

A Guide to the Northampton County (Va.) Land records relating to Gingaskin Indian lands, 1795-1815

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A Collection in the Library of Virginia 1168316

Library of Virginia

2009

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History

Processed by: Sarah Nerney

Title Statement

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Subtitle: Northampton County (Va.) Land records relating to Gingaskin Indian lands, 1795-1815

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Publication Statement

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Publisher: Library of Virginia

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Profile Description

Creation: Machine-readable finding aid derived from MARC record, created by Sarah Nerney, 30 October 2009

Language Usage: Description is in English

Revision Description

2013-11-21 Converted to schema conforming EAD by dtd2schema.vh.xsl.

Descriptive Summary

Barcode number

1168316

Language

English

Collector

Northampton County (Va.) Circuit Court.

Physical Characteristics

7 leaves.

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 a transfer of court papers from Northampton County under the accession number 44548.

Preferred Citation

Northampton County (Va.) Land records relating to Gingaskin Indian lands, 1795-1815. Local government records collection, Northampton County Court Records. The Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia 23219.

Historical Information

Northampton County probably was named for the English county, of which Obedience Robins, a prominent early resident of the Eastern Shore, was a native. The county, which originally included all of the peninsula south of Maryland and which was one of the eight shires established in 1694, was first called Accomac. The name was changed by legislative action in 1643.

The Accomac Indians were one of the Virginian Algonquin-speaking tribes of the Eastern Shore often collectively referred to as Powhatan Indians. In 1641, the Accomac became known as the Gingaskins when they accepted a patent from the English government for the remaining 1500 acres of their ancestral lands. Various legal and boundary struggles with their English neighbors reduced the lands reserved for the Gingaskins to 650 acres which was patented again in 1680. Over the years, Indian lands were often leased to outsiders in order to help support Gingaskin members, most of whom chose to maintain a traditional lifestyle and not farm the lands. Great concern was exhibited by white neighbors about Gingaskins intermarrying with free negroes and charges were made in a petition to the General Assembly in 1787 that there were no more "real" Indians left on the reservation therefore the land should be given to whites who could better protect it i.e. farm it in the traditional English way. In 1812, the trustees of the Gingaskin reservation convinced (or forced) the remaining members to accept a division of the land amongst themselves. The Virginia General Assembly passed a law in 1813 to terminate the Gingaskin reservation and divide the land between the official members. This was the first instance of termination or legal allotment of reservation lands and detribalization of its new owners in United States history. Three fourths of individual Gingaskin owners retained their lands until 1831 when most were forced out following the Nat Turner insurrection. Descendants of the Gingaskins continued to live in the area and most intermarried with the local black population.

Scope and Content

Northampton County (Va.) Land records relating to Gingaskin Indian lands, 1795-1815, consist of three documents. The first is an investigation of persons including free negroes living on Gingaskin lands and their claims to title (1795); the second is a report of commissioners appointed to divide the lands of the Gingaskin tribe of Indians which gives names of the persons to whom the reservation was divided between (1814); and the third is a settlement with the Gingaskin Indians for costs associated with surveying their reservations for division amongst the remaining members (1815).

Index Terms

Corporate Names:

Northampton County (Va.). Circuit Court.

Subjects:

Algonquian Indians -- Virginia.
Free African Americans -- Virginia -- Northampton County.
Indians of North America -- Eastern Shore (Md. and Va.)
Indians of North America -- Virginia.
Land subdivision -- Virginia -- Northampton County.
Powhatan Indians -- Virginia.

Geographical Names:

Northampton County (Va.) -- History -- 18th century.
Northampton County (Va.) -- History -- 19th century.

Genre and Form Terms:

Accounts -- Virginia -- Northampton County.
Land records -- Virginia -- Northampton County.
Local government records -- Virginia -- Northampton County.
Reports -- Virginia -- Northampton County.