

A Guide to the Princess Anne County (Va.) Petitions to Remain in the Commonwealth, 1837-1860

Princess Anne County (Va.) Petitions to Remain in the Commonwealth, 1837-1860
1837-1860

A Collection in the Library of Virginia
Library of Virginia
2025

History

Processed by: L. Neuroth; M.Mason

Title Statement

A Guide to the Princess Anne County (Va.) Petitions to Remain in the Commonwealth, 1837-1860

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Publication Statement

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Profile Description

Creation: Machine-readable finding aid derived from MS Word, created by Mary Ann Mason, 1 December 2025

Language Usage: Description is in English

Descriptive Summary

Language

English

Creator

Virginia Beach (Va.) Circuit Court.

Physical Characteristics

3 items..

Location

Library of Virginia

Repository

Library of Virginia

Administrative Information

Access Restrictions

Princess Anne County (Va.) Petitions to Remain in the Commonwealth, 1837-1860, 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 were transferred to the Library of Virginia from Princess Anne County (Va.) in an undated accession.

Processing Information

Princess Anne County (Va.) Petitions to Remain in the Commonwealth were originally described as part of the Princess Anne County (Va.) Free and Enslaved Records but were removed to the present Princess Anne County (Va.) Petitions to Remain in the Commonwealth, record to enhance discoverability in November 2025.

These records have been 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.

Encoded by M. Mason: November 2025.

Preferred Citation

Princess Anne County (Va.) Petitions to Remain in the Commonwealth, 1837-1860. Local government records collection, Princess Anne County Court Records. The Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia.

Adjunct Descriptive Data

Related Material

See Also: [Princess Anne County \(Va.\) Free and Enslaved Records](#)

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

Additional Princess Anne 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: Sometimes referred to as "Applications to Remain," these records are applications that formerly enslaved individuals submitted to state and local courts for permission to remain in Virginia with their free status. The Virginia General Assembly passed a law stating that all formerly enslaved people freed after 1 May 1806 who remained in Virginia more than twelve months could be put on trial by the state. Individuals who wished to remain in the commonwealth were to petition the state legislature. In 1816, a new Act of Assembly gave the local courts power to grant permission to remain. The documents in these cases will include: the name(s) of the petitioner(s), the circumstances of free status, and a request to remain in the county. Individuals needed to prove that they had in fact been emancipated. Therefore, application packets might also include supporting documents such as the formerly enslaved person's register, a copy of a will or deed of emancipation, or witness statements known as affidavits.

Locality History: Princess Anne County (extinct) was named for Anne, daughter of King James II, who became queen of England in 1702. The county was formed from Lower Norfolk County in 1691 and became extinct on 1 January 1963, after its consolidation with the city of Virginia Beach.

Scope and Content

Princess Anne County (Va.) Petitions to Remain in the Commonwealth, 1837-1860, consist of three petitions. Petitions to remain are applications that formerly enslaved individuals submitted to state and local courts for permission to remain in Virginia with their free status. The petitions often include the formerly enslaved individual's name, their method of emancipation, name of their former enslaver, and whether the application/petition was successful or not. Petitions may also include affidavits signed mainly by white residents or witness statements provided by white residents. Additional names of enslaved or free Black and multiracial individuals can be found in these records.

Petitions to remain in Virginia, 1837, 1858, and 1860, contain court orders, notices, and affidavits relating to the petitions of Jacob Boush and Toney Boush, 1837; George Boush 1858, and Adam Land, 1860. The records document the circumstances of the petitioner's emancipation and statements attesting to his character and reasons for wanting to remain in Virginia. [Digital images]

Arrangement

Arrangement

This collection is arranged

- Series I: Petitions to Remain in the Commonwealth, 1837-1860, arranged chronologically.

Contents List

Series I: Petitions to Remain in the Commonwealth, 1837-1860

Extent

3 items

Physical Location Library of Virginia

Barcode number 1120074: Free and Enslaved Records, 1766-1862

Library of Virginia