

A Guide to the Louisa County (Va.) Free and Enslaved Records, 1770-1863

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A Collection in the Library of Virginia
Library of Virginia
2007

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History

Processed by: Callie Freed; M. Mason

Title Statement

A Guide to the Louisa County (Va.) Free and Enslaved Records, 1770-1863

Subtitle: Louisa County (Va.) Free and Enslaved Records, 1770-1863

Author: Sarah Nerney

Publication Statement

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Profile Description

Creation: Machine-readable finding aid derived from MARC record, created by Sarah Nerney, 13 December 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

Louisa County (Va.) Circuit Court.

Physical Characteristics

1.35 cubic feet (3 boxes)

Location

Library of Virginia

Repository

The Library of Virginia

Administrative Information

Access Restrictions

"Free Negro" Tax records, 1851-1864, 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 came to the Library of Virginia in transfers of court papers from Louisa County under an undated accession.

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.

Deeds of Emancipation were removed from this record in January 2026 and are now described in Louisa County (Va.) P Deeds of Emancipation

"Free Negro" Registrations were removed from this record in January 2026 and are now described in Louisa County (Va.) Records related to the Registration of Free Persons.

Certificates of Importation were removed from this record in January 2026 and are now described in Louisa County (Va.) Certificates of Importation.

Item described as "refusal to register Frederick Taylor of Goochland as a free negro (n.d.)" in 2007 version of finding aid, not located in January 2026

Encoded by S. Nerney, 2007; updated by M. Mason, January 2026

Preferred Citation

Louisa County (Va.) Free and Enslaved Records, 1770-1863. Local government records collection, Louisa County Court Records. The Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va.

Adjunct Descriptive Data

Related Material

See also: [Louisa County \(Va.\) Deeds of Emancipation](#)

See also: [Louisa County \(Va.\) Certificates of Importation](#)

See also: [Louisa County \(Va.\) Records Related to the Registration of Free Persons](#)

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

Additional Louisa 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

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 this 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 Free and Enslaved Records

Locality History: Louisa County was named for Louisa, a daughter of King George II and wife of King Frederick V of Denmark. It was formed from Hanover County in 1742.

Scope and Content

Louisa County (Va.) Free Negro and Slave Records, 1770-1863, consists of "Free Negro" Tax Records, 1851-1864, Free Person in want of registration, circa 1850s; Patrol records, 1770-1863; and various records, 1773-1855

"Free Negro" Tax Records, 1851-1864, are lists compiled by the Commissioner of Revenue for tax purposes. "List of free negroes over the age of 12," 1851-1864, notes the full names of the individual, their age and occupation.

"Lists of free negroes returned who have not paid their taxes," 1852-1853, records the individuals full name, male free Black individuals between 21 and 55 years subject to tax of \$1.00, male free Black individuals above 16 years of age, enslaved persons above 16 years of age, enslaved persons above 12 years of age, horses mules etc., why returned insolvent, and amount of tax.

Report, circa 1850s, of the Louisa County jailer concerning Mary Ann Collins, a "woman of colour," held in jail for want of free papers.

Patrol Records, 1770-1863, include the names of persons appointed to serve and the amount of pay they claimed against the city for doing the patrol work. Sometimes the number of hours worked is given instead of the amount of money owed. 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."

"enrollment of Free negroes for public service," 1862, includes a list of free men between 18-50 in the district of commissioner of revenue John R. Quarles and W.J. Winters. Includes the first and last name of 51 men.

Various Record Types

Agreement, 1855, between James Nelson, a "free mulatto man," and Burwell B. Dickinson where Nelson agrees to work at the direction of Dickinson for two years, with Dickinson receiving the full wages from Nelson's labor.

Bond, 1773, of Frederick Harris, guardian, of Samuel Ferrell binding Jeffery, a man enslaved by Ferrell, to Joseph Thompson and William Ferrell from January to December of 1773.

Bond, 1803, of Micajah Parish for hire of Sarah and her two children, presumably enslaved by James Shelton the other party to the bond.

County claims, 1817, one for promise of payment to Williams Anderson for the hire of Salley, an enslaved woman; and another claim for Amediah Anderson for the hire of Charlotte, an enslaved woman.

Depositions, 1813, in a dispute between Ezekiel James and Robert Thurston concerning who in the legal enslaver of Reuben and Sanco.

Letter, 1855, of Thomas B. Brooks to the court regarding Jim Chicken, previously enslaved by Jack Hope, and Viney, previously enslaved by Colonel Diggs. Brooks claim both Jim and Viney are too elderly to work and provide for themselves, but that he, Brooks, is unwilling to continue his support of the pair.

Pass, 1833, for Francis, Judy, and Aggia to travel to [Nickerby Pandester ?]

Records, 1840, related to the sale of Nancy, an enslaved woman held in jail as "a runaway." Nancy is believed to be enslaved by Robert Brown of Hanover County, Va. These records includes affidavit noting Nancy as "a runaway," order to sell Nancy, a report of the sale, and accounts regarding fees accrued during her time in the local jail.

Summons, 1776, for William Snelson to show cause as to why he sold or offered Molly, Edmond, Sally, and Sidner the children of Sarah Martin for sale Will, 1808, of John Mead of Scott County, Ky., which stipulates all the individuals enslaved by him to be kept together and hired out for the purpose of paying for his debts, his children's education. These enslaved individuals are to then be divided amongst Mead's children once his daughter reaches adulthood. Enslaved individuals named include Joe, Adam, Sally, Betty, Moses, Anna, and Patrick. Also includes document involving the hiring out of Joe.

Arrangement

This collection is arranged

- Series I: Free and Enslaved Records, 1770-1863

Contents List

Series I: Free and Enslaved Records, 1770-1863

Extent

3 boxes

Physical Location Library of Virginia

Barcode number 1153190: Free and Enslaved Records, 1770-1865

Barcode number 1153191: Free and Enslaved Records, 1809-1819

Barcode number 1153192: Free and Enslaved Records, 1809-1863

Library of Virginia