

A Guide to the Princess Anne County (Va.) Ministers' Returns, 1787-1821

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1787-1821

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Author: Callie Lou Freed

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Descriptive Summary

Barcode number

1146834

Language

English

Collector

Virginia Beach (Va.) Circuit Court.

Physical Characteristics

1 vol. (112 leaves) This volume is a negative photostatic copy.

Location

Library of Virginia

Repository

The Library of Virginia

Administrative Information

Access Restrictions

There are no restrictions.

Use Restrictions

Use microfilm copy, Princess Anne County (Va.) Reel 73.

Acquisition Information

This negative photostatic copy was compiled and created by the Virginia State Library's (now the Library of Virginia) Archives Division from the original court records delivered from the City of Virginia Beach's Circuit Court Clerk's Office under the accession 26620. The microfilm copy of this record was generated in-house by The Library of Virginia's Imaging Services Branch.

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Adjunct Descriptive Data

Related Material

Additional Princess Anne County Marriage Records can be found on microfilm at the Library of Virginia. Consult ["A Guide to Virginia County and City Records on Microfilm."](#)

Historical Information

Princess Anne County was formed from Lower Norfolk County in 1691 and became extinct in 1963, after its consolidation with the city of Virginia Beach. Princess Anne County was named for Anne, daughter of James II, who became queen of England in 1702.

Prior to 1853, when the Commonwealth began recording vital statistics, Virginia marriages were recorded at the county or city level. Beginning in 1661, in order to be married by license, the groom was required to go before the county clerk and give bond with security that there was no lawful reason to prevent the marriage. The license, issued then by the clerk, was given to the minister who performed the service. Written consent from a parent or guardian was needed for individuals younger than twenty-one years.

Until 1780, marriages could be performed only by ministers of the Established Church, who were required by law to record marriages in the parish register. In 1780, dissenting ministers (only four per county from each sect) were first permitted to perform marriage ceremonies. In order to have a record of all marriages, ministers were required to sign a certificate to be filed with the county clerk. Initially, ministers sent marriage certificates to the clerk every three months. Some ministers adopted a custom of making collected returns--a list of marriages performed within a period of time such as a year or several years. Beginning in 1784, marriage certificates were returned annually. The law was rarely enforced, and ministers' returns were sometimes late, incorrect, incomplete, and in many instances, not made at all. County clerks compiled a register of marriages based, in part, on ministers' returns.

The ministers' returns of Princess Anne County (Va.) described in this collection were created by the County Court.

Scope and Content

Princess Anne County (Va.) Ministers' returns, 1787-1821, is divided into two sections. The first section covering pages 1-101, 1787, 1821, records the returns made by individual ministers of marriages performed within the county. The majority of returns in this section are in the form of lists which record the date of marriage and names of both parties. However, a few returns take the form of registers with record the date of the marriage, the names of both parties, the date of the marriage license and the date of the marriage ceremony. In the process of preparing and sending the returns, the name of the minister and the minister's denomination are also recorded.

The second section covering pages 102-112, 1803-1808, records marriage licenses prepared by the county

clerk and presented to the minister who would perform the ceremony. These signed documents "authorized and licensed" or "licensed and permitted" the ministers to perform the actual marriage ceremonies. The license indicated to the minister and the public that there were no impediments to the marriage.

Index Terms

Corporate Names:

Virginia Beach (Va.) Circuit Court.

Subjects:

Christian sects--Virginia--Princess Anne County.

Clergy--Virginia--Princess Anne County.

Marriage--Virginia--Princess Anne County.

Geographical Names:

Princess Anne County (Va.)--History.

Virginia Beach (Va.)--History.

Genre and Form Terms:

Local government records--Virginia--Princess Anne County.

Marriage licenses--Virginia--Princess Anne County.

Marriage records--Virginia--Princess Anne County.

Ministers' returns--Virginia--Princess Anne County.

Added Entry - Corporate Name:

Princess Anne County (Va.) County Court.

Arrangement

Arranged chronologically within each section.