

A Guide to the Richmond County (Va.) Chancery Causes, 1739-1958 (bulk 1739-1939)

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A Collection in the Library of Virginia
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2006

Author: Greg Crawford

History

Processed by: Greg Crawford

Title Statement

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Author: Greg Crawford

Publication Statement

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Profile Description

Creation: Machine-readable finding aid derived from MARC record, created by Greg Crawford, 19 June 2007

Language Usage: Description is in English

Revision Description

2014-01-23 Converted to schema conforming EAD by dtd2schema.vh.xsl.

Descriptive Summary

Language

English

Collector

Richmond County (Va.) Circuit Court.

Physical Characteristics

61 cubic feet (124 boxes); Digital images.

Location

Library of Virginia

Repository

The Library of Virginia

Administrative Information

Access Restrictions

Patrons are to use digital images of Richmond County Chancery Causes, 1739-1958 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 Richmond County (Va.) in 2006 under the accession number 42487 and under an undated accession.

Processing Information

Richmond County (Va.) Chancery Causes 1739-1958 were processed in two separate groups. The first was field processed in 1999-2000 and the second in 2007 by G. Crawford.

Microfilm was generated from original material processed in the field. Digital images were then created from the microfilm.

Encoded by G. Crawford, 2006; Updated by E. Swain, June 2024.

Preferred Citation

Richmond County (Va.) Chancery Causes, 1739-1958. (Cite style of suit and chancery index no.). Local Government Records Collection, Richmond County Court Records. The Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia, 23219.

Adjunct Descriptive Data

Related Material

Additional Richmond 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."](#)

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

Historical Information

Context of 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: Richmond County may have been named for Richmond borough in Surrey, England, or for Charles Lennox, first duke of Richmond and a son of King Charles II. It was formed from Old Rappahannock County in 1692. The county seat is Warsaw.

Lost Locality Notes: Some volumes were burned and mutilated through unknown causes; in addition, the will books prior to 1699 were missing as early as 1793, and order books for the period 1794-1816 are also missing. Numerous loose records prior to 1781 are missing as well.

Scope and Content

Richmond County (Va.) Chancery Causes, 1739-1958, 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.

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 as follows: Bill, Answer, and Final Decree (if found.)

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