

Rockingham County (VA) Land Records

Records Group Summary

Title	Rockingham County (VA) Land Records
Reference Code	RCLR
Inclusive Dates	1778-Present
Document Creator	Rockingham County Circuit Court; Rockingham County Chancery Court
Extent	115 linear sq. feet
Language	English
Location	Rockingham County Circuit Court Clerk's Office
Bio/Historical Note	Rockingham County was established in 1778 from Augusta County. In 1780, Harrisonburg was named the county seat and incorporated as a town. The county is named for Charles Watson-Wenworth, 2nd Marquess of Rockingham. Since its establishment, many individuals have called Rockingham County their home, and unsurprisingly, the record of land is quite extensive. Because of this, the Land Records collection houses many different types of records

Scope and Content	<p>The records housed within the Land Records collection vary, and a great deal of information can be found here. All deeds, land indentures, land petitions, maps, and land tax books can be found here. Our Maps series consists of maps, relating to the creation of the town of Shendun, Grottoes, and the Shenandoah National Park. The Land Indenture series houses all indentures of land made in the County of Rockingham from 1778-1850. A land indenture can be defined as a legal contract between two parties representing the pledge, promises, and covenants of its issuing parties. In many ways, land indentures resemble (and often act as) deeds. Petitions vary in their reasons, but many of them were created as "attachments against property." Finally, the Land Tax Books hold annual lists of land owners for Rockingham County from 1778 to present. Information recorded in Virginia land tax records changes relatively little from 1782 to the present. The early laws required the tax commissioner in each district to record in "a fair alphabetical list" the names of persons owning land or town lots, the quantity of land owned, the value of the land or lots, and the amount of tax owed. Each tract or lot owned by an individual was to be entered separately. As time went on, some additional information was included such as whether the estate was held in fee or for life, distance from the courthouse, and an explanation of alterations to the land. Land owned by African Americans began to be listed separately within each district in 1891.</p>
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Arrangement	<p>Deed books are arranged chronologically and are readily available on the first floor of the courthouse in our Genealogy room. Each deed book is also indexed and easily searchable through our inhouse information management system. For this reason, they do not appear on this finding aid. The Land Indentures and Land Petitions series are arranged chronologically, and alphabetically by the last name of the Grantor. All Land Tax books are arranged chronologically.</p>
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Processing Information	<p>From 2015-2019 the archive was largely run by student volunteers untrained in archival arrangement and description. As a result, the records had been stored without clear organization. Any underlying system already in place was unclear.</p>
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Contents		
Series I	Land Indentures	Location
Box I	1778-1798	C.005 _003 _006*
Box II	1799-1850	C.005 _003 _006

Series II	Land Petitions	
Box III	1914-1930	C.005_003_005
Box IV	1931-1941	C.005_003_005
Series III	Maps	
Roll Tube I	Shendun 1890	C.005_001_006
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Series IV	Rockingham County Land Tax Books	Basement
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Land Book Helbert-May	1986	
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Series V	Entry Book	Location
Book I	1776-1795 Original	C.005_002_004
Book II	Transcript Part I	C.005_002_004
Book III	Transcript Part II	C.005_002_004
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*Bay_column_row of the rolling shelves		