

Royall Family Papers

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1813-1817



Title Statement

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Profile Description

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Revision Description

2020-08-21	Finding aid notes updated to new department standards. juliags
2021-03-18	LM Rozema added missing notes for an unprocessed collection, added FA title and filing titles, added FA date from EAD, and added component with instances previously attached to collection level.

Descriptive Summary

Unit ID

Ms.1988.041

Unit Date

1813-1817

Language

The materials in the collection are in English.

Abstract

Court documents relating the estate of William Royall, of what is today Monroe County, West Virginia, including two bonds signed by his widow, Anne Royall, and a the verdict of a jury called to determine the legitimacy of the will.

Creator

Royall family

Extent

0.1 Cubic Feet 1 folder

Repository

Special Collections and University Archives, Virginia Tech

Administrative Information

Conditions Governing Access

The collection is open to research.

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Source of Acquisition

The Royall Family Papers were purchased by Special Collections and University Archives in 1988.

Processing Information

The processing and description of the Royall Family Papers commenced and was completed in April, 2021.

Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: [identification of item], [box], [folder], Royall Family Papers, Ms1988-041, Special Collections and University Archives, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, Va.

Biographical Note

Anne Newport was born in Baltimore, Maryland, on June 11, 1769. As a child, she lived with her parents in western Pennsylvania until the death of her father and the family's impoverishment led the young Newport and her mother to move to western Virginia. The two women eventually became servants in the home of William Royall, in what is today Mineral County, West Virginia. In November, 1797, Anne Newport and William Royall were married. During the years of her marriage, Anne Royall educated herself and became well read.

William Royall died in 1812. A will, leaving nearly his entire estate to the use of his wife during her widowhood, was contested by relatives. The court originally upheld the will in 1817, but on appeal, a jury annulled the will in 1819.

From 1817 to 1825, Anne Royall toured Alabama and other places in the South and wrote of her travels. After spending some time in Washington, D. C., petitioning for a widow's pension for her late husband's Revolutionary War service, she continued traveling in New England and other northern states for several years, continuing to make notes and take subscriptions for books. She would eventually publish ten books about her travels. Her one novel, *The Tennessean* was published in 1827. Royall's unsentimental style, her willingness to expose corruption, and her controversial views on issues of the day earned her some powerful enemies. She was convicted in Washington, D. C. on the charge of being a "public nuisance, a common brawler and a common scold" and fined \$10 in 1829. Royall published two Washington newspapers, *Paul Pry* (1831-1836) and *The Huntress* (1836-1854), both devoted to exposing fraud and corruption. She has been called the first professional woman journalist in the United States.

Anne Royall died on October 1, 1854, and was buried in Congressional Cemetery, Washington, D. C.

Scope and Content

This collection contains three legal documents relating to the estate of William Royall, a resident of what is now Monroe County, West Virginia. The first of these documents is an 1813 bond signed by Anne Royall as executrix of her late husband's estate, binding her to complete an inventory and appraisal of the estate. The bond is also signed by John Handley, Tomson Caperton, John Daugherty, and Valentine Miller. A note appended by the Monroe County clerk states that no inventory appeared to have ever been filed. Also

included is a copy of the 1817 verdict reached by a jury called to determine the legitimacy of William Royall's will. The collection also contains what appears to be an 1817 bond signed by Anne Royall and Newton Gardner regarding the seizure of an enslaved woman named Lucinda to satisfy a court ruling against Royall.

Keywords

Botetourt County (Va.)

Local/Regional History and Appalachian South

Women -- History

Rights Statement for Archival Description

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Description of Subordinate Components

Papers

Unit Date 1813-1817

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