

A Guide to the New Kent County (Va.) Free Negro and Slave Records, 1855

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History

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Author: Catherine G. O'Brien

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Descriptive Summary

Barcode number

1138029

Language

English

Collector

New Kent County (Va.) Circuit Court.

Physical Characteristics

4 p.

Location

Library of Virginia

Repository

The Library of Virginia

Administrative Information

Access Restrictions

There are no restrictions.

Use Restrictions

There are no restrictions.

Acquisition Information

These items came to the Library of Virginia in shipments of court papers from New Kent County.

Preferred Citation

New Kent County (Va.) Free Negro and Slave Records, 1855, Local government records collection, New Kent County Court Records. The Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va. 23219.

Adjunct Descriptive Data

Related Material

New Kent County is one of Virginia's Lost Records Localities. Additional New Kent County Records may be found in the Virginia Lost Records Localities Collection at the Library of Virginia. Search the [Lost Records Localities Digital Collection](#) available at Virginia Memory.

For more information and a listing of lost records localities see [Lost Records research note](#).

Historical Information

New Kent County may have been named either for the English county of Kent or for Kent Island, in the upper waters of the Chesapeake Bay. William Claiborne, a native of Kent who had been driven from Kent Island by Lord Baltimore, was a prominent resident of the New Kent area about 1654 when the county was formed from York County. Part of James City County was added in 1767. The county seat is New Kent.

Records were destroyed when John Posey set fire to the courthouse on 15 July 1787. Many records were lost when the courthouse was partially destroyed by fire during Civil War hostilities in 1862. Additional records were burned in Richmond on 3 April 1865, where they had been moved for safekeeping during the Civil War.

An act passed in 1801 by the Virginia legislature required commissioners of the revenue annually to return a complete list of all free African Americans within their districts, with their names, sex, place of abode, and trades, and a copy of the list to be fixed at the courthouse door.

Scope and Content

New Kent County (Va.) Free Negro and Slave Records, 1855, include a List of Free Negroes, 1855, compiled by the commissioner of revenue to determine the county levy. It records the full name, gender, age, and trade or occupation of 150 individuals.

Index Terms

Corporate Names:

New Kent County (Va.) Circuit Court

Subjects:

African Americans--Employment--Virginia--New Kent County.

Free African Americans--Virginia--New Kent County.

Geographical Names:

New Kent County (Va.)--History--19th century

Genre and Form Terms:

Free negro and slave records--Virginia--New Kent County.

Local government records--Virginia--New Kent County.

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