

A Guide to the Westmoreland County (Va.) Free Negro and Slave Records, 1780-1870

Westmoreland County (Va.) Free Negro and Slave Records, 1780-1863
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A Collection in the Library of Virginia 1176635

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Author: Sarah Nerney

History

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Title Statement

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Descriptive Summary

Barcode number

1176635

Language

English

Collector

Westmoreland County (Va.) Circuit Court.

Physical Characteristics

.35 cu. ft. (1 box)

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 transfers of court papers from Westmoreland County.

Preferred Citation

Westmoreland County (Va.) Free Negro and Slave Records, 1780-1863. Local government records collection, Westmoreland County Court Records. The Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va.

Adjunct Descriptive Data

Related Material

Additional Westmoreland County Free Negro and Slave 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

Westmoreland County was formed from Northumberland County in 1653. Part of King George County was added in 1777.

Scope and Content

Westmoreland County (Va.) Free Negro and Slave Records, 1780-1870, contains free negro certifications (1809-1855, n.d.); free negro lists (1801, 1851); statements of negroes brought into Virginia from other states (1815, 1817, 1819); and miscellaneous free negro and slave records (1780-1854). Also included are photocopies of documents from other local records series relating to slave and free negroes. These categories include copies of deeds of manumission and emancipation (1805-1814); copies of slave bills of sale and various other types of deeds (1790-1845); copies of lists of insolvent free negroes (1850-1863); and copies of various miscellaneous records (1813-1852).

Free negro certifications (1809-1855, n.d.) consist of statements based either on another person's knowledge or on other official documentary evidence seen by the certifier that this person was either born free or was emancipated. Often times details accompany the certificates about the free person's life such as their place of birth, their occupation, where they had grown up, or how the certifier had come to know them.

Free negro lists (1801, 1851) were compiled by the commissioner of the revenue for tax purposes. They record the full name of each individual, place of residence, and occupation. The 1851 list gives the ages of recorded individuals on the list. Family groupings are more or less discernible by the arrangement of names.

Statements of negroes brought into Virginia from other states (1815, 1817, 1819) are also known as certificates of importation of slaves. They are certifications from slaveowners that they have brought slaves into the state for personal use and not for sale. The statements list the names and ages of slaves brought in and some of the lists give a brief physical description.

Miscellaneous records (1780-1854) include a runaway slave advertisement for Coffy of King George County (1780 ca.); a list of slaves with ages, owner unknown (1830 ca.); an account of sale of John Boy, a runaway (1831); and a court summons to James Grimes, a free negro, to prove his residence (1854).

Photocopies of deeds of manumission and emancipation (1805, 1810, 1814) are of three deeds freeing slaves from their enslavement. The names of the slaves are given as well as the name of the slaveowner and the court date that the deed was proved. The originals are filed in the Westmoreland County land records with the other deeds.

Photocopies of slave bills of sale and various other deeds mentioning slaves (1790-1845) include deeds of bargain and sale, release, mortgage, and deeds of gift. The originals are filed in the Westmoreland County land records with the other deeds.

Photocopies of lists of insolvent free negroes (1850-1863) were compiled by the commissioner of the revenue. The lists are generally in alphabetical order by surname and give the first and last name for each person as well as the amount of tax not paid. The lists are almost entirely composed of males. The original lists are filed with Westmoreland County tax and fiscal records.

Photocopies of miscellaneous records (1813-1852) include runaway advertisements (1813, 1818); requests by the Overseers of the Poor to bind out poor negro children (1821, 1840, 1851); a memorandum of free negroes hired by order of the court to pay their public dues (1818); a statement of free negroes hired (1819); a court summons to prove the loss of Robert Beale's slaves to the enemy (1821); a coroner's county claim for the cost of an inquest on Polly Tuckson, a free negro (1835); a notice from the court to William I. Courtney to revoke his merchant's license for selling to slaves (1836). Citations are provided with each photocopy for the location of the original documents.

Index Terms

Corporate Names:

Westmoreland County (Va.) Circuit Court.

Subjects:

African Americans -- Employment -- Virginia -- Westmoreland County.

African Americans -- Virginia -- Westmoreland County.

Free African Americans -- Virginia -- Westmoreland County.

Freedmen -- Virginia -- Westmoreland County.

Fugitive slaves -- Virginia -- Westmoreland County.

Slave records -- Virginia -- Westmoreland County.

Slaveholders -- Virginia -- Westmoreland County.

Slaves -- Emancipation -- Virginia -- Westmoreland County.

Slaves -- Virginia -- Westmoreland County.

Tax collection -- Virginia -- Westmoreland County.

Geographical Names:

Westmoreland County (Va.) -- History.

Genre and Form Terms:

Bills of sale -- Virginia -- Westmoreland County.

Certificates -- Virginia -- Westmoreland County.

Claims -- Virginia -- Westmoreland County.

Deeds -- Virginia -- Westmoreland County.

Deeds of manumission -- Virginia -- Westmoreland County.

Emancipations -- Virginia -- Westmoreland County.

Free negro and slave records -- Virginia -- Westmoreland County.

Free negro lists -- Virginia -- Westmoreland County.

Free negro registrations -- Virginia -- Westmoreland County.

Free papers -- Virginia -- Westmoreland County.

Judicial records -- Virginia -- Westmoreland County.

Lists -- Virginia -- Westmoreland County.

Local government records -- Virginia -- Westmoreland County.

Registrations -- Virginia -- Westmoreland County.

Arrangement

Arrangement by record type.

