

A Guide to the Fluvanna County (Va.) Records Related to the Registration of Free Persons, 1802-1864

Fluvanna County (Va.) Records Related to the Registration of Free Persons, 1802-1864
1802-1864

A Collection in the Library of Virginia
Library of Virginia
2025

History

Processed by: S. Nerney; L. Neuroth

Title Statement

A Guide to the Fluvanna County (Va.) Records Related to the Registration of Free Persons, 1802-1864

Subtitle: Fluvanna County (Va.) Records Related to the Registration of Free Persons, 1802-1864

Author: Mary Ann Mason

Publication Statement

Date: © 2025 By The Library of Virginia. All Rights Reserved.

Publisher: Library of Virginia

Profile Description

Creation: Machine-readable finding aid derived from MS Word, created by Mary Ann Mason, 23 April 2025

Language Usage: Description is in English

Descriptive Summary

Language

English

Collector

Fluvanna County (Va.) Circuit Court.

Physical Characteristics

digital images; 1 folder.

Location

Library of Virginia

Repository

Library of Virginia

Administrative Information

Access Restrictions

Fluvanna County (Va.) Records Related to the Registration of Free Persons, 1802-1864, 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

The Library of Virginia's digital services department photographed the original pages of the Fluvanna County (Va.) Register of Free Negroes and Mulattoes, 1806-1847, housed at the Fluvanna County Historical Society in 2023 to create the digital images under accession 54545.

The Library of Virginia's Virginia Untold Manager photographed the original six "Free Nrgro" Registrations, housed at the Fluvanna County Historical Society in 2023 to create the digital images in 2023 under accession 54545.

The microfilm copy of these records was generated by The Library of Virginia's Imaging Services Branch.

Processing Information

"Free Negro" Registration Records, 1802-1861, were originally described as part of the Fluvanna County (Va.) Free and Enslaved Records but were removed to the present Fluvanna County (Va.) Records Related to the Registration of Free Persons, to enhance the context between the record types.

Fluvanna County (Va.) Register of Free Negroes, 1851-1864 was previously described on its own but removed to the present Fluvanna County (Va.) Records Related to the Registration of Free Persons, to enhance the context between the record types.

These records have been processed, scanned, and indexed by L. Neuroth and other LVA staff for the purposes of digitizing them for the digital project Virginia Untold: The African American Narrative.

Encoded by M. Mason, April 2025

Preferred Citation

Fluvanna County (Va.) Records Related to the Registration of Free Persons, 1802-1864. Local government records collection, Fluvanna County Court Records. The Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia.

Alternative Form Available

Fluvanna County (Va.) Register of Free Negroes, 1851-1864 is available on microfilm as Fluvanna County (Va.) Reels 26 and 48

Custodial History

The Fluvanna County (Va.) Register of Free Negroes, 1851-1864, came to the Library of Virginia in 2010 for the purposes of scanning and duplication and was returned to the locality in 2011.

Photocopy of the Fluvanna County (Va.) Register of Free Negroes, 1851-1864 came to the Library of Virginia in 2004 under accession 41352, and was deaccessioned as a non-record in April 2025.

Adjunct Descriptive Data

Related Material

See also: [Fluvanna County \(Va.\) Free and Enslaved Records](#)

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

Additional Fluvanna 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."

Location of Originals

Register of Free Negroes, 1806-1847, is held by the Fluvanna County Historical Society.

Register of Free Negroes, 1851-1864, is held by the Fluvanna County Circuit Court.

Historical Information

"Free Negro" Registers:

In 1793, the Virginia General Assembly specified that "free Negroes or mulattoes" were required to be registered and numbered in a book to be kept by the town clerk, which shall specify "age, name, colour, and stature, by whom, and in what court the said negro or mulatto was emancipated; or that such negro or mulatto was born free." The process was extended to counties in 1803. Although some clerks were already recording such features, an 1834 Act of Assembly made it a uniform requirement to record identifying marks and scars and the instrument of emancipation, whether by deed or will. This bound register often coincided with a loose certificate containing largely the same identifying information. Both the registration system and the process of renewal was enforced differently in the various Virginia localities. Thus, the information found in these registers may differ from year to year and across localities.

The register books resulting from the administration of the 1793 and 1803 Act of Assembly are evidence of Virginia legislators' reaction to a quickly growing free Black and multiracial population in Virginia in the post-Revolutionary War period. Acts such as these allowed white officials to police the activities and movement of free Black community members throughout the state thereby restricting their autonomy.

"Free Negro" Registrations

In 1793, the Virginia General Assembly specified that "free Negroes or mulattoes" were required to "be registered and numbered in a book to be kept by the town clerk, which shall specify age, name, color, status and by whom, and in what court emancipated." These entries often coincided with the creation of a loose certificate containing largely the same identifying information.

Documents in this record group differ from the bound volumes referred to as "registers." These registration records typically appear in the form of certificates or handwritten statements recording the free status of a Black or multiracial person. They can include the free person's name, sometimes age, a brief physical description, and the circumstances of the person's freedom or emancipation, parents, former enslaver, place or date of emancipation. There are also affidavits that were given by individuals affirming a free person's status, as well as written descriptions of free people. In some cases, a person would not have a registration to submit to the court. Instead they produced some other form of identification proving their free status, for example, a deed of emancipation, a will, an apprenticeship indenture, or an affidavit of someone testifying to their character and status.

Locality History: Fluvanna County was named after the eighteenth-century term for the upper James River. The name, meaning river of Anne, was given in honor of Queen Anne of England. The county was formed from Albemarle County in 1777.

Scope and Content

Fluvanna County (Va.) Records Related to the Registration of Free Persons, 1802-1864, consists of two "Free Negro" Registers, 1806-1864; and "Free Negro" Registrations, 1802-1861, undated.

Register of Free Negroes, 1806-1847, records the registration of free Black and multiracial people of Black descent in Fluvanna County and covers the years 1806-1847. The clerk recorded name, age, height, complexion, marks and scars, and in what court the person was emancipated or if the person was born free. Does not include an index or page numbers.

Register of Free Negroes, 1851-1864, lists the registration number, age, name, color, stature, marks or scars, in what court the person was emancipated or whether the person was born free. Some clerks recorded additional information not required by law. There is no index.

"Free Negro" Registrations and certificates, 1802-1861, undated, may give the registration number, age, name, color, stature, marks or scars, in what court the person was emancipated or whether the person was born free. Some clerks recorded additional information not required by law. Many of the registrations were probably presented as proof of legal free status in another locality in order to achieve registration in Fluvanna. These papers include several registrations from 1851-1852 that were in a wrapper titled "free negro papers renewed." Certificates are usually letters or affidavits from an individual attesting to their knowledge of a free person and how this person came to be free.

"Free Negro" Registrations includes six digital images of registrations, 1848-1850, for Anna Shelton, Betsey Mayo, Henry Nicholas, Augustus Wood, Mary Robinson, William Gibson, Betsey Tyler, and Joseph Mayo.

Arrangement

This collection is arranged

- Series I: Records related to the registration of free persons, 1802-1864, arranged by records type then chronologically

Contents List

Series I: Records Related to the Registration of Free Persons , 1802-1864

Extent

Digital images; 1 folder

Physical Location Library of Virginia

Arrangement

arranged by record type then chronologically

Barcode number 0007853794: Register of Free Negroes and Mulattoes, 1806-1847 [Digital]

Barcode number 0007906100: Register of Free Negroes, 1851-1864 [Digital]

Barcode number 1156112: Free and Enslaved Records 1800-1865

Library of Virginia