

A Guide to the Dinwiddie County (Va.) Records related to the Registration of Free Persons, 1850-1864

Dinwiddie County (Va.) Records related to the Registration of Free Persons, 1850-1864
1850-1864

A Collection in the Library of Virginia
Library of Virginia
2006
Author: S. Nerney

History

Processed by: LVA staff

Title Statement

A Guide to the Dinwiddie County (Va.) Records related to the Registration of Free Persons, 1850-1864

Subtitle: Dinwiddie County (Va.) Records related to the Registration of Free Persons

Author: Sarah Nerney

Publication Statement

Date: © 2006 By The Library of Virginia. All Rights Reserved.

Publisher: Library of Virginia

[Conditions of Use](#)

Profile Description

Creation: Machine-readable finding aid derived from being created directly into EAD, created by S. Nerney, 31 March 2006

Language Usage: Description is in English

Revision Description

2013-11-21 Converted to schema conforming EAD by dtd2schema.vh.xsl.

Descriptive Summary

Language

English

Creator

Dinwiddie County (Va.) Circuit Court.

Physical Characteristics

2 volumes; 1 microfilm reel

Location

Library of Virginia

Repository

The Library of Virginia

Administrative Information

Access Restrictions

Dinwiddie County (Va.) Records related to the Registration of Free Persons, 1850-1864, 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 were transferred to the Library of Virginia from Dinwiddie County (Va.) in 2022 under accession number 53585.

Digital images of the register were produced by the Library of Virginia Imaging Services in 2022 and accessioned under accession number 54088.

The microfilm copy of these records was generated by the Library of Virginia's Imaging Services Branch at an unknown date.

Processing Information

The microfilm of the Register of "Free Negroes" was originally described as Dinwiddie County (Va.) Register of "Free Negroes," 1850-1864, but was removed to the present Dinwiddie County (Va.) Records related to the Registration of Free Persons, 1850-1864, record to enhance the context between record types in May 2026.

The Register of "Free Negroes" was conserved by Etherington Conservation Center in 2022.

These records were 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 in 2006 and 2022.

Encoded by S. Nerney: March 2006; updated by C. Collins: May 2026.

Preferred Citation

Dinwiddie County (Va.) Records related to the Registration of Free Persons, 1850-1864. Local government records collection, Dinwiddie County Court Records. The Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia.

Alternative Form Available

The Dinwiddie County (Va.) Register of "Free Negroes," 1850-1864, is available on microfilm, Dinwiddie County (Va.) Reel No. 62.

The Dinwiddie County (Va.) Register of "Free Negroes," 1850-1864, is available as an inkjet facsimile.

Adjunct Descriptive Data

Related Material

See also: [Dinwiddie County \(Va.\) Free and Enslaved Records, 1859-1860](#)

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

Additional Dinwiddie 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."](#)

Dinwiddie County is one of Virginia's Lost Records Localities. Additional Dinwiddie County records may be found in the [Lost Records Localities Digital Collection](#) available on the Library of Virginia website.

Historical Information

"Free Negro" Registers

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, colour, and stature, by whom, and in what court the said negro or mulatto was emancipated; or that such negro or mulatto was born free." The process was extended to counties in 1803. Although some clerks were already recording such features, an 1834 Act of Assembly made it a uniform requirement to record identifying marks and scars and the instrument of emancipation, whether by deed or will. This bound register often coincided

with a loose certificate containing largely the same identifying information. Both the registration system and the process of renewal was enforced differently in the various Virginia localities. Thus, the information found in these registers may differ from year to year and across localities.

The register books resulting from the administration of the 1793 and 1803 Act of Assembly are evidence of Virginia legislators' reaction to a quickly growing free Black and Multiracial population in Virginia in the post-Revolutionary War period. Acts such as these allowed white officials to police the activities and movement of free Black community members throughout the state thereby restricting their autonomy.

Locality History: Dinwiddie County was named for Robert Dinwiddie, lieutenant governor of Virginia from 1751 to 1758, and was formed from Prince George County in 1752. The county seat is Dinwiddie.

Lost Locality Note: The bulk of court records prior to 1865 were stolen, mutilated, and/or destroyed by Union troops who ransacked the courthouse during the last months of the Civil War. Post-1830 volumes such as deed books, will books, chancery order books, and marriage registers exist.

Scope and Content

Dinwiddie County (Va.) Records related to the Registration of Free Persons, 1850-1864, consist of one Register of "Free Negroes," 1850-1864.

Dinwiddie County (Va.) Register of "Free Negroes," 1850-1864, records the registration of free Black and Multiracial people of Black descent in Dinwiddie County and covers the years 1850 to 1864. The clerk recorded name, age, height, complexion, marks and scars, and in what court the person was emancipated or if the person was born free. There is an index. It includes page numbers. In some instances, the clerk recorded information not required by law such as the name of the former enslaver, previous place of registration, or place of birth.

Arrangement

This collection is arranged

- Series I: Register of "Free Negroes," 1850-1864, arranged chronologically by entry date.

Contents List

Series I: Register of "Free Negroes," 1850-1864

Extent

Extent: 2 volumes

Physical Location Library of Virginia

Arrangement

Arranged chronologically by entry date

Barcode number 0007819808: Register of "Free Negroes," 1850-1864

**Barcode number 0007834376: Register of "Free Negroes," 1850-1864
[inkjet facsimile]**