

A Guide to the Goochland County (Va.) Free and Enslaved Records, 1726-1867

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A Collection in the Library of Virginia
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2007

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History

Processed by: S. Nerney

Title Statement

A Guide to the Goochland County (Va.) Free and Enslaved Records, 1726-1867

Subtitle: Goochland County (Va.) Free and Enslaved Records, 1726-1867

Author: Sarah Nerney

Publication Statement

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Profile Description

Creation: Machine-readable finding aid derived from MARC record, created by Sarah Nerney, 15 October 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

Goochland County (Va.) Circuit Court.

Physical Characteristics

1 cu. ft. (2 boxes); 1 microfilm reel

Location

Library of Virginia

Repository

The Library of Virginia

Administrative Information

Access Restrictions

This collection is open for research.

Use Restrictions

There are no restrictions.

Acquisition Information

These records came to the Library of Virginia in a transfer of court papers from Goochland County (Va.) as part of an undated accession.

Records related to requisitions for public use, circa 1862, were purchased by the library in 2011 and arrived under accession number 45355.

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.

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

Loose microfilmed free and enslaved records were previously described as Goochland County (Va.) Various Loose Free Negro and Slave Records, 1813-1844, but have been added to this descriptive record to increase connections between materials.

Certificates of Importation were removed from this record in June 2024 and are now described in Goochland County (Va.) Certificates of Importation, 1813.

Deeds of Emancipation were removed from this record in June 2024 and are now described in Goochland County (Va.) Deeds of Emancipation, 1782-1862.

Petitions to Remain were removed from this record in June 2024 and are now described in Goochland County (Va.) Petitions to Remain in the Commonwealth, 1821.

"Free Negro" Registrations were removed from this record in June 2024 and are now described in Goochland County (Va.) Records related to the Registration of Free Persons, 1801-1864.

Encoded by S. Nerney, 2007; updated by M. Mason and C. Collins, June 2024.

Preferred Citation

Goochland County (Va.) Free and Enslaved Records, 1726-1867. Local government records collection, Goochland County Court Records. The Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia.

Adjunct Descriptive Data

Related Material

See also: [Goochland County \(Va.\) Certificates of Importation, 1813](#)

See also: [Goochland County \(Va.\) Deeds of Emancipation, 1782-1862](#)

See also: [Goochland County \(Va.\) Petitions to Remain in the Commonwealth, 1821](#)

See also: [Goochland County \(Va.\) Records related to the Registration of Free Persons, 1801-1864](#)

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

Additional Goochland 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:

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 Goochland 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 Deeds; Fiduciary Records; "Free Negro" Tax Records; Free Persons in Want of Registration; Requisitions for Public Use; and "Runaway" Records.

Locality History: Goochland County was named for Sir William Gooch, lieutenant governor of Virginia from 1727 to 1749. It was formed from Henrico County in 1728.

Scope and Content

Goochland County (Va.) Free and Enslaved Records, 1726-1867, consist of Deeds, 1762-1859; Fiduciary records, 1792-1857; "Free Negro" tax records, 1802-1863, undated; Free people in want of registration, 1825-1861; Patrol records, 1762-1863; Requisitions for Public Use, 1861-1862 circa, "Runaway" records, 1813-1837; Records Related to the hiring of enslaved persons, 1803-1822, and additional single items of various record types, 1726-1867.

Deeds, 1762-1859, consist largely of bills of sale documenting the sale of Black and multiracial enslaved individuals between white individuals. These bills of sale and other deeds contain the name of the grantor and the name of the grantee, the name and age of the enslaved individuals being sold, the price paid, the date of the deed or bill of sale, and the date of recordation if it was recorded. Sometimes other property is included in the deed as well such as livestock, demonstrating the dehumanize practice of chattel slavery.

Fiduciary records, 1792-1857, consist of an estate division, 1792, concerning the estate of Chares Johnson, Sr., naming Sampson, Dick, Harry, Frank, Thon, Jenny, and Milley as enslaved Black individuals to be divided amongst Johnson's heirs. The records also include a guardian appointment, 1857, requested by William James Cosby, a "free boy of color," seeking to have Robert Winston, a "free man of color," to act as his guardian. Lastly, the records contain a "list of dower negroes," 1825, enslaved by Mary Trevilian which includes: Billy, Caty, Amey, Naney, Iris, Louise, Sylvia, Margaret, Bob, Mary, and Charles.

"Free Negro" Tax Records, 1802-1863, undated, consist of "Free Negro Tax Lists" and "Free Negro Delinquent Tax Lists."

"Lists of Free Negroes and Mulattoes", 1802-1807, 1809-1813, 1815, 1817, 1852-1853, 1855-1858, 1860, 1863, and undated, consist of about twenty-nine lists compiled by the commissioner of the revenue for tax purposes. The list records are compiled for various magistral districts and include the full name of each individual, place of residence, and occupation. On some lists, family groupings are clearly delineated. Some lists also classify persons as either "mulatto" or "freed negro."

"Free Negro Delinquent Tax Lists", 1850-1863, are lists compiled by Goochland County deputy sheriffs of free persons who had failed to pay their revenue tax. The lists consist of the names of persons who are insolvent, sometimes an account of how much they owe, and whether they then paid the tax directly or were hired out in order to do so. The lists also contain orders to hire out the free persons in order to pay off the tax as state law allowed.

Free People in Want of Registration, 1825-1861, includes documents relating to Black and multiracial individuals held in jail due lack of documentation/registration, showing their legal status as free. Individuals included in these records include: Robert Johnson, Robert Coleman, Lucy Ann Howard (or Homes), John Battles, Sally Mallory, and George M. Smith.

Patrol Records, 1762-1863, include patrol appointments and authorizations and patrol accounts. These patrols generally acted as the policing force that monitored the movement of free and enslaved Black and multiracial individuals. These record the names of the individuals on patrol; who authorized their patrol; dates of patrol; the number of hours on patrol; general geographic area patrolled; and compensation awarded. Some returns specifically note the objective to "apprehend all slaves and other disorderly persons," or "to visit all negro quarters, and other places suspected of entertaining unlawful assemblies of servants, slaves, or of disorderly persons."

Requisitions for Public Use, 1861-1862 circa, consist of records related to enslaved persons requisitioned for public use. These records note the name of the enslaver, whole number of enslaved persons aged 18-45, number sent last year, proportion of each, exceptions, remarks, and number allotted. This information was compiled and recorded as the county attempted to comply with the state law requisitioning slaves to work on the public defense works including the fortifications around Richmond. These records do not include the names of enslaved individuals.

Also, includes an order, 1861, for certain "free negroes" to report for work on the fortifications at Richmond.

"Runaway" Records, 1813-1837, consist of a memorandum, 1813, concerning Abram, a self-emancipated enslaved man, encountering James, another self-emancipated Black man, in the woods while away. Also includes an order, 1837, naming George Woodson Payne, Peter J. Archer, and Thomas R. Argyle to value two [unnamed] "runaway" enslaved persons confined to the county jail.

Records relating the hiring of enslaved persons, 1803-1822, consist of promissory notes, letters, or bills relating to the hire of Black and multiracial enslaved persons between private white residents. The promissory notes and bills list the name of the person hiring the enslaved person, the name(s) of the enslaved persons, the cost to hire (including requirements to furnish clothing and food), and the name of the enslaver. Some letters are included in these records that discuss the enslaved individuals performing the labor.

Additional single items relating to the documentation of free and enslaved Black and multiracial individuals in and around Goochland County, Va., include:

An argument, 1810 circa, presented by a lawyer to jury from unknown case (lawyer appears to be defending one or multiple Black clients in the case, and employs the bill of rights to make his case).

Certificate, 1739, of the capture of Hampton, an "outlaw" [possibly self-emancipated] Black man enslaved by John Owen. The record notes that Samuel Barton, Johns Spears, and Henry Sizemore did so by killing Hampton.

Licenses, 1823, include an order by the court permitting Roger Cooper and John Marks, "free [men] of colour" to carry firearms and ammunition.

"List of colored people on Elk Island," 1867, lists nineteen individual residents on the Elk Island [island in the James River].

List, undated, of enslaved persons including Beth, Aggy, Mystilla, and Phyllis described as "already made out" and Don, Will, David [?], Sarah, and Dianna described as "...dead before the law took place."

Note, 1806, involving a deed between Adam and Mary Toler to George [Potter] and John Shelton concerning the erasure of the names of Ben and Tom [also struck through in this document], two Black men enslaved by the Tolers, in the deed.

Order, 1861 circa, of the court directing constables to search free and enslaved Black and multiracial persons in the county for "firearms, ammunitions, and unlawful weapons of any description."

Pass, 1726 [approximately], for Peter, a Black man, enslaved by Philip Webber.

Summons, 1844, of commanding the county's justices of the peace to appear in court for the approving of the Act of Assembly passed 10 February 1844 entitled "An Act to extend the provisions of an Act to prevent free negroes and mulattoes in the counties of Accomack and Richmond from selling agricultural products without a certificate."

Lastly, this collection includes three microfilmed items, 1813-1844, located on frames 68-78 on Goochland County (Va.) Reel 78. These records contain a schedule, 1813-1814, for enslaved workers hired out. These Black and multiracial persons were either hired or enslaved by the estate of C. F. [Bat-otherwise illegible]. They also include a fragment of a "Free Negro" registration, 1843, for James H[illegible] dated 15 February 1834, and affidavits, 1844, concerning the legal status of Jacob Sampson. The two affiants were acquainted with Jacob Sampson and his household and attested to his good character and orderly house. [see: [Goochland County \(Va.\) Records related to the Registration of Free Persons, 1801-1864](#), for other free registrations and affidavits].

Arrangement

This collection is arranged

- Series I: Free and Enslaved Records, 1726-1867, arranged loosely by record type then chronologically.

Contents List

Series I: Free and Enslaved Records, 1726-1867

Extent

1 cubic foot (2 boxes); 1 microfilm reel

Physical Location Library of Virginia

Arrangement

Arranged loosely by record type then chronologically.

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Barcode number 1147037: Free and Enslaved Records, 1726-1867

Barcode number 1149995: Oversize Judgments, "Free Negro List," 1802-1863, undated [oversize]

Goochland County (Va.) Reel No. 78: Loose Records, 1813-1814, 1834, 1844

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