

A Guide to the Tazewell County (Va.) Free Negro and Slave Records, 1820-1862

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A Collection in the Library of Virginia 1138037
Library of Virginia
2006

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History

Processed by: Catherine OBrion

Title Statement

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Subtitle: Tazewell County (Va.) Free Negro and Slave Records, 1820-1862

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Publication Statement

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

Publisher: Library of Virginia

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Profile Description

Creation: Machine-readable finding aid derived from MARC record, created by Catherine OBrion, 24 July 2007

Language Usage: Description is in English

Revision Description

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

Descriptive Summary

Barcode number

1138037

Language

English

Collector

Tazewell County (Va.) Circuit Court.

Physical Characteristics

.15 cu.ft.

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 a transfer of court papers from Tazewell County Circuit Court.

Preferred Citation

Tazewell County (Va.) Free Negro and Slave Records, 1820-1862. Local government records collection, Tazewell County Court Records. The Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va. 23219.

Historical Information

An act passed by the Virginia legislature in 1803 required every free negro or mulatto to be registered and numbered in a book to be kept by the county clerk. An act passed in 1806 required freed slaves to leave the state within a year.

In 1806, the General Assembly moved to remove the free negro population from Virginia with a law that stated that any emancipated slaves, freed after May 1, 1806, who remained in the Commonwealth more than a year, would forfeit the right to freedom and be sold by the Overseers of the Poor for the benefit of the parish. Families wishing to stay were to petition the legislature through the local county court. Beginning in 1837, freed slaves could petition the local courts for permission to remain.

Tazewell County was named for Henry Tazewell, United States senator from Virginia from 1794 until his death in 1799. It was formed from Wythe and Russell Counties in 1799, and parts of Logan (now in West Virginia), Russell, Wythe, and Washington counties were added later.

Scope and Content

Tazewell County (Va.) Free Negro and Slave Records, 1820-1862. The collection contains a letter requesting a deed of emancipation, 1820 July 18; the free negro registration of George Chapman, 1850; a county court order granting John King, a free person of color, permission to reside in Tazewell County, 1862; and patrol orders, 1860-1861, to inspect homes of enslaved people to ensure there were no unlawful assemblies.

The letter requesting free papers was written at the request of Cyrus Walker, the Commonwealth Attorney for Adair County, Kentucky, on behalf of Demon (no surname is given). Demon came to Kentucky with William Glenn, the letter explains. He then discovered Glenn "was about to sell him for a slave and send him to Orleans." He escaped from Glenn to Walker, the letter continues, and Walker brought a suit against Glenn. "I must beg you in Demon's stead," Neel writes, "as he confides much in your friendship and says he paid you for recording it."

Index Terms

Corporate Names:

Tazewell County (Va.) Circuit Court.

Subjects:

Free African Americans--Virginia--Tazewell County.

Slave trade--Kentucky--Adair County.

Geographical Names:

Tazewell County (Va.)--History--19th century.

Genre and Form Terms:

Correspondence--Virginia--Tazewell County.

Free negro and slave records--Virginia--Tazewell County.

Free negro registrations--Virginia--Tazewell County.

Local government records--Virginia--Tazewell County.

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