

A Guide to the Lancaster County (Va.) Ministers' Returns, 1782-1852

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A Collection in the Library of Virginia Barcode numbers 1133863 and 1128149/ Lancaster County (Va.) Reels 367 and 368

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History

Processed by: Library of Virginia staff

Title Statement

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Subtitle: Lancaster County (Va.) Ministers' Returns, 1782-1852

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Profile Description

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Revision Description

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

Descriptive Summary

Collection numbers

Barcode numbers 1133863 and 1128149/ Lancaster County (Va.) Reels 367 and 368

Language

English

Collector

Lancaster County (Va.) Circuit Court.

Physical Characteristics

104 items, 1 v. (negative photostat), 2 microfilm reels

Location

Library of Virginia

Repository

The Library of Virginia

Administrative Information

Access Restrictions

There are no restrictions.

Use Restrictions

Use microfilm copies, Lancaster County (Va.) Reels 367 and 368.

Acquisition Information

The original returns came to the Virginia State Library (now the Library of Virginia) in a transfer of court papers from Lancaster County.

The negative photostatic volume was compiled and created, under the accession number 26608, by the staff of the Virginia State Library's (now the Library of Virginia) Archives Division.

The microfilm copies of the original returns were generated by the Virginia State Library's Microfilm Section.

Preferred Citation

Lancaster County (Va.) Ministers' Returns, 1782-1852. Lancaster County (Va.) Reels 367 and 368, Local government records collection, Lancaster County Court Records. The Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia 23219.

Adjunct Descriptive Data

Related Material

The volume is located at the State Records Center. Contact Archives Research Services for access information, directions and hours.

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

Historical Information

Lancaster County was formed from Northumberland and York Counties sometime between 26 March and 16 September 1651. The county was probably named for the English county.

Prior to 1853, when the Commonwealth began recording vital statistics, Virginia marriages were recorded at the county or city level. Beginning in 1661, in order to be married by license, the groom was required to go before the county clerk and give bond with security that there was no lawful reason to prevent the marriage. The license, issued then by the clerk, was given to the minister who performed the service. Written consent from a parent or guardian was needed for individuals younger than twenty-one years.

Until 1780, marriages could be performed only by ministers of the Established Church, who were required by law to record marriages in the parish register. In 1780, dissenting ministers (only four per county from each sect) were first permitted to perform marriage ceremonies. In order to have a record of all marriages, ministers were required to sign a certificate to be filed with the county clerk. Initially, ministers sent marriage certificates to the clerk every three months. Some ministers adopted a custom of making collected returns--a list of marriages performed within a period of time such as a year or several years. Beginning in 1784, marriage certificates were returned annually. The law was rarely enforced, and ministers' returns were sometimes late, incorrect, incomplete, and in many instances, not made at all. County clerks compiled a register of marriages based, in part, on ministers' returns.

The original returns were created by the County Court.

Scope and Content

Lancaster County (Va.) Ministers' Returns, 1782-1852, records the original returns made by individual ministers of marriages performed within the county. The majority of these original returns are in the form of lists which record the date of marriage and the names of both parties. In the process of preparing and sending the returns, the name of the minister and the minister's denomination are also recorded. Once these items were transferred into the Library's archival collection, the staff numbered each return individually from 3062 to 3162 and the collection has now been processed into 2 folders, 1782-1820 and 1822-1852. In

addition, there are a few marriage licenses (1800, 1822) and a ministers' bond (1810) found in and amongst these original returns. There are no listings in the returns for marriages in 1783, 1788, 1821, 1823 and 1824.

The Archives Division staff then created a negative photostatic volume of these returns. This process, however, only occasionally recorded the information found on the back of the returns. Four returns, dated 1852 and noting marriages from 1850-1852, were overlooked and are not found in this volume. The ending date for the volume is 1849. The microfilm images capture the back of the original returns. The microfilming staff, however, did not adhere to the numbering order of the returns but instead filmed items by the date of the return. The four returns missing from the volume were once again overlooked during filming. The ending date for the microfilm is also 1849.

Index Terms

Corporate Names:

Lancaster County (Va.) Circuit Court.

Subjects:

Christian sects--Virginia--Lancaster County.

Clergy--Virginia--Lancaster County.

Marriage--Virginia--Lancaster County.

Geographical Names:

Lancaster County (Va.)--History.

Genre and Form Terms:

Local government records--Virginia--Lancaster County.

Marriage records--Virginia--Lancaster County.

Ministers' returns--Virginia--Lancaster County.

Added Entry - Corporate Name:

Lancaster County (Va.) County Court.

Arrangement

Arranged chronologically.

Contents List

Barcode number 1133863: Ministers' Returns 1782-1852

Barcode number 1128149: Ministers' Returns (negative photostat) 1782-1849

Reel numbers 367 and 368: Ministers' Returns, 1782-1849