

A Guide to the Prince William County (Va.) Chancery Causes, 1804-1951 (bulk 1831-1921)

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A Collection in the Library of Virginia Prince William County (Va.) Chancery Causes, 1804-001-1951-001
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Author: G. Crawford

History

Processed by: Field processors and G. Crawford

Title Statement

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Subtitle: Prince William County (Va.) Chancery Causes, 1804-1951 (bulk 1831-1921)

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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, 13 March 2008

Language Usage: Description is in English

Revision Description

2014-01-13 Converted to schema conforming EAD by dtd2schema.vh.xsl.

Descriptive Summary

Chancery Records Index

Prince William County (Va.) Chancery Causes, 1804-001-1951-001

Language

English

Collector

Prince William County (Va.) Circuit Court

Physical Characteristics

Digital images

Physical Characteristics

2.7 cubic feet (6 boxes)

Location

Library of Virginia

Repository

The Library of Virginia

Administrative Information

Access Restrictions

Prince William County (Va.) Chancery Causes, 1804-1951 use digital images found on the [Chancery Records Index](#) available electronically at the website of the Library of Virginia.

Use Restrictions

No restrictions on use.

Acquisition Information

These materials came to the Library of Virginia in transfer of court papers from Prince William County in an undated accession.

Original Records returned to the locality in 2006 by request of the clerk of the Circuit Court.

Processing Information

A portion of this collection was field processed prior to 2006. Additional records were identified, processed and indexed while processing miscellaneous court records in 2005-2010.

Digital images were generated by PTFS and Library of Virginia through the Library of Virginia's Circuit Court Records Preservation Program in 2006 and in 2005-2010.

Encoded by G. Crawford: 2008; updated by E. Swain: April 2024

Preferred Citation

Prince William County (Va.) Chancery Causes, 1804-1951. (Cite style of suit). Local government records collection, Prince William County Court Records. The Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia, 23219.

Adjunct Descriptive Data

Related Material

Additional Prince William County Court Records can be found on microfilm at The Library of Virginia. Consult ["A Guide to Virginia County and City Records on Microfilm."](#)

Prince William County is one of Virginia's Lost Records Localities. Additional Prince William 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.

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

See [The Chancery Records Index](#) to find the chancery records of additional Virginia localities.

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: Prince William County was named for William Augustus, duke of Cumberland and third son of King George II. It was formed from Stafford and King George Counties by a statute adopted in 1730. The county courthouse is in the city of Manassas, Virginia and the county administrative offices are in Woodbridge, Virginia.

Scope and Content

Prince William County (Va.) Chancery Causes, 1804-1951, 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.

Index Terms

Corporate Names:

Prince William County (Va.) Circuit Court.

Subjects:

African Americans--History.

Business enterprises--Virginia--Prince William County.

Debt--Virginia--Prince William County.

Divorce suits--Virginia--Prince William County.

Estates (Law)--Virginia--Prince William County.

Equity--Virginia--Prince William County.

Free African Americans--Virginia--Prince William County.

Land subdivision--Virginia--Prince William County.

Geographical Names:

Prince William County (Va.)--History.

Prince William County (Va.)--Genealogy.

Genre and Form Terms:

Chancery causes--Virginia--Prince William County.

Deeds--Virginia--Prince William County.

Judicial records--Virginia--Prince William County.

Land records--Virginia--Prince William County.

Local government records--Virginia--Prince William County.

Plats--Virginia--Prince William County.

Wills--Virginia--Prince William 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.

Records were scanned with the bills, answers, and decrees at the end of the case file.