

# A Guide to the Virginia Auditor of Public Accounts - Condemned Slaves and Free Blacks Executed or Transported Records, 1779-1865

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1779-1865



A Collection in the Library of Virginia APA 756

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## History

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## Title Statement

A Guide to the Virginia Auditor of Public Accounts - Condemned Slaves and Free Blacks Executed or Transported Records, 1779-1865

**Subtitle:** Virginia Auditor of Public Accounts - Condemned Slaves and Free Blacks Executed or Transported Records, 1779-1865

**Collection:** APA 756

**Author:** Jessie Graham

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## Profile Description

**Creation:** Machine-readable finding aid created in EAD by Renee M. Savits, 29 February 2016

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## Descriptive Summary

### Accession Number

APA 756

### Language

English

### Creator

Virginia Auditor of Public Accounts (1776-1928)

### Extent

5.1 cu. ft. (11 boxes)

### Repository

The Library of Virginia

## Administrative Information

## Access Restrictions

The bulk of the Auditor of Public Accounts Condemned Slaves and Free Blacks Executed or Transported Records, 1779-1865, are digitized and available through [Virginia Untold: The African American Narrative Digital Collection](#) on the Library of Virginia website. Please use digital images where possible.

## Use Restrictions

There are no restrictions.

## Acquisition Information

Transferred from the Auditor of Public Accounts in 1913.

## Preferred Citation

Virginia. Auditor of Public Accounts (1776-1928). Condemned Slaves and Free Blacks Executed or Transported Records, 1779-1865. Accession APA 756, State government records collection, The Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia.

# Biographical Information

During the antebellum period the General Assembly passed increasingly restrictive laws in response to white fears of slave crime and insurrection. Procedures were established to compensate slaveholders for the loss of their property when slaves ran away or were imprisoned or executed. Some condemned slaves were transported beyond the state's boundaries, frequently to Africa.

Free blacks, too, were subjected to harsh laws intended to persuade or compel them to leave Virginia. Special taxes were assessed against them, emigration to Liberia was promoted, and reenslavement for debt or crime was threatened constantly. Some free blacks did leave, but most stayed despite the restrictions.

Capital cases involving slaves and free blacks were tried before special sessions of local courts and included murder, attempted murder, and burglary. If a slave was condemned, his value to his owner was estimated and certified to the auditor of public accounts for payment. Alternatives to execution included sale or expulsion from the state by order of the governor. Often brief transcripts of trial records were sent to Richmond with the slave's valuation, especially if reprieve and transportation to Africa were under consideration.

# Scope and Content

*Materials in the Library of Virginia's collections contain historical terms, phrases, and images that are offensive to modern readers. These include demeaning and dehumanizing references to race, ethnicity, and nationality; enslaved or free status; physical and mental ability; religion; sex; and sexual orientation and gender identity.*

The Condemned Slaves and Free Blacks Executed or Transported Records, 1779-1865, are housed in 11 boxes and arranged into three series. Series have been designated for Series I: Slaves executed records, 1779-1864; Series II. Transportation records, 1788-1865; and Series III. Miscellaneous records, 1816-1855. These records concern payment from the Auditor of Public Accounts to slave owner(s) for the execution or transportation of a slave (or multiple slaves) condemned for capital crimes committed.

The records, 1779-1865, contain affidavits, bonds, correspondence, court records, death warrants, estate files, power of attorneys, receipts, sheriff certificates, and valuations of slaves and free blacks convicted for capital crimes and sentenced to be executed or transported from the United States. Capital cases involving slaves and free blacks were tried before special sessions of the local courts called Courts of Oyer and Terminer. Oyer and Terminer cases were held before a commission authorized to hear a criminal case with special circumstances. Capital cases heard in Oyer and Terminer Courts usually included murder, attempted murder, burglary, rape, attempted rape, infanticide, house burning, and insurrection. If found guilty of the crime, a slave or free person of color was either executed or sold and transported outside of the boundaries of the United States. If a slave were condemned, his or her value was estimated and certified to the Auditor of Public Accounts for payment to his or her owner to cover the loss of property. Executions of condemned slaves waned after the 1830s when sale and transportation became more favorable. Slaves and free blacks condemned to sale and transportation were usually held at the State Penitentiary until the sale took place.

The records are identified by the slave owner's name and the date on which the Auditor of Public Accounts paid the owner for his or her loss of the slave(s). Many of the files include a copy of the judgment and court records detailing the crime and sentence, while other files simply contain a valuation and receipt from the Auditor's Office. Also included are statements from the sheriff certifying that the execution took place. The vast majority of the records pertain to condemned slaves and very few of these records contain information about free persons of color. Some sporadic references to free blacks can be found in Bonds for Transportations and Executive Authority to Sell Transportees, found in Series II: Transportation records, Subseries B and C. Additional records relating to free persons of color can be found in Series III:

Miscellaneous Records, Lists of slaves and free persons of color received into the Penitentiary of Virginia. The records contain information on the slave(s) such as name, age, locality, and owner's name. Of note are several files of execution and transportation records that pertain to insurrections led by Gabriel Prosser (1800) in Henrico County, Virginia, and Nat Turner (1831) in Southampton County, Virginia.

## Arrangement

This collection is arranged in the following series:

- Series I: Slaves executed records, 1779-1864
- Series II. Transportation records, 1788-1865
- Series III. Miscellaneous records, 1816-1855

## Contents List

### Series I: Slaves executed records, 1779-1864.

**Boxes** 1-4 (box)

#### Extent

Extent: 1.6 cu. ft. (4 boxes)

#### Scope and Content

The Slaves Executed records series, 1779-1864, are housed in 4 boxes and contain case files relating to the condemnation of a slave (or multiple slaves) for capital crimes committed (such as arson, burglary, murder, and rape). The series contains affidavits, correspondence, court records, death warrants, estate files, power of attorneys, receipts, sheriff certificates, valuations, and a few wills. The cases are identified by the slave owner's name and the date on which the Auditor of Public Accounts paid the owner for his or her loss of the slave(s). The files sometimes include detailed court records about the crime in question, though in many cases the file contains only the valuation and receipt from the Auditor's Office. Also often included are statements from the sheriff certifying that the execution took place. The records contain information on the slave(s) such as name, age, locality, and owner's name.

Of note are files related to slaves condemned for their involvement in the insurrections led by Gabriel Prosser (1800) and Nat Turner (1831).

#### Arrangement

Arranged chronologically.

#### 1779-1785

**Box** 1

**Folder** 1

#### 1786

**Box** 1

**Folder** 2

#### 1787

**Box** 1

**Folder** 3

#### 1788 January-March

**Box** 1

**Folder** 4

#### 1788 April-December

**Box** 1

**Folder** 5

#### 1789

**Box 1**  
**Folder 6**

**1790**

**Box 1**  
**Folder 7**

**1791**

**Box 1**  
**Folder 8**

**1792**

**Box 1**  
**Folder 9**

**1793**

**Box 1**  
**Folder 10**

**1794**

**Box 1**  
**Folder 11**

**1795**

**Box 1**  
**Folder 12**

**1796**

**Box 1**  
**Folder 13**

**1797**

**Box 1**  
**Folder 14**

**1798**

**Box 1**  
**Folder 15**

**1799**

**Box 1**  
**Folder 16**

**1800**

**Box 1**  
**Folder 17**

**1800-1801, Gabriel's Insurrection**

**Box 1**  
**Folder 18**

**1801**

**Box 1**  
**Folder 19**

**1802**

**Box 2**

**Folder 1**

**1803 [see also oversize box 11]**

**Box 2**

**Folder 2**

**1804**

**Box 2**

**Folder 3**

**1805**

**Box 2**

**Folder 4**

**1806**

**Box 2**

**Folder 5**

**1807**

**Box 2**

**Folder 6**

**1808**

**Box 2**

**Folder 7**

**1809**

**Box 2**

**Folder 8**

**1810**

**Box 2**

**Folder 9**

**1811**

**Box 2**

**Folder 10**

**1812**

**Box 2**

**Folder 11**

**1813**

**Box 2**

**Folder 12**

**1814**

**Box 2**

**Folder 13**

**1815**

**Box 2**

**Folder 14**

**1816**

**Box 2**

**Folder 15**

**1817**

**Box 2**

**Folder 16**

**1818**

**Box 2**

**Folder 17**

**1819**

**Box 2**

**Folder 18**

**1820**

**Box 2**

**Folder 19**

**1821**

**Box 2**

**Folder 20**

**1822**

**Box 2**

**Folder 21**

**1823**

**Box 3**

**Folder 1**

**1824**

**Box 3**

**Folder 2**

**1825 [see also oversize box 11]**

**Box 3**

**Folder 3**

**1826**

**Box 3**

**Folder 4**

**1827 January-August**

**Box 3**

**Folder 5**

## **1827 September-December**

**Box 3**

**Folder 6**

## **1828**

**Box 3**

**Folder 7**

## **1829**

**Box 3**

**Folder 8**

## **1830**

**Box 3**

**Folder 9**

## **1831**

**Box 3**

**Folder 10**

## **1832**

**Box 3**

**Folder 11**

## **1832, Turner's Insurrection**

**Box 3**

**Folder 12**

## **1833**

**Box 3**

**Folder 13**

## **1834**

**Box 3**

**Folder 14**

## **1835**

**Box 3**

**Folder 15**

## **1836**

**Box 3**

**Folder 16**

## **1837**

**Box 3**

**Folder 17**

## **1838**

**Box 3**

**Folder 18**

**1839**

**Box 3**

**Folder 19**

**1840**

**Box 3**

**Folder 20**

**1841**

**Box 3**

**Folder 21**

**1842**

**Box 3**

**Folder 22**

**1843**

**Box 3**

**Folder 23**

**1844**

**Box 4**

**Folder 1**

**1845**

**Box 4**

**Folder 2**

**1846**

**Box 4**

**Folder 3**

**1847**

**Box 4**

**Folder 4**

**1848**

**Box 4**

**Folder 5**

**1849**

**Box 4**

**Folder 6**

**1850**

**Box 4**

**Folder 7**

**1851**

**Box 4**

**Folder 8**

**1852**

**Box 4**

**Folder 9**

**1853**

**Box 4**

**Folder 10**

**1854**

**Box 4**

**Folder 11**

**1855**

**Box 4**

**Folder 12**

**1857**

**Box 4**

**Folder 13**

**1858**

**Box 4**

**Folder 14**

**1862**

**Box 4**

**Folder 15**

**1864**

**Box 4**

**Folder 16**

## **Series II: Transportation records, 1788-1865.**

**Boxes** Box 5-11

### **Extent**

Extent: 3.3 cu. ft. (7 boxes).

### **Scope and Content**

The Slaves Transported records series, 1788-1865, are housed in 7 boxes and arranged into three subseries. Subseries have been designated for Subseries A: Slaves Transported; Subseries B: Bonds for Transportation; and Subseries C: Executive Authority to Sell Transports. The series contains affidavits, correspondence, court records, powers of attorney, receipts, sheriff certificates, valuations, and a few wills. The cases are identified by the slave owner's name and the date on which the Auditor of Public Accounts paid the owner for his or her loss of the slave(s). After being found guilty and condemned by a Court of Oyer and Terminer, it was determined by the court whether the slave or free person of color should be executed for the crime or sold and transported outside of the United States. (If condemned, a free person of color then became a slave). If marked for sale and transportation, the slave was usually brought to the state penitentiary in Richmond, Virginia. Sales were held periodically at the penitentiary and the buyers were obligated by bond to transport the slaves outside of the United States.

### **Arrangement**

Arranged chronologically.

## **Subseries A: Slaves transported, 1788-1865.**

**Extent**

3.05 cu. ft. (5 boxes, 1/2 box, and 1 oversize box)

**Scope and Content**

The Slaves transported subseries, 1788-1865, is housed in 5 boxes and contain case files devoted to the sale and transportation of a condemned slave (or multiple slaves) for capital crimes committed. In some cases, the slave(s) may have been ordered executed and then given a reprieve. The files include copies of the court judgment and often detail the crime in question. In many cases the file contains only the valuation and receipt from the Auditor's Office. The cases are identified by the owner's name and the date on which the Auditor of Public Accounts paid the owner for his or her loss of the slave(s). The records do not include information on the sale of the slaves or the location to which they were transported. This subseries also includes records of payment to people who physically transported the slaves beginning in 1856. Included in this series are files related to slaves condemned and transported for their involvement in the insurrections led by Gabriel Prosser (1800) and Nat Turner (1831).

**Arrangement**

Arranged chronologically.

**1788-1801**

**Box 5**

**Folder 1**

**1801, Gabriel's Insurrection**

**Box 5**

**Folder 2**

**1802**

**Box 5**

**Folder 3**

**1803**

**Box 5**

**Folder 4**

**1804**

**Box 5**

**Folder 5**

**1805**

**Box 5**

**Folder 6**

**1806**

**Box 5**

**Folder 7**

**1807**

**Box 5**

**Folder 8**

**1808**

**Box 5**

**Folder 9**

**1809**

**Box 5**

**Folder 10**

**1810**

**Box 5**

**Folder 11**

**1811**

**Box 5**

**Folder 12**

**1812**

**Box 5**

**Folder 13**

**1813**

**Box 5**

**Folder 14**

**1814**

**Box 5**

**Folder 15**

**1815**

**Box 5**

**Folder 16**

**1816**

**Box 5**

**Folder 17**

**1817**

**Box 5**

**Folder 18**

**1818**

**Box 5**

**Folder 19**

**1819**

**Box 6**

**Folder 1**

**1820**

**Box 6**

**Folder 2**

**1821**

**Box 6**

**Folder 3**

-----

**1822**

**Box 6**

**Folder 4**

**1823**

**Box 6**

**Folder 5**

**1824 February-October**

**Box 6**

**Folder 6**

**1824 November-December**

**Box 6**

**Folder 7**

**1825**

**Box 6**

**Folder 8**

**1826**

**Box 6**

**Folder 9**

**1827**

**Box 6**

**Folder 10**

**1828**

**Box 6**

**Folder 11**

**1829**

**Box 6**

**Folder 12**

**1830 March-June**

**Box 6**

**Folder 13**

**1830 July-December**

**Box 6**

**Folder 14**

**1831**

**Box 7**

**Folder 1**

**1832**

**Box 7**

**Folder 2**

**1831-1832, Turner's Insurrection**

**Box 7**

**Folder 3**

**1833**

**Box 7**

**Folder 4**

**1834 January-May**

**Box 7**

**Folder 5**

**1834 June-December**

**Box 7**

**Folder 6**

**1835**

**Box 7**

**Folder 7**

**1836**

**Box 7**

**Folder 8**

**1837 January-July**

**Box 7**

**Folder 9**

**1837 August-December**

**Box 7**

**Folder 10**

**1838**

**Box 7**

**Folder 11**

**1839**

**Box 7**

**Folder 12**

**1840 January-August**

**Box 7**

**Folder 13**

**1840 September-December**

**Box 7**

**Folder 14**

**1841 January-July**

**Box 7**

**Folder 15**

**1841 August-December**

**Box 7**

**Folder 16**

**1842**

**Box 7**

**Folder 17**

**1843**

**Box 8**

**Folder 1**

**1844**

**Box 8**

**Folder 2**

**1845 January-July**

**Box 8**

**Folder 3**

**1845 August-December**

**Box 8**

**Folder 4**

**1846**

**Box 8**

**Folder 5**

**1847**

**Box 8**

**Folder 6**

**1848**

**Box 8**

**Folder 7**

**1849**

**Box 8**

**Folder 8**

**1850**

**Box 8**

**Folder 9**

**1851 January-May**

**Box 8**

**Folder 10**

**1851 June-August**

**Box 8**

**Folder 11**

**1851 September-November**

**Box 8**

**Folder 12**

**1852 January-June**

**Box 8**

**Folder 13**

**1852 July-November**

**Box 8**

**Folder 14**

**1853**

**Box 8**

**Folder 15**

**1854 January-May**

**Box 8**

**Folder 16**

**1854 June-August**

**Box 8**

**Folder 17**

**1854 September-December**

**Box 8**

**Folder 18**

**1855 January-June**

**Box 9**

**Folder 1**

**1855 July-September**

**Box 9**

**Folder 2**

**1856**

**Box 9**

**Folder 3**

**1857 February-June**

**Box 9**

**Folder 4**

**1857 July-December**

**Box 9**

**Folder 5**

**1858 January-June**

**Box 9**

**Folder 6**

**1858 July-December**

**Box 9**

**Folder 7**

**1859 March-October**

**Box 9**

**Folder 8**

**1859 November-December**

**Box 9**

**Folder 9**

**1860 January-February**

**Box 9**

**Folder 10**

**1860 March-June**

**Box 9**

**Folder 11**

**1860 July-September**

**Box 9**

**Folder 12**

**1860 October-December**

**Box 9**

**Folder 13**

**1861 January-April**

**Box 9**

**Folder 14**

**1861 May-December**

**Box 9**

**Folder 15**

**1862 January-August**

**Box 10**

**Folder 1**

**1862 September-December**

**Box 10**

**Folder 2**

**1863**

**Box 10**

**Folder 3**

**1864 [see also oversize box 11]**

**Box 10**

**Folder 4**

**1865**

**Box 10**

**Folder 5**

**Oversize separated materials**

**Box 11**

**Subseries B: Bonds for Transportation, 1804-1857.**

**Extent**

.25 cu. ft. (1/2 box)

**Scope and Content**

The Bonds for Transportation subseries, 1804-1857, is housed in 1/2 box and contains bonds signed by the purchasers of condemned slaves ordered to be transported outside the boundaries of the United States. The bonds contain the names of the slaves and the localities in which they were convicted and obligate the signers to remove the slaves from the United States by a certain date. Most of the bonds were for multiple slaves sold and transported together. The bonds do not contain information about the location to which the slaves were transported.

**Arrangement**

Arranged chronologically.

**1804-1809**

**Box 10**

**Folder 6**

**1810-1815**

**Box 10**

**Folder 7**

**1816-1820 [see also oversize box 11]**

**Box 10**

**Folder 8**

**1821-1829 [see also oversize box 11]**

**Box 10**

**Folder 9**

**1831-1835**

**Box 10**

**Folder 10**

**1836-1845 [see also oversize box 11]**

**Box 10**

**Folder 11**

**1846-1853**

**Box 10**

**Folder 12**

**1854-1855**

**Box 10**

**Folder 13**

**1856-1857**

**Box 10**

**Folder 14**

### **Subseries C: Executive Authority to Sell Transports, 1833-1857.**

#### **Extent**

2 folders

#### **Scope and Content**

The Executive Authority to Sell Transports subseries, 1833-1857, is housed in two folders and contains letters from the Executive Department (the Governor's Office) to the Auditor of Public Accounts. The letters order the Auditor to receive payment for slaves marked for sale and transportation. The letters include the purchasers name and the amount owed. The letters do not include any information about the slaves purchased or where they would be transported.

#### **Arrangement**

Arranged chronologically

#### **1833-1851**

**Box 10**

**Folder 15**

#### **1852-1857**

**Box 10**

**Folder 16**

### **Series III: Miscellaneous Records, 1816-1855.**

**Boxes** Box 10

#### **Extent**

Extent: .20 cu. ft. (5 folders)

#### **Scope and Content**

The Miscellaneous records series, 1816-1855, is housed in 1/2 box and contain a variety of records that document the execution and transportation of condemned slaves and free persons of color. Included are lists of slaves and free blacks received at the state penitentiary, lists of those executed and transported during a given time period, lists of sales, and a treasurer's balance sheet. Some, but not all, of these records contain slave names, owner names, dates of sales, valuation, and places of residence. The "List of slaves and free persons of color received into the Penitentiary," 1816-1855, includes the name of slave, date of receipt, where sentenced, owners name, age of slave, value, and if they died, were pardoned, or sold.

#### **Arrangement**

Arranged alphabetically.

#### **List of slaves and free persons of color received into the Penitentiary of Virginia for sale and transportation, 1816-1842.**

**Box 10**

**Folder 17**

#### **List of slaves and free persons of color received into the Penitentiary of Virginia for sale and transportation, 1845-1855.**

**Box 10**

**Folder 18**

#### **Lists of sold slaves and free persons, 1843-1850.**

**Box 10**

**Folder 19**

**Slaves transported and executed, 1833-1854.**

**Box 10**

**Folder 20**

**Treasurer's balance sheet, 1833-1846.**

**Box 10**

**Folder 21**

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