

# A Guide to the James City County (Va.)/Williamsburg (Va.) Wills, 1862-1959 (bulk 1862-1930)

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A Collection in the Library of Virginia 1153851-1153855

Library of Virginia

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**Author:** Louise Jones

## History

**Processed by:** Library of Virginia staff

## Title Statement

A Guide to the James City County (Va.)/Williamsburg (Va.) Wills, 1862-1959 (bulk 1862-1930)

**Subtitle:** James City County (Va.)/Williamsburg (Va.) Wills, 1862-1959 (bulk 1862-1930)

**Collection:** 1153851-1153855

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## Publication Statement

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## Profile Description

**Creation:** Machine-readable finding aid derived from being created directly into EAD, created by Louise Jones, 11 December 2007

**Language Usage:** Description is in English

## Revision Description

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

## Descriptive Summary

### Barcode numbers

1153851-1153855

### Language

English

### Collector

James City County (Va.)/Williamsburg (Va.) Circuit Court

### Physical Characteristics

5 cu. ft. (5 boxes)

**Location**

State Records Center - Archives Annex, 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 shipments of court papers from James City County (Va.)/Williamsburg (Va.)

**Preferred Citation**

James City County (Va.)/Williamsburg (Va.) Wills, 1862-1959 (bulk 1862-1930). Local Government Records Collection, James City County (Va.)/Williamsburg (Va.) Court Records. The Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va. 23291.

## Adjunct Descriptive Data

### Related Material

Additional James City County (Va.)/Williamsburg (Va.) Court Records can be found on microfilm in the Library of Virginia. Consult ["A Guide to Virginia County and City Records on Microfilm."](#)

See the [Lost Records Localities Digital Collection](#) available at Virginia Memory.

For more information and a listing of lost records localities see [Lost Records research note](#).

## Historical Information

James City County was named for James I. It was one of the eight shires established in 1634. Parts of New Kent and York Counties were added later.

The City of Williamsburg, in James City and York Counties, was established by the General Assembly as Middle Plantation in 1633. After the capitol building at Jamestown burned in 1698, the assembly decided to move the capital of the colony to Middle Plantation, which was renamed Williamsburg in 1699 in honor of William III. Williamsburg was established in 1699 and declared a "city Incorporate" in 1722, although its actual status was that of a borough. It served as the capital of Virginia from 1699 until 1780. Williamsburg was incorporated as a city in 1884.

Individuals dying with a written will died testate. After the death of an individual, his or her will was brought into court, where two of the subscribing witnesses swore that the document was genuine. After the will was proved, the executor was bonded to carry out his or her duties to settle the estate. The court then ordered the will to be recorded.

James City County was recognized in 1634 as an original shire. Williamsburg was founded in 1699 and declared a "city Incorporate" by a royal charter in 1722, although its actual status was that of a borough. Beginning in 1770, the courts of James City County and Williamsburg shared a common courthouse. During the Civil War, the records of both localities were transferred to Richmond for safekeeping, but were destroyed by fire there on April 3, 1865. The records of the superior court of chancery for the Williamsburg district were destroyed by a courthouse fire in April 1911.

## Scope and Content

James City County (Va.)/Williamsburg (Va.) Wills, 1862-1959 (bulk 1862-1930), record the deceased's plan for how his or her estate was to be divided among his or her heirs following his or her death. Information commonly recorded in wills include the name of the deceased, also referred to as the testator; names of heirs; a listing of real and personal property (including slaves) and how it was to be divided among the heirs; names of individuals who were to be the will's executors; the date the will was written; and the date the will was recorded at the court house. Additional record types may be found in this collection such as fiduciary records

(inventories and accounts.)

## Index Terms

### Corporate Names:

James City County (Va.) Circuit Court  
Williamsburg (Va.) Circuit Court

### Subjects:

African Americans--History  
Estates (Law)--Virginia--James City County  
Estates (Law)--Virginia--Williamsburg  
Land subdivision--Virginia--James City County  
Land subdivision--Virginia--Williamsburg  
Slaveholders--Virginia--James City County  
Slaveholders--Virginia--Williamsburg  
Slaves--Virginia--James City County  
Slaves--Virginia--Williamsburg

### Geographical Names:

James City County--History  
Williamsburg--History

### Genre and Form Terms:

Local government records--Virginia--James City County  
Local government records--Virginia--Williamsburg  
Wills--Virginia--James City County  
Wills--Virginia--Williamsburg

## Arrangement

Arrangement is chronological by year and then alphabetical by surname.