

A Guide to the Prince Edward County (Va.) Chancery Causes, 1754-1913, 1952-1953

Prince Edward County (Va.) Chancery Causes, 1754-1953 (bulk 1831-1913)
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Descriptive Summary

Language

English

Collector

Prince Edward County (Va.) Circuit Court.

Physical Characteristics

99.75 cubic feet (219 boxes); Digital images

Location

Library of Virginia

Repository

The Library of Virginia

Administrative Information

Access Restrictions

Chancery Causes, 1754-1913 digital images found on the [Chancery Records Index](#) available electronically at the website of the Library of Virginia.

Chancery Causes 1952-1953 unprocessed, Contact Archives Research Services for availability.

Use Restrictions

There are no restrictions.

Acquisition Information

These records came to the Library of Virginia in a transfer of court papers from Prince Edward County (Va.) in 2008 under the accession number 43604 and under an undated accession.

Processing Information

These records were field processed in 1996-1998. Records from Chancery Causes, 1856-1913 were reprocessed by Library of Virginia staff in 2009. Records from Chancery Causes, 1754-1883 were reprocessed by Library of Virginia staff in 2010. At this time, there are no plans to process the identified 1952-1953 records, or other post-1913 material.

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Adjunct Descriptive Data

Related Material

Additional Prince Edward 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

Context of Record type: Chancery Causes are cases of equity. According to Black's Law Dictionary they are "administered according to fairness as contrasted with the strictly formulated rules of common law." A judge, not a jury, determines the outcome of the case; however, the judge is basing the decision on findings compiled and documented by Commissioners. Chancery causes are useful when researching local history, genealogical information, and land or estate divisions. They are a valuable source of local, state, social, and legal history and serve as a primary source for understanding a locality's history. Chancery causes document the lived experiences of free and enslaved individuals; women; children; people living with physical disabilities or mental health struggles; people living in poverty; defunct institutions and corporate entities; or those that may not have otherwise left traditional written histories.

Locality History: Prince Edward County was named in honor of Edward Augustus, a son of Prince Frederick Louis, a grandson of King George II, and a younger brother of King George III. The county was formed from Amelia County in 1753. The county court first met on 8 January 1754. The county seat is Farmville.

Scope and Content

Prince Edward County (Va.) Chancery Causes, 1754-1913, 1953-1953, consists of cases concerning issues of equity brought largely by residents of the county and filed in the circuit court. These cases often involve the following actions: divisions of estates or land, disputes over wills, disputes regarding contracts, debt, divorce, and business disputes. Other less prevalent issues include freedom suits, permissions to sell property, and disputes concerning trespass. Predominant documents found in these chancery causes include bills (documents the plaintiff's complaint), answers (defendant's response to the plaintiff's complaint), decrees (court's decision), depositions, affidavits, correspondence, lists of heirs, deeds, plats, wills, records involving enslaved individuals, business records or vital statistics.

Arrangement

Organized by case, of which each is assigned a unique index number comprised of the latest year found in case and a sequentially increasing 3-digit number assigned by the processor as cases for that year are found. Arranged chronologically.

Arrangement of documents within each folder are as follows: Bill, Answer, and Final Decree (if found).

Selected Suits of Interest

Causes of Interest are identified by local records archivists during processing and indexing. These causes are generally selected based upon guiding principles of having historical, genealogical or sensational significance; however, determining what is "of interest" is subjective, and the individual perspective and experience of the describing archivist will affect the material identified.

1754-001: Richard Davison vs. George Walker.

Scope and Content

Contract Dispute. Davison, who was hired by Walker to work as an overseer of a plantation and eight enslaved persons, alleges he never received his share of the crop. He accuses Walker of allowing a horse and hogs to be turned into the cornfield, damaging the crop, then hiring another overseer and refusing to settle with Davison.

1755-001: Bridget Braithwaite by etc. vs. Edward Braithwaite.

Scope and Content

Divorce/Separate Maintenance. The plaintiff accuses the defendant of abandonment and cohabiting with "a woman of ill fame and reputation" in the same parish and county. She sues for support, claiming she and her children will be left to support themselves on her labor, which, she argues, "is very little being upwards of 47 years of age and very infirm." The couple was married in 1729.

1758-001: Robert Hastie vs. Zachariah Leigh.

Scope and Content

Contract Dispute. Hastie sues Zachariah Leigh for his share of tobacco earned for his work as an overseer for Leigh.

1760-001: Judith Morton, by etc. vs. Thomas Crawford, etc.

Scope and Content

Debt. The plaintiff is trying to recover 100 pounds awarded to her in common law court for slander by forcing the sale of two enslaved individuals. She charges the defendants with fraud for promising to sell the enslaved person, but refusing to carry out the sale, thereby evading the judgment against them.

1767-001: Ryland Randolph vs. Thomas Wood.

Scope and Content

Contract Dispute. Randolph directed Tyree, his overseer, to negotiate a mortgage with Thomas Wood for two enslaved persons to secure Wood's debt to Randolph. Randolph charges Wood with fraud and alleges that Wood owes him money for the care of Ambrose, an enslaved boy who was too young to work.

1767-002: Peter LeGrand by etc. vs. Andrew French.

Scope and Content

Debt. The suit pertains to LeGrand's mortgage of enslaved persons to secure a debt to Alexander Speirs and Co., Scottish merchants. This case is one of several from the period documenting planters' debts to Scottish merchants.

1776-001: Daniel Dejarnett vs. William Hansford.

Scope and Content

Contract dispute. Dejarnett accuses Hansford of leaving before the end of his three-year term as a carpentry apprentice and stealing goods bought for him for the apprenticeship. Dejarnett had already sued for breach of contract on the law side of the court and lost.

1779-002: George Walton vs. Thomas Scott, Jr.

Scope and Content

Contract Dispute. The dispute involves Scott's request to purchase two enslaved individuals and other items while he was in Petersburg in 1778. The case contains a 1779 deposition of Peyton Randolph with information about the sale of the Falling River Estate in Prince Edward County to Thomas Scott, Jr. He also mentions the appraisal of the people he enslaved at his Long Island Estate at 200 pounds each.

1779-003: Legatees of Charles Rice vs. Charles Chattrel, etc.

Scope and Content

Contract Dispute. The case is one of several in the collection that contains a detailed invoice showing the cost of building a house.

1779-005: Agness Hannah, for etc. vs. Robert Hannah.

Scope and Content

Divorce/Separate Maintenance. Agness Hannah charges her husband with treating her in an "unjust barbarous and cruel" manner, abusing her verbally and physically, threatening to kill her, and carrying on a "criminal correspondence with his own negro woman slave." Since she left the home, she alleges, she hasn't had access to any of the estate set aside for her by the terms of a marriage contract, and she has been forced to rely on the charity of acquaintances. Depositions describe sexual assault against an enslaved woman and assault with a gun and hammer against Agness Hannah.

1783-002: Ann Morris by etc. vs. Isaac Morris

Scope and Content

Separate Maintenance/Divorce. This suit is one of several in the collection that contain allegations of physical abuse.

1783-012: John Cole vs. Peter Johnston, etc.

Scope and Content

Contract Dispute. The suit involves a dispute between two people working as factors of Scottish firms and a store in the town of Osborn. It contains records documenting discussions of tobacco prices.

1786-005: Joshua Blanton vs. John Leitch

Scope and Content

Contract Dispute. The dispute involves the purchase of a "new Negro African slave." It is unusual to find a reference to the importation of slaves from Africa during this period.

1786-012: Joshua Blanton vs. William McGraw

Scope and Content

Debt. Blanton sues for payment for his service to the U.S. army as an express rider in 1782. The case contains articles of agreement for the work arrangement.

1790-001: Henry Lipnor vs. Martin Smith

Scope and Content

Business Dissolution. The case involves a business dispute between two partners in a business in Manchester, Va. It contains business records, affidavits, depositions, accounts, a broadside advertising the sale of French's Store in Prince Edward County, with an inventory, and correspondence pertaining to a business deal. Letters contain references to plans to sell the inventory of the store quickly and persuade planters to sell their tobacco and ship it. A letter from 1784 contains a reference to the undue influence in the community of "old Venable" especially with "the Presbyterians," and his alliances with other people of influence in the community. Another letter contains a reference to "Peter your child and wench," thought dead, but discovered to be alive.

1793-004: Henry Lipnor and wife vs. Philemon Holcomb, Sr.

Scope and Content

This case is one of several involving accusations against Philemon Holcomb for not doing his job as sheriff, at the expense of "penniless children."

1793-006: John Clarke, etc. vs. John Holcombe Overstreet

Scope and Content

Debt. John Clarke is suing to force Overstreet to sell at public auction Jack, a blacksmith and enslaved man, to pay a debt. The defendant's answer describes the terms of agreement to hire out Jack, a "valuable tradesman" at the blacksmith's trade, and divide the profits.

1794-010: Martin Smith vs. Peter LeGrand

Scope and Content

Contract Dispute. The defendant alleges he is being treated unfairly by Smith, his creditor. He claims that in Virginia, unless explicitly stated otherwise by a contract, there is an implied agreement that merchants in country stores will allow creditors one year of interest-free debt, due to the scarcity of mercantile and market towns, which renders planters incapable of paying for goods when they purchase them.

1796-003: August Watson vs. Patrick Henry

Scope and Content

Contract Dispute. The case concerns a dispute concerning dower rights to the title of an estate known as Pleasant Grove owned by Patrick Henry.

1796-006: Executor of Robert Pleasants vs. John Watson.

Scope and Content

Debt. The case involves a dispute over the terms of repayment of a bond, and the rapid depreciation of currency during the Revolutionary War.

1805-030: Alexander Dunlop vs. Benjamin Lawson.

Scope and Content

Contract Dispute. This suit involves a dispute over title to a land warrants in Kentucky and the northwestern territory. The warrants were given to Benjamin Lawson in return for military service during the Revolutionary war.

1805-036: Executors of Patrick Henry vs. John A. Overstreet

Scope and Content

Estate Dispute. The case involves Henry's handling, as a guardian, of the affairs of the Fontaine family.

1805-038: James Taylor vs. Administrator of Benjamin Bedford

Scope and Content

Estate Dispute. James Taylor, step-father, is suing the children of his wife's first marriage for ownership of enslaved individuals the children inherited from their father on the grounds that Taylor raised them with his own money as part of his family.

1805-039: Executor of William Anderson vs. Esther Anderson

Scope and Content

Estate Dispute. The suit documents how enslaved individuals were hired out until heirs of the state came of age, and to support trust funds for the case of widows. In this case, the estate was governed in part by a marriage contract. The case contains multiple depositions about what was intended by the contract and how the executors tried to fulfill the terms of the contract.

1806-009: John Jackson vs. Owen Smith

Scope and Content

Contract dispute. The suit documents payments made to an enslaver for the work completed by individuals he enslaved regarding repairs to a "cotton machine" in 1795. The testimony includes

references to enslaved laborers working to repair a gristmill, working on Easter Monday, and references to a barter economy (payment in fish and pork).

1806-014: William Neal, etc. vs. William Morton, etc.

Scope and Content

Contract dispute. The suit is a dispute with two people in North Carolina who were hired to build a house in Prince Edward County.

1804-010: John Atwell vs. Executors of John Clarke

Scope and Content

Contract Dispute. This suit involves a dispute over the terms of the sale of two enslaved boys who were security for a debt. The plaintiff argues he should have had a year to repay the loan before they were sold. The case contains several depositions describing the "pawning" of the two boys, efforts to enlist friends to recover them before they were sold, and difficulty obtaining credit and recovering debts in the local economy.

1805-013: Peter Fore vs. Peter Kelso, Guardian, etc.

Scope and Content

Estate Dispute. This case involves a dispute over the handling of two young enslaved children who were to be separated from their mother by the terms of a will.

1805-016: Administrator of John H. Christian vs. Executors of Patrick Henry

Scope and Content

Estate Dispute. Henry was appointed guardian of Christian when he was very young. Christian's estate included a plantation in Kentucky called Fort William and Saltzburg, and a piece of land with a salt spring. The plaintiff is suing for rents from the land 1790 to 1798 and the labor of an enslaved person and horses sold by Henry. The case includes detailed accounts of Henry's guardianship of Christian's estate.

1807-002: Sherwood Fowler vs. Mary B. Webber

Scope and Content

Fowler is suing his mother-in-law for fraudulently taking his property including housekeeping items and Edith, and enslaved girl. Webber additionally sold Edith. Fowler claims he gave his property to his mother-in-law to protect it from being taken to pay for damages awarded by a jury to Nancy Taylor. Taylor charged him with assault and battery for, Fowler admits, "a good baisting which he had given her." The case contains several depositions describing the disputes.

1807-011: Thomas Pankey vs. Richard Ligon

Scope and Content

Contract Dispute. Pankey, a house builder, sues a client, Richard Ligon. The case contains an invoice for making 3,500 bricks, raising the still house walls, and attending making of bricks.

1807-013: Pugh W. Price vs. Huriah Nixon, etc.

Scope and Content

The case contains two depositions of Reverend Drury Lacy (1758-1815), regarding his purchase of 400 acres of land from John Price.

1807-025: James Franklin vs. John Cunningham

Scope and Content

Contract Dispute. The plaintiff is suing the defendant for selling him Tom who was not actually enslaved. The documents show that the alleged Tom was sold several times before recovering his freedom in the Charlotte County Court. Paul Michaux Cunningham testifies that he and his partner Paul Cunningham received Tom for one or two years in partial payment for carpentry work completed for Edward Scott.

1807-026: Samuel W. Venable, Surviving Partner, vs. Woodson Knight.

Scope and Content

Estate Dispute. This case involves heirs accusing a trustee of mismanaging their estate by failing to provide clothing and other necessary items for the people enslaved by the estate.

1808-008: Executor of Philip B. Matthews vs. Executors of William Matthews.

Scope and Content

Estate Dispute. The case involves a dispute among heirs over the legal title to an enslaved woman. The case contains several depositions about the handling of the issue. One witness suggests one brother gave "his Negro woman" to his brother and sister in return for her room and board alone to ensure that she was not hired out, as he "expected she would have children and did not wish to have her abused."

1808-010: Robert Donald Sr., Surviving Partner, vs. James Hopkins, etc.

Scope and Content

Debt. This case involves British merchants trying to collect debts from the Revolutionary period.

1808-011: Samuel Carter vs. Executrix of Wadill Carter.

Scope and Content

Contract Dispute. The bill contains a description of the operation of a brandy still that the plaintiff inherited from his father.

1808-018: John Kidd vs. Elizabeth Kidd.

Scope and Content

Estate Dispute. The case involves Toney, an enslaved man, who is identified as a blacksmith, and his claim about rights granted him in a disputed will. The plaintiffs allege Toney confiscated the will, which was written before the Revolutionary war, held onto it, then produced it after the Benjamin Kidd died, contrary to Kidd's intentions. The case was appealed to the Superior Court of Chancery, Richmond District.

1809-005: Littleberry Farmer vs. Thomas Fulder and wife

Scope and Content

Estate Dispute. The plaintiff accuses his father's widow and her new husband of mismanaging and "destroying" the portion of the estate that she received as her widow's dower by hiring out enslaved persons annually, but not sharing the proceeds with the estate, and by selling a valuable enslaved boy to pay a debt.

1811-001: Peter Nunnally, Sr. vs. Administrator of Thomas H. Puckett

Scope and Content

Contract Dispute. This case involves a dispute over terms of hiring out enslaved persons. Includes several depositions about the practice of bidding for annual contracts and prices for hiring two enslaved boys.

1811-005: George Davidson vs. Executor of Richard Blanton.

Scope and Content

Contract Dispute. Dispute over the sale of an enslaved woman who returned, after the sale, to the place where she was reared.

1811-007: Archibald Hix vs. Jacob Maddox and Co.

Scope and Content

Contract Dispute. Dispute over the health of an enslaved person who was hired out. The answer includes a

description of medical treatment of the enslaved man, and the doctor's warning that he should not "run the river" while recovering. The plaintiff accuses the defendant of using the slave against doctor's orders and causing him permanent damage, resulting in a financial loss to the owner.

1811-010: John White and wife vs. Andrew Porter

Scope and Content

Estate Dispute. The case involves a woman and her husband suing to claim her dower rights. The case contains several dispositions with testimony about morality and conduct of Mrs. White.

1811-013: Aaron (enslaved) vs. Executor of Andrew Baker

Scope and Content

Freedom Suit. The plaintiff alleges his enslaver agreed to free him in exchange for wages he earned when he was hired out, but failed to include the provision in his will. The case contains a reference to a law pertaining to emancipation of enslaved persons over age 45. In the answer, Baker's widow mentions Andrew Baker's intention to emancipate all the people he enslaved, his decision to wait until after he died to let them know for fear the enslaved individuals would find out their freedom depended on his death, and his widow's difficulties in carrying out his wishes.

1811-030: Stephen Dejarnett vs. James Hurt, etc.

Scope and Content

Contract Dispute. The plaintiff charges the defendant with selling him an enslaved man who was known to be a poisoner.

1818-029: Sarah Tyree vs. William Tyree, Sr., etc.

Scope and Content

Divorce/Separate Maintenance. The plaintiff alleges her husband turned her out of house and home, inflicted "cruel and brutal treatment," withheld "measures of obtaining food and raiment" The case includes an affidavit from the plaintiff's married daughter about her father's alleged severe abuse of her mother.

1821-012: William A. Lilley vs. Executor of Peter Saunders

Scope and Content

The case includes correspondence discussing treatment of cancer.

1825-010: Administrator of Samuel Dodson vs. Francis Thackston

Scope and Content

The case contains correspondence with a reference to Captain John D. Richardson and his Company, which saw action at the Battle of Craney Island in the War of 1812.

1825-021: Frances Holeman by etc. vs. James Holeman

Scope and Content

Divorce/Separate Maintenance. The defendant alleges his wife threatened him with murder and beat him, and that he had to take the children away to protect the children from her bad influence.

1825-029: Samuel White, etc. vs. Dick White

Scope and Content

Contract Dispute. This case involves a property dispute between two free persons who were members of the Israel community, Samuel White, son of Hercules White; and Dick White. It includes a plat of property along the Buffalo River owned by Hercules White and others.

1825-040: John Boatwright vs. Elizabeth Dillon

Scope and Content

Contract Dispute. The bill describes a partnership between a man and woman in a carpentry business. The depositions describe business dealings with Elizabeth Dillon, one of the partners.

1826-008: John Baldwin and wife vs. Ann Frazer

Scope and Content

There is a reference, in the answer, to the assumed death of Joshua Davidson the elder and his family at the hands of Indigenous people, in 1779 in South Carolina.

1830-017: Foushee Cloughon vs. William L. Wootton, etc.

Scope and Content

Contract Dispute. The case includes a description of a business partnership for the purchase and sale of enslaved persons.

1831-016: Jacob Saylor vs. Executors of Martin Saylor

Scope and Content

Estate Dispute. The case concerns a bequest to educate a nephew in state of Ohio, and a request that he come back to Virginia and rescue "my negro woman Nelly and her son Terah and conduct them to State of Ohio, and be as a guardian to them."

1831-021: Edward W. Preston vs. William A. Howard

Scope and Content

Contract Dispute. The case involves a dispute over the purchase of an enslaved man who returned to Cumberland County, where his wife lived, after he was purchased.

1832-003: Sam White, etc. vs. Administrator of Dick White

Scope and Content

Estate Dispute. The suit involves free African Americans who were descended from formerly enslaved persons emancipated by Richard Randolph.

1835-001: Administrators of America Todd vs. Administrator of Peter Jones

Scope and Content

Estate Dispute. The case was appealed to Superior Court of Chancery, Richmond District. It contains depositions about disputes about the management of enslaved persons, for example, whether there were too many around the house, whether they were kept busy, etc., and discussions of migration to Lowndes County, Alabama. The records also include detailed accounts.

1837-001: Thomas T. Craghead vs. Richard Kidder Randolph

Scope and Content

The case involves Randolph, who sold enslaved individuals, and left others in care of people in Prince Edward County when he moved to Newport, Rhode Island in 1810. The case concerns his efforts to provide support for some enslaved individuals left in Prince Edward, and to keep a mother and children together.

1837-018: Permelia Howard vs. Samuel White

Scope and Content

This suit concerns free African Americans, descendants of formerly enslaved individuals emancipated by Richard Randolph.

1837-022: George W. Bell vs. Josiah Sharpe, etc.

Scope and Content

This suit concerns Nathan Homes, a "free man of color", and his purchase of a lot and a home in the county.

1837-028: Brooks Baker vs. Commonwealth of Virginia.

Scope and Content

The plaintiff is suing for compensation for a penalty he paid for conviction of assault and battery against Nancy Davis. The depositions describe a battle between a white man and a white woman concerning an enslaved girl. Also contains disputes regarding alcohol, use of violence, and guns.

1837-034: Administrators of Alexander Legrand, etc. vs. Josiah Legrand, Committee

Scope and Content

Estate Dispute. This suit contains records of marriages and births for the Legrand family, and records of enslaved persons born in the eighteenth century.

1837-046: William H Venable and Co. vs. William D Hix

Scope and Content

This case contains a letter from Merit Hix, in St. Louis, Missouri, to his father James Hix, 1830, describing the state of business there as "very dull" due to the slow flow of the Mississippi River, and urging his father to emigrate to Missouri because land is cheap, and the country is settling quickly.

1837-047: Judith L. Penick by etc. vs. Jonathan Penick

Scope and Content

This case involves a married woman who is trying to protect her family estate and prevent the sale of more enslaved persons to pay her husband's gambling debts in Richmond.

1837-054: George W Daniel vs. Merritt H Steger

Scope and Content

The defendant is the owner of Steger's Tobacco Factory in Farmville. The case contains a broadside advertising the sale of the factory and a description of the property as "sufficiently large to work one hundred hands to advantage."

1838-015: Royall Watkins, etc. vs. Owen H. Tucker

Scope and Content

Estate Dispute. This case includes information about a "slave auction" and estate accounts documenting expenses for keeping enslaved people and hiring them out.

1839-002: John Thackston vs. Hudson Wilson

Scope and Content

Contract Dispute. The case contains a contract for construction of the Prince Edward courthouse and a bill for construction of a brick house.

1841-008: Daniel Mitchell and wife, etc. vs. Atrix of John Pearson, etc.

Scope and Content

Estate Dispute. The case includes a letter from a widow in Danville asking help to prevent the sale of Clem, an enslaved person.

1841-057: John Brown vs. Hampton Giles

Scope and Content

Estate Dispute. The case involves a dispute over a tract of land given to Brown's father when he was emancipated by Richard Randolph.

1842-020: William M. Carter vs. Dabney Cosby

Scope and Content

The defendant is an artisan from Milton, North Carolina, who was contracted to build a Presbyterian Church in Prince Edward County. The case includes a letter to Cosby about the debt, and a letter from Cosby explaining he didn't have employment in Prince Edward, so he went to Milton where there was plenty of work.

1843-010: Edward Wooldridge vs. Thomas A. Legrand, Administrator**Scope and Content**

Estate Dispute. The case contains a list of the 44 grandchildren of Simon Wooldridge and a detailed genealogy, including the children of Ralph Wooldridge, Jonah Wooldridge, Nancy Baugh, formerly Wooldridge; Robert, Wooldridge, Polly Inge, Edward Wooldridge; and Rhoda Scruggs, formerly Wooldridge, as well as some of the grandchildren's marriages. The accounts contain yearly wages paid for work as overseer.

1843-012: Zackariah Goodman vs. Trustees of Appomattox Co.**Scope and Content**

The case involves a proposal to construct locks to improve navigation on the Appomattox River.

1843-015: Jesse Bradley vs. Thomas H. Anderson**Scope and Content**

Estate Dispute. The case contains an agreement between Lucy Anderson and Thomas Anderson to allow Lucy to move west with enslaved persons included in her dower.

1844-022: Thomas Doswell vs. Executor of William Doswell, etc.**Scope and Content**

Estate Dispute. The case contains multiple combined suits documenting migration to Madison County, Alabama, and Christian County, Kentucky. It contains several letters from Madison County, Alabama territory, and from Lawrence County [state unclear].

1844-044: Nathaniel Penick vs. Samuel W Venable, etc.**Scope and Content**

Contract Dispute. The case involves a dispute over division of a Presbyterian Church in Cumberland County, in Hanover Presbytery.

1845-014: Trustee of John Clarke, etc. vs. Alexander Scott, Assignee**Scope and Content**

Estate Dispute. The valuation of enslaved persons in this case document their marriages and families.

1845-016: John James Ewing vs. Executors of James Ewing**Scope and Content**

Contract Dispute. This case documents the money spent per enslaved person on corn and the amount of corn grown by enslaved persons for themselves on a plantation in 1819. It also documents expenses paid for a midwife.

1846-011: Nicholas C. Read vs. Samuel W. Venable**Scope and Content**

Business Dissolution. This case involves a dispute between former business partners. It documents their tobacco business which involved the buying, selling, and manufacturing of tobacco.

1847-004: Richard Gallion and wife vs. Robert Bowman

Scope and Content

Debt. This case documents Saluda Gallion's work as a school teacher in Prince Edward County before she was married, and her efforts to collect claims from families.

1847-005: John Walthall vs. Milton and Quarles

Scope and Content

Contract Dispute. This case involves the right to use Page's patent for a portable circular sawmill and includes a copy of the patent.

1847-011: Fanny Bowman vs. Executor of Philip Bowman

Scope and Content

Estate Dispute. This case pertains to the estate of Philip Bowman, a free Black man who was married to an enslaved woman enslaved by the Venable family. When Philip Bowman died, his mother sued to acquire property he had tried to leave to his wife, who was still enslaved. The Venable family tried to protect the widow's interests by promising to care for her, but later put her in the poor house to live out her days there.

1847-015: John N. Brooks vs. Samuel P. Rice, etc.

Scope and Content

This case documents the treatment of Samuel P. Rice, president of Hampden Sydney College, with leeches, and the hiring of enslaved persons from Rice by the Trustees of Hampden Sydney College for the year 1845.

1847-024: Henry Jackson by etc. vs. John H Smith, etc.

Scope and Content

Estate Dispute. The defendant is described as a "slave trader," buying enslaved persons "to be carried to the South." The plaintiff alleges his inheritance in enslaved persons is unjustly being sold and carried South.

1848-002: Committee of Josiah Chambers vs. Administrator of James Madison, etc.

Scope and Content

Estate Dispute. This case involves James Madison's embezzlement of funds from Josiah Chambers' estate, and the fraudulent selling of lots in the town of Farmville. This case includes testimony about the legitimacy of the marriage of Chambers, who was declared "mentally unsound" by the court; about the sale of enslaved persons for profit by Chamber's Committee, and the provision of seasonal clothing for Chambers. It also contains receipts of medical care for enslaved persons.

1848-031: Reuben A. Rudd, etc. vs. Reuben H. Dejarnett, Trust., etc.

Scope and Content

Estate Dispute. This large case pertains to a marital separation, an accusation of "insanity" for wanting to ruin the family by selling all the people they enslaved; a plea to avoid the sale of a young child away from his mother "from a humane motive," the sale of certain enslaved persons to acquire money to buy a plantation for the trustees; accusations of fraud. The records include accounts for hiring out and selling enslaved persons to administer a trust.

1850-015: Frances Anderson by etc. vs. R.C. Anderson.

Scope and Content

Estate Dispute. The case contains a will, written in St. Augustine, Florida and proved in Chesterfield County in 1847, describing two enslaved persons who "have been raised in a factory in Richmond, and would be of little value in the country."

1852-011: John J Flournoy vs. Thomas W Epes.

Scope and Content

Contract Dispute. This case concerns a contract to keep the Eagle Hotel in Farmville. The records include accounts that document furnishings of the hotel, such as plates, glasses, mustard, pillow cases, towels, etc.

1852-015: Devisees of Archer Allen, etc. vs. Nancy Allen, etc.

Scope and Content

Estate Dispute. This case involves conveyance in 1804 of a property called Gold Mine in Buckingham County, wherein there "was a mine of gold ore, or other valuable metals."

1852-016: John H. Leigh and wife, etc., vs. Executor of Daniel Allen

Scope and Content

Estate Dispute. This case includes accounts listing the prices of tobacco sold at Randolph's warehouse in Farmville from 1831-1840.

1853-006: Edward Williams vs. John Stevens, etc.

Scope and Content

Estate Dispute. This suit involves the plaintiff's efforts to regain an enslaved family, a "mulatto woman" and her children, who "plaintiff was unwilling for particular reasons to part." Plaintiff claims enslaved persons were sold to a creditor at half their market value, on the provision that plaintiff could regain the enslaved persons when he repaid the purchase price. When his daughter loaned him the money, the defendant claimed no such agreement had been made, and informed her he had already sold the enslaved individuals. The case includes a deposition taken at a store house owned by McNaught and Ormand in Newport, Wakulla County, Florida.

1853-010: William Borum and wife, etc. vs. Executor of David Ellington

Scope and Content

Estate Dispute. In this case, the heirs of David Ellington seek unsuccessfully to revoke Ellington's bequest to two emancipated enslaved persons.

1854-010: Trustee of James Madison vs. Thomas L. Morton, etc.

Scope and Content

Estate Dispute. This suit identifies several enslaved people who were carpenters; it also documents migration to Yazoo City, Mississippi, and Alabama and a Cumberland Presbyterian congregation.

1858-032: Joseph T. Redd, etc. vs. Admr. Of Thomas Read

Scope and Content

A letter dated 1858 is filed with the suit in which the guardian of Read's children expressed his desire that enslaved persons be sold, rather than divided, in the interest of the children.

1860-028: Guardian of Maria S. Dupuy, etc., vs. Maria S. Dupuy, etc.

Scope and Content

Estate Dispute. This case contains a petition to sell George, an enslaved man, described as "disorderly, rebellious, and thievish," and one whose "influence tends to corrupt other slaves."

1862-001: Executors of John Watson vs. Dosha (enslaved) etc.

Scope and Content

Estate dispute. This suit documents the emancipation and removal to Liberia of 66 enslaved people in

1857. The court record includes a list of people freed, with names, approximate ages, family relationships, and the number of deaths among them after reaching Liberia. The plaintiffs are suing the executors for distribution of funds intended for their use in Liberia [See also: Chancery Cause 1873-001].

1867-020: Joseph D. Chambers, etc. vs. Administer of Josiah Chambers, etc.

Scope and Content

Estate Dispute. This case includes a list of enslaved persons, their occupations, and to whom they were sold as part of the estate division [Images 462-464]. In some instances, familial relationships are noted.

1867-045: Joel Elam vs Thomas G Lindsay and wife, etc.

Scope and Content

Will of Aaron Lindsay specifies enslaved persons to be sold are not to be sold to a "trafficker" nor to anyone known to mistreat enslaved persons.

1872-034: Mahaly Johnson vs. Jacob Shepperson

Scope and Content

Formerly enslaved persons who were not married to each other; custody of child Cary at issue; depositions about character of each, whether or not Cary goes to school, general treatment of child. Shepperson's former owner testifies to his character.

1873-001; Dosha (enslaved) etc. vs. Executors of John Watson, etc.

Scope and Content

Estate dispute. This suit documents the emancipation and removal to Liberia of 66 enslaved people in 1857. The court record includes a list of people freed, with names, approximate ages, family relationships, and the number of deaths among them after reaching Liberia. The plaintiffs are suing the executors for distribution of funds intended for their use in Liberia [See also: Chancery Cause 1862-001].

1873-038: Agnes W. Watkins, Sr., etc. vs. Exr. of Henry E Watkins, etc.

Scope and Content

Enslaved persons are listed in family groups with ages and relationships given.

1911-023: Samuel Jones vs. Susan Jones

Susan Jones vs. Samuel Jones

Scope and Content

Divorce suit. Susan Jones is being represented by Giles B. Jackson, a Black lawyer. The case contains some letterhead from Jackson's office noting that he is licensed to practice in front of the Virginia Supreme Court. Giles B. Jackson was a native of Goochland County, Virginia, born enslaved. After the Civil War, he worked as a laborer for the Stewart family, a prominent Richmond family. Subsequently, he was employed in the law offices of William H. Beveridge. Beveridge tutored Jackson, who went on to become the first Black attorney to practice before the Supreme Court of Virginia. Jackson organized and promoted the "Negro Building" at the Jamestown Tercentennial in 1907. A year later, he published "A History of the Negro Race of the United States."