

# A Guide to the Norfolk County (Va.) Criminal/Commonwealth Causes, circa 1797- 1939

Norfolk County (Va.) Criminal/Commonwealth Causes, circa 1797-1939  
circa 1797-1939

---

A Collection in the Library of Virginia 1157473, 1171278, 1171307

Library of Virginia

2008

**Author:** Sam Walters

## History

**Processed by:** Library of Virginia staff

## Title Statement

A Guide to the Norfolk County (Va.) Criminal/Commonwealth Causes, circa 1797-1939

**Subtitle:** Norfolk County (Va.) Criminal/Commonwealth Causes, circa 1797-1939

**Collection:** 1157473, 1171278, 1171307

**Author:** Sam Walters

## Publication Statement

**Date:** © 2008 By The Library of Virginia. All Rights Reserved.

**Publisher:** Library of Virginia

[Conditions of Use](#)

## Profile Description

**Creation:** Machine-readable finding aid derived from being created directly into EAD, created by Sam Walters, 24 June 2008

**Language Usage:** Description is in English

## Revision Description

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

## Descriptive Summary

### Barcode numbers

1157473, 1171278, 1171307

### Language

English

### Collector

Chesapeake (Va.) Circuit Court

### Physical Characteristics

1.13 cu. ft. (3 boxes)

**Location**

Library of Virginia

**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 the city of Chesapeake under the accession number 41922.

**Preferred Citation**

Norfolk County (Va.) Criminal/Commonwealth Causes, circa 1797-1939. Local government records collection, Chesapeake (City)/Norfolk County Court Records. The Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va. 23219.

## Adjunct Descriptive Data

### Related Material

Additional court records for Norfolk County can be found on microfilm at the Library of Virginia. Consult "[A Guide to Virginia County and City Records on Microfilm.](#)"

Additional Norfolk County criminal records may be found at the Chesapeake Courthouse and the Library of Virginia.

## Historical Information

Chesapeake, which was named for the Chesapeake Bay, comprises the former Norfolk County and the former city of South Norfolk. It was formed by court order in 1963 by a merger of these two entities, both of which thereby became extinct.

Norfolk County was probably named by Adam Thoroughgood, a local resident, for his native county in England. It was formed from Lower Norfolk County in 1691, and became extinct in 1963, when it was consolidated with the city of South Norfolk to form the city of Chesapeake. The county seat was Portsmouth.

## Scope and Content

Norfolk County (Va.) Criminal/Commonwealth Causes, circa 1797-1939 are criminal court cases and consist primarily of warrants, summons, indictments, and verdicts handed down by grand juries and other legal authorities in order to prosecute individuals who violated the penal code. These offenses ranged in severity from murder, rape, assault and battery, and larceny to tax evasion and slander. Criminal offenders and victims who appear in cases prior to the abolition of slavery in Virginia in 1865 included both free and enslaved persons.

Warrants were issued by grand juries, judges, and justices of the peace directing law enforcement officials to either arrest and imprison a person suspected of having committed a crime or to cause an individual to appear in court to answer accusations made against them. Peace warrants directing an offender to "keep the peace of the Commonwealth" or to restrain from any violent acts are commonly found in assault and battery cases.

Summonses were used to call a suspected person to appear in court. A summons could also be issued to direct witnesses or victims to come before the court in order to provide evidence or information deemed pertinent to a case.

An indictment is the official, written description of the crime that an accused individual is suspected of committing, which is approved by a grand jury and presented to a court in order to begin legal proceedings. Due to this process, indictments are often referred to as "presentments."

Verdicts are the formal pronouncements made by juries on issues submitted to them by a judge or other law

enforcement official. In the case of a guilty verdict, a judge will sentence the offender. Sentences may include a fine, corporal punishment, and/or imprisonment. Coroners also submitted verdicts such as "death by suicide," "death by natural causes," etc. when determining the cause of a suspicious or sudden death.

## Index Terms

### Corporate Names:

Chesapeake (Va.) Circuit Court

### Subjects:

African Americans -- History  
Assault and battery -- Virginia -- Norfolk County  
Crime -- Virginia -- Norfolk County  
Criminals -- Virginia -- Norfolk County  
Larceny -- Virginia -- Norfolk County  
Libel and slander -- Virginia -- Norfolk County  
Murder -- Virginia -- Norfolk County  
Rape -- Virginia -- Norfolk County  
Slaveholders -- Virginia -- Norfolk County  
Slavery -- Virginia -- Norfolk County  
Slaves -- Virginia -- Norfolk County  
Tax evasion -- Virginia -- Norfolk County

### Geographical Names:

Chesapeake (Va.) -- History  
Norfolk County (Va.) -- History

### Genre and Form Terms:

Indictments -- Virginia -- Norfolk County  
Summons -- Virginia -- Norfolk County  
Verdicts -- Virginia -- Norfolk County  
Warrants (Law) -- Virginia -- Norfolk County

### Added Entry - Corporate Name:

Norfolk County (Va.) Circuit Court