

# A Guide to the Highland County (Va.) Commonwealth Causes, 1852-1867

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A Collection in the Library of Virginia 0007281802

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## History

**Processed by:** J Porter, Library of Virginia staff

## Title Statement

A Guide to the Highland County (Va.) Commonwealth Causes, 1852-1867

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**Collection:** 0007281802

**Author:** J Porter

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## Profile Description

**Creation:** Created directly into EAD, by J Porter, 16 March 2012

**Language Usage:** Description is in English

## Revision Description

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

## Descriptive Summary

### Barcode number

0007281802

### Language

English

### Collector

Highland County (Va.) Circuit Court.

### Physical Characteristics

.45 cu. ft. (1 box)

### Location

Library of Virginia

**Repository**

The Library of Virginia

## Administrative Information

**Access Restrictions**

There are no restrictions. Collection is unprocessed but open for research.

**Use Restrictions**

There are no restrictions.

**Acquisition Information**

These items came to the Library of Virginia in shipments of court papers from Highland County.

**Preferred Citation**

Highland County (Va.) Commonwealth Causes, 1852-1867. Local government records collection, Highland County Court Records. The Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va. 23219.

## Adjunct Descriptive Data

### Related Material

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

## Historical Information

Highland County was named for its mountainous terrain. It was formed from Bath and Pendleton (West Virginia) Counties in 1847. Its area is 416 square miles, and the county seat is Monterey.

## Scope and Content

Highland county (Va.) Commonwealth Causes, 1852-1867, are criminal court cases and consist primarily of warrants, summons, and indictments handed down by grand juries and other legal authorities in order to prosecute individuals who violated the penal code. These offenses ranged in severity from assault and battery to larceny to murder.

Warrants were issued by grand juries, judges, and justices of the peace directing law enforcement officials to either arrest and imprison a person suspected of having committed a crime or to cause an individual to appear in court to answer accusations made against them. Peace warrants directing an offender to "keep the peace of the Commonwealth" or to restrain from any violent acts are commonly found in assault and battery cases.

Summonses were used to call a suspected person to appear in court. A summons could also be issued to direct witnesses or victims to come before the court in order to provide evidence or information deemed pertinent to a case.

An indictment is the official, written description of the crime that an accused individual is suspected of committing, which is approved by a grand jury and presented to a court in order to begin legal proceedings. Due to this process, indictments are often referred to as "presentments."

## Index Terms

### Corporate Names:

Highland County (Va.) Circuit Court.

### Subjects:

African Americans--History.

Assault and battery--Virginia--Highland County.

Crime--Virginia--Highland County.

Criminals--Virginia--Highland County.  
Larceny--Virginia--Highland County.  
Libel and slander--Virginia--Highland County.  
Murder--Virginia--Highland County.  
Rape--Virginia--Highland County.  
Tax evasion--Virginia--Highland County.  
Women--History.

## **Geographical Names:**

Highland County (Va.)--History.

## **Genre and Form Terms:**

Indictments--Virginia--Highland County.  
Local government records--Virginia--Highland County.  
Summons--Virginia--Highland County.  
Verdicts--Virginia--Highland County.  
Warrants (Law)--Virginia--Highland County.

## **Selected Commonwealth Causes of Interest**

### **1856 Sep: Commonwealth vs. Sam (slave)**

#### **Scope and Content**

Sam, was tried, convicted and hanged for the murder of Mr. Francis W. Sheridan. This case highlights conspiracy theories regarding the death of Sheridan, intrigue and hearsay from various members of the community and Mr. Sheridan's wife and stepdaughter.

### **1855 Mar: Commonwealth vs. John Botkin Sr.**

#### **Scope and Content**

This case involves the willful intent to interrupt and disturb a religious assembly that met for public worship of God. The jury found Mr. Botkin guilty and fined him one cent.

### **1866 Jul: Commonwealth vs. Alexander McCray**

#### **Scope and Content**

This case involves the alleged theft of a bay horse by a Mr. Alexander McCray. The uniqueness of this case involves the correspondence from U.S. military personnel and the Freedmen's Bureau to the County Prosecutor explaining why the county had no standing in this case, due in a large part to the fact that the bay horse in question was actually the property of the U.S. military and not the property of the complainant Stephen J. Reynolds.