

A Guide to the Orange County (Va.) Commonwealth Causes, 1736-1903

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History

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Descriptive Summary

Barcode numbers

1171412-1171424, 1171468

Language

English

Collector

Orange County (Va.) Circuit Court

Physical Characteristics

6.3 cu. ft. (14 boxes)

Location

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 Orange County.

Preferred Citation

Orange County (Va.) Commonwealth Causes, 1736-1903. Local government records collection, Orange County Court Records. The Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va. 23219.

Adjunct Descriptive Data

Related Material

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

Additional Orange County criminal records may be found at the Orange County Courthouse and the Library of Virginia.

Historical Information

Orange County, according to most accounts, was named for William of Orange, the Dutch prince who became William III of England in 1688. It is more probable, however, that the name honored William IV, prince of Orange-Nassau, who married Anne, eldest daughter of George II, in 1734--the year Orange County was formed from Spotsylvania County.

Scope and Content

Orange County (Va.) Commonwealth Causes, 1736-1903 are criminal court cases and consist primarily of warrants, summons, indictments, and verdicts 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 murder, rape, assault and battery, and larceny to tax evasion and slander. Criminal offenders and victims who appear in cases prior to the abolition of slavery in Virginia in 1865 included both free and enslaved persons.

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."

Verdicts are the formal pronouncements made by juries on issues submitted to them by a judge or other law enforcement official. In the case of a guilty verdict, a judge will sentence the offender. Sentences may include a fine, corporal punishment, and/or imprisonment. Coroners also submitted verdicts such as "death by suicide," "death by natural causes," etc. when determining the cause of a suspicious or sudden death.

Index Terms

Corporate Names:

Orange County (Va.) Circuit Court

Subjects:

African Americans -- History
Assault and battery -- Virginia -- Orange County
Crime -- Virginia -- Orange County
Criminals -- Virginia -- Orange County
Larceny -- Virginia -- Orange County
Libel and slander -- Virginia -- Orange County
Murder -- Virginia -- Orange County
Rape -- Virginia -- Orange County
Slaveholders -- Virginia -- Orange County
Slavery -- Virginia -- Orange County
Slaves -- Virginia -- Orange County
Tax evasion -- Virginia -- Orange County

Geographical Names:

Orange County (Va.) -- History

Genre and Form Terms:

Indictments -- Virginia -- Orange County
Summons -- Virginia -- Orange County
Verdicts -- Virginia -- Orange County
Warrants (Law) -- Virginia -- Orange County

Arrangement

Chronological