

# A Guide to the Danville (Va.) Chancery Causes, 1842-1913 (bulk 1880-1910)

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## History

**Processed by:** Field Processors

## Title Statement

A Guide to the Danville (Va.) Chancery Causes, 1842-1913 (bulk 1880-1910)

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## Profile Description

**Creation:** Machine-readable finding aid derived from MARC record, created by Greg Crawford, 09 February 2017

**Language Usage:** Description is in English

## Descriptive Summary

### Language

English

### Collector

Danville (Va.) Circuit Court

### Physical Characteristics

Digital images; 79.65 cubic feet (174 boxes)

### Location

State Records Center Archival Annex

### Repository

The Library of Virginia

## Administrative Information

### Access Restrictions

Danville (Va.) Chancery Causes, 1842-1913, 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 on use.

## Acquisition Information

These records came to the Library of Virginia in a transfer of court papers from Danville (Va.) in 2009 under the accession number 44112.

## Processing Information

Danville (Va.) Chancery Causes, 1842-1913, were processed by field processors before 2009.

Digital images were generated by Backstage Library Works through the Library of Virginia's Circuit Court Records Preservation Program in 2015.

Encoded by G. Crawford: February 2017; updated by C. Collins: October 2023.

## Preferred Citation

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# Adjunct Descriptive Data

## Related Material

Additional Danville (Va.) 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](#).

## 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:** Danville, in Pittsylvania County, was named for the Dan River on which the city is located. Danville was established in 1793, was incorporated as a town in 1830, and became a city in 1890. The town of North Danville, incorporated in 1877 and renamed Neopolis in 1894, was added in 1896.

## Scope and Content

Danville (Va.) Chancery Causes, 1842-1913, 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, Ayres, Bass, Bethell (also spelled Bethel), Boisseau, Boswell, Brown, Cabell, Carter, Claiborne, Clark, Coleman, Coles, Conrad, Corbin, Cosby, Crawley, Crews, Crumpton, Davis, Elliott, Ferrell, Fitzgerald, Freeman, Fuller, Gerst, Gravely, Graves, Green, Hairston, Hall, Harris, Harrison, Harvey, Hill, Holland, Hunt, Hutchings, Johnson, Johnston, Jones, Keen, Lawson, Lewis, Lipscomb (also spelled Lipscombe), Martin, Miller, Millner, Mitchell, Moore, Motley, Noell, Pace, Pairo, Patton, Penn, Richardson, Robertson, Robinson, Scott, Smith, Spencer, Stokes, Swanson, Talbott, Taylor, Thomas, Waddill, Walker, Walters, Watkins, Watson, White, Williams, Williamson, Wilson, Withers, Wood, Wooding, and Yates.

The Bank of Danville is the primary defendant in 12 suits that ended between 1890 and 1912. The Town of Danville is involved in 13 suits that ended between 1860 and 1890 as the primary defendant, while the City of Danville is the primary defendant in 10 suits that ended between 1890 and 1913.

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

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