

A Guide to the Hampton, City of/Elizabeth City County (Va.) Chancery Causes, 1950-1965

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History

Processed by: UNPROCESSED

Title Statement

A Guide to the Hampton, City of/Elizabeth City County (Va.) Chancery Causes, 1950-1965

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Profile Description

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Language Usage: Description is in English

Descriptive Summary

Language

English

Collector

Hampton (Va.) Circuit Court

Physical Characteristics

129.225 cubic feet (130 boxes)

Location

Library of Virginia

Repository

Library of Virginia

Administrative Information

Access Restrictions

The majority of the Hampton, City of/Elizabeth City County (Va.) Chancery Causes, 1950-1965, are unprocessed. At this time, there are no plans to process and index these records. Contact Archives Research Services for availability.

One chancery cause, dated circa 1954, is processed, but indexed information and digital images are not available at this time. Contact Archives Research Services for availability.

Use Restrictions

There are no restrictions on use.

Acquisition Information

A portion of these records came to the Library of Virginia in a transfer of court papers from Hampton (Va.) in 2012 under the accession number 50572. Additional records were transferred to the library as part of an undated accession.

Processing Information

Encoded by C. Collins: March 2024.

Preferred Citation

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Adjunct Descriptive Data

Related Material

See also: [A Guide to the Elizabeth City County \(Va.\) Chancery Causes, 1747-1935 \(bulk 1880-1913\).](#)

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: Elizabeth City County (extinct) was named for Elizabeth, daughter of King James I, and was one of the original shires, or counties, first enumerated in 1634. It became extinct on 1 July 1952 when it was incorporated into the city of Hampton, which was the county seat.

Locality History: Hampton was located in Elizabeth City County, which is now extinct. It takes its name from Hampton Creek, earlier called Southampton River in honor of the earl of Southampton, an important figure in the Virginia Company of London. An Indian town stood on the site in 1607, when Captain John Smith visited the area. The colonists established a village there in 1610 and a trading post in 1630. Hampton was established by an act of assembly in 1680 and was designated as a port of entry in 1705. It was first incorporated as a town in March 1849, but the act was repealed the following December. It was incorporated again in 1852, but the act of incorporation was repealed in 1860. The General Assembly incorporated the town of Hampton in 1887 for a third time, and it became a city by court order on 4 March 1908. It was greatly enlarged on 1 July 1952 by a merger with Elizabeth City County and the town of Phoebus; the county and town thereby became extinct.

Scope and Content

Hampton, City of/Elizabeth City County (Va.) Chancery Causes, 1950-1965, 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.

Arrangement

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availability.

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