

A Guide to the Montgomery County (Va.) Records Related to the Registration of Free Persons, 1823-1863

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1823-1863

A Collection in the Library of Virginia
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2007

Author: Sarah Nerney

History

Processed by: Library of Virginia staff

Title Statement

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Author: Sarah Nerney

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Profile Description

Creation: Machine-readable finding aid derived from MARC record, created by Sarah Nerney, 4 December 2007

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

Montgomery County (Va.) Circuit Court.

Physical Characteristics

digital images

Location

Library of Virginia

Repository

The Library of Virginia

Administrative Information

Access Restrictions

Montgomery County (Va.) Records Related to the Registration of Free Persons, 1823-1863, 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

Digital scans of the original registers were accessioned by the Library of Virginia in 2024 under accession number 54240.

Processing Information

These registers were microfilmed by the Library of Virginia's Imaging Services Division.

The microfilm of the two original registers was originally described as the **Montgomery County (Va.) Registers of Free Negroes and Mulattoes, 1823-1863** but was retitled the Montgomery County (Va.) Records Related to the Registration of Free Persons, 1823-1863 for standardization purposes in 2024.

Encoded by S. Nerney, 2007; Updated by M. Mason, December 2024

Preferred Citation

Montgomery County (Va.) Records Related to the Registration of Free Persons, 1823-1863. Local government records collection, Montgomery County Court Records. The Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia.

Alternative Form Available

Montgomery County (Va.) Register of Free Negroes and Mulattoes, 1823-1847 is available as microfilm
Montgomery County (Va.) Reel 92

Montgomery County (Va.) Register of Free Negroes and Mulattoes, 1848-1863 is available as microfilm
Montgomery County (Va.) Reel 92

Custodial History

Montgomery County (Va.) Register of Free Negroes and Mulattoes, 1823-1847 and 1848-1863 came to the Library of Virginia as a loan for digitization in 2024 under accession 54239 and was then returned to locality by request of the Clerk.

Adjunct Descriptive Data

Related Material

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

Additional Montgomery County (Va.) court records can be found on microfilm at the Library of Virginia. Consult ["A Guide to Virginia County and City Records on Microfilm."](#)

Historical Information

Context for Record Type:

"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: Montgomery County was named for Richard Montgomery, who was killed in the American assault on Quebec late in 1775. It was formed from Fincastle County in 1776, and the county court first met on 7 January 1777. Subsequent additions were made from Botetourt (1790) and Pulaski (1842) Counties.

Scope and Content

Montgomery County (Va.) Records Related to the Registration of Free Persons, 1823-1863, consists of two "Free Negro" Registers, 1823-1847 and 1848-1863.

Montgomery County (Va.) Register of Free Negroes and Mulattoes, 1823-1847, kept by the clerk of the court for Montgomery County, records the registration number, age, name, color, stature, marks or scars, and in what court the person was emancipated or whether the person was born free. There is no index. Some entries include notes recording the renewal of registration by an individual with notation to see the minute books for additional information.

Montgomery County (Va.) Register of Free Negroes and Mulattoes, 1848-1863, kept by the clerk of the court for Montgomery County, records the registration number, age, name, color, stature, marks or scars, and in what court the person was emancipated or whether the person was born free. There is no index. Some entries include notes recording the renewal of registration by an individual with notation to see the minute books for additional information. Last several pages of the volume contain entries created to 1865 local elections.

Arrangement

This collection is arranged

- Series I: Records Related to the Registration of Free Persons, 1823-1863

Contents List

Series I: Records Related to the Registration of Free Persons, 1823-1863

Extent

digital images

Arrangement

enteries made chronologically

Barcode number 0007890272: Register of Free Negroes and Mulattoes, 1823-1847 [Digital]

Barcode number 0007890273: Register of Free Negroes and Mulattoes, 1848-1863 [Digital]