

A Guide to the Mecklenburg County (Va.) Free Negro and Slave Records, 1781-1882

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A Collection in the Library of Virginia 1138028
Library of Virginia
2006

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History

Processed by: Library of Virginia staff

Title Statement

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Subtitle: Mecklenburg County (Va.) Free Negro and Slave Records, 1781-1882

Collection: 1138028

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Publication Statement

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Publisher: Library of Virginia

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Profile Description

Creation: Machine-readable finding aid derived from MARC record, created by Sarah Nerney, 05/25/2007

Language Usage: Description is in English

Revision Description

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

Descriptive Summary

Barcode numbers

1138028

Language

English

Collector

Mecklenburg County (Va.) Circuit Court.

Physical Characteristics

.25 cu. ft. (1 box)

Location

Library of Virginia

Repository

The Library of Virginia

Administrative Information

Access Restrictions

There are no restrictions.

Use Restrictions

There are no restrictions.

Acquisition Information

These items came to the Library of Virginia in transfers of court papers from Mecklenburg County.

Preferred Citation

Mecklenburg County (Va.) Free Negro and Slave Records, 1781-1882. Local government records collection, Mecklenburg County Court Records. The Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia 23219.

Adjunct Descriptive Data

Related Material

Additional Mecklenburg Free Negro and Slave Records can be found on microfilm at the Library of Virginia. Consult ["A Guide to Virginia County and City Records on Microfilm."](#)

Mecklenburg County is one of Virginia's Lost Records Localities. Additional Mecklenburg Court Records may be found in the Virginia Lost Records Localities Collection at the Library of Virginia. Search the [Lost Records Localities Database](#) found on the Library of Virginia's web site.

Historical Information

Mecklenburg County was formed from Lunenburg County in 1764.

Beginning in 1778, slaveholders who brought slaves into Virginia were required to register the slaves with the county court and sign an oath agreeing not to bring slaves into the commonwealth with the intent of selling them.

Created in 1764. Numerous loose records prior to 1783 are missing. Volumes that record deeds, court orders, and wills exist.

Scope and Content

Mecklenburg County (Va.) Free Negro and Slave Records, 1781-1882, include a bond between Sophia Jones and the Commonwealth (1849); Peter Hutcheson's petition to exempt a slave from the levy (1788); lists of slaves (1851, 1853, 1856); certificates of importation of slaves (1781-1819); certificate of purchase of slaves (1837, 1838); fees for registrations of free negroes (1828, 1831); free negro register (1820); free negro registers renewed (1827, 1831, 1836, 1838, 1842); documents and lists relating to requisition of slaves and free negroes to work on the fortifications (1863-1865, n.d.); and a letter from former slave Jennie Brown of Corinth, Mississippi, to the sheriff inquiring about her family in Mecklenburg (1882).

The bond between Sophia Jones and the Commonwealth (1849) concerns the establishment of the fact that Sophia Jones is a free woman, not a slave, but is not entitled to remain in the state of Virginia. The bond guarantees that she will depart within ten days of being released from jail and not return.

Peter Hutcheson's petition to exempt a slave from the levy (1788) requests that the said negro man not be taxed due to his affliction with "rumitis" making him unable to anything of consequence.

Lists of slaves (1851, 1853, 1856) are three lists of either dower slaves or slaves sold from an estate. The lists give the name of the owner, the manner in which the slaves came to be owned, the names and ages of the slaves, and to whom they were sold if sold.

Certificates of importation of slaves (1781-1819) contain information whereby a slaveowner swears that (s)he has not imported the slave from Africa and that (s)he has not brought the slave into Virginia with the purpose of selling it. The slave is sometimes named but not always and occasionally information is given as to age or birth date.

The certificates of purchase of slaves (1837, 1838) are two documents that give the name of the purchaser,

the name of the seller, and the names and ages of the slaves purchased. The certificate was recorded by the clerk. The slaves were owned by right of the husband of the widow of a Towler.

Fees for registrations of free negroes (1828, 1831) are three bills for the clerk's fee charged for registering a free negro. The slips give the name of the person, the reason for the charge, and the amount.

The free negro register from 1820 is for Molly Cousins and is the copy of her free negro registration that she would have carried on her to prove her free status. It gives her registration number which would match the number in the volume kept by the clerk of court, age, brief physical description, circumstances of her freedom, and certification by the clerk of court.

Free negro registrations renewed (1827, 1831, 1836, 1838, 1842) contain the name of the free person, age and a brief physical description, whether born free or emancipated, and a statement either to a prior registration with the court or to a certification or prior free papers and a comparison of the papers with the person who possessed them. The register number is also given; this number corresponds to the entry number in the register of free negroes kept by the clerk of court at the courthouse.

Documents and lists relating to requisition of slaves and free negroes to work on the fortifications (1863-1865, n.d.) consist primarily of lists compiled by magisterial district of the names of slaveowners and the numbers of slaves that they sent to fulfill the conscription orders from the state. Others documents include orders and summons from both state and county government relating to the requisition of slaves and free negroes (1863-1865); a letter to the Mecklenburg court from the Secretary of the Commonwealth regarding specific questions about the requisition of slaves (1863); and a petition for exemption of an individual's slaves from the requisition (1865).

The letter (1882) from former slave Jennie Brown of Corinth, Mississippi, to the sheriff of Mecklenburg County inquires about family members who may still be in the area. She states that she was sold prior to the Civil War and is looking for any remaining members of her family, the Kings. She lists the names of neighbors whom she can recall, says that her grandmother lived in Petersburg, and then lists all of the names and her relationship to family members that she is trying to find. She states that her husband's name is Tobe Brown and her current residence is Alcorn County, Mississippi.

Index Terms

Corporate Names:

Mecklenburg County (Va.) Circuit Court.

Subjects:

African Americans--Virginia--Mecklenburg County.

Confederate States of America--Defenses.

Free African Americans--Virginia--Mecklenburg County.

Freedmen--Virginia--Mecklenburg County.

Slave labor--Virginia--Mecklenburg County.

Slave records--Virginia--Mecklenburg County.

Slave trade--Virginia--Mecklenburg County.

Slaveholders--Virginia--Mecklenburg County.

Slaves--Virginia--Mecklenburg County.

Geographical Names:

Mecklenburg County (Va.)--History.

Genre and Form Terms:

Bonds (legal records)--Virginia--Mecklenburg County.

Certificates--Virginia--Mecklenburg County.

Executive orders--Virginia--Mecklenburg County.

Free negro lists--Virginia--Mecklenburg County.

Free negro registrations--Virginia--Mecklenburg County.

Free papers--Virginia--Mecklenburg County.

Fees--Virginia--Mecklenburg County.

Lists--Virginia--Mecklenburg County.

Letters (correspondence)--Virginia--Mecklenburg County.

Local government records--Virginia--Mecklenburg County.

Summons--Virginia--Mecklenburg County.

Tax and fiscal records--Virginia--Mecklenburg County.

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