

A Guide to the Augusta County (Va.) Register of Colored Persons cohabiting together as Husband and Wife, 27th February 1866

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A Collection in the Library of Virginia

Library of Virginia

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History

Processed by: Sarah Nerney

Title Statement

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Profile Description

Creation: Machine-readable finding aid derived from being created directly into EAD, created by Sarah Nerney, 26 September 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

Collector

Augusta County (Va.) Circuit Court.

Physical Characteristics

15 p.

Location

Library of Virginia

Repository

The Library of Virginia

Administrative Information

Access Restrictions

Augusta County (Va.) Register of Colored Persons cohabiting together as Husband and Wife, 27th February 1866, is digitized and available through [Virginia Untold: The African American Narrative Digital Collection](#) on the Library of Virginia website. Please use digital images.

There are no restrictions.

Use Restrictions

There are no restrictions.

Acquisition Information

These records came to the Library of Virginia in a transfer of court papers from Augusta County in 2007 under the accession numbers 43239 and 43324. These accessions are filed together as the complete cohabitation register.

Photocopies of 7 leaves of the cohabitation records came to the Library of Virginia in 1998 under accession 36065.

Processing Information

Accession 36065 originally filed in Private Papers was combined with this collection. It consists of 7 leaves of photocopies and is a copy of accession 43239.

Part of the cohabitation register was microfilmed by the Library of Virginia's Imaging Services Division. The microfilm consists of a partial copy of the Augusta cohabitation register [accession 43324].

Digital images were created by the Library of Virginia's Photographic and Digital Imaging Services. Photolab numbers 07_1202_01-07.tif (accession 43239) and 08_0613_01-21.tif (accession 43324).

Encoded by S. Nerney, 2006; Updated by M. Mason, March 2025.

Preferred Citation

Augusta County (Va.) Register of Colored Persons cohabiting together as Husband and Wife, 27th February 1866. Local government records collection, Augusta County Court Records. The Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va.

Alternative Form Available

Part of the cohabitation register is available on microfilm [21 frames]

Adjunct Descriptive Data

Related Material

This record contains similar but not identical information to the information recorded in the [Augusta County \(Va.\) Marriages of Colored persons returned by Freedmen's Bureau Agents, 1865-1866](#). Please also see this record which potentially contains additional entries.

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

Additional cohabitation registers are available digitally with searchable transcriptions through the Library of Virginia's [Virginia Untold: the African American Narrative](#) website.

Historical Information

Context for Record Type: A cohabitation register, or as it is officially titled, "Register of Colored Persons Cohabiting Together as Husband and Wife on 27th February 1866," was the legal vehicle by which formerly enslaved men and women legitimized both their marriages and their children. During enslavement, enslaved people were considered property by Virginia law. While many enslaved people entered into non-sanctioned marriages, these were neither recognized legally nor protected from enslavers who separated spouses at will. In 1864, Governor Francis Pierpont recommended that the General Assembly of the Restored

government of Virginia pass a law "requiring the clerk of each county or corporation court to keep a book, in which, at the joint request of a negro man and woman, who have heretofore been living as man and wife, he shall register their names and the date of their marriage." On February 26, 1866, the General Assembly passed an act legitimizing marriages between enslaved people and the children that resulted from them. These records contain extensive information including the names of the husband and wife, as well as their ages, place of birth, residence, occupations, previous enslavers, previous enslaver's city or county residence, the name(s) of their children, the children's ages, and the date of commencement of cohabitation.

Locality History: Augusta County was named for Augusta of Saxe-Gotha, who married Frederick Louis, Prince of Wales, and was the mother of King George III. It was formed from Orange County by a statute of 1738 that stipulated that when the population was large enough the new county government would begin to function. The county court first met on 9 December 1745. The county courthouse is in Staunton, and the county administrative offices are in Verona.

Scope and Content

Augusta County (Va.) Register of Colored Persons of Lunenburg County, State of Virginia, cohabiting together as Husband and Wife on 27th February 1866. This register records on twenty one pages the name of the husband, his age, place of birth, residence, occupation, last owner, last owner's residence, name of the wife, her age, place of birth, residence, last owner, last owner's residence, name of children with the ages of each, and the date of commencement of cohabitation.

Contents List

Series I: Register of Colored Persons cohabiting together as Husband and Wife 1866

Extent

15 pages

Physical Location Library of Virginia

Barcode number: 1177587: Register of Colored Persons of Augusta County, State of Virginia, cohabiting together as Husband and Wife on 27th February 1866 [DO NOT SERVE]

Barcode number: 0007432758: Register of Colored Persons of Augusta County, State of Virginia, cohabiting together as Husband and Wife on 27th February 1866 [INK JETS]