

A Guide to the Northumberland County (Va.) Commonwealth Causes, 1800, 1859-1898, 1909

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2009

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History

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Title Statement

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Revision Description

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Descriptive Summary

Barcode number

0007813844

Language

English

Collector

Northumberland County (Va.) Circuit Court

Physical Characteristics

.45 cu. ft.

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 shipments of court papers from Northumberland County under the accession number 43283.

Preferred Citation

Northumberland County (Va.) Commonwealth Causes, 1800, 1859-1898, 1909. Local government records collection, Northumberland County Court Records. The Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va. 23219.

Adjunct Descriptive Data

Related Material

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

For more information and a listing of lost records localities see [Lost Records research note](#).

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

Historical Information

Northumberland County was named probably for the English county. It was formed about 1645 from the district of Chickacoan, the early-seventeenth-century name for the region between the Potomac and the Rappahannock Rivers. The date of the county's formation is conjectural because the act of assembly creating it is no longer extant, but internal evidence shows that the county was functioning in 1645. The county suffered some losses in a fire in the clerk's office on October 25, 1710. Volumes beginning in 1650 that record deeds, court orders, and wills exist. The county seat is Heathsville.

Scope and Content

Northumberland County (Va.) Commonwealth Causes, 1800, 1859-1898, 1909 are criminal court cases and consist primarily of warrants, summons, and indictments 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 assault and battery to larceny. Some 1860 causes reference enslaved people arrested for being "at large," as well as cases involving enslaved or free 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."

Arrangement

Chronologically by year, but unprocessed and not arranged within years.

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