

A Guide to the Cocke and Gilliam Business Records, 1790-1913 (bulk 1870-1895)

Cocke and Gilliam Business Records, 1870-1895

1870-1895

A Collection in the Library of Virginia 1047004, 1125837

Library of Virginia

2008

Author: Bari Helms

History

Processed by: Library of Virginia staff

Title Statement

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Publication Statement

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Publisher: Library of Virginia

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Profile Description

Creation: Machine-readable finding aid derived from being created directly into EAD, created by Bari Helms, 28 March 2008

Language Usage: Description is in English

Revision Description

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

Descriptive Summary

Barcode numbers

1047004, 1125837

Language

English

Collector

Petersburg (Va.) Circuit Court

Physical Characteristics

1.25 cu. ft.

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 the City of Petersburg.

Preferred Citation

Cocke and Gilliam Business Records, 1790-1913. Local government records collection, Petersburg (City) Court Records. The Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va. 23219.

Historical Information

The Cocke and Gilliam law firm, known earlier as the Davies and Cocke law firm, practiced law during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in Petersburg, Va. The firm also practiced in the surrounding counties of Dinwiddie, Chesterfield, Prince George, and Surry, and in the Supreme Court of Appeals and United States Courts in Richmond.

Robert Gilliam, born in 1847, was a leading attorney in Virginia. His grandfather, John Gilliam, a native of Prince George County where he was a planter, was a lieutenant in the Prince George Cavalry during the revolution and was present at the surrender of Lord Cornwallis at Yorktown. His father, Robert Gilliam (1796-1884), was a clerk of court for Prince George County.

Robert Gilliam lived in Prince George County until 1861 when he moved with his parents to Richmond. There, he became a messenger in the Confederate treasury department and rose to the level of assistant cashier by the end of the war. In 1869, Gilliam became a clerk of court in Prince George county, a position he held until 1874 when he removed to Petersburg and began practicing law. In 1879, Gilliam married Mary Love Bragg, daughter of former North Carolina governor Thomas Bragg. Gilliam also served as clerk of court for Petersburg from 1888 to 1915.

John Gilliam, born around 1846, lived most of his adult life in New York where he was a merchant and a broker on Wall St.

Samuel D. Davies, born in Petersburg in 1839, was a son of Colonel William Davies and a grandson of Samuel Davies, a former president of Princeton College. Educated at William and Mary College, Davies served in the Civil War as a lieutenant under Generals Pettigrew and Archer. Throughout his adult life, Davies practiced law and was a contributor of both poetry and prose to periodicals such as the "Southern Literary Messenger" of Richmond.

Scope and Content

Cocke and Gilliam Business Records, 1790-1913, records the activities of the law firm in and around Petersburg, Va., and consists of a ledger, 1873-1891; personal correspondence, 1870-1890; judgments, 1856-1874; indentures, 1806-1890; cancelled checks, 1879-1883; land title abstracts, 1879-1895; executions, 1825 and 1858; case briefs, 1870; jury lists, 1875 and 1878; and notary public bonds, executions, subpoenas, indictments, and declarations for the Hustings Court, Circuit Superior Court, and the Circuit Court of Petersburg, 1790-1913.

Ledger, 1873-1891, contains a chronological listing of business activities listed under the name of the client or lawyer. Entries document such activities as the writing of deeds, defending distress warrants, and amounts paid for advertising. The entries primarily pertain to the work done by lawyers Samuel D. Davies and John J. Cocke. At the back of the volume is an expense account for the firm, which documents such expenses as office maintenance, furniture purchases, rent, postage, and travel.

The correspondence, 1870-1890, includes letters written to Robert Gilliam by his brother John Gilliam and other family members and acquaintances. The letters describe business dealings and detail family and social news.

One letter, undated, written by Mary C. Carr provides information on Washington, D.C. society. Carr writes of attending a lecture where Susan B. Anthony "gave us a very spirited and argumentative address. She fairly annihilated the men. I am sure those present will never again have the temerity to assert themselves as

'lords of creation.'" Carr also describes her attendance at a reception given by Mrs. Grant where she was "ushered into the presence of his alcoholic Majesty."

Another letter, 1882, written by Aunt Ady in Nashville, discussed the living situation in the area after the Civil War -- "My relatives, as well as myself, have all been impoverished by the war, and cannot help me. The want of labor has brought lands down here as well as in Virginia. Negroes have homes and work for themselves."

Index Terms

Corporate Names:

Cocke and Gilliam.

Subjects:

Gilliam family.

Law firms--Virginia--Petersburg.

Lawyers--Virginia--Petersburg.

Social history--19th century.

Geographical Names:

Petersburg (Va.)--History--19th century.

Genre and Form Terms:

Briefs (legal documents)--Virginia--Petersburg.

Indentures--Virginia--Petersburg.

Judgments--Virginia--Petersburg.

Land records--Virginia--Petersburg.

Ledgers (account books)--Virginia--Petersburg.

Letters (correspondence).

Local government records--Virginia--Petersburg.

Added Entry - Personal Name:

Carr, Mary C.

Cocke, John J.

Davies, Samuel D.

Gilliam, John.

Gilliam, Robert.

Added Entry - Corporate Name:

Davies and Cocke.