

# A Guide to the York County (Va.) Wills, 1719-1885

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A Collection in the Library of Virginia 1141508, 1147042

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## History

**Processed by:** Library of Virginia staff

## Title Statement

A Guide to the York County (Va.) Wills, 1719-1885

**Subtitle:** York County (Va.) Wills, 1719-1885

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**Author:** Louise Jones/Callie Lou Freed

## Publication Statement

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## Profile Description

**Creation:** Machine-readable finding aid derived from being created directly into EAD, created by Louise Jones, 11 September 2009

**Language Usage:** Description is in English

## Revision Description

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

## Descriptive Summary

**Barcode number**

1141508, 1147042

**Language**

English

**Collector**

York County (Va.) Circuit Court

**Physical Characteristics**

1.01 cu. ft. (1 box; 1 folder)

**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 shipments of court records from York County.

**Preferred Citation**

York County (Va.) Wills, 1719-1885. Local Government Records Collection, York County Court Records. The Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va. 23219.

## Adjunct Descriptive Data

### Related Material

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

### Related Material

York County is one of Virginia's Lost Records Localities. Additional York Court Records may be found in the Virginia Lost Records Localities Digital Collection at the Library of Virginia. Search the [Lost Records Localities Digital Collection](#) available on Virginia Memory.

### Related Material

See also Guide to the Executive Papers of Governor Thomas Nelson, Jr. available electronically at the website of the Virginia Heritage Project-<http://ead.lib.virginia.edu/vivaxtf/view?docId=lva/vi01972.xml>

### Related Material

For additional information, see also York County Chancery Cause, 1786-005 and Augusta County Chancery Cause, 1805-043.

## Historical Information

York County originally was named Charles River County, for King Charles I, and was one of the eight shires, or counties, first enumerated in 1634. A record of 7 January 1634 employs the name York County, and a statute of 1643 officially changed the name to York County, probably in honor of James, duke of York, the second son of King Charles I, and later King James II.

Individuals dying with a written will died testate. After the death of an individual, his or her will was brought into court, where two of the subscribing witnesses swore that the document was genuine. After the will was proved, the executor was bonded to carry out his or her duties to settle the estate. The court then ordered the will to be recorded.

Thomas Nelson Jr. is regarded as one of the U.S. Founding Fathers since he signed the Declaration of Independence as a member of the Virginia delegation. Nelson represented York County in the House of Burgesses from 1761 to 1775. He represented York County in the House of Delegates from 1777-1783 and from 1786 to 1788. He was a general in the Virginia militia and commanded the militia from 1777-1781. He led three thousand Virginia militiamen in General George Washington's Army during the siege at Yorktown. He represented Virginia in the Continental Congress from 1775 to 1777 and was its Governor from 1781 June 12-November 22. He resigned as Governor due to ill health. Nelson died in York County (some accounts say Hanover County), on 4 January 1789. He is buried in Grace Church Cemetery in Yorktown. According to his will, he owned land in Hanover, James City, York, Warwick, Loudoun and Prince William counties as well as

the City of Williamsburg. He was a slave owner and mentions the following slaves in this will: Aggy, Charles, Melinda, Nancy, Dick and James Rideout. Only one slave, Smith Harry, was given his freedom.

Recognized in 1634 as an original shire. Most pre-Revolutionary War-era loose records are missing. Volumes that record deeds, court orders, and wills exist.

The 18th century Wills were created by the County Court.

## Scope and Content

York County (Va.) Wills, 1719-1885, record the deceased's plan for how his or her estate was to be divided among his or her heirs following his or her death. Information commonly recorded in wills include the name of the deceased, also referred as the testator; names of heirs; a listing of real and personal property (including slaves) and how it was to be divided among the heirs; names of individuals who were to be the will's executors; the date will was written; and the date will was recorded at the court house.

Housed separately, is the original Will of Thomas Nelson, Jr. The will was recorded in 16 February 1789 in York County. The will was conserved by Etherington Conservation Services at their satellite site found in the Library of Virginia in Richmond, Va.

## Index Terms

### Corporate Names:

York County (Va.) Circuit Court

### Subjects:

African Americans--History.

Estates (Law)--Virginia--York County.

Land subdivision--Virginia--York County.

Slaveholders--Virginia--York County.

Slaves--Virginia--York County.

### Geographical Names:

York County--History.

### Genre and Form Terms:

Local government records--Virginia--York County.

Wills--Virginia--York County.

### Added Entry - Personal Name:

Nelson, Thomas, Jr., 1738-1789.

### Added Entry - Corporate Name:

York County (Va.) County Court.

## Arrangement

Arranged chronologically by year and then alphabetical by surname.