

A Guide to the Richmond (Va.) Will Books, 1874-1980

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A Collection in the Library of Virginia 1092881-1092913, 1125057-1125062
Library of Virginia
2017

History

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Title Statement

A Guide to the Richmond (Va.) Will Books, 1874-1980

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Profile Description

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Descriptive Summary

Barcode Numbers

1092881-1092913, 1125057-1125062

Language

English

Collector

Richmond (Va.) Circuit Court

Extent

39 v.

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 records from Richmond (City.)

Preferred Citation

Richmond (Va.) Will Books, 1874-1980. Local government records collection, Richmond (City) Court Records. The Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va. 23219.

Adjunct Descriptive Data

Related Material

Additional Richmond (City) Records can be found on microfilm at the Library of Virginia. Consult [A Guide to Virginia County and City Records on Microfilm](#).

Richmond (Va.) is one of Virginia's Lost Records Localities. Additional Richmond records may be found in the Virginia Lost Records Localities Digital Collection at the Library of Virginia. Search the [Lost Records Localities Digital Collection available at Virginia Memory](#).

Historical Information

Richmond was established in 1742 and in 1779 was designated the capital of Virginia effective 30 April 1780. It was incorporated as a town, although "stiled the City of Richmond," in 1782 and was incorporated as a city in 1842. It served as the capital of the Confederacy from mid-1861 to April 1865. Richmond was enlarged by the annexation of Manchester (or South Richmond) in 1910, and by the addition of Barton Heights, Fairmount, and Highland Park in 1914. The city also annexed land from Henrico County in 1867, 1892, and 1941. A further annexation from Chesterfield County occurred in 1970. Richmond was named by William Byrd (1674-1744), who envisioned the development of a city at the falls of the James River and with the help of William Mayo laid out the town in 1737. The name probably came from the English borough of Richmond upon Thames, which Byrd visited on several occasions.

Hustings Courts were a system of courts unique to eighteenth and nineteenth century Virginia. These courts administered to independent cities, serving as the equivalent to county courts, adjudicating matters of lands and chattels, debts, and contracts. Hustings Courts also had a probate division for the administration of wills. In 1973, Virginia's Hustings Courts and Corporation Courts were reorganized as city Circuit Courts.

During the burning of Richmond on April 3, 1865, Richmond Circuit Court Judge John A. Meredith led efforts to save the circuit court records found at the State Court House. Rescuers successfully removed all the papers that were related to pending suits. Many of the order books, all of the will books and deed books were lost. Records of the superior court and the circuit superior court of law and chancery were also destroyed. Most of the pre-Civil War Hustings Court records survive.

Scope and Content

Richmond (Va.) Will Books, 1874-1980, typically record the name of the testator, list of heirs and the year that the wills were proven in court. These records may also include probate records such as inventories and appraisements.

Index Terms

Corporate Names:

Richmond (Va.) Circuit Court.

Richmond (Va.) Hustings Court.

Subjects:

African Americans--History--Virginia.

Public records--Virginia--Richmond.

Geographical Names:

Richmond (Va.)--History.

Genre and Form Terms:

Local government records--Virginia--Richmond.

Will Books--Virginia--Richmond.

Wills--Virginia--Richmond.

Arrangement

This collection is arranged chronologically by year.

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