

A Guide to the Bedford County (Va.) Chancery Causes, 1755-1912 (bulk 1850-1912)

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History

Processed by: K. Rowlett

Title Statement

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Author: Greg Crawford

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Profile Description

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

Descriptive Summary

Language

English

Collector

Bedford County (Va.) Circuit Court

Physical Characteristics

Digital images

Location

Library of Virginia

Repository

The Library of Virginia

Administrative Information

Access Restrictions

Bedford County (Va.) Chancery Causes, 1755-1912, use digital images found on the [Chancery Records Index](#) available electronically at the website of the Library of Virginia.

Use Restrictions

There are no restrictions.

Processing Information

Bedford County (Va.) Chancery Causes, 1755-1912, never came to the Library of Virginia. They were processed in the field by K. Rowlett between 1999 and 2007 and were sent for digitization from the locality.

Digital images were generated by Crowley Micrographics through the Library of Virginia's Circuit Court Records Preservation Program in 2008.

In some instances, additional documents (e.g., plats) have been added but not scanned.

Encoded by G. Crawford: 2009; updated by C. Collins: May 2023.

Preferred Citation

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Adjunct Descriptive Data

Related Material

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

Location of Originals

Original Bedford County (Va.) Chancery Causes, 1755-1912, are retained in the locality. Contact the Clerk of the Circuit Court for access.

Historical Information

Context for 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: Bedford County was named probably for John Russell, fourth duke of Bedford, who served as secretary of state for the southern department from 1748 to 1751 and had general supervision of colonial affairs. It was formed from Lunenburg County in 1753, and parts of Albemarle and Lunenburg Counties were added in 1755. The county court first met on 5 May 1754. The county seat is the town of Bedford.

Scope and Content

Bedford County (Va.) Chancery Causes, 1755-1912, 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.

Commonly found surnames among the plaintiffs and defendants include Adams, Anderson, Anthony, Arrington, Arthur, Austin, Ayers, Bell, Board, Bowles, Brown, Buford, Burks, Burroughs, Burton, Callaway, Calloway, Campbell, Carter, Clark, Claytor, Cofer, Creasy (also spelled Creasey), Cundiff, Davis, Dearing,

Dickinson, Donald, Dooley, Early, Franklin, Fuqua, Goggin, Graves, Gray, Hancock, Hardy, Harris, Hatcher, Hawkins, Haynes, Holt, Hopkins, Hudnall, Hurt, James, Jeter, Johnson, Jones, Jordan, Kasey, Layne, Lee, Leftwich, Lowry, Martin, McDaniel, McGehee, Mead, Meador, Miller, Minor, Michell, Morgan, Musgrove, Nance, Nichols, Noell, Otey, Overstreet, Parker, Pate, Patterson, Payne, Poindexter, Preas (also spelled Prease), Preston, Price, Quarles, Reynolds, Roberts, Robertson, Robinson, Rucker, Sale, Saunders, Scott, Smith, St. Clair, Steptoe, Stevens, Stewart, Stiff, Tate, Thomas, Thompson, Thurman, Tinsley, Turner, Turpin, Wade, Walker, Watson, Watts, White, Wilkerson, Wilkes, Williams, Williamson, Wills, Wilson, Wingfield, Witt, Wood, and Wright.

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 generally as follows: Bill, Answer, and Final Decree (if found.)

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