

A Guide to the Lunenburg County (Va.) Free and Enslaved Records, 1802-1865

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A Collection in the Library of Virginia
Library of Virginia
2006

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History

Processed by: Sarah Nerney

Title Statement

A Guide to the Lunenburg County (Va.) Free and Enslaved Records, 1802-1865

Subtitle: Lunenburg County (Va.) Free and Enslaved Records, 1802-1865

Author: Sarah Nerney

Publication Statement

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Profile Description

Creation: Machine-readable finding aid derived from MARC record, created by Sarah Nerney, 20 February 2013

Language Usage: Description is in English

Revision Description

2013-11-21 Converted to schema conforming EAD by dtd2schema.vh.xsl.

Descriptive Summary

Language

English

Collector

Lunenburg County (Va.) Circuit Court.

Physical Characteristics

.23 cubic feet (1 box)

Location

Library of Virginia

Repository

The Library of Virginia

Administrative Information

Access Restrictions

Records concerning Requisitions for Public Use and "Free Negro" tax lists, 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 transfers of court papers from Lunenburg County in 2006 under accession 42852 and 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.

Certificates of Registration were removed from this record in February 2024 and are now described in the Lunenburg County (Va.) Certificates of Importation, 1812-1813

Encoded by S. Nerney, 2006; updated by M. Mason, February 2024.

Preferred Citation

Lunenburg County (Va.) Free and Enslaved Records, 1802-1865. Local government records collection, Lunenburg County Court Records. The Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia 23219.

Adjunct Descriptive Data

Related Material

See also: [Lunenburg County \(Va.\) Records Related to the Registration of Free Persons, 1800-1865](#)

See also: [Lunenburg County \(Va.\) Certificates of Importation, 1812-1813](#)

See also: [Lunenburg County \(Va.\) Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands Records, 1865-1869](#)

See also: [Lunenburg County \(Va.\) Apprenticeship Indentures, 1799-1868](#)

See also: [Lunenburg County \(Va.\) Business Records, 1835-1924](#) contains accounts books pertaining to enslaved laborers and the selling of enslaved individuals.

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

Additional Lunenburg 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 Lunenburg 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. 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. 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.

Locality History: Lunenburg County was named for George II, duke of Brunswick-Luneburg, a German possession of the Hanoverian kings of England. It was formed from Brunswick County in 1745.

Scope and Content

Lunenburg County (Va.) Free and Enslaved Records, 1802-1865, includes "Free Negro" tax lists, 1802-1810; Requisition for Public Use Records, 1862-1865 and undated; and a sale account, 1825.

"Free Negro" tax lists, 1802-1810, consists of four tax lists created by a Commissioners of Revenue for the county. These tax lists record the name, sex, and place of abode of each person on the list and the trade or occupation for each head of household. On the 1802 and one of the 1803 lists, families are grouped together as one entry and familial relationships are given. Occasionally a person is noted as being emancipated from slavery.

Requisition for Public Use Records, 1862-1865 and undated, consists of court orders, 1863-1865; a letter, 1864, from Governor William Smith in response to a protest from Lunenburg citizens over the requisitions; printed communications, 1864, from the Virginia Executive Department; and lists, 1862-1865 and undated, of enslaved persons sent under requisition to work on the public defenses.

Court orders, 1863-1865, consist of four orders concerning the requisitioning of enslaved persons for use on the public works. The orders either command the justices to make lists of eligible enslaved persons to make up Lunenburg's required allotment or concern resisting the state's requisition.

The letter, 1864, from Governor William Smith is a reply to the citizens of Lunenburg who had submitted to him resolutions opposing some of the requirements of the enslaved persons requisition. Smith encourages Lunenburg's citizens to participate cheerfully in the requisition or face the Confederate impressment officer.

Communications, 1864, from the Executive Department are printed letters from the governor and annexed schedules concerning the requisition of enslaved persons to work on the fortifications at Richmond. There are two letters, two schedules, and a copy of the March 13, 1863, Act of Assembly passed to amend and re-enact the 1862 act to provide for the public defense. The letters order the county to comply and the annexed schedules indicate how many slaves each county is required to provide.

Lists, 1862-1865 and undated, of enslaved individuals sent under requisition to work on the public defenses are lists of enslavers and the numbers of enslaved persons that they have sent under the requisition. Enslaved names are not given. Some of the lists have multiple columns indicating numbers of enslaved individuals sent on different dates. Some lists note exemptions or other information about a enslaver and his particular situation regarding the requisition. A few of the lists seem to indicate an individual enslaver's total number of persons enslaved as well as the numbers sent to the public works. Some of the lists are recorded by numbered magisterial district and several of the lists are undated.

Lastly, include a sale account, 1825 July 11, for the sale of Jack, a self-emancipated enslaved man, who after being held in the county jail was sold the Richard May, the highest Bidder.

Arrangement

This collection is arranged into

- Series I: Free and enslaved records, 1802-1865, record arranged by record type then loosely chronological

Contents List

Series I: Free and enslaved records 1802-1865

Extent

.23 cubic feet (1 box)

Physical Location Library of Virginia

Arrangement

Chronological

Barcode number 1138026: Free and Enslaved Records, 1780-1868

Library of Virginia