

A Guide to the Norfolk County (Va.) Judgments (Freedom Suits), 1819

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History

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Title Statement

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Profile Description

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Descriptive Summary

Barcode number

0007582021

Language

English

Collector

Norfolk County (Va.) Circuit Court

Physical Characteristics

.10 cu. ft.

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 a transfer of court papers from Norfolk County.

Preferred Citation

Norfolk County (Va.) Judgments (Freedom Suits), 1819. Local government records collection, Norfolk County (Va.) County Court Records. The Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va. 23219.

Adjunct Descriptive Data

Related Material

Additional Norfolk County court records can be found at the Library of Virginia.

Historical Information

Norfolk County was created in 1691 when Lower Norfolk County was divided into Norfolk County and Princess Anne County. Norfolk County became extinct on 1 January 1963, when it was consolidated with the city of South Norfolk to form the city of Chesapeake. The county seat was Portsmouth.

Slaves sued for emancipation in freedom suits based on the following: they were descendant(s) of a free female ancestor, typically a Native American (Hening 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)

Scope and Content

Norfolk County (Va.) County Judgments (Freedom Suits), 1819, consist of one suit: Peter, a slave vs. John Shipp. 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:

Norfolk County (Va.) Circuit Court.

Subjects:

African Americans -- History -- Virginia -- Norfolk County.

Slaveholders -- Virginia -- Norfolk County.

Slavery -- Virginia -- Norfolk County.

Geographical Names:

Norfolk County (Va.) -- History.

Genre and Form Terms:

Civil actions -- Virginia -- Norfolk County.
Freedom suits -- Virginia -- Norfolk County.
Judicial records -- Virginia -- Norfolk County.
Local government records -- Virginia -- Norfolk County.

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