

A Guide to the Chesterfield County (Va.) Apprenticeship Indentures, 1768-1898

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A Collection in the Library of Virginia
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History

Processed by: LVA staff

Title Statement

A Guide to the Chesterfield County (Va.) Apprenticeship Indentures, 1768-1898

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Profile Description

Creation: Machine-readable finding aid derived from MARC record, created by Greg Crawford, 19 January 2018

Language Usage: Description is in English

Descriptive Summary

Language

English

Collector

Chesterfield County (Va.) Circuit Court.

Physical Characteristics

.225 cu. ft. (1 box); 1 folder

Location

Library of Virginia

Repository

The Library of Virginia

Administrative Information

Access Restrictions

Indentures related to 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 Chesterfield County (Va.) as part of an undated accession.

Processing Information

Several Chesterfield County Apprenticeship Indentures were originally described as part of the Chesterfield County (Va.) Free and Enslaved Records, 1760-1862, but were removed to the present Chesterfield County (Va.) Apprenticeship Indentures, 1768-1898, record to enhance discoverability in January 2026. These indentures were found among Chesterfield County (Va.) Dead Papers.

Indentures related to Black and Multiracial individuals have been processed, scanned, indexed by S. Nerney, L. Neuroth, and LVA staff for the purposes of digitizing them for the digital project Virginia Untold: The African American Narrative. Other indentures have been processed and indexed by LVA staff.

Encoded by G. Crawford: January 2018; updated by C. Collins: January 2026.

Preferred Citation

Chesterfield County (Va.) Apprenticeship Indentures, 1768-1898. Local government records collection, Chesterfield County Court Records. The Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia.

Adjunct Descriptive Data

Related Material

See also: [Chesterfield County \(Va.\) Free and Enslaved Records, 1760-1862](#)

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

Additional Chesterfield 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: Chesterfield County was named for Philip Dormer Stanhope, fourth earl of Chesterfield, British statesman and diplomat, and was formed from Henrico County in 1749. The county seat is Chesterfield Court House. Part of Henrico County was added to Chesterfield in 1922.

Scope and Content

Chesterfield County (Va.) Apprenticeship Indentures, 1768-1898, 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.

These records are comprised of 1 box, and an additional folder, of apprenticeship indentures. Around 56 of the indentures, dated 1799-1886, are related to Black and Multiracial individuals. They were bound out to "learn the art, trade and mystery" of such trades as carpentry, hewing and sawing, brick laying, ditching and stone masonry, stevedoring, farming, spinning, weaving, sewing, and washing.

Arrangement

This collection is arranged

- Series I: Apprenticeship Indentures, 1768-1898, arranged chronologically.

Contents List

Series I: Apprenticeship Indentures, 1768-1898

Extent

Extent: .225 cu. ft. (1 box); 1 folder

Physical Location Library of Virginia

Arrangement

Arranged chronologically

Barcode number 1116535: Free and Enslaved Records, 1790-1862

Barcode number 0007704127: Apprenticeship Indentures, 1768-1898, undated

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