

A Guide to the Culpeper County (Va.) Chancery Causes, 1803-1927 (bulk 1870-1910)

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A Collection in the Library of Virginia
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Author: Greg Crawford

History

Processed by: V. Brooks and Field Processors

Title Statement

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Profile Description

Creation: Machine-readable finding aid derived from MARC record, created by Greg Crawford, 05 April 2010

Language Usage: Description is in English

Revision Description

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

Descriptive Summary

Language

English

Collector

Culpeper County (Va.) Circuit Court.

Physical Characteristics

Digital images; 80.925 cubic feet (179 boxes)

Location

Library of Virginia

Repository

The Library of Virginia

Administrative Information

Access Restrictions

Chancery Causes 1803-1913 use digital images found on the Chancery Records Index available electronically at the website of the Library of Virginia.

Chancery Causes 1914-1927 are processed and indexed information is available on the Chancery Records Index, but digital images are not available at this time. Contact Archives Research Services for availability.

Use Restrictions

There are no restrictions on use.

Acquisition Information

The bulk of these records came to the Library of Virginia in a transfer of court papers from Culpeper County (Va.) in 2010 under the accession number 45147. Additional chancery causes were found among Culpeper County records, possibly transferred in 2008 under the accession number 43770, already stored at the library.

Processing Information

Chancery Causes 1829-1913 were processed by field processors before 2009. Additional chancery causes from 1803-1927 were discovered among Culpeper County records already stored at the library. They were processed by V. Brooks around 2012.

Digital images of Chancery Causes 1829-1913 were generated by PTFS through the Library of Virginia's Circuit Court Records Preservation Program in 2009.

Digital images of Chancery Causes 1803-1912 were generated by Backstage Library Works through the Library of Virginia's Circuit Court Records Preservation Program in 2012.

Encoded by G. Crawford: April 2010; updated by C. Collins: October 2023.

Preferred Citation

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Adjunct Descriptive Data

Related Material

Additional Culpeper 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](#).

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

Historical Information

Context for 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: Culpeper County may have been named for Catherine Culpeper; for her mother, Margaret Lady Culpeper; or for Thomas Culpeper, second baron Culpeper of Thoresway, governor of Virginia from 1677 to 1683; or for their family, which long held proprietary rights in the Northern Neck. It was formed from Orange County in 1749. The county seat is Culpeper.

Lost Locality Note: A significant number of loose records are missing for the period prior to 1840. They were stolen, mutilated, and/or destroyed during the Civil War. Culpeper was the site of several military engagements and experienced widespread pillaging by both Union and Confederate troops. The county courthouse was used as a jail for Confederate prisoners by Union forces.

Scope and Content

Culpeper (Va.) Chancery Causes, 1803-1927, 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.

Several suits involve fertilizer companies, such as the Bradley Fertilizer Co., the Patapsco Guano Co., the Southern Fertilizer Co., the Tygert Allen Fertilizer Co. and the Tygert Fertilizer Co., the Virginia Carolina Chemical Co., the Monumental Chemical Co., and the Zell Guano Co., many of which ended after 1890. The Culpeper National Bank and the Culpeper Savings Bank were directly associated with seven and eight suits, respectively.

Commonly found surnames among the plaintiffs and defendants include Alcocke, Ashby, Baker, Barbour, Beckham, Bell, Bickers, Bowen, Bowers, Brooke, Brown, Browning, Butler, Clatterbuck, Colvin, Compton, Coons, Corbin, Covington, Curtis, Dulaney, Eggborn (also spelled Eggborne), Fant, Farish, Field, Flint, Freeman, Gaines, Gibson, Gordon, Gray, Grayson, Green, Hall, Hansbrough (also spelled Hansborough), Hill, Hitt, Hudson, Hume, Jackson, Jameson (also spelled Jamison), Jeffries, Jennings, Johnson, Jones, Kelly (also spelled Kelley), Latham, Lewis, Lightfoot, Long, Major, Marshall, Miller, Moore, Nalle, Nelson, Obannon, Payne, Pendleton, Perry, Petty, Richards, Rixey, Roberts, Robertson, Ross, Rosson, Scott, Settle, Shackleford (also spelled Shakelford), Slaughter, Smith, Somerville, Stringfellow, Strother, Taylor, Thomas, Thompson, Triplett, Turner, Vaughan (also spelled Vaughn), Ward, Wharton, Wheatley, Williams, Willis, Wood, Yancey, and Young.

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.

Arrangement of documents within each folder are generally as follows: Bill, Answer, and Final Decree (if found.)