

A Guide to the Cumberland County (Va.) Apprenticeship Indentures, 1759-1856

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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 Cumberland County (Va.) Apprenticeship Indentures, 1759-1856

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Profile Description

Creation: Machine-readable finding aid derived from MARC record, created by Greg Crawford, 04 April 2018

Language Usage: Description is in English

Descriptive Summary

Language

English

Collector

Cumberland County (Va.) Circuit Court.

Physical Characteristics

.225 cu. ft. (1 box)

Location

Library of Virginia

Repository

The Library of Virginia

Administrative Information

Access Restrictions

Apprenticeship 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 Cumberland County (Va.) as part of an undated accession.

Processing Information

Indentures related to Black and Multiracial individuals have been processed, scanned, and indexed by 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: April 2018; updated by C. Collins: April 2026.

Preferred Citation

Cumberland County (Va.) Apprenticeship Indentures, 1759-1856. Local government records collection, Cumberland County Court Records. The Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia.

Adjunct Descriptive Data

Related Material

See also: [Cumberland County \(Va.\) Free and Enslaved Records, 1759-1865](#)

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

Additional Cumberland 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: Cumberland County was named for William Augustus, duke of Cumberland, third son of King George II. It was formed from Goochland County in 1749. The county seat is Cumberland.

Scope and Content

Cumberland County (Va.) Apprenticeship Indentures, 1759-1856, 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 include 5 folders of apprenticeship indentures. Of these indentures, 38 are related to Black and Multiracial individuals. They were bound out "to be taught the Art trade or Mistery" of farming, blacksmithing, and wheelwrighting, among other occupations. Their white counterparts were bound out to learn similar trades. In most instances, Black and white female apprentices learned trades related to "female business," "house business," or housekeeping, like sewing, cording, spinning, and weaving.

Arrangement

This collection is arranged

- Series I: Apprenticeship Indentures, 1759-1856, arranged chronologically.

Contents List

Series I: Apprenticeship Indentures, 1759-1856

Extent

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

Physical Location Library of Virginia

Arrangement

Arranged chronologically

Barcode number 1156167: Apprenticeship Indentures; Officials' Bonds; Ministers' Bonds; Oaths of Office; Commissions; Recommendations, Qualifications, and Appointments; Miscellaneous Documents, 1759-1902

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