



LIBRARY OF VIRGINIA

Sandra Gioia Treadway
Librarian of Virginia

Library of Virginia Makes Goochland County Chancery Records Available Online ~Five Million Images From Across Virginia Reveal Stories of Our Past ~ Contact: Janice M. Hathcock - 804-692-3592

For Immediate Release

The Goochland County Chancery Records from 1731 through 1913 are now available online from any Internet connected computer. Because these records rely so heavily on testimony from witnesses, they offer a unique glimpse into the lives of Virginians from the early 18th century through the First World War.

The Goochland County Chancery Causes include the five millionth chancery image scanned by the Library of Virginia. The records are the latest local records to be processed, indexed and digitally reformatted as part of the Library's innovative Circuit Court Records Preservation Program.

"The Library is delighted to have scanned five million chancery images. We are especially pleased that the five millionth image is one that preserves the history of Goochland County and its inhabitants," said Librarian of Virginia Sandra G. Treadway. "We began this project in earnest in 2005 and now have scanned chancery records from 47 localities across Virginia."

A broad spectrum of citizens—rich and poor, black and white, slave and free—appear in the records. Chancery cases are a valuable source of local, state, social, and legal history and serve as a primary source for understanding a locality's history. They show the growth of business and industry in a locality, from taverns and churches to mines and creameries.

Among the 119,000 images scanned from the Goochland collection are ones related to disputes over land, wills, divorces, debts, and business issues. The names of slaves suing for their freedom, of the descendants of the Huguenot settlers of Manakin-Towne, of planters, millers, coal miners, church leaders, and ordinary citizens appear in the records.

Carefully-drawn plats sometimes illustrate cases involving disputed property lines and mining rights. Ornate marriage certificates and licenses accompany some divorce suits. Broadsides advertise the auction of farms and businesses describing the land and its features or the business and its equipment.

These records are important because they help document the history of Goochland County and its inhabitants," said Carl Childs, director of Local Records Services at the Library. "To truly understand the history of a region, a person must research the records of the local circuit court, particularly the chancery records, as they provide critical information for historians, genealogists, and other researchers." Childs credits Circuit Court Clerk Lee G. Turner and her staff for their strong commitment to preserving these important records. "Their recognition of the importance of these records," he explains, "helped ensure the success of this project." For more information about the chancery records, please contact Carl Childs, carl.childs@lva.virginia.gov or 804-692-3739.

EDITOR'S ADVISORY : A demonstration of the online Goochland Chancery Causes in the historic Goochland Courthouse will be presented on October 14 at 10:00 a.m. Present will be The Honorable Lee G. Turner, Clerk of the Goochland Circuit Court, James Richmond, Deputy Clerk, Dr. Sandra G. Treadway, Librarian of Virginia, Suzy Szasz Palmer, Interim Archivist of Virginia, and Carl Childs, Director of Local Services with the Library of Virginia.