

A Guide to the Caroline County (Va.) Records Related to the Registration of Free Persons, 1831-1863

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1831-1863

A Collection in the Library of Virginia

Library of Virginia

2024

History

Processed by: LVA Staff

Title Statement

A Guide to the Caroline County (Va.) Records Related to the Registration of Free Persons, 1831-1863

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Profile Description

Creation: Machine-readable finding aid derived from MS Word, created by Mary Ann Mason, 25 June 2024

Language Usage: Description is in English

Descriptive Summary

Language

English

Collector

Caroline County (Va.) Circuit Court

Physical Characteristics

4 items.

Location

Library of Virginia

Repository

Library of Virginia

Administrative Information

Access Restrictions

Caroline County (Va.) Records Related to the Registration of Free Persons, 1806-1860, 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 transfer of court papers from Caroline County in an undated accession.

Processing Information

The "Free Negro" Registration Records, 1831-1863, were originally described as part of the Caroline County (Va.) Free and Enslaved Records, but were removed to the present Caroline County (Va.) Records Related to the Registration of Free Persons, to enhance discoverability June 2024

These records have been processed, scanned, and indexed by L. Neuroth and other LVA staff for the purposes of digitizing them for the digital project Virginia Untold: The African American Narrative.

Encoded by M. Mason, June 2024

Preferred Citation

Caroline County (Va.) Records Related to the Registration of Free Persons, 1831-1863. Local government records collection, Caroline County Court Records. The Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia.

Adjunct Descriptive Data

Related Material

See also: [Caroline County \(Va.\) Free and Enslaved Records, 1788-1864](#)

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 Negro" Registrations

In 1793, the Virginia General Assembly specified that "free Negroes or mulattoes" were required to "be registered and numbered in a book to be kept by the town clerk, which shall specify age, name, color, status and by whom, and in what court emancipated." These entries often coincided with the creation of a loose certificate containing largely the same identifying information.

Documents in this record group differ from the bound volumes referred to as "registers." These registration records typically appear in the form of certificates or handwritten statements recording the free status of a Black or multiracial person. They can include the free person's name, sometimes age, a brief physical description, and the circumstances of the person's freedom or emancipation, parents, former enslaver, place or date of emancipation. There are also affidavits that were given by individuals affirming a free person's status, as well as written descriptions of free people. In some cases, a person would not have a registration to submit to the court. Instead they produced some other form of identification proving their free status, for example, a deed of emancipation, a will, an apprenticeship indenture, or an affidavit of someone testifying to their character and status.

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.

Lost Locality Note: Created in 1728. 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.) Related to the Registration of Free Persons, 1831-1863, consists of "Free Negro"

registrations.

"Free Negro" registrations, 1831-1864, consists of several records which contain the name of free Black and multiracial persons; their sex; age; physical description/ complexion; and how they secured their freedom (born free or through a will or deed). While some of these records are actual registrations, most are requests for paper or other documentation to prove the individual's legal status as free. Names include Amey (or Amey Freeman); William Bowlee; Peter Lee; William Fox (or Billy Fox); Lewis Weaver; and John Jackson.

Also includes an affidavit, 1864, of Henry B. Gouldman certifying the free legal status of Nelson Johnson.

Arrangement

This collection is arranged

- Series I: Records related to the registration of free persons, 1831-1863, arranged chronologically

Contents List

Series I: Records Related to the Registration of Free Persons 1813-1863

Extent

4 items

Physical Location Library of Virginia

Arrangement

arranged chronologically

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

Library of Virginia