

A Guide to the York County (Va.) Chancery Causes, 1768-1891

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1768-1891

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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 G. Crawford, 28 March 2014

Language Usage: Description is in English

Descriptive Summary

Language

English

Collector

York County (Va.) Circuit Court.

Physical Characteristics

7.50 cu.ft. (16 boxes).

Location

Library of Virginia

Administrative Information

Access Restrictions

Chancery Causes, 1768-1891, **are not digitized by indexed information can be found** on the [Chancery Records Index](#) available electronically at the website of the Library of Virginia.

There are no restrictions.

Use Restrictions

There are no restrictions.

Acquisition Information

These records came to the Library of Virginia in a transfer of court papers from York County (Va.) under an undated accession.

Processing Information

These records were processed in 2008-2009.

Encoded by G. Crawford: 2009; Updated by E. Swain: December 2024.

Preferred Citation

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Adjunct Descriptive Data

Related Material

Additional York 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."](#)

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

Biographical Information

Context of 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: York County originally was named Charles River County, for King Charles I, and was one of the eight shires, or counties, first enumerated in 1634. A record of 7 January 1634 employs the name York County, and a statute of 1643 officially changed the name to York County, probably in honor of James, duke of York, the second son of King Charles I, and later King James II. The county seat is Yorktown.

Lost Locality Notes: Most pre-Revolutionary War-era loose records are missing. Volumes that record deeds, court orders, and wills exist because county court clerks removed the volumes from the courthouse for safekeeping during the Revolutionary War and Civil War.

Scope and Content

York County (Va.) Chancery Causes, 1768-1891, 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.

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 as follows: Bill, Answer, and Final Decree (if found).

