

A Guide to the Goochland County (Va.) Ministers' Returns, 1794-1853

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Author: Callie Lou Freed

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Descriptive Summary

Barcode number

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Language

English

Collector

Goochland County (Va.) Circuit Court.

Physical Characteristics

1 v. (86 p.) This volume is a negative photostatic copy.

Location

State Records Center - Archives Annex, Library of Virginia

Repository

The Library of Virginia

Administrative Information

Access Restrictions

There are no restrictions.

Use Restrictions

There are no restrictions.

Acquisition Information

This photostatic copy was created by the staff of the Virginia State Library's (now the Library of Virginia) Archives Division.

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Adjunct Descriptive Data

Related Material

Additional Goochland County Marriage Records can be found on microfilm at the Library of Virginia. Consult ["A Guide to Virginia County and City Records on Microfilm"](#)

Historical Information

Goochland County was formed from Henrico County in 1728. The county was named for Sir William Gooch, lieutenant governor of Virginia from 1727 to 1749.

Until 1780, marriages could be performed only by ministers of the Established Church, who were required by law to record marriages in the parish register. In 1780, dissenting ministers (only four per county from each sect) were permitted to perform marriage ceremonies. In order to have a record of all marriages, ministers were required to sign a certificate to be filed with the county clerk. Initially, ministers sent marriage certificates to the clerk every three months. Some ministers adopted a custom of making collected returns--a list of marriages performed within a period of time such as a year or several years. Beginning in 1784, marriage certificates were returned annually. The law was rarely enforced, and ministers' returns were sometimes late, incorrect, incomplete and in many instances, not made at all. County clerks compiled a register of marriages based, in part, on ministers' returns.

The original ministers' returns, from which this volume was compiled, were created by the County Court.

Scope and Content

Goochland County (Va.) Ministers' Returns, 1794-1853, records the returns made by individual ministers of marriages performed within the county. The majority of returns are in the form of lists which record the date of marriage and names of both parties. In the process of preparing and sending the returns, the name of the minister and the minister's denomination are also recorded. As part of the return process, ministers filed marriage certificates with the county clerk. The signed documents certified that a minister had performed the actual marriage ceremony between the named individuals on a certain date.

There is a note on the first page of the volume which indicates that the earliest marriages recorded in the county, from February 1788, are found in Deed Book 15. The note further explains that these early recordings are found in deed books until 1793 (see Deed Book 16.) From 1793 until July 21st 1794, marriages were recorded in order books (see Order Book 19.) There is an internal index to the volume which is organized alphabetically A-Y, by the bride or groom's surname, according to the order of the page numbers in the volume. This index lists marriages recorded prior to 1794 in Deed Books 15 and 16 and Order Book 19.

Index Terms

Corporate Names:

Goochland County (Va.) Circuit Court.

Subjects:

Christian sects--Virginia--Goochland County.

Clergy--Virginia--Goochland County.

Marriage--Virginia--Goochland County.

Public records--Virginia--Goochland County.

Geographical Names:

Goochland County (Va.)--History.

Genre and Form Terms:

Deed books--Virginia--Goochland County.

Judicial records--Virginia--Goochland County.

Land records--Virginia--Goochland County.

Local government records--Virginia--Goochland County.

Marriage certificates--Virginia--Goochland County.

Marriage records--Virginia--Goochland County.

Ministers' returns--Virginia--Goochland County.

Order books--Virginia--Goochland County.

Added Entry - Corporate Name:

Goochland County (Va.) County Court.

Arrangement

Arranged chronologically by date received and recorded.