

A Guide to the Rockbridge County (Va.) Court Records, 1822-1846

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A Collection in the Library of Virginia 0007348619
Library of Virginia
2012

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History

Processed by: Greg Crawford

Title Statement

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Subtitle: Rockbridge County (Va.) Court Records, 1822-1846

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Publication Statement

Date: © 2012 By The Library of Virginia. All Rights Reserved.

Publisher: Library of Virginia

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Profile Description

Creation: Machine-readable finding aid derived from MARC record, created by Greg Crawford, 25 July 2012

Language Usage: Description is in English

Revision Description

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

Descriptive Summary

Barcode numbers

0007348619

Language

English

Collector

Rockbridge County (Va.) Circuit Court

Physical Characteristics

.15 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.) Court Records, 1822-1846. Local government records collection, Rockbridge County Court Records. The Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia 23219.

Adjunct Descriptive Data

Related Material

Additional Rockbridge County Judgments and Commonwealth Causes 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

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.) Court Records, 1822-1846, consist of one civil suit and two commonwealth causes.

Commonwealth versus Trustees of Washington College, 1822 August, includes information, bill of exceptions, subpoenas and other documents. The trustees were accused and found guilty of harboring a slave named Tamer, the property of Robert Douthat, without his consent and to the great detriment and annoyance of people in the neighborhood. The trustees were fined three dollars.

Commonwealth versus Polly Watkins (alias Dolly Freeman), 1827 April, includes two indictments, copy of record, recognizance, subpoenas, list of jurors, and other documents. Watkins was indicted for harboring a runaway slave named Rachel, the property of Christianna Holmes, and for feloniously carrying the same slave from Rockbridge County to Botetourt County. The copy of record includes depositions from witnesses on behalf of the Commonwealth, including the slave Rachel, who testified to how Watkins transported the slave to Botetourt County. She forged free papers for the slave and passed her off as a family member. Watkins was found not guilty for feloniously carrying the slave from Rockbridge County to Botetourt County, but was found guilty of harboring a slave. Watkins was fined ten dollars, but if she was unable to pay the fine, she was to be punished with ten lashes on her bare back at the public whipping post.

Peter Jordan vs. Thomas Gardner, 1846 September, was a civil suit in which Jordan sued Gardner for damages from an assault and battery. Gardner asked the court to dismiss the suit because Jordan was a slave and under the laws of Virginia could not sue a white man. The court ruled against Gardner and allowed the suit to continue. The suit originated out of a previous civil suit in which Gardner sued Jordan for slander and assault and battery. Jordan was found guilty and sentenced to ten lashes.

Court Records 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.
Washington and Lee University.

Subjects:

African Americans -- Virginia.
Free African Americans -- Virginia -- Rockbridge County.
Fugitive slaves -- 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.
Criminal court records -- Virginia -- Rockbridge County.
Judicial records -- Virginia -- Rockbridge County.
Local government records -- Virginia -- Rockbridge County.

Added Entry - Corporate Name:

Rockbridge County (Va.) Superior Court of Law.

Arrangement

Arranged chronologically.