

A Guide to the Louisa County (Va.) Ministers' Returns, 1781-1853

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A Collection in the Library of Virginia Barcode number 1109802/Louisa County (Va.) Reel 136

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Descriptive Summary

Collection numbers

Barcode number 1109802/Louisa County (Va.) Reel 136

Language

English

Collector

Louisa County (Va.) Circuit Court.

Physical Characteristics

1 v. (127 p.); 1 microfilm reel

Location

State Records Center - Archives Annex, Library of Virginia

Repository

The Library of Virginia

Administrative Information

Access Restrictions

There are no restrictions.

Use Restrictions

Use microfilm copy, Louisa County (Va.) Reel 136.

Acquisition Information

This original volume came to the Virginia State Library (now the Library of Virginia) in a transfer of court papers from Louisa County.

Reel 136 was generated by Backstage Library Works through the Library of Virginia's Circuit Court Records Preservation Program.

Preferred Citation

Louisa County (Va.) Ministers' Returns, 1781-1853. Louisa County (Va.) Reel 136, Local government records collection, Louisa County Court Records. The Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia 23219

Adjunct Descriptive Data

Related Material

Additional Louisa 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

Louisa County was formed from Hanover County in 1742. The county was named for Louisa, a daughter of King George II.

Prior to 1853, when the Commonwealth began recording vital statistics, Virginia marriages were recorded at the county or city level. Beginning in 1661, in order to be married by license, the groom was required to go before the county clerk and give bond with security that there was no lawful reason to prevent the marriage. The license, issued then by the clerk, was given to the minister who performed the service. Written consent from a parent or guardian was needed for individuals younger than twenty-one years.

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 first 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

Louisa County (Va.) Ministers' Returns, 1781-1853, records the returns made by individual ministers of marriages performed within the county. This volume was originally entitled, "Marriage Returns." Returns in this volume, prior to 1853, record the names of the parties, the date of the marriage ceremony--either month, day and year or month and year and the minister's name and denomination. As part of the return process, ministers filed marriage certificates with the county clerk. These signed documents certified that a minister had performed the actual marriage ceremony between the named individuals on a certain date. The majority of returns in this volume are in the form of lists. By 1853, more information was included in lists or certificates from the individual ministers such as the place of the marriage ceremony, the names of the

parties, the ages of the parties, the status of the parties before marriage and the occupation of the groom. In addition, the parents' names of both parties and the birthplaces of both parties were sometimes noted.

Index Terms

Corporate Names:

Louisa County (Va.) Circuit Court.

Subjects:

Christian sects--Virginia--Louisa County.

Clergy--Virginia--Louisa County.

Marriage--Virginia--Louisa County.

Geographical Names:

Louisa County (Va.)--History.

Genre and Form Terms:

Local government records--Virginia--Louisa County.

Marriage certificates--Virginia--Louisa County.

Marriage records--Virginia--Louisa County.

Ministers' returns--Virginia--Louisa County.

Added Entry - Corporate Name:

Louisa County (Va.) County Court.