

The following abbreviations and phrases are commonly found in legal documents from the 17th through 19th centuries. Please use this list to assist you with reading or transcribing Library of Virginia materials, particularly from local court records collections such as those in Virginia Untold.

&C – see ETC

ACK or ACK'D – acknowledged

A.R. – “in the year of reign”; commonly to precede or follow the name of a public official such as a court clerk

ADMR – administrator; a person appointed by the court to manage or take care of the assets or liabilities of a deceased person

ADMS – administrators; plural of administrator

ADMX – administratrix; feminine of administrator

Aforesaid / Said – denoting a thing or person previously mentioned

ASGN – assignee; a person to whom a transfer of all or part of another's property, interests or rights is made

C.C. – court clerk

CERT – certified

COMR – commissioner; an officer who is charged with the administration of the laws relating to some particular subject matter; appointed to hear facts and report to court

COMT – committee; a person, or board of persons, to whom the handling of an estate has been committed, especially one appointed to handle the estate of someone judged insane

CRED – creditors; a person to whom a debt is owed by another person who is the “debtor”

Cr – abbreviation for credit

CUR – curator; a temporary guardian appointed to take care of the estate of a minor above a certain age, a lunatic, a spendthrift, or other person not regarded as competent to administer it for himself

Dr – abbreviation for debit

DEV – devisee; a person to whom lands or other real property are given in a will

Deliv'd – delivered; referring to a legal document delivered to court or appropriate party

DIST – distributee; an heir; a person entitled to share in the distribution of an estate

ETC – et cetera; and others

Et at / Et al – Latin for “and others”

Et uxor – Latin for “and wife”

Ex Parte – “on behalf of” or in the interests of one side only

EXR – executor; a person named in a will to settle an estate

EXRS – executors; plural of executor

EXX – executrix; feminine of executor

GDN – guardian; one who legally has responsibility for the care, management and estate of a minor child; person who manages the right and property of another

Grantor – the seller

Grantee – the purchaser

Heretofore – “up to now” or “before this time”

Know all men to whom these presents – “take note”; often used to introduce a legal document

LEGT – legatee; usually a person to whom personal property is given in a will

RECV – receiver; a neutral person appointed by the court to receive and preserve the property or fund in litigation, and receive its rents, issues and profits, and apply or dispose of them at the direction of the court

Relict – the surviving spouse, usually refers to the widow

REP – representative; one who represents others or another in a special capacity

SHFF – sheriff; elected constitutional officer responsible for law enforcement

SEAL – usually presented with a decorative circle or bubble next to a signature

SURVPARTNER – surviving partner; the living one of two or more persons in a business relationship after the death of the other or others

Testate – died leaving a will

Testator – person making the will

Teste – witness, indicates a copy (recorded in the courthouse)

To Wit – “that is to say”

TRST – trustee; one in whom an estate, interest or power is vested, under an express or implied agreement to administer or exercise it for the benefit or use of another

Vizt or Viz – Latin for “that is to say,” “namely,” or “to wit”

Witnesseth – “take notice of”; commonly separates the preliminaries in a contract from the other terms of the agreement

Additional legal terms can be searched in The Law Dictionary: thelawdictionary.org

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