

A Guide to the Albemarle County (Va.) Judgment, Giovanni Antonio Giannini (John Antonio Gianinna) vs. Thomas Jefferson, 1798 Jan.

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Albemarle County (Va.) Circuit Court.

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The Library of Virginia

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Related Material

Additional Albemarle 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"](#)

Albemarle County is one of Virginia's Lost Records Localities. Additional Albemarle County Court Records may be found in the Virginia Lost Records Localities Collection at the Library of Virginia. Search the [Lost Records Localities Database](#) found at the Library of Virginia web site.

Historical Information

Albemarle County was named for William Anne Keppel, second earl of Albemarle and governor of the Virginia colony from 1737 to 1754. It was formed from Goochland County in 1744, and part of Louisa County and certain islands in the Fluvanna River, now called the James, were added later.

Giovanni Antonio Giannini (ca. 1747-ca. 1825), his wife Maria Modena Giannini, their 2-year-old daughter Maria Caterina, and Maria's brother, Francis Modena sailed from Livorno (Leghorn) in Italy for Virginia with Italian entrepreneur Filippo Mazzei in September 1773. They arrived near Williamsburg in late November. Giannini worked for Mazzei in Albemarle County for five years, and later worked for Thomas Jefferson.

Thomas Jefferson was born 13 April 1743 in Goochland County, Virginia (now part of Albemarle County, Virginia). He graduated from the College of William and Mary in 1762. A member of the Virginia House of Burgesses from 1769 to 1775, Jefferson represented Virginia in the Continental Congress in 1775 and 1776. He wrote the Declaration of Independence in 1776. Jefferson served as governor of Virginia from 1779 to 1781. After serving another term in Congress from 1783 to 1784, he was appointed minister to France and served from 1784 to 1788. Jefferson served as Secretary of State under President George Washington from 1789 to 1793, and as Vice President under President John Adams from 1797 to 1801. Jefferson succeeded Adams as president, serving from 1801 to 1809. Upon his retirement, Jefferson returned to his home, Monticello, in Albemarle County. He founded the University of Virginia in Charlottesville, Virginia. Jefferson died 4 July 1826 and was buried at Monticello.

Filippo (Philip) Mazzei was born 25 December 1730 in Italy. He attended the Hospital Santa Maria Nuova in Florence and became a doctor. He traveled about Europe, spending time in Italy, Germany, and Turkey, before arriving in London, England, in 1756. While in London he met Thomas Adams (1730-1788), a Virginian conducting business in England. Adams convinced Mazzei to emigrate to Virginia, which the latter did in 1773. Adams, who had also returned to Virginia, introduced Mazzei to the leading citizens of Virginia, including Thomas Jefferson. Impressed with Mazzei, Jefferson gave him land adjoining Monticello. Mazzei undertook the cultivation of grapes for wine-making. The American Revolution interrupted his efforts as Mazzei joined the struggle for independence. Appointed Virginia's agent to Europe to raise funds, Mazzei was

captured and briefly imprisoned. Upon his release he traveled to Europe where he successfully promoted a Franco-American alliance, but unsuccessfully attempted to raise funds. Returning to Virginia, Mazzei again attempted his agricultural experiments. However, he returned to Europe in 1785 to visit friends and relatives and despite attempts, he never returned to Virginia. Mazzei witnessed the French Revolution and worked for the King of Poland as an intelligencer. Mazzei received public office from the king, but left Poland when Russia and Prussia invaded the country. Returning to Italy, Mazzei continued to correspond with Jefferson and James Madison. He died 19 March 1816.

Scope and Content

Albemarle County (Va.) Judgment, Giovanni Antonio Giannini (John Antonio Gianinna) vs. Thomas Jefferson, 1798 Jan. Giannini is suing Jefferson for damages on a contract Giannini signed with Philip Mazzei, in Italy, in 1773. Jefferson is acting as Mazzei's security. Giannini is seeking compensation for return passage to Leghorn (Livorno), Italy, for himself and his family members, as promised in the 1773 contract. The case records contain Giannini's complaint, the contract between Giannini and Mazzei, in Italian, an English translation of the contract, exceptions of attorneys Philip Gooch and Thomas Carr, summonses for John Key; and Thomas Jefferson's plea, by his attorneys. Antonio Giannini, Maria Giannini and Nicolau Matelli were all parties to the contract, each to serve Mazzei for 5 years at the same rate of pay.

Index Terms

Persons:

Adams, Thomas.

Bellini, Carlo (Charles)

Jefferson, Thomas, 1743-1826.

Matelli, Nicholas.

Mazzei, Filippo, 1730-1816.

Family Names:

Giannini family (Giovanni Antonio Gianinna, ca. 1747-ca. 1825)

Corporate Names:

Albemarle County (Va.) Circuit Court.

Geographical Names:

Albemarle County (Va.)--History--18th century.

Subjects:

Indentured servants--Virginia--Albemarle County.

Italian American families--Virginia--Albemarle County.

Genre and Form Terms:

Accounts--Virginia--Albemarle County.

Bail bonds--Virginia--Albemarle County.

Bonds (negotiable instruments)--Virginia--Albemarle County.

Civil actions--Virginia--Albemarle County.

Local government records--Virginia--Albemarle County.

Summonses--Virginia--Albemarle County.