

A Guide to the Orange County (Va.) Chancery Causes, 1736-1952

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History

Processed by: J. Watkinson, V. Brooks, and Field Processors

Title Statement

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Profile Description

Creation: Machine-readable finding aid derived from MARC record, created by Greg Crawford, 24 March 2022

Language Usage: Description is in English

Descriptive Summary

Language

English

Collector

Orange County (Va.) Circuit Court

Physical Characteristics

Digital images; 11.2 cubic feet (24 boxes).

Location

State Records Center

Repository

The Library of Virginia

Administrative Information

Access Restrictions

Orange County (Va.) Chancery Causes, 1736-1952, 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.

Acquisition Information

These records came to the Library of Virginia in a transfer of court papers from Orange County (Va.) under an undated accession.

Processing Information

Chancery Causes 1736-1899 were processed by Library of Virginia staff and completed in 2007. Chancery Causes 1900-1952 were processed in the locality by field processors beginning in 1994 after receiving a processing grant.

Digital images were generated from microfilm in 2022 by Backstage Library Works through the Circuit Court Records Preservation Program.

Preferred Citation

Orange County (Va.) Chancery Causes, 1736-1952. (Cite style of suit and chancery index no.). Local Government Records Collection, Orange County Court Records. The Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia.

Adjunct Descriptive Data

Related Material

Additional Orange County 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](#).

Additional cases may be available at the Circuit Court Clerk's Office.

Historical Information

Context of 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: Orange County according to most accounts, was named for William of Orange, the Dutch prince who became King William III of England in 1688. It is more probable, however, that it was named for William IV, prince of Orange-Nassau, who married Anne, eldest daughter of King George II, in 1734-the year that Orange County was formed from Spotsylvania County. The county court first met on 21 January 1735. The county seat is Orange.

Scope and Content

Orange County (Va.) Chancery Causes, 1736-1952 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.

Location of Originals

Orange County (Va.) Chancery Causes, 1900-1952 are retained in the locality. Contact the County Clerk for access.

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. Index numbers are not recorded on file folders.

Arrangement of documents follows no particular order.

Selected Suits of Interest

Since the processing of this locality, information gathering standards have changed. At this time there are no suits of interest available for this locality.

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