

A Guide to the Powhatan County (Va.) Land Records, 1777-1909

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Descriptive Summary

Barcode numbers

1119390-1119391, 1199346-1199397, 1199402-1199406

Language

English

Collector

Powhatan County (Va.). Circuit Court.

Physical Characteristics

25 cu.ft.

Location

State Records Center - Archives Annex, 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 Powhatan County.

Preferred Citation

Powhatan County (Va.) Land Records, 1777-1909. Local Government Records Collection, Powhatan County Court Records. The Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va. 23219.

Adjunct Descriptive Data

Related Material

Deed Books and Indices to Deeds for Powhatan County can be found on microfilm at the Library of Virginia. Consult ["A Guide to Virginia County and City Records on Microfilm."](#)

Additional Powhatan County Land Records can be found on microfilm at The Library of Virginia web site. Consult ["A Guide to Virginia County and City Records on Microfilm."](#)

Historical Information

Powhatan County was named for the paramount chief of the Powhatan Indians in the tidewater of Virginia in the late sixteenth and early years of the seventeenth century. It was formed from Cumberland County in 1777, and part of Chesterfield County was added in 1850.

Two freeholders were appointed on order of the county court to procession or review the bounds of farms or tracts of land in each precinct in order to renew or replace old landmarks. This was originally a function of the church vestry, but was continued by the court after disestablishment. Persons who walked the boundaries were called processioners.

Scope and Content

Powhatan County (Va.) Land Records, 1777-1909, consist of deeds, processioners' returns, lists of conveyances, and plats.

Powhatan County (Va.) Deeds, 1777-1909, consist of deeds of bargain and sale, deeds of gift, mortgages, deeds of trust, deeds of emancipation, and unrecorded deeds. On presentation to the court, deeds were proved and recorded. If the deed was not witnessed, the grantor acknowledged the deed in open court. Unrecorded deeds were never proved and recorded in deed books. A few of the deeds include plats. Except for a few years early in the eighteenth century, slaves in Virginia were considered personal property and consequently were not usually sold by deed. However, they were often transferred in deeds of gift or were the property listed in mortgages and deeds of trust.

Deeds of bargain and sale are the most commonly recorded deed in which one individual sells property, usually land, but occasionally personal property, to another individual. Such deeds show the names of the grantor and grantee, the residence of both parties, a description of what is being sold, the consideration (or price), the location of the tract of land, the tract's boundaries, and any limitations on the property being sold. The deed was signed by the grantor, and possibly his wife or anyone else having a claim to the property, and by at least two witnesses. Appended to the deed may be a memorandum of livery of seisin, stating that the property has changed hands and that peaceful possession has taken place.

Deeds of gift are often found transferring property, either real or personal, from one individual to another "for love and affection." The degree of kinship, if any, between the grantor and grantee is sometimes stated.

Mortgages and deeds of trust were deeds where one party is indebted to another and transfers or mortgages property to a third party to secure the debt.

Processioners' returns, 1811-1836, record area processioned with geographical landmarks, roads, property

lines noted, the names of the persons present, the date(s) when the processioning occurred, the names of the processioners, and the date that the return was recorded by the county court.

Lists of conveyances, 1779-1911, summarizes real and personal property transactions recorded in the clerk's office. Entries record names of parties involved, form of conveyance, date of conveyance, type of property conveyed, and date conveyance was recorded in clerk's office.

Plats include a map of Powhatan County, undated; plat of Town of Scottsville, circa 1835; and plat of town of Jefferson, undated.

Index Terms

Corporate Names:

Powhatan County (Va.) Circuit Court.

Subjects:

African Americans -- History.

Land subdivision -- Virginia -- Powhatan County.

Land use surveys -- Virginia -- Powhatan County.

Land owners -- Virginia -- Powhatan County.

Personal property. -- Virginia -- Powhatan County.

Slaveholders. -- Virginia -- Powhatan County.

Slavery -- Virginia -- Powhatan County.

Slaves -- Virginia -- Powhatan County.

Geographical Names:

Powhatan County (Va.) -- History.

Genre and Form Terms:

Deeds -- Virginia -- Powhatan County.

Land records -- Virginia -- Powhatan County.

Local government records -- Virginia -- Powhatan County.

Mortgage deeds -- Virginia -- Powhatan County.

Plats -- Virginia -- Powhatan County.