

A Guide to the Lynchburg (Va.) Chancery Causes, 1805-1964

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Descriptive Summary

Language

English

Collector

Lynchburg (Va.) Circuit Court.

Physical Characteristics

301.70 cu. ft. (666 boxes)

Location

Library of Virginia

Repository

The Library of Virginia

Administrative Information

Access Restrictions

Lynchburg Chancery Causes, 1805-1869, use digital images found on the [Chancery Records Index](#) available electronically at the website of the Library of Virginia.

Lynchburg Chancery Causes, 1870-1945 are indexed but not scanned. Contact Archives Research Services for availability.

Additional Lynchburg Chancery Causes, 1805-1964 are unprocessed. Contact Archives Research Services for availability.

Use Restrictions

There are no restrictions.

Acquisition Information

These items came to the Library of Virginia in a transfer of court papers from Lynchburg under an undated accession.

Processing Information

Lynchburg Chancery Causes were processed by Library of Virginia staff in two batches, in 2007 and 2017. Additional chancery causes are unprocessed.

Digital images for Lynchburg Chancery Causes 1805-1829 were generated by Backstage Library Works through the Library of Virginia's Circuit Court Records Preservation Program in 2019.

Digital images for Lynchburg Chancery Causes 1830-1869 were generated by Backstage Library Works through the Library of Virginia's Circuit Court Records Preservation Program in 2023.

The suit of Exrs. of Joseph Pettyjohn vs. Exr. of Seth Woodroof was previously described separately. Records are now described together.

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Adjunct Descriptive Data

Related Material

Additional Lynchburg 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."](#)

See also: ["A Guide to the William Cobbs Letters, 1827-1841."](#) and ["A Guide to the Robert Lewis Cobbs Letters, 1817."](#) Exhibits in the Lynchburg Chancery Cause 1848-002.

Historical 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.

Types of Courts: The Superior Courts of Chancery were created in 1802 to expedite the hearing of chancery suits. Each court heard cases from the localities which constituted its chancery district. The court met at one location in the district and its records were kept in that one location. The Superior Courts of Chancery were abolished in 1831.

The Superior Court of Chancery for the Lynchburg District existed between 1814 and 1831. The district consisted of the following localities: Amherst County, Bedford County, Campbell County, Franklin County, Henry County, Patrick County, Pittsylvania County, and the city of Lynchburg.

Locality History: Lynchburg was named for John Lynch, the owner of the original town site. It was established in 1786, was incorporated as a town in 1805, and became a city in 1852. Parts of Campbell and Bedford Counties were annexed to the city in 1976.

Scope and Content

Lynchburg (Va.) Chancery Causes, 1805-1964, 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.

The collection includes chancery causes heard in the Superior Court of Chancery for the Lynchburg District seated in the city of Lynchburg between 1814 and 1831. The district consisted of the following localities: Amherst County, Bedford County, Campbell County, Franklin County, Henry County, Patrick County, Pittsylvania County, and the city of Lynchburg. Suits that originated in these localities are found in this collection.

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

Selected Suits of Interest

Causes of Interest are identified by local records archivists during processing and indexing. These causes are generally selected based upon guiding principles of having historical, genealogical or sensational significance; however, determining what is "of interest" is subjective, and the individual perspective and experience of the describing archivist will affect the material identified.

Contract Suits about the Health of Enslaved People

Scope and Content

Multiple plaintiffs entered their suit into the Chancery Court alleging contract fraud surrounding the health of an enslaved person at the time of either hiring or purchase. The plaintiffs alleged the defendants had not made them aware of medical issues the enslaved person had; these medical issues ranged from sexually transmitted infections, contagious diseases, and disabilities. See suits 1820-024, 1821-041, 1821-046, 1823-013, 1825-001, 1827-077, 1827-094, 1828-015, 1830-037, and 1832-009.

Chancery Suits with Genealogical Information of Enslaved People

Scope and Content

A number of suits contain information regarding familial relationships between enslaved people. See suits 1817-019, 1818-036, 1820-007, 1820-039, 1821-043, 1821-053, 1821-072, 1822-052, 1825-035, 1825-078, 1826-066, 1826-069.

1814-001: Petition of Edmund Martin by c vs Lt. Joseph Barnett

Scope and Content

Edmund Martin was underage when he enlisted in the military during the War of 1812. His parents petitioned the court to prevent him from being impressed back into service.

1815-002: Peter Detto vs Heirs of Caleb Tait, etc.

Scope and Content

This contract dispute includes correspondence from Huntsville, AL by Waddy Tate to his uncle Caleb in Lynchburg. The letter referenced Andrew Jackson and the Battle of Horseshoe Bend.

1815-004: John Street vs Adms. of Champion Marable and 1815-009: Shadrack Corder by c vs Nathaniel Crenshaw, etc.

Scope and Content

John Street and Shadrack Corder both alleged in their respective suits that the defendants in both causes took advantage of their weakness for cards and alcohol to get them into debt.

1816-008: Anselm Clarkson vs Exr. of James Franklin

Scope and Content

Anselm Clarkson agreed to marry Polly Sullivan, the illegitimate daughter of James Franklin, if Franklin agreed to pay him the same sum of money he paid Benjamin Taliaferro who agreed to marry Franklin's other illegitimate daughter, Mildred (Milly) Taylor. Franklin failed to pay prior to his death the full amount owed Clarkson. The executor of Franklin's estate refused to pay Clarkson the amount owed. Clarkson sued over the failure to abide by the marriage contract. SEE ALSO: Chancery Cause 1817-028.

1817-013: Thomas Ward vs Meredith Lambeth, etc.

Scope and Content

A contract suit which involved the transportation of a family of enslaved people from Richmond to Lynchburg. One of the enslaved men, Dixon, attempted to escape. He was captured in Williamsburg.

1817-028: Jeremiah Franklin vs. Sally Franklin

Scope and Content

Jeremiah Franklin promised to marry Sally Franklin, the sister of James Franklin. In return Jeremiah could live on James Franklin's plantation without paying rent. Also, Jeremiah promised that after marriage he would not remove his family (James' sister and James Franklin's illegitimate daughters - Polly Sullivan and Mildred Taylor - whom James' sister was raising) and would not move to North Carolina which Jeremiah previously wanted to do. Twenty years later, James Franklin died. Sally Franklin introduced a suit in Amherst County against Jeremiah for ownership of the property given to him by James Franklin. SEE ALSO: Chancery Cause 1816-008.

1818-005: Paulus A.E. Irving vs. Samuel Garland, etc.

Scope and Content

Samuel Garland loaned money to Paulus Irving in 1814, around the time Irving was called to serve in the militia during the War of 1812. Irving claimed he had not only paid back the loan, but had overpaid and sued for reimbursement. Referenced in the suit was Irving's service in the War of 1812 in a letter which described troop movements in Norfolk.

1818-016: Nathan Greer vs. Daniel Brown, etc.

Scope and Content

This debt suit was filed by Nathan Greer, who was accused by Daniel Brown of "most cruelly" beating Fanny, an enslaved woman. Fanny never recovered from her injuries and died about a year later. An affidavit and depositions include more details of the attack.

1818-029: Jeremiah Gray vs. Elizabeth Gray

Scope and Content

Jeremiah Gray was Elizabeth Gray's brother-in-law, her husband's brother. Jeremiah accused Elizabeth of selling and lending enslaved people out of state. The enslaved people were part of a dower she had received from her husband's estate after his death. Jeremiah claimed Elizabeth had violated an act of assembly passed in 1785 by selling the enslaved people out of state. Jeremiah also argued that Elizabeth, at age 80, was too old to manage his brother's estate and allowed it to go to waste. The cause includes depositions defending Elizabeth's ability to manage the estate claiming she regularly came to the assistance of women in difficult cases. One deponent said that Elizabeth married Adin because she owed him 100 pounds for building a mill. She could not repay the debt so she agreed to marry him.

1819-007: Josiah P. Moon vs. Richard North, etc.

Scope and Content

In this debt suit, the plaintiff Josiah P. Moon served in the militia during the War of 1812. He referenced the British attack on Washington, D.C., during the War of 1812, the British threat to Richmond and how the governor called out the militia to protect the city.

1819-010: Edmund Penn vs. Boyd Miller, survpartner

Scope and Content

Edmund Penn borrowed money from William Brown and Company to pay his tuition at Princeton College. He was delinquent in repaying his college loans.

1819-012: Thomas Philips vs. Sarah Haynes (free), etc.

Scope and Content

The defendants were "free" African Americans emancipated by the will of Thomas Haynes of Bedford County: Sarah, Rachel, Harry, Peter, Ned, George, Isbell, Hannah, Milly, Flanders, Daniel, Anna, Washington, Pleasant, Polly, Caleb, Dinah, James, and Braxton. The cause stems from an ejectment suit the defendants won against the plaintiff in the Superior Court of Law of Bedford County in 1815. Thomas Philips wanted the Superior Court of Chancery in Lynchburg to overturn the Bedford County court's decision. See also Bedford County Chancery Cause 1811-012: Sarah (enslaved) etc. vs. Exr. of Thomas Haynes, a freedom suit.

1819-015: Rev. Alexander Hay vs. John Ragland, Sr., etc. and Richard C. Moore, etc. vs. John Ragland, Sr.

Scope and Content

Evan Ragland willed both land and enslaved people to William and Mary College and the Protestant Episcopal Church of Virginia; the property willed to both institutions would be used to fund a trust for the support of ministers of the Protestant Episcopal Church. Ragland's family contested the will. They refused to relinquish the enslaved people and land to Ragland's executor. Richard Moore, a bishop in the Protestant Church, sued to gain control of the property and enslaved people. His complaint included background information on the Protestant Episcopal Church.

1820-014: Children of Wiatt Smith vs. James Smith

Scope and Content

The suit involved a dispute over the transfer by deed of enslaved people. Wiatt schemed to defraud James Smith, his brother, of enslaved people and money.

1820-023: Isabella Wooster vs. Alexander Irvine etc.

Scope and Content

Isabella Wooster was an elderly, unmarried woman with no children. She gave control of her entire estate to Alexander Irvine, her nephew, and in return he would provide her with financial support. Instead, Irvine abused her, forcing her to flee from her home and to rely on the charity of her neighbors. Irvine accused Thomas Stewart, one of the trustees of Wooster's property, of poisoning Wooster's mind against Irvine for his own benefit.

1820-058: Lynchburg Toll Bridge Co. vs. William Mitchell, trst., etc.

Scope and Content

The Lynchburg Toll Bridge Company wanted the court to issue an injunction against the defendants to prevent them from building a free bridge across the James River. SEE ALSO: Chancery Cause 1823-011.

1820-059: Richard Pollard vs. Joseph Mozby (free)

Scope and Content

Joseph Mozby was a "free" African American who owned property next to the Richard Pollard and built a hog house on it. Pollard claimed the fire from Mozby's chimney posed a danger to his property.

1821-009: Sarah Armistead by etc. vs. William Armistead

Scope and Content

William and Sarah Armistead were unhappily married and each accused the other of mistreatment. Numerous depositions were included by people who describe the Armistead's marriage as well as the activities of the people enslaved by the Armistead's.

1821-024: Robert C. Scott vs. John Garnier, etc.

Scope and Content

John Garnier failed to pay his share of the cost in purchasing a "stand of colors" for the cavalry troop in Campbell County. Garnier was of French nationality and believed to have returned to France.

1821-033: Charles Evans, etc. vs. Lewis B. Allen

Scope and Content

Charles Evans and the other plaintiffs were enslaved by Lewis B. Allen. They argued they were free because their ancestor, Jane Gibson, was Native American. The plaintiffs entered genealogical charts as exhibits. Also included were court documents from freedom suits initiated by Evans family members heard in other courts such as the Superior Court of Chancery - Richmond District and District Court of Richmond City.

1822-018: Edward H. Carter, etc. vs. Hill Carter, etc.

Scope and Content

Cause involved the division of nearly one hundred enslaved people that were part of a trust fund set up by Edward Carter and William Fauntleroy for their descendants. The wills of Edward Carter and William Fauntleroy were used as exhibits. Both men requested the emancipation of some of the enslaved people. The cause also included the division of enslaved people which listed names, values, and the member of the Carter family that received them. One of the defendants, Otho Carter, was the brother of the plaintiffs and was identified as being disabled since infancy.

1823-021: Exr. of Vernon Metcalfs. Robert Morriss etc.

Scope and Content

In this estate dispute, references were made to the health conditions of several enslaved people, namely that they suffered from syphilis which negatively impacted the value the enslavers placed upon them. Included as an exhibit was Vernon Metcalf's will, in which he expressed his repugnance for slavery despite being an enslaver himself. He dictated in his will his desire for the enslaved families to be kept together after his death, with the exception of Doll, an enslaved woman he wanted sold because she attempted to kill him at least four times.

1823-039: John Alcock, etc. vs. Exrs. of William Cabell, the elder

Scope and Content

The cause involved the division of enslaved people who were all descendants of an enslaved woman named Daphney. The cause listed the names of Daphney's descendants, their birth dates, and to whom they were sold.

1823-042: Nelson Davis vs. Jonathan Brooks Dawson

Scope and Content

Nelson Davis and Jonathan Brooks Dawson were the sons of Christopher Dawson, although Davis might have been an illegitimate child by one of Christopher Dawson's enslaved women. Nelson Davis claimed their father left a will in which he gave him a sixteen year old enslaved person and other property. Jonathan Dawson denied his father ever wrote a will.

1822-067: Thomas Rudd vs. Stephen Cook and Co. etc.

Scope and Content

Stephen Cook and Co. contracted with John Hancock to sell all of their stock of goods in their Lynchburg

store at the price the business paid for the goods in other cities. One of the major issues in the suit was to determine the value of the goods according to the different currencies of Virginia and Philadelphia.

1823-068: Joel Estes vs. Thomas Rawling, etc.

Scope and Content

The dispute was over the sale of lots for a new town called Jackson on the Dan River in Rockingham County, NC. Joel Estes challenged the defendants' claim concerning the navigability of the Dan River south of Danville. Numerous references were made to the Dan River and comparing navigation on the river to other rivers in the region.

1824-001: John H. Smith vs. John Labby, etc.

Scope and Content

The cause involved an enslaved man named Squire Lacy, a waterman known for his ability to navigate the James River. John H. Smith hired Squire from the defendants. Smith accused them of fraud. The defendants claimed Lacy was healthy at the time of sale but the Smith said Lacy suffered from asthma and died from it a few months later. The defendants claimed Smith hired out Squire to remove rocks from the James River for the purpose of paving the Main Street of Lynchburg and while working in inclement weather, Lacy became sick and died.

1824-012: Peachy Cash vs. George Campbell

Scope and Content

Peachy Cash hired an enslaved man from George Campbell. Cash claimed he had received permission from Campbell to punish the enslaved man with twenty-four lashes for killing Cash's dog. Campbell claimed he gave no such permission and filed a suit against Cash for the "trespass"; Cash retaliated by filing a counter-suit.

1824-020: Admr. of Francis Miller vs. Exrs. of John Depriest

Scope and Content

Francis Miller and John Depriest were business partners who purchased Patey, an enslaved child and her two children. John Depriest fled Virginia after stabbing the sheriff of Campbell County. Both partners later passed and the administrator of Francis Miller's estate wanted to settle the division of their partnership, including Patey, the children she had at the time the partners enslaved her and the children she had after.

1824-040: Joel Thacker vs. Jemima Jenkins, etc. and James Bruce vs. Joel Thacker, etc.

Scope and Content

In this estate suit, reference was made to a coroner's inquisition in which Joel Thacker was accused of the murder of an enslaved female given to the defendant by Thacker's father. Thacker fled the state and filed his cause from Kentucky. The defendant further claimed that the coroner was cooperating with Thacker in pursuing the cause against the defendant. The coroner would receive half the proceeds Thacker would receive from winning the cause. James Bruce stated that the coroner's inquest disappeared from the clerk's office.

1824-056: Mark Anthony vs. James C. Moorman, etc.

Scope and Content

Mark Anthony accused the defendants of being in violation of a Campbell County court order forbidding them from building a dam for their grist mill. The defendants built the dam and the resulting high water behind the dam flooded an important road, used by the citizens of Bedford, Franklin, Patrick, Pittsylvania, and Henry counties.

1824-061: Morry Clark vs. Thomas A. Holcombe, etc.

Scope and Content

Morry Clark agreed to purchase an enslaved person suffering from venereal disease from the defendants on an installment plan. If the enslaved person died before Clark made the final payment, the defendants agreed to accept the loss. According to Clark, one of the defendants agreed to cover the medical expenses

for treatment of the enslaved person, but failed to do so, and Clark had to pay.

1824-062: Sterling Claiborne vs. Jabez Camden, etc. and Jabez Camden vs. Sterling Claiborne

Scope and Content

Cause involves the value of enslaved people. Correspondence written by Thomas Aldridge to Sterling Claiborne used as an exhibit; Aldridge informed Claiborne that he used an enslaved boy as a spy to monitor the movements of other enslaved people.

1825-013: Exrs. of James Callaway vs. Exr. of Andrew Donald, etc.

Scope and Content

Callaway and Donald family were merchants. Callaway shipped deer skins to William Donald of Scotland to sell in England, Scotland, and Ireland in 1775. The Revolutionary War began; therefore, Callaway did not learn of the state of the transaction until years later. Callaway's estate is suing for the money owed to Callaway from the transaction plus interest.

1825-026: Bennett Hudson vs. Thomas Aldridge etc.

Scope and Content

James Sands attempted to rape the ten-year-old daughter of Bennett Hudson. Hudson brought charges against Sands for the assault. Sands, his brother, and Aldridge not only filed judgement suits against Hudson, but also intimidated him into declaring the charges false and to give them money as reparations. Hudson filed the chancery suit to have the judgement suits dismissed.

1825-027: Polly Davidson alias Polly Wright, etc. vs. Thomas P. Wright, etc. and Prior Wright, etc. vs. Admr. of Thomas P. Wright alias Thomas Godsey, etc.

Scope and Content

The suit involved a dispute over the estate of Robert Wright, a "free man of color," who died at age 38. He owned a substantial amount of property (including enslaved people) in Campbell County which he inherited from Thomas Wright, his former enslaver and father. Polly Davidson was a white woman who lived with Robert Wright as his wife. They had a child named Martha. Robert also had an infant son named Thomas from a previous marriage with a white woman named Mary Godsey. The family of Thomas Wright argued that Robert was never freed by their father; therefore, he did not have legal right to the property. The cause includes numerous depositions regarding Robert and Polly's relationship, the will of Thomas Wright, and his divorce from Mary Godsey.

1825-055: Widow of Charles S. Johnston, etc. vs. Edward B. Victor, etc.

Scope and Content

The cause was centered on the efforts of Lucy Johnston, the widow of Charles S. Johnston, to recover enslaved people, who she claimed were improperly sold. Peggy, an enslaved woman, had fled to Leesburg or Fredericksburg and lived as a "free person" for about five years. She was found and returned to her enslaver. The cause references local trafficking of enslaved people.

1827-001: William Robertson and wife vs. Exr. of Robert Burton, etc. and Thomas Bowles and wife, etc. vs. Exr. of Robert Burton, etc.

Scope and Content

Central question in this cause had to do with the status of two enslaved women, Jenetta and Myrtilla, who were part of Burton's estate. Jenetta was the wife of Thomas Bowles, a "free" African-American man. The executor interpreted Burton's will to mean the enslaved women could hire themselves out to whomever they chose in order to support themselves until they married a "free" person. They would then receive a substantial legacy from Burton's estate. Moreover, they were to be emancipated as soon as the laws of the Commonwealth permitted it. The heirs of Burton did not agree with the executor's interpretation of

Burton's will and contested the terms in court.

1827-037: John N. Rose vs. Hill Carter, etc.

Scope and Content

John N. Rose sued the Carter family to recover wages owed to him for building an addition to the Carter home on Walnut Grove plantation in Nelson County in 1795. He built it for John Champe Carter and his wife Apphia. The reason the Carters gave for not paying Rose was that he never finished building the addition. Rose learned that the Carter family planned to auction eighty-eight enslaved people with proceeds from the sale to be divided among Carter family members. Rose wanted the court to have the Carters pay him what he was owed from the proceeds they receive from the sell of the enslaved people. Cause includes an inventory of enslaved people that list their names, age, and value. Unusual reference found in the deposition of Robert S. Rose. He was asked by the John Rose if he knew Frank Floyd, who was once enslaved by Robert's father, if so, did Robert know Floyd's ancestry. Robert Rose said Frank was the son of Sarah Floyd who was the daughter of Betsey Dean, a mixed-race woman. Betsey Dean's mother was black and her father was a white Englishman, an indentured servant to the deponent's grandfather. Sarah married a white man named Mitchel Floyd who died during the Revolutionary War.

Louisa Cockrane alias Lavisia Cockrane vs. William Graves, etc.

Scope and Content

Louisa Cockrane was a "free" woman of color, who was suing to protect property she inherited from Richard Bennett Sr.

1827-071: John Ward, Jr., etc. vs. Patsey Barbour, etc.

Scope and Content

John Ward built a toll bridge which crossed the Staunton River in 1816. Months after its completion, but bridge was destroyed due to high water. Ward was too elderly to repair the bridge, so contracted the land and rights to John Lynch and Patsey Barbour. John Ward Jr. alleged they were not abiding by the contract and allowing the Ward's to cross the bridge without paying the tolls.

1828-007: James Brownlee and wife vs. William Harlow, etc.

Scope and Content

James Brownlee was married to Nathaniel Harlow's daughter Susannah. He accused the defendants of denying his wife her fair share of the estate left to her in her father's will. The defendants' response was that Susannah was denied her portion of the estate because of the bad character of her and her husband. They questioned the legitimacy of Susannah's marriage to Brownlee. At the time of their marriage, she was already married to James West. James West was the son of an enslaved woman. In the depositions, he was accused of murdering his first wife, being a drunkard, and operating a brothel out of his house in Waynesboro.

1828-057: William Dickinson, Sr., etc. vs. Isaac Skillman, etc.

Scope and Content

William Dickinson purchased Randal/Randolph, an enslaved blacksmith, from Isaac Skillman. Randal was hired out to work at an iron works in Botetourt County where other enslaved people were forced to labor. Randal was convicted of stealing and hung. Dickinson filed an injunction against Skillman, claiming he should not have to pay the full amount Randal had been valued at because of his bad character.

1832-007: Elizabeth Shoemaker vs. Zedekiah Shoemaker

Scope and Content

Elizabeth Shoemaker filed for separate maintenance from Zedekiah Shoemaker, her husband. Zedekiah aged 77, was a widower with eleven adult children. He was a lonely and wanted someone to spend his last days on earth with. Zedekiah claimed that within a few weeks of their marriage he discovered her in the act of adultery in his bed. He also accused his wife and her "paramour" of assisting one of the people he enslaved in escaping. The suit includes an affidavit given by one of Zedekiah's sons describing how he found Elizabeth, her lover, and the enslaved person. Elizabeth demanded financial support from Zedekiah. She accused him of adultery with an enslaved woman.

1834-026: William Patrick Davis vs. Mahlon Cadwallader

Scope and Content

William Patrick Davis was a "free person of color," apprenticed to Mahlon Cadwallader. Cadwallader planned to move to Indiana and take Davis with him. With his mother acting as his agent because he was underage, Davis sued to have the court void his apprenticeship to Cadwallader. Davis won his suit and he and his siblings were apprenticed to another family.

1848-004: Henry B. Richards vs. Henry Barnes Richards

Scope and Content

Henry B. Richards, the guardian of Henry Barnes Richards, his young son, wished to move to New York for his son's education. As New York was a free state, Henry B. Richards asked the court for permission to sell the enslaved people who were legally enslaved by Henry Barnes Richards to fund the move and his education.

1855-033: Mingo (free) etc. vs. Exr. of John Paup etc.

Scope and Content

The plaintiffs were previously enslaved by William Walker and emancipated in his will. However, they were held in bondage. The plaintiffs won freedom in 1809 in the Superior Court of Chancery, Richmond District and sued for compensation for the time they were illegally held.

1857-026: Admr. of Thomas Dix vs. Admr. of Henry Lyne

Scope and Content

Described in this debt suit, Fanny O'Connor was enslaved by Henry Lyne, along with her children. Fanny was purportedly Lyne's illegitimate daughter and he emancipated Fanny and her children in his will. Their emancipation was to take place shortly after the General Assembly passed an act ordering all former enslaved people emancipated after May 1, 1806 to leave the Commonwealth. To avoid removing Fanny and her children from the state, the executor kept them on Lyne's estate. When Lyne's estate was inventoried, Fanny and her children were appraised as enslaved property despite the fact they were not. Also, Fanny was permitted to go at large in the community as a "free person" which upset people in the community. In response, the executor removed Fanny and her children from the state, so that they could enjoy their freedom.

1904-065: Exrs. of Joseph Pettyjohn vs Exr. of Seth Woodroof

Scope and Content

This estate suit concerned a dispute among the heirs of William Pettyjohn, who died in 1822. The case included testimony given in the 1880s about the price of enslaved people purchased in the 1830s as well as information about the individual people Woodruff enslaved.