other items. Information found in documents include enslaved's argument for freedom, acquisition of enslaved people by enslavers, ancestry of enslaved people, and relationship between enslaved and enslavers.