

# A Guide to the Southampton County (Va.) Certificates of Importation, 1790-1816

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1790-1816



A Collection in the Library of Virginia  
Library of Virginia  
2024

## History

**Processed by:** LVA Staff

## Title Statement

A Guide to the Southampton County (Va.) Certificates of Importation, 1790-1816

**Subtitle:** Southampton County (Va.) Certificates of Importation, 1790-1816

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## Publication Statement

**Date:** © 2024 By The Library of Virginia. All Rights Reserved.

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## Profile Description

**Creation:** Machine-readable finding aid derived from MS Word, created by Mary Ann Mason, 26 June 2024

**Language Usage:** Description is in English

## Descriptive Summary

### Language

English

### Collector

Southampton County (Va.) Circuit Court

### Physical Characteristics

3 items.

### Location

Library of Virginia

### Repository

Library of Virginia

## Administrative Information

### Access Restrictions

Southampton County (Va.) Certificates of Importation, 1790-1816, 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 Southampton County in 1983 under accession 31913

## Processing Information

Certificates of Importation, 1790-1816 were originally described as part of the Southampton (Va.) Free and Enslaved Records, but were removed to the present Southampton (Va.) Certificates of Importation,, 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

Southampton County (Va.) Certificates of Importation, 1790-1816. Local government records collection, Southampton County Court Records. The Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va. 23219

# Adjunct Descriptive Data

## Related Material

See also: [Southampton County \(Va.\) Free and Enslaved Records, 1754-1860](#)

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

Additional Southampton 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."](#)

## Historical Information

**Context for Record Type:** In 1778, Governor Patrick Henry enacted legislation preventing importation of enslaved people into the commonwealth. Those that did bring their enslaved people were required to register them with the county court and sign a certificate of importation agreeing that they were not bringing enslaved people into the commonwealth with the intent to sell. The enslaved person is sometimes named, but not always, and occasionally information is given as to age, birthdate, and the state from which the individuals were moving. According to Section 3 of the act "every slave imported into this commonwealth contrary to the true intent and meaning of this act, shall upon such importation become free." By this clause, those enslaved people who were brought into Virginia illegally could pursue their freedom in the local courts.

**Locality History:** Southampton County was named, in the opinion of many authorities, for Henry Wriothesley, third earl of Southampton and treasurer of the London Company from 1620 to 1624. It is more likely, however, that the county was named for the borough of Southampton in England. Southampton County was formed in 1749 from Isle of Wight County, and part of Nansemond County was added later.

## Scope and Content

Southampton County (Va.) Certificates of Importation, 1790-1816, sometimes entitled certificates of nonimportation, contain information whereby an enslaver swears that they have not imported the enslaved person from Africa and that the enslaver has not brought the enslaved person into Virginia with the purpose of selling the enslaved person. The enslaved person is sometimes named, but not always, and occasionally information is given as to age, birthdate, and the state the individuals are moving from.

Enslaved individuals referenced in these certificates includes: unnamed (brought to Virginia by William Bryant in 1790); unnamed (brought to Virginia by John Lee in 1798); and Jinney (brought to Virginia by Benjamin Devaney of Franklin County, NC in 1816).

## Arrangement

This collection is arranged

- Series I: Certificates of Importation, 1790-1816 arranged chronologically

## Contents List

### **Series I: Certificates of Importation, 1790-1816**

#### **Extent**

3 items

**Physical Location** Library of Virginia

#### **Arrangement**

arranged chronologically

**Barcode number 1119722: Free and enslaved records, 1759-1866**

Library of Virginia