

A Guide to the Alexandria (Va.) Business Records, 1804-1942

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A Collection in the Library of Virginia

Library of Virginia

2008

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History

Processed by: Bari Helms

Title Statement

A Guide to the Alexandria (Va.) Business Records, 1804-1942

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Author: Bari Helms

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Profile Description

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Language Usage: Description is in English

Revision Description

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

Descriptive Summary

Language

English

Creator

Alexandria (Va.) Circuit Court

Physical Characteristics

5 volumes

Location

State Records Center - Archives Annex, Library of Virginia

Repository

The Library of Virginia

Administrative Information

Access Restrictions

Many of the business volumes are fragile. **Please handle with extreme care.**

Use Restrictions

There are no restrictions.

Acquisition Information

Series I and II came to the Library of Virginia in a transfer of court papers in 1957 from Alexandria under the accession number 24665d.

Series III came to the Library of Virginia in a transfer of court papers from Alexandria in an undated accession.

Processing Information

Prior to 2024, the various business records in this collection were originally described as individual records, but they have been consolidated into one large business record for the locality.

Encoded by C. Freed, October, 2025

Preferred Citation

Alexandria (Va.) Business Records, 1804-1942. Local government records collection, Alexandria (Va.) Court Records. The Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va. 23219.

Adjunct Descriptive Data

Related Material

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

For additional information on the Alexandria Canal Company, consult the Alexandria Canal Company Levels of Alexandria-Washington Turnpike, 1831-1832 part of Alexandria (Va.) Road and Bridge Records, Local government records collection, Library of Virginia, Barcode 7777967.

Historical Information

Context for Record Type: Business Records, both volumes and loose records, are in some cases transferred to the Library of Virginia as components of court record transfers. These business records in some cases were simply stored in the local court building for safe keeping by business owners. In other cases, business records (particularly ledgers, account books, etc.) may have been filed in a court case as an exhibit. These business record exhibits appeared both in chancery causes and in judgments, these records serving as exhibits for business dissolution cases, debt suits, and contract disputes.

Locality History:: Alexandria in Fairfax and Arlington Counties, was named for John Alexander, an early owner of the tract in Fairfax County on which the town was located. The act to establish Alexandria was passed in 1749. Its site had previously been known as Hunting Creek Warehouse and as Belhaven. Alexandria was incorporated as a town in 1779 and was ceded to the federal government in 1789 for use as part of the site of the new national capital. It officially became part of the District of Columbia in 1801 and was renamed Alexandria County by Congress. By an act of 9 July 1846, Alexandria County, including the town of Alexandria, was retroceded to Virginia, which took jurisdiction over the area on 20 March 1847. The town was incorporated as a city in 1852. Area: 15.2 square miles. Population: 128,283 (2000), 135,200 (2005 estimate.)

Scope and Content

Alexandria (Va.) Business Records, 1804-1942, are comprised of various records created by individuals in pursuit of documenting business activities in and around Alexandria (Va.) Represented records consist of bound volumes such as an account book, a subscription list and registers.

Arrangement

This collection is arranged

- Series I: Alexandria (Va.) Canal Company Account of Tolls Collected, 1845-1853
- Series II: Unidentified Agent's Account of Newspaper Subscribers, 1804-1808
- Series III: United States Fidelity and Guaranty Company Registers of Bonds and Policies, 1912-1942

Contents List

Series I: Alexandria (Va.) Canal Company Account of Tolls Collected, 1845-1853

Extent

1 volume

Physical Location State Records Center

Scope and Content

Historical Information:The Alexandria Canal played a brief, but significant, part in the history of commercial navigation on the Potomac River. After the charter of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal, which ran from Cumberland, Maryland, to Washington, D.C., Alexandria merchants proposed in 1830 that a canal be constructed linking their city to Georgetown. Congress granted a charter to the Alexandria Canal Company on 26 May 1830. Construction on the aqueduct bridge and canal began in 1833 and was completed a decade later. The Potomac Aqueduct Bridge, which spanned 1000 feet between Georgetown and Rosslyn, allowed boats to cross the Potomac without first unloading in Georgetown. Boats would then continue their trips downstream on the seven-mile canal leading to Alexandria's seaport. The canal officially opened on 2 December 1843 with the arrival of the first canal boat in Alexandria. In 1850, when the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal was completed to Cumberland, Maryland, coal from Maryland's mines became the most important commodity shipped to Alexandria along with wheat, corn, whiskey, corn meal, and flour. Important exports from Alexandria included fish, salt, plaster, and lumber.

The only interruption in service on the Alexandria Canal came during the Civil War when the canal was used to transfer Federal troops and supplies. But in 1886, a break in the aqueduct coincided with the demand for a toll-free bridge across the Potomac River and service on the canal came to an end. The canal structure was abandoned, and, finally, in 1923, the aqueduct bridge was removed. During the 1980s, Alexandria archaeologists discovered and restored the tidal basin and lift lock in Alexandria.

Scope and Content:Alexandria (Va.) Canal Company Account of Tolls Collected, 1845-1853, records the tolls received at Alexandria and Washington, D.C. for both ascending and descending trade. Information found in each entry includes the number and date of the way bill, name of the boat master, boat name, name and quantity of items on board, total amount of freight, number of weekly receipts, and the total toll received. Items shipped on the descending trade included wood, wheat, flour, corn, seed, apples, whiskey, lime, pork, coal, and iron. Fish, salt, plaster, and lumber were among the exports shipped out of Alexandria on the ascending trade.

Barcode number 1112996: Alexandria (Va.) Canal Company Account of Tolls Collected 1845-1853

Series II: Unidentified Agent's Account of Newspaper Subscribers, 1804-1808

Extent

1 volume

Physical Location State Records Center

Scope and Content

Historical Information:The unidentified newspaper agent conducted business in Alexandria, Va., during the early nineteenth century.

Scope and Content:Unidentified Agent's Account of Newspaper Subscribers, 1804-1808, records a list of subscribers to various newspapers compiled by an agent operating in Alexandria, Va. Information found in each entry includes the subscriber name, date subscription commenced, and payments made on accounts. Entries are organized by the various newspaper titles. Newspaper titles represented in the volume include *Baltimore Federal Gazette*, *Virginia Herald*, *Boston Gazette*, *National Intelligencer*, and *Washington Federalist*.

Barcode number 1112993: Unidentified Agent's Account of Newspaper Subscribers 1804-1808

Series III: United States Fidelity and Guaranty Company Registers of Bonds and Policies 1912-1942

Extent

3 volumes

Physical Location State Records Center

Scope and Content

Historical Information: United States Fidelity and Guaranty Company (US F & G) was a prominent American insurance company founded in 1896 in Baltimore, Maryland. It was known for its extensive range of insurance products and significant historical impact in the industry. The company operated until 1998. Along with the home office, the company maintained many branches operating in other states--such as Alexandria and Richmond in Virginia.

Scope and Content: United States Fidelity and Guaranty Company Registers of Bonds and Policies, consist of three volumes recorded in City of Alexandria. The bulk of the bonds and/or policies date from 1920-1941. Each book contains a standardized form including information such as the number of the policy or bond, the date of the bond or policy, the name of the assured or principal, location of risk, the character of the risk (title of person taking out policy--includes notaries, contractors, clerks, receivers, trustees, guardians, etc.), amount of bond or policy, the date premium paid to agent and the date premium paid to company. The first two volumes contain an alphabetical index. Representatives of the company and/or accredited traveling representatives recorded all the entries in each volume.

**Barcode number 1112714: United States Fidelity and Guaranty Company
Register of Bonds and Policies 1912-1928 (bulk 1920-1926)**

**Barcode number 1112715: United States Fidelity and Guaranty Company
Register 1927-1942 (bulk 1932-1938)**

**Barcode number 1112713: United States Fidelity and Guaranty Company
Register 1934-1942 (bulk 1938-1941)**