

A Guide to the New Kent County (Va.) Convict Register, 1888-1956

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1888-1956



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History

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Title Statement

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Descriptive Summary

Barcode Number

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Language

English

Collector

New Kent County (Va.) Circuit Court.

Extent

1 v.

Location

State Records Center--Library of Virginia, Archives Annex

Repository

The Library of Virginia

Administrative Information

Access Restrictions

There are no restrictions.

Use Restrictions

There are no restrictions.

Acquisition Information

This volume came to the Library of Virginia in a transfer of court records from New Kent County under the accession number 42127.

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Adjunct Descriptive Data

Related Material

Additional Winchester (City) Records can be found on microfilm at the Library of Virginia. Consult [A Guide to Virginia County and City Records on Microfilm](#).

Historical Information

New Kent County may have been named either for the English county of Kent or for Kent Island, in the upper waters of the Chesapeake Bay. William Claiborne, a native of Kent who had been driven from Kent Island by Lord Baltimore, was a prominent resident of the New Kent area around 1654 when the county was formed from York County. Part of James City County was added in 1767.

Records were destroyed when John Posey set fire to the courthouse on 15 July 1787. Many records were lost when the courthouse was partially destroyed by fire during the Civil War hostilities in 1862. Additional records were burned in Richmond on 3 April 1865, where they had been moved for safekeeping during the Civil War.

During the 1869-1870 session, the General Assembly passed an "Act to Secure Identification of Persons Convicted of Criminal Offences." On 2 November 1870, the act was approved. The act specified that "every clerk of the court of each county and corporation shall keep a register of full and accurate descriptive lists of every person convicted in his own or any other court of record of his county or corporation, of felony or other infamous offence, and a duly certified and attested copy of any such descriptive list may be used as prima facie evidence of the facts therein stated in any question of identity. Such registers shall be kept written up, well indexed, and shall be open to public inspection at reasonable hours. The register shall follow a set form and each descriptive list shall be attested by said clerk."

In addition, "the clerk of every court of record of each county or corporation, other than the county or corporation court, shall within ten days from the date of conviction of any person in his court of any offence mentioned in the first section of this act, deliver to the clerk of the county or corporation court, for record in said register, an attested descriptive list of the person so convicted, in the form hereinbefore prescribed." The judges of the respective courts are responsible for seeing that the provisions of the act are "punctually and properly carried out" by their respective clerks. The act was amended on 18 January 1871 and outlined the following: "For the services mentioned in this or the first section of this act, the clerk shall be entitled to a fee of fifty cents, to be paid out of the state treasury." By and large, the county and circuit court clerks went about compiling these registers throughout the counties of Virginia as late as the 1960s.

Order books and/or Minute books record all matters brought before the court when it was in session and may contain important information not found anywhere else. A wide variety of information is found in order/minute books--including individuals convicted of felonies.

The original register was created by the County Court until 1902. After this date, felonies were recorded in the Circuit Court.

Scope and Content

New Kent County (Va.) Convict Register, 1888-1856, is a "descriptive list of persons convicted of a felony, or other infamous offences, in the County Court of New Kent County, Virginia since 2 November 1888." Based on a set form, the listings of each conviction include the individual's name in full and any aliases, the present and last known residence of the accused, the color or race of the individual (with a c for colored and a w for white), the individual's height, eye color, hair color and any identifying marks, the apparent of known age of

the accused, his or her occupation, the offence, the court in which convicted, the date of conviction and page of record and whether the judgment was reversed or pardon granted and date thereof. The volume had 216 pages but there are only entries on pages 1-7 and 9. The entries include the convict's full name and are arranged by date of conviction. On page 5 is found a copy of a newspaper article highlighting an escape from Southhampton State Prison Farm on 21 April of unidentified year. At the beginning, the volume contains an index. Volume has been damaged by water.

Index Terms

Corporate Names:

New Kent County (Va.) Circuit Court.

Subjects:

African American prisoners--Virginia--New Kent County.
African Americans--Employment--Virginia--New Kent County.
African Americans--History--1863-1877.
African Americans--History--1877-1964.
African Americans--Virginia--New Kent County.
Occupations--Virginia--New Kent County.
Prisoners--Virginia--New Kent County.
Public records--Virginia--New Kent County.

Geographical Names:

New Kent County (Va.)--History.

Genre and Form Terms:

Criminal court records--Virginia--New Kent County.
Judicial records--Virginia--New Kent County.
Local government records--Virginia--New Kent County.
Minute books--Virginia--New Kent County.
Order books--Virginia--New Kent County.
Registers (lists)--Virginia--New Kent County.

Added Entry - Corporate Name:

New Kent County (Va.) Corporation Court.

Arrangement

This volume is arranged by date and the index is arranged alphabetically by surname and date of conviction.