

# A Guide to the Brunswick County (Va.) Free and Enslaved Records, 1851-1862

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A Collection in the Library of Virginia  
Library of Virginia  
2006

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## History

**Processed by:** Library of Virginia staff

## Title Statement

A Guide to the Brunswick County (Va.) Free and Enslaved Records, 1851-1862

**Subtitle:** Brunswick County (Va.) Free and Enslaved, 1851-1862

**Author:** Sarah Nerney

## Publication Statement

**Date:** © 2006 By The Library of Virginia. All Rights Reserved.

**Publisher:** Library of Virginia

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## Profile Description

**Creation:** Machine-readable finding aid derived from being created directly into EAD, created by Sarah Nerney and edited by Mary Ann Mason, 31 March 2006

**Language Usage:** Description is in English

## Revision Description

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

## Descriptive Summary

### Language

English

### Creator

Brunswick County (Va.) Circuit Court.

### Physical Characteristics

.225 cu. ft. (1 box)

### Location

Library of Virginia

### Repository

The Library of Virginia

## Administrative Information

## Access Restrictions

Brunswick County (Va.) Free and Enslaved Records, 1851-1862, 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 a transfer of court papers from Brunswick County (Va.) as part of 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 and certificates were removed from this record in January 2025 and are now described in Brunswick County (Va.) Records related to the Registration of Free Persons, 1803-1864.

These records were processed, scanned, and indexed by L. Neuroth and LVA staff for the purposes of digitizing them for the digital project Virginia Untold: The African American Narrative at an unknown date.

Encoded by S. Nerney: March 2006; updated by M. Mason: February 2024 and C. Collins: January 2025.

## Preferred Citation

Brunswick County (Va.) Free and Enslaved Records, 1851-1862. Local government records collection, Brunswick County Court Records. The Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia.

# Adjunct Descriptive Data

## Related Material

See also: [Brunswick County \(Va.\) Records related to the Registration of Free Persons, 1803-1864](#)

See also: [Brunswick County \(Va.\) Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands Records, 1865-1868](#)

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

Additional Brunswick County (Va.) Court Records can be found on microfilm at The Library of Virginia web site. Consult ["A Guide to Virginia County and City Records on Microfilm."](#)

Brunswick County is one of Virginia's Lost Records Localities. Additional Brunswick County records may be found in the [Lost Records Localities Digital Collection](#) available on the Library of Virginia website.

# 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 Brunswick 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.

**See:** the [Virginia Untold Record Types](#) on the Library of Virginia website for additional context concerning "Free Negro" Tax Records and Requisitions for Public Use.

**Locality History:** Brunswick County was named for the duchy of Brunswick-Lüneburg, one of the German possessions of King George I. It was formed by statute in 1720 from Prince George County and on 31

October 1723 the boundaries of the county were ordered to be laid out, but, because of the sparse population, the county court first met in June 1732. Brunswick County was enlarged by the addition of parts of Surry and Isle of Wight Counties in 1733. The county seat is Lawrenceville.

**Lost Locality Note:** Most loose records prior to 1781 are missing. Pre-1781 volumes that record deeds, court orders, and wills exist.

## 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.*

*The Library of Virginia will at times choose to retain original language in collection descriptions to preserve historical accuracy or to document context. Historical terms and phrases are indicated by the use of quotation marks to differentiate between language taken from a historical source and the language generated by Library of Virginia staff. Examples: Organizational names, titles, place names, and personally chosen identifiers.*

Brunswick County (Va.) Free and Enslaved Records, 1851-1862, consist of "Free Negro" Tax Records, 1851-1862, and Requisitions for Public Use, 1862.

"Free Negro" Tax Records, 1851-1862, are comprised of 22 lists of "free negroes" compiled by the commissioner of the revenue for tax purposes. They record the names of free adult Black persons and free persons of color within a district, as well as their age, sex, and their trade or occupation. Additional information inconsistently noted includes number of children and place of abode.

Requisitions for Public Use, 1861-1862, contain two lists of free Black and Multiracial individuals summoned by the sheriff of Brunswick County to work on the fortifications at Richmond. The first and last names of the men are given, and remarks written beside the names of several men note to whom they had been hired and the date the term of hire was to end. Two additional lists document the number of "able Boded Male Free negroes" between the ages of 18 and 50 in two Brunswick County parishes: Meherrin and St. Andrews.

## Arrangement

This collection is arranged

- Series I: Free and Enslaved Records, 1851-1862, arranged loosely by record type then chronologically.

## Contents List

### **Series I: Free and Enslaved Records, 1851-1862**

#### **Extent**

.225 cu. ft. (1 box)

**Physical Location** Library of Virginia

#### **Arrangement**

Arranged loosely by record type then chronologically

**Barcode number 1138017: Free and Enslaved Records, 1823-1860**