

# A Guide to the Caroline County (Va.) Free and Enslaved Records, 1788-1864

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A Collection in the Library of Virginia  
Library of Virginia  
2015

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## History

**Processed by:** LVA staff

## Title Statement

A Guide to the Caroline County (Va.) Free and Enslaved Records, 1788-1864

**Subtitle:** Caroline County (Va.) Free and Enslaved Records, 1788-1864

**Author:** Greg Crawford

## Publication Statement

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## Profile Description

**Creation:** Machine-readable finding aid derived from being created directly into EAD, created by Greg Crawford, 05 January 2015

**Language Usage:** Description is in English

## Descriptive Summary

### Language

English

### Collector

Caroline County (Va.) Circuit Court

### Physical Characteristics

.45 cu.ft. (1 box)

### Location

Library of Virginia

### Repository

The Library of Virginia

## Administrative Information

### Access Restrictions

This collection is open for research.

## Use Restrictions

There are no restrictions.

## Acquisition Information

These records came to the Library of Virginia in shipments of court papers from the city of Caroline County.

## 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.

Commonwealth Causes relating to free and enslaved Black and multiracial individuals are believed to have been removed Caroline County (Va.) Commonwealth Causes [not processed].

"Free Negro" Registrations were removed from this record in June 2024 and are now described in Caroline County (Va.) Records Related to the Registrations of Free Persons, 1831-1863.

Petitions to Remain were removed from this record in June 2024 and are now described in Caroline County (Va.) Petitions to Remain in the Commonwealth, 1859.

"Commonwealth Causes, 1802-1836, related to free and enslaved Black and multiracial people consist of criminal cases heard where the defendants themselves are either free or enslaved individuals. Some causes contain original material, some contain photocopies. Causes commonly found against free Black and enslaved people include breaking and entering, stealing, assault, murder, and arson. Commonwealth causes also include several cases, 1808, where the court charge several Black and multiracial enslaved individuals with "consult, advise, or conspire to rebel or make insurrection." Enslaved individuals named in these causes include: Arch, Lewey, and Daniel." was removed from this record in May 2026 to the Caroline County (Va.) Criminal Records descriptive record as part of the "Miscellaneous Records" Virginia Untold digitization project.

Encoded by, G. Crawford, 2015; Updated by M. Mason, June 2024; Updated by M. Mason, June 2026

## Preferred Citation

Caroline County (Va.) Free and Enslaved Records, 1788-1864. Local government records collection, Caroline County Court Records. The Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia.

# Adjunct Descriptive Data

## Related Material

See also: [Caroline County \(Va.\) Records Related to the Registration of Free Persons, 1831-1863](#)

See also: [Caroline County \(Va.\) Apprenticeship Indentures, 1826](#)

See also: [Caroline County \(Va.\) Petitions to Remain in the Commonwealth, 1859](#)

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

Additional Caroline 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.](#)"

Caroline County (Va.) is one of Virginia's Lost Records Localities. Additional Caroline County Court Records may be found in the [Lost Records Localities Digital Collection](#) on the Library of Virginia website.

# Historical Information

## Context for Record Type:

### 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 Orange 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 Commonwealth Causes; Fiduciary Records; Requisitions for Public Use; and "Runaway" Records

**Locality History:** Caroline County was named for Caroline of Anspach, wife of King George II. It was formed from Essex, King and Queen, and King William Counties on 1 May 1728, and additional parts of King and Queen County were added in 1742 and in 1763. The county seat is Bowling Green.

**Lost Locality Note:** Most loose records and deed books prior to 1836 and will books prior to 1853 were stolen, mutilated, and/or destroyed by Union troops who ransacked the courthouse in May 1864. A near-complete run of order books exists.

## Scope and Content

Caroline County (Va.) Free and Enslaved Records, 1788-1864, consists of Commonwealth Causes, 1802-1836; Deeds, 1788; Fiduciary Records, 1842 and undated; Fiduciary Records, 1842 and undated; Pass, 1845; Patrol Records, 1806-1848; Requisitions for Public Use, 1864; "Runaway" Records, 1812-1825; and Tax and Fiscal Records, 1833.

Deed, 1788, includes a bill of sale between Margaret Parish and Grave, Benjamin, and Frances Graves concerning Rose, a Black woman enslaved by Margaret Parish.

Fiduciary Records, 1842 and undated, consist of a Report of F.W. Scotts [possibly trustee in estate of Achilles Duling], 1842, concerning the transport of Scipio, emancipated by Archilles Dulling, to Ohio. Scotts seeks funds for furnishing Scipio with many of the necessities for his travel to Ohio. Also includes inventory, undated, noting enslaved persons divided between members of the Turner, Taylor, Pendleton, and Page families. Inventory contains about seventy names of Black and multiracial enslaved individuals.

Pass, 1845, of John (or John Freeman) provided by John Pendleton, noting John Freeman as a "free boy of colour" with clearance to travel to Richmond for work.

Patrol Records, 1806-1848, consists of largely commissions and accounts. These patrols generally acted as the policing force that monitored the movement of free and enslaved Black and multiracial individuals. These record the names of the individuals on patrol; who authorized their patrol; dates of patrol; the number of hours on patrol; general geographic area patrolled; and compensation awarded. Some returns specifically note the objective to "apprehend all slaves and other disorderly persons," or "to visit all negro quarters, and other places suspected of entertaining unlawful assemblies of servants, slaves, or of disorderly persons."

Requisitions for Public Use, 1864, consists of a printed call for enslaved persons to be requisitioned for labor on the public defenses, 1864 December 16, made to the county courts. Made by Governor Smith based upon the annexed schedule ["slave schedule" taken as part of the census].

"Runaway" Records, 1812-1825, consists of a note for payment, 1812, granted Edmund Poe for the "taking" [transport or capture] of Will, enslaved by John Pendleton; Report of sale, 1823, for the sale of Sam, a self-emancipated Black man; and valuation, 1825, of Jacob and Issac, two self-emancipated Black men, being held in the Caroline County jail.

Tax and Fiscal Records, 1833, consists of a letter of Archibald Bramam to the court seeking to have various enslaved Black men and women [all unnamed] enslaved by himself, Eliza Rollins, and Elizabeth Clift, exonerated from taxes due to the enslaved individuals advanced age.

## Arrangement

This collection is arranged

- Series I: Free and Enslaved Records, 1788-1864, arranged loosely by record type then chronologically

## Contents List

### Series I: Free and Enslaved Records 1788-1864

#### Extent

.45 cubic feet (1 box)

**Physical Location** Library of Virginia

#### Arrangement

arranged by record type then chronologically

**Barcode number 1116115: Free and enslaved records, 1788-1864**

Library of Virginia