

A Guide to the Fauquier County (Va.) Records related to the Registration of Free Persons, 1817-1865

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1817-1865



A Collection in the Library of Virginia
Library of Virginia
2007

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History

Processed by: S. Nerney, L. Neuroth, and LVA Staff

Title Statement

A Guide to the Fauquier County (Va.) Records related to the Registration of Free Persons, 1817-1865

Subtitle: Fauquier County (Va.) Records related to the Registration of Free Persons

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Publication Statement

Date: © 2007 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 MARC record, created by Sarah Nerney, 9 September 2007

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

Fauquier County (Va.) Circuit Court.

Physical Characteristics

1 volume; 1 microfilm reel (135 images)

Location

Library of Virginia

Repository

The Library of Virginia

Administrative Information

Access Restrictions

Fauquier County (Va.) Records related to the Registration of Free Persons, 1817-1865, 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 Fauquier County (Va.) Register of "Free Negroes," 1817-1865, was transferred to the Library of Virginia from the Virginia Museum of History & Culture (formerly the Virginia Historical Society) in 2022 under accession number 53553.

The microfilm of the register was generated circa 2007 and was accessioned under accession number 43136.

Digital images of the register were produced by Backstage Library Works circa 2022.

Processing Information

The microfilm of the "Free Negro" register was originally described as Fauquier County (Va.) Register of "Free Negroes," 1817-1865, but was removed to the present Fauquier County (Va.) Records related to the Registration of Free Persons, 1817-1865, record to enhance the context between record types in April 2025.

These records were processed, scanned, and indexed by S. Nerney, L. Neuroth, and LVA staff for the purposes of digitizing them for the digital project Virginia Untold: The African American Narrative in 2007 and around 2022.

Encoded by S. Nerney: September 2007; updated by C. Collins: April 2025.

Preferred Citation

Fauquier County (Va.) Records related to the Registration of Free Persons, 1817-1865. Local government records collection, Fauquier County Court Records. The Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia.

Alternative Form Available

The Fauquier County (Va.) Register of "Free Negroes," 1817-1865, is available on microfilm, Fauquier County (Va.) Reel No. 115.

Custodial History

The register (Call Number Mss4 F2742 a 2) was loaned to the Library of Virginia by the Virginia Museum of History & Culture (formerly the Virginia Historical Society) in 2007 for microfilming. It was returned upon completion. The register was transferred to the Library of Virginia in 2022.

Adjunct Descriptive Data

Related Material

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

Additional Fauquier 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."](#)

Historical Information

Context for Record Type:"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.

Locality History: Fauquier County was named for Francis Fauquier, lieutenant governor of Virginia from 1758 to 1768. It was formed in 1759 from Prince William County. The county seat is Warrenton.

Scope and Content

Fauquier County (Va.) Records related to the Registration of Free Persons, 1817-1865, consist of the Fauquier County (Va.) Register of "Free Negroes," 1817-1865. The register records the registration of free Black and Multiracial people of Black descent in Fauquier County and covers the years 1817 to 1865. 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. An index is included at the end of the volume. It includes page numbers. In some instances, the clerk recorded information not required by law such as the names of the former enslaver, previous place of registration, or place of birth.

Arrangement

This collection is arranged

- Series I: Records related to the Registration of Free Persons, 1817-1865, arranged loosely by record type then chronologically.

Contents List

Series I: Records related to the Registration of Free Persons, 1817-1865

Extent

1 volume

Physical Location Library of Virginia

Arrangement

Arranged loosely by record type then chronologically

Barcode number 0007816868: Register of "Free Negroes," 1817-1865

Library of Virginia