

A Guide to the Southampton County (Va.) Judgments (Freedom Suits), 1828

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History

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Profile Description

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Descriptive Summary

Barcode number

0007532872

Language

English

Collector

Southampton County (Va.) Circuit Court

Physical Characteristics

.10 cu. ft.

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 transfers of court papers from Southampton County.

Preferred Citation

Southampton County (Va.) Judgments (Freedom Suits), 1828. Local government records collection, Southampton County Court Records. The Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia 23219.

Adjunct Descriptive Data

Related Material

Additional Southampton County Court Records are found at the Library of Virginia.

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

Additional freedom suits may be found in the Southampton County Chancery Causes. Search the [the Chancery Records Index](#) found on the Library of Virginia web site. Enter the tilde symbol in the plaintiff surname field.

Historical Information

Slaves sued for emancipation in freedom suits based on the following: they were descendant(s) of a free female ancestor, typically a Native American (Henings Statutes, volume 2, p.170); failure of slaveowner(s) to abide by the 1778 slave nonimportation act (Henings Statutes, volume 9, pp. 471-472); or claimed to have been freed by slaveowner(s) by deed of emancipation or last will and testament (Henings Statutes volume 11, pp. 39-40)

Southampton County was named, in the opinion of many authorities, for Henry Wriothesley, third earl of Southampton and treasurer of the Virginia Company of London from 1620 to 1624. It is more likely, however, that the county was named for the borough of Southampton in England. Southampton County was formed in 1749 from Isle of Wight County, and part of Nansemond County was added in 1786. The county seat is Courtland.

Scope and Content

Southampton County (Va.) Judgments (Freedom Suits), 1828, consist of suits initiated by slaves seeking to gain their freedom on the law side of the court. Cases are identified by style of suit consisting of plaintiff and defendant names. Surnames of others involved in a suit, including secondary plaintiffs and defendants, witnesses, deponents and affiants, and family members with surnames different from the plaintiff or defendant are indexed. Also identified are names of slaves and slaveowners found in suit as well as whether slave(s) won their freedom. Predominant documents found in freedom suits include petitions, records of suits, depositions, affidavits, wills, among other items. Information found in documents include slave's argument for freedom, acquisition of slaves by slaveowners, slave ancestry, and relationship between slaves and slaveowners.

Judgments (Freedom Suits) are useful when researching local history and genealogical information, particularly for African Americans. They are a valuable source of local, state, social, and legal history and serve as a primary source for understanding a locality's history.

Index Terms

Corporate Names:

Southampton County (Va.) Circuit Court.

Subjects:

African Americans -- Virginia.

Free African Americans -- Virginia -- Southampton County.

Slaveholders -- Virginia -- Southampton County.

Slavery -- Virginia -- Southampton County.

Geographical Names:

Southampton County (Va.) -- History.

Southampton County (Va.) -- Genealogy

Genre and Form Terms:

Civil actions -- Virginia -- Southampton County.

Freedom suits -- Virginia -- Southampton County.

Judicial records -- Virginia -- Southampton County.

Local government records -- Virginia -- Southampton County.

Petitions -- Virginia -- Southampton County.

Wills -- Virginia -- Southampton County.

Arrangement

Arranged chronologically.

List of Freedom Suits

1828 October: Petition of Ethrington Gardner (alias Etherton Gardner)

1828 October: Winnifred Newsum vs. Cooper Waller