

A Guide to the Caroline County (Va.) Chancery Causes, 1762-1873

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History

Processed by: G. Crawford, S. Nerney, and Library of Virginia Staff

Title Statement

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Author: Greg Crawford

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Profile Description

Creation: Machine-readable finding aid derived from MARC record, created by Greg Crawford, 16 April 2007

Language Usage: Description is in English

Revision Description

2013-11-21 Converted to schema conforming EAD by dtd2schema.vh.xsl.

Descriptive Summary

Language

English

Collector

Caroline County (Va.) Circuit Court.

Physical Characteristics

Digital images; 8.55 cubic feet (17 boxes)

Location

Library of Virginia

Repository

The Library of Virginia

Administrative Information

Access Restrictions

Caroline County (Va.) Chancery Causes, 1762-1873, use digital images found on the [Chancery Records Index](#) available electronically at the website of the Library of Virginia.

Use Restrictions

There are no restrictions.

Acquisition Information

These records came to the Library of Virginia in a transfer of court papers from Caroline County (Va.) before 1984.

Processing Information

Chancery Causes 1787-1849 were originally processed by an unknown processor. They were reprocessed by G. Crawford in 2005. Additional chancery causes dating from 1762 to 1873, found among Caroline County records stored at the Library of Virginia, were processed S. Nerney in 2012.

Digital images of Chancery Causes 1787-1849 were generated by Crowley Micrographics through the Library of Virginia's Circuit Court Records Preservation Program in 2005.

Digital images of Chancery Causes 1762-1873 were generated by Backstage Library Works through the Library of Virginia's Circuit Court Records Preservation Program in 2012.

Encoded by G. Crawford: April 2007; updated by C. Collins: April 2024.

Preferred Citation

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Adjunct Descriptive Data

Related Material

Additional unindexed pre-1913 records are also available in the Caroline County Circuit Court Clerk's office.

Additional Caroline County Court Records can be found on microfilm at The Library of Virginia web site.

Consult [A Guide to Virginia County and City Records on Microfilm](#).

Caroline County is one of Virginia's Lost Records Localities. Additional Caroline County Records may be found in the [Lost Records Localities Digital Collection](#) available the Library of Virginia website.

See also: "[A Guide to the William Thomas Warren Taliaferro Letters, 1820-1827.](#)" exhibits in Caroline County Chancery Cause 1833-002: William T. W. Taliaferro, etc. vs. Admr. of Dr. John Taliaferro, etc.; W. T. W. Taliaferro vs. Admr. of Dr. John Taliaferro, etc.; Jane E. Taliaferro, etc. vs. Admr. of Dr. John Taliaferro, etc.; and Admr. of Jane Taliaferro, etc. vs. Admr. of Dr. John Taliaferro, etc.

Historical Information

Context for Record Type: Chancery Causes are cases of equity. According to Black's Law Dictionary they are "administered according to fairness as contrasted with the strictly formulated rules of common law." A judge, not a jury, determines the outcome of the case; however, the judge is basing the decision on findings compiled and documented by Commissioners. Chancery causes are useful when researching local history, genealogical information, and land or estate divisions. They are a valuable source of local, state, social, and legal history and serve as a primary source for understanding a locality's history. Chancery causes document the lived experiences of free and enslaved individuals; women; children; people living with physical disabilities or mental health struggles; people living in poverty; defunct institutions and corporate entities; or those that may not have otherwise left traditional written histories.

Locality History: Caroline County was named for Caroline of Anspach, wife of King George II. It was formed from Essex, King and Queen, and King William Counties on 1 May 1728, and additional parts of King and Queen County were added in 1742 and in 1763. The county seat is Bowling Green.

Lost Locality Note: Most loose records and deed books prior to 1836 and will books prior to 1853 were stolen, mutilated, and/or destroyed by Union troops who ransacked the courthouse in May 1864. A near-complete run of order books exists.

Scope and Content

Caroline County (Va.) Chancery Causes, 1762-1873, consists of cases concerning issues of equity brought largely by residents of the county and filed in the circuit court. These cases often involve the following

actions: divisions of estates or land, disputes over wills, disputes regarding contracts, debt, divorce, and business disputes. Other less prevalent issues include freedom suits, permissions to sell property, and disputes concerning trespass. Predominant documents found in these chancery causes include bills (documents the plaintiff's complaint), answers (defendant's response to the plaintiff's complaint), decrees (court's decision), depositions, affidavits, correspondence, lists of heirs, deeds, plats, wills, records involving enslaved individuals, business records or vital statistics.

Commonly found surnames among the plaintiffs and defendants include Baylor, Beazley (also spelled Beazeley), Boulware, Buckner, Burrus (also spelled Burruss), Carter, Catlett, Chiles, Coleman, Collins, Estes (also spelled Estis), Gatewood, Gray, Hackett, Harris, Johnston, Jones, Kidd, Long, Mason, Miller, Norment, Pare, Peatross, Rennolds, Robinson, Sale, Samuel, Smith, Southworth, Sutton, Taliaferro, Taylor, Timberlake, Tompkins, Turner, Woolfolk, Wright, and Yates.

These records contain 1 folder of "Orphan Chancery" which is processed but not indexed. These records contain parts, often single items, of chancery causes that could not be further identified as belonging to a certain case.

These records also contain 1 folder of "Chancery decrees from foreign jurisdictions," which is processed but not indexed. The decrees are copies of chancery decrees obtained from other Virginia localities that were found while processing the Caroline County chancery causes. They originated from the following localities: Richmond City; Spotsylvania County, Essex County, and King George County.

Arrangement

Organized by case, of which each is assigned a unique index number comprised of the latest year found in case and a sequentially increasing 3-digit number assigned by the processor as cases for that year are found. Arranged chronologically.

Arrangement of documents within each folder are generally as follows: Bill, Answer, and Final Decree (if found.)