

A Guide to the Princess Anne County (Va.) Free and Enslaved Records, 1766-1862

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A Collection in the Library of Virginia
Library of Virginia
2025

History

Processed by: LVA Staff; M. Mason; L. Neuroth

Title Statement

A Guide to the Princess Anne County (Va.) Free and Enslaved Records, 1766-1862

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Publication Statement

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Profile Description

Creation: Machine-readable finding aid derived from MS Word, created by Mary Ann Mason, 1 December 2025

Language Usage: Description is in English

Descriptive Summary

Language

English

Collector

Virginia Beach (Va.) Circuit Court

Physical Characteristics

0.45 cu. ft. (1 box); 1 microfilm reel .

Location

Library of Virginia

Repository

Library of Virginia

Administrative Information

Access Restrictions

Collection is open to research.

Use Restrictions

There are no restrictions.

Acquisition Information

These records came to the Library of Virginia in a transfer of court records from Virginia Beach (Va.) Circuit Court in 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.

"List of Freed Negroes," 1864, was originally described in a separate stand-alone record "Princess Anne County (Va.) List of Freed Negroes, 1864" but was moved to in the Princess Anne County (Va.) Free and Enslaved record to enhance discoverability. The volume was microfilmed by the Library of Virginia's Imaging Services Division.

Deeds of Emancipation were removed from this record in November 2025 and are now described in Princess Anne County (Va.) Deeds of Emancipation.

Petitions to Remain were removed from this record in November 2025 and are now described in Princess Anne County (Va.) Petitions to Remain in the Commonwealth.

"Free Negro" Registrations were removed from this record in November 2025 and are now described in Princess Anne County (Va.) Records related to the Registration of Free Persons, 1801-1864.

Encoded by Catherine G. O'Brien, 2009; updated by M. Mason, November 2025

Preferred Citation

Princess Anne County (Va.) Free and Enslaved Records, 1766-1862. Local government records collection, Princess Anne County Court Records. The Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia.

Adjunct Descriptive Data

Related Material

See Also: [Princess Anne County \(Va.\) Records Related to the Registration of Free Persons](#)

See Also: [Princess Anne County \(Va.\) Petitions to remain in the Commonwealth](#)

See Also: [Princess Anne County \(Va.\) Deeds of Emancipation](#)

See Also: [Princess Anne County \(Va.\) Apprenticeship Indentures](#)

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

Additional Princess Anne 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 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; "Free Negro" Tax Records; and Free Persons in Want of Registration.

Locality history: Princess Anne County (extinct) was named for Anne, daughter of King James II, who became queen of England in 1702. The county was formed from Lower Norfolk County in 1691 and became extinct on 1 January 1963, after its consolidation with the city of Virginia Beach. The county seat was

Princess Anne.

Scope and Content

Princess Anne County (Va.) Free and Enslaved Records, 1766-1862. The collection contains apprenticeship indenture, 1858; "Free Negro" Tax Records, 1802-1862; Free persons in want of registration, 1861; "List of Freed Negroes," 1864; Patrol Accounts and Returns, 1771-1862; and Miscellaneous Records pertaining to Black and Multiracial individuals, 1766-1860.

Apprenticeship indenture, 1858, noting John Wilson, an 11 year old free Black boy, to be bound to William Smith until 14 years of age.

Deed of gift, 1834, of Ann H. Brooke to Rebeca Dubury, her sister, regarding the transfer of Nancy, Mary, and Sandy, a Black woman, girl, and boy, to be enslaved by Dubury.

"Free Negro" Tax Records, 1802-1862, consist of "List of Free Negroes and Mulattoes," 1802, 1821,1823-1824,1828,1832-1834,1836,1839 -1846,1848-1852,1857,1862. These lists are created by the commissioner of revenue for the district and document the name, age, occupation, and residence of free Black and Multiracial individuals assessed for taxes.

Also includes, "Free Negro Delinquent Tax Lists," 1812-1814 and 1849-1861. These are tax records compiled by the commissioner of the revenue. Delinquent tax lists contain names and residence of free Black and Multiracial individuals who have not paid their taxes in a given year or years.

Free person in wants of registration, 1861, includes documents relating to Isaac Granger proving his freedom after being held in jail due to lack of registration.

"List of Freed Negroes," 1864, is a volume that records the date, full name, age, eye color, hair color, complexion, height, occupation, where from (state and county), present residence, and remarks regarding Black and Multiracial individuals. Many of the remarks note that the person is a deserter from the "Rebel Army" or has "gone North." Many others are listed as having left Virginia for cities such as St. Louis, Washington, DC, Baltimore, and New York. Many of those listed are originally from counties other than Princess Anne and from states other than Virginia. There is no index. [Microfilm only]

Patrol accounts and returns,1771-1862, consist of five folders of documents which note the recruitment and payment of local citizens appointed to patrol the enslaved population of the county. Occasionally, a return includes a report of unlawful activity among enslaved people.

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

Account, 1779-1780, between the county of Princess Anne and Sherrif Edward Moseley. Notes expenses to be paid to Moseley in preforming his position as sheriff includes summoning court for trails involving various enslaved persons (John and Rodger, enslaved by Col. Moseley; Ned and Robbin, enslaved by Col. Thorowgood; Dick, Jack and Joe, enslaved by John Brown) also includes charges for whippings (Ned, Robbin, and Tom) and execution of Jack.

Affidavit, undated, noting that George Vallentime was born 1766 and served his time with John Watts of Prince George County.

Certificate, 1800, documenting that Sam, a Black man enslaved by Lammuel Wilson, and bought his freedom and is now free.

Circular [typescript],1802, publicizing new legislation requiring county courts to submit records of capital cases involving enslaved people.

Claim, 1852, of Jack Owens, a free Black man, concerning issue in taxes charged to him for years 1850 and 1852. Appears to be in reference to his enslaved sons James and Johnsey.

Estate document, 1803, noting Pattey, an enslaved Black woman, as being enslaved by Mrs. Hambleton, after being transferred in ownership by John Thorowgood.

Letter, 1860, of John Peters to J.J. Burroughs, concerning legal matters in regards to property. Includes a postscript reminding Burroughs to secure May E. Cross's free papers at the next court.

Lists noting the birth of enslaved people. The first list, 1766-1770, includes Argil, Robbert, Diney, Marg, David, and Nil. The second list, 1791-1799, includes the children of Peter and Sally (Arfaca, Peter, Betsy, and Vinear [?])

Order, 1815, of court notifying residence that the sheriff will be taking depositions regarding enslaved people taken by the British or who fled to the British during the War of 1812.

Pass, 1802, for John, an enslaved Black man, to travel in pursuit of reaching John Richard Edwards to work in his smith.

Arrangement

This collection is arranged

- Series I: Free and Enslaved Records, 1766-1862

Contents List

Series I: Free and Enslaved Records, 1766-1862

Extent

. 45 cubic foot (1 box); 1 microfilm reel

Physical Location Library of Virginia

Barcode number 1120074: Free and Enslaved Records, 1766-1862

Princess Anne County (Va.) Reel 76: List of Freed Negroes, 1864

Library of Virginia