

A Guide to the Rockbridge County (Va.) Judgments (Freedom Suits), 1809-1854

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History

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Title Statement

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Descriptive Summary

Barcode numbers

0007347552

Language

English

Collector

Rockbridge County (Va.) Circuit Court

Physical Characteristics

.35 cu. ft. (1 box)

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 transfers of court papers from Rockbridge County.

Preferred Citation

Rockbridge County (Va.) Judgments (Freedom Suits), 1809-1854. Local government records collection, Rockbridge County Court Records. The Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia 23219.

Adjunct Descriptive Data

Related Material

Additional Rockbridge County Judgments are found at the Library of Virginia.

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

Historical Information

Slaves sued for emancipation in freedom suits based on the following: they were descendant(s) of a free female ancestor, typically a Native American (Hening Statutes, volume 2, p.170); failure of slaveowner(s) to abide by the 1778 slave nonimportation act (Henings Statutes, volume 9, pp. 471-472); or claimed to have been freed by slaveowner(s) by deed of emancipation or last will and testament (Henings Statutes volume 11, pp. 39-40)

Rockbridge County was named for Natural Bridge, an exceptional rock formation located in the county. The county was formed from Augusta and Botetourt Counties in 1778, and another part of Botetourt was added in 1888. The county seat is the city of Lexington.

Scope and Content

Rockbridge County (Va.) Judgments (Freedom Suits), 1809-1854, consist of suits initiated by slaves seeking to gain their freedom on the law side of the court. Cases are identified by style of suit consisting of plaintiff and defendant names. Surnames of others involved in a suit, including secondary plaintiffs and defendants, witnesses, deponents and affiants, and family members with surnames different from the plaintiff or defendant are indexed. Also identified are names of slaves and slaveowners found in suit as well as whether slave(s) won their freedom. Predominant documents found in freedom suits include petitions, records of suits, depositions, affidavits, wills, among other items. Information found in documents include slave's argument for freedom, acquisition of slaves by slaveowners, slave ancestry, and relationship between slaves and slaveowners.

Judgments (Freedom Suits) are useful when researching local history and genealogical information, particularly for African Americans. They are a valuable source of local, state, social, and legal history and serve as a primary source for understanding a locality's history.

Index Terms

Corporate Names:

Rockbridge County (Va.) Circuit Court.

Subjects:

African Americans -- Virginia.
Free African Americans -- Virginia -- Rockbridge County.
Slaveholders -- Virginia -- Rockbridge County.
Slavery -- Virginia -- Rockbridge County.

Geographical Names:

Rockbridge County (Va.) -- History.
Rockbridge County (Va.) -- Genealogy

Genre and Form Terms:

Civil actions -- Virginia -- Rockbridge County.
Freedom suits -- Virginia -- Rockbridge County.
Judicial records -- Virginia -- Rockbridge County.
Local government records -- Virginia -- Rockbridge County.
Petitions -- Virginia -- Rockbridge County.
Wills -- Virginia -- Rockbridge County.

Added Entry - Corporate Name:

Rockbridge County (Va.) Superior Court of Law.

Arrangement

Arranged chronologically.

List of Freedom Suits

1809 August: Aaron~ vs. James Moore

1809 August: Ceaser~ vs. John McCorkle

1809 August: Dina~ vs. James McKee

1809 August: Edward~ vs. John Standoff

1809 August: James~ vs. William Taylor

1809 August: James~ vs. John Standoff

1809 November: Millie~ vs. Smith Scott

1809 November: Minter~ vs. James Moore

1816 February: David~ vs. Andrew Paul (Heard in County Court)

1816 April: David~ vs. Andrew Paul (Heard in Superior Court of Law)

1821 June: Darkey~, etc. vs. James Ritchie

1831 June: Sally~ vs. James Ritchie

1834 April: Richard~ vs. William Finley

1854 April: Ailsy~, etc. vs. Cornelius C. Baldwin

1854 August: Daniel Porter vs. Alexander P. Davis (see also Rockbridge County Chancery Cause 1851-005 - Exr. of Martha Porter vs. Daniel~, etc. Images available on the Chancery Records Index found on the Library of Virginia web site.)