

A Guide to the Rockbridge County (Va.) James Connor and Dorothy Johns vs. A. T. Shields, Clerk of Court, 1924 September

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Descriptive Summary

Barcode number

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Language

English

Collector

Rockbridge County (Va.) Circuit Court.

Physical Characteristics

1 folder

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 Rockbridge County (Va.) Circuit Court.

Preferred Citation

Rockbridge County (Va.) James Connor and Dorothy Johns vs. A. T. Shields, Clerk of Court, 1924 September. Local government records collection, Rockbridge County Court Records. The Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va. 23219.

Adjunct Descriptive Data

Related Material

See also Rockbridge County (Va.) Atha Sorrells by her next friend William Sorrells vs. A. T. Shields, Clerk of Circuit Court, 1925. Local government records collection, Rockbridge County Court Records. The Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va. 23219.

See also Rockbridge County (Va.) Clerk's Correspondence [Walter A. Plecker to A. T. Shields], 1912-1943. Local government records, Rockbridge County Court Records. The Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va. 23219. Some correspondence in this collection directly concerns the Johns case.

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 later.

On March 20, 1924, Virginia passed the Racial Integrity Act that recognized only two races, white and colored. The act required that a racial description of every person be recorded at birth, and made marriage between white persons and non-white persons a felony. The law was the most famous ban on miscegenation in the United States, and was overturned by the United States Supreme Court in 1967, in *Loving vs. Virginia*. The registrar of Virginia's Bureau of Vital Statistics, Dr. Walter Ashby Plecker, developed the racial criteria behind the act and adhered strictly to the one-drop rule, a historical colloquial term that holds that a person with any trace of African ancestry is considered black. The Racial Integrity Act was subject to the Pocahontas exception. Since many influential families claimed descent from Pocahontas, the legislature declared that a person could be considered white with as much as one-sixteenth Indian ancestry. This law, along with the Sterilization Act also of 1924, imposed the practice of scientific eugenics in the Commonwealth.

Scope and Content

Rockbridge County (Va.) James Connor and Dorothy Johns vs. A. T. Shields, Clerk of Court, 1924 September. This judgment consists of the petition of James Connor, a white man, and Dorothy Johns, a free issue or triple mixed blood (white, Indian and negro) woman, to the court to issue a writ of mandamus to the clerk of court. Shields had refused to issue them a marriage license under the provisions of the 1924 Racial Integrity Act. Also included in a witness summons for Silas Coleman of Amherst County. The verdict is not recorded on the court papers but Mr. Connors and Miss Johns were not successful in their request.

Index Terms

Persons:

Shields, Abner Terry, 1852- .

Corporate Names:

Rockbridge County (Va.) Circuit Court.

Subjects:

African Americans -- Virginia -- Rockbridge County.

Eugenics.

Indians of North America.

Interracial marriage -- Virginia -- Rockbridge County.

Interracial marriage -- Law and legislation.

Miscegenation.

Geographical Names:

Rockbridge County (Va.) -- History -- 20th century.

Genre and Form Terms:

Civil court records -- Virginia -- Rockbridge County.

Local government records -- Virginia -- Rockbridge County.