

A Guide to the Goochland County (Va.) Judgments (Freedom Suits), 1763

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History

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Title Statement

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Profile Description

Creation: Machine-readable finding aid derived from MARC record, created by Greg Crawford, 01 December 2015

Language Usage: Description is in English

Descriptive Summary

Barcode number

0007635206

Language

English

Collector

Goochland County (Va.) Circuit Court

Physical Characteristics

.05 cu. ft.

Location

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 transfers of court papers from the circuit court of Goochland County.

Preferred Citation

Goochland County (Va.) Judgments (Freedom Suits), 1763. Local government records collection, Goochland County Court Records. The Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia 23219.

Adjunct Descriptive Data

Related Material

Additional Goochland County Court Records are found at the Library of Virginia.

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

Additional freedom suits may be found in the Goochland County Chancery Causes. Search the [the Chancery Records Index](#) found on the Library of Virginia web site. Enter the tilde symbol in the plaintiff surname field.

Historical Information

Slaves sued for emancipation in freedom suits based on the following: they were descendant(s) of a free female ancestor, typically a Native American (Henings Statutes, volume 2, p.170); failure of slaveowner(s) to abide by the 1778 slave nonimportation act (Henings Statutes, volume 9, pp. 471-472); or claimed to have been freed by slaveowner(s) by deed of emancipation or last will and testament (Henings Statutes volume 11, pp. 39-40)

Goochland County was named for Sir William Gooch, lieutenant governor of Virginia from 1727 to 1749. It was formed from Henrico County in 1728. The county seat is Goochland.

Scope and Content

Goochland County (Va.) Judgments (Freedom Suits), 1763, consist of suits initiated by slaves seeking to gain their freedom on the law side of the court. Cases are identified by style of suit consisting of plaintiff and defendant names. Surnames of others involved in a suit, including secondary plaintiffs and defendants, witnesses, deponents and affiants, and family members with surnames different from the plaintiff or defendant are indexed. Also identified are names of slaves and slaveowners found in suit as well as whether slave(s) won their freedom. Predominant documents found in freedom suits include petitions, records of suits, depositions, affidavits, wills, among other items. Information found in documents include slave's argument for freedom, acquisition of slaves by slaveowners, slave ancestry, and relationship between slaves and slaveowners.

The collection consists of a freedom suit titled Jane Banks vs. Judith Leak heard in 1763 May. The plaintiff claimed to be the daughter of a free mulatto named Mary Brooks. She was an indenture servant for the defendant. The defendant refused to release Jane Banks from service.

Judgments (Freedom Suits) are useful when researching local history and genealogical information, particularly for African Americans. They are a valuable source of local, state, social, and legal history and serve as a primary source for understanding a locality's history.

Index Terms

Corporate Names:

Hampton (Va.) Circuit Court.

Subjects:

African Americans -- Virginia.

Free African Americans -- Virginia -- Goochland County.

Slaveholders -- Virginia -- Goochland County.

Slavery -- Virginia -- Goochland County.

Geographical Names:

Goochland County (Va.) -- History.

Goochland County (Va.) -- Genealogy

Genre and Form Terms:

Civil actions -- Virginia -- Goochland County.

Freedom suits -- Virginia -- Goochland County.

Judicial records -- Virginia -- Goochland County.

Local government records -- Virginia -- Goochland County.

Arrangement

Arranged chronologically.