

A Guide to the Pittsylvania County (Va.) Enslaved and Free Records, 1860-1864

Pittsylvania County (Va.) Enslaved and Free Records, 1860-1864
1860-1864

A Collection in the Library of Virginia
Library of Virginia
2017

Author: Greg Crawford

History

Processed by: Chris Smith

Title Statement

A Guide to the Pittsylvania County (Va.) Enslaved and Free Records, 1860-1864

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Collection: 0007696169

Author: Greg Crawford

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Profile Description

Creation: Machine-readable finding aid derived from being created directly into EAD, created by Greg Crawford, 11 September 2017

Language Usage: Description is in English

Descriptive Summary

Language

English

Collector

Pittsylvania County (Va.) Circuit Court

Physical Characteristics

.45 cu.ft. (1 box)

Location

Library of Virginia

Repository

The Library of Virginia

Administrative Information

Access Restrictions

"Free Negro" tax lists, 1860, are digitized and available through [Virginia Untold: The African American Narrative Digital Collection](#) on the Library of Virginia website. Please use digital images.

Use Restrictions

There are no restrictions.

Acquisition Information

These records came to the Library of Virginia in transfer of court records from Pittsylvania County in an undated accession.

Processing Information

Starting in 2023, Library of Virginia archival staff in partnership with the Virginia Untold Project Manager began efforts to describe records related to free and enslaved Black and multiracial people in a manner that improved the historical context of the records. In doing so, in some cases material once described within the "Free and Enslaved" record group for a locality may no longer be described within this record. When this has occurred, please see the Processing Information and Related Materials section for records that have been described separately.

"Free Negro" Registrations, 1821-1864, were removed from this record in January 2024 and are now described in the Pittsylvania County (Va.) Records Related to the Registration of Free Persons, 1807-1865.

Apprentice indenture, 1806, was removed from this record in January 2024 and are now described in the Pittsylvania County (Va.) Apprenticeship Indentures, 1806.

Encoded by G. Crawford, 2017; edited by M. Mason, January 2024.

Preferred Citation

Pittsylvania County (Va.) Enslaved and Free Records, 1860-1864. Local government records collection, Pittsylvania County Court Records. The Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia.

Adjunct Descriptive Data

Related Material

See also: [Pittsylvania County \(Va.\) Apprenticeship Indentures, 1806](#)

See also: [Pittsylvania County \(Va.\) Records Related to the Registration of Free Persons, 1807-1865](#)

See also: [Pittsylvania County \(Va.\) Judgments \(Freedom Suits\), 1793-1843](#)

Records related to free and enslaved people of Pittsylvania County (Va.) and other localities are available through the [Virginia Untold: The African American Narrative Digital Collection](#) on the Library of Virginia website.

Additional Pittsylvania County (Va.) court records can be found on microfilm at the Library of Virginia. Consult ["A Guide to Virginia County and City Records on Microfilm."](#)

Historical Information

Context for Record Type:

Free and Enslaved Records

The Free and Enslaved Records collection is comprised of miscellaneous records related to the regulation and policing of both enslaved and free Black and Multiracial people in Pittsylvania County. The localities/local government authorities were largely responsible for enforcing laws that restricted the movement of enslaved and free Black and multiracial people and the resulting documentation was often filed in the circuit courts. The ways in which local authorities enacted legal measures against or on behalf of enslaved and free Black and multiracial people varied from locality to locality; therefore records were not necessarily standardized or filed and retained in a consistent manner. This collection is topical and a means by which to compile miscellaneous documents related to free and enslaved people that are not established local government record types.

"Free Negro Tax" Records

In 1801, the Virginia Legislature passed an act requiring commissioners of the revenue to annually return a complete list of all free Black Virginians within their districts, with their names, sex, place of abode, and trades. Delinquent tax lists include names of free Black individuals returned delinquent and sometimes why they were returned, such as "no property," "removed," or "not found." In 1853, the General Assembly passed a law allowing the taxes raised on free Black men and women to be collected in a fund to be applied to the

removal of these individuals as a part of the recolonization effort.

Requisitions for Public Use

These records include requisition lists filed in local courts and payroll records of the Virginia Engineer Department. Information found in these records include names of enslaved and free Black people, locality of origin, occupation, location of fortification, names of enslavers, and monetary value of enslaved people. Virginia enacted legislation as early as July 1, 1861 during the Civil War to requisition enslaved and free Black people to work on military fortifications and other defensive works around the commonwealth. From 1862 to 1863, at the request of the president of the Confederate States, the General Assembly passed three more laws that requisitioned enslaved laborers to work on fortifications and other works of the defense. Each county and city were given a certain number of enslaved laborers that had to be provided to the government under the requisition act. Enslaved people requisitioned for service did not have a choice. In many cases, the alternative was severe punishment or to be hanged.

Payroll records of the Engineer Department include payrolls of enslaved people that worked on fortifications and other defenses as the result of an 1861 Act of Assembly calling for defense of the Commonwealth. The "slave rolls" provide the enslaved person's name, the hirer's name, time employed as well as rates of pay, and other amounts received. Enslaved people were employed to work on the defenses at Fort Boykin, Fort Huger, Fort Lowry, Gloucester Point, Hardy's Bluff, Jamestown Island, Lowry's Point, Mulberry Island, Williamsburg, and Yorktown. Note that the payroll registers in this collection do not relate directly to the lists of people requisitioned for public use by the Federal Government. Those payrolls are available digitally via the National Archives catalog.

Locality History: Pittsylvania County was named in honor of William Pitt, first earl of Chatham, the English statesman. It was formed from Halifax County in 1766. The county court first met on 26 June 1767. The county seat is Chatham.

Scope and Content

Materials in the Library of Virginia's collections contain historical terms, phrases, and images that are offensive to modern readers. These include demeaning and dehumanizing references to race, ethnicity, and nationality; enslaved or free status; physical and mental ability; religion; sex; and sexual orientation and gender identity.

Pittsylvania County (Va.) Enslaved and Free Records, 1860-1864, includes "Free Negro" tax lists, and requisitions for public use.

"Free Negro" tax lists, 1860, created by the Deputy Sheriff, consists of the names of free Black and multiracial individuals who have not paid their taxes for the years, 1857-1859. The list also includes the number of years of unpaid taxes and the amount due.

Requisitions for public use records, 1863-1864, undated, consist of records related to requisition of enslaved individuals for work on public defense fortification during the Civil War. The names of enslaved individuals are largely not present in these records. The records include lists [number] of enslaved men ages 18-55 from various districts in Pittsylvania County (many of these lists include the name of the enslaver, number of enslaved individuals the enslaver currently enslaves, number of enslaved individuals sent voluntarily, and number sent went required by legislation). Additional documents include correspondence concerning enslaved individuals sent by who are unable to work; appointments of commissioners to compile the lists; and lists of enslavers compiled to ascertain who is legible for the draft.

Arrangement

This collection is arranged

- Series I: Enslaved and Free Records, 1860-1864

Contents List

Series I: Enslaved and Free Records, 1860-1864

Extent

.45 cubic feet (1 box)

Arrangement

by record type; then chronologically

Barcode number 0007696169: Free and Enslaved Records 1821-1864

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