

A Guide to the Northampton County (Va.) Apprenticeship Indentures, 1727-1748

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A Collection in the Library of Virginia
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2024

History

Processed by: LVA Staff

Title Statement

A Guide to the Northampton County (Va.) Apprenticeship Indentures, 1727-1748

Subtitle: Northampton County (Va.) Apprenticeship Indentures

Author: Caroline Collins

Publication Statement

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Profile Description

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Language Usage: Description is in English

Descriptive Summary

Language

English

Collector

Northampton County (Va.) Circuit Court

Extent

4 items.

Location

Library of Virginia

Repository

Library of Virginia

Administrative Information

Access Restrictions

IN PROGRESS: Northampton County (Va.) Apprenticeship Indentures, 1727-1748, involving Black and multiracial individuals are digitized and available through [Virginia Untold: The African American Narrative Digital Collection](#) on the Library of Virginia website. Please use digital images.

Use Restrictions

There are no restrictions.

Acquisition Information

These records came to the Library of Virginia in a transfer of court papers from Northampton County (Va.) as part of an undated accession.

Processing Information

Northampton County Apprenticeship Indentures were originally described as part of the Northampton County (Va.) Free and Enslaved Records, 1737-1860, but were removed to the present Northampton County (Va.) Apprenticeship Indentures, 1727-1748, record to enhance discoverability in July 2024.

The apprenticeship indentures currently in this collection are believed to have been removed from Northampton County (Va.) Judgments and processed by LVA staff around 2007.

These records were scanned and indexed by LVA staff for the purposes of digitizing them for the digital project Virginia Untold: The African American Narrative in 2024.

Encoded by C. Collins: July 2024.

Preferred Citation

Northampton County (Va.) Apprenticeship Indentures, 1727-1748. Local government records collection, Northampton County Court Records. The Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia.

Adjunct Descriptive Data

Related Material

See also: [Northampton County \(Va.\) Free and Enslaved Records, 1737-1860](#)

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

Additional Northampton County (Va.) court records can be found on microfilm at The Library of Virginia web site. Consult "[A Guide to Virginia County and City Records on Microfilm.](#)"

Historical Information

Context for Record Type: In 1765, the General Assembly established that illegitimate children of "woman servants, Negroes, white women by Negroes were to be bound out" until the age of 21 for males and 18 for females. In the late eighteenth century, the General Assembly established the Overseers of the Poor, an appointed body that provided food, clothing, shelter, and medical treatment for people who were too poor to support themselves or too ill to provide for their basic needs. They also bound out children whose parents could not support them and those who were orphaned through apprenticeship contracts. These agreements arranged for white children to be taught a trade or domestic skills as well as educated in reading, writing, and arithmetic. In 1805, the General Assembly amended the previous act to no longer require the master of "black or mulatto orphans" to teach reading, writing, or arithmetic, with the intent that this would prevent Black children from learning these skills.

Locality History: Northampton County was named probably 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, or counties, first enumerated in 1634, was first called Accomack. The General Assembly changed the name to Northampton County in 1643. Accomack County was created from Northampton County about 1663, but in October 1670, the General Assembly temporarily reunited the two counties as Northampton County. In November 1673, Accomack County was again separated from Northampton. The county seat is Eastville.

Scope and Content

Northampton County (Va.) Apprenticeship Indentures, 1727-1748, consist of contracts or agreements binding out white, Black, or multiracial children, sometimes those who were orphaned, to learn a particular trade or craft. These indentures may be written agreements between the family of the apprentice and those responsible for the indentured. In many cases this includes the direct involvement of the Overseers of the Poor. They typically contain the name of the person or institution binding out, the person to whom bound, the name of the person being indentured, the length of the apprenticeship, and the responsibilities of the person taking on the indenture.

Currently, identified material only includes indentures of Black and multiracial children, though additional apprenticeship indentures concerning white children may remain in unprocessed records.

These records include the petition, 1727, of Diana Webb (or Diana Manly) requesting "the usual dues," as she had never received them, and accusing Thomas Savage, to whom she was bound until the age of twenty-one, of neglecting her schooling. [See the [UncommonWealth blog](#) for several posts written about the Webb family.]

Additionally, the records are comprised of three indentures: 1740, of William Carter, who was bound out to John Wilson (or Willson), his father (Wilson claimed Carter as his child by Hannah Carter, a woman of color); 1741, of Southy Carter, who was bound to Muns Bishop; and 1748, of an unnamed male child of Catharine Anderson, who was originally bound to Thomas Widgeon. Following Widgeon's passing, Nicholas Campell petitioned the court to bind the child to himself.

Arrangement

This collection is arranged

- Series I: Apprenticeship Indentures, 1727-1748, arranged chronologically.

Contents List

Series I: Apprenticeship Indentures, 1727-1748

Extent

4 items

Physical Location Library of Virginia

Arrangement

arranged chronologically

Barcode number 0007532553: Free and Enslaved Records, 1727-1866

Library of Virginia