

A Guide to the Mecklenburg County (Va.) Ministers' Returns, Marriage Licenses and Index, 1785-1842

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A Collection in the Library of Virginia Barcode numbers 1095288, 1095298-1095299/Mecklenburg County (Va.) Reels 48, 130 and 166

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Descriptive Summary

Collection numbers

Barcode numbers 1095288, 1095298-1095299

Language

English

Collector

Mecklenburg County (Va.) Circuit Court.

Physical Characteristics

3 v. , 3 microfilm reels

Location

State Records Center - Archives Annex, Library of Virginia

Repository

The Library of Virginia

Administrative Information

Access Restrictions

There are no restrictions.

Use Restrictions

Use microfilm copies, Mecklenburg County (Va.) Reels 48, 130 and 166.

Acquisition Information

These volumes came to the Library of Virginia in a transfer of court papers from Mecklenburg County.

Microfilm Reel 48 was generated by the Genealogical Society of Utah while filming in the Mecklenburg County Circuit Court Clerk's Office.

Microfilm Reels 130 and 166 were generated by a field operator, from the Virginia State Library's (now the Library of Virginia) Microfilm Section, while filming in the Mecklenburg County Circuit Court Clerk's Office.

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Adjunct Descriptive Data

Related Material

These volumes are located at the State Records Center. Contact Archives Research Services for access information, directions and hours.

Related Material

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

Related Material

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

Historical Information

Mecklenburg County was formed from Lunenburg County in 1764. The county court first met on 11 March 1765. The county was named for Charlotte of Mecklenburg-Strelitz, consort of King George III.

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. The license, issued then by the clerk, was given to the minister who performed the service.

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. Ministers' returns were required by law beginning in 1780, so all marriages from that date would be of record in the county court clerk's office--thereby creating an official record. 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. Once the marriage service was performed, the minister submitted a return to the county clerk. The county clerk recorded these returns along with other marriage records, such as licenses, in a volume.

The ministers' returns, marriage licenses and index, from which these volumes were compiled, were created by the County Court.

Scope and Content

Mecklenburg County (Va.) Ministers' Returns, Marriage Licenses and Index, 1785-1842, records the returns made by individual ministers of marriages performed within the county. Whether single or in the form of lists, these returns record the date of the marriage and the names of both parties. Single returns mentioned the location of the marriage and sometimes the minister's denomination. This volume also contains marriage licenses prepared by the county clerk and presented to the minister who would perform the ceremony. These signed documents "authorized and licensed" or "licensed and permitted" the ministers to perform the actual marriage ceremonies. The license indicated to the minister and the public that there were no impediments to the marriage. These licenses were intermixed with the ministers' returns from 1832-1842 (pages 105-164.) There are some interesting notes found in the back of the volume. On page 27, there is a record of a marriage (1799) between slaves Thomas and Mary owned by Sir Peyton Skipwith. Page 47 records the marriage (1811) between Thomas Hill & Fanny R. Baptist, the parents of notable Confederate General A. P. Hill. In 1822, page 76, is a marriage of free coloured persons William Kersey and Margaret Ivey.

In addition to this volume, a separate, handwritten index was created. This index is organized alphabetically A-Y, by the groom's surname, according to the order of the page numbers in the volume. A separate, typescript index was compiled by the Circuit Court clerk, N.G. Hutcheson, in 1939. This index incorporates all the information from the handwritten index with a few additions and corrections. There are some marriage bonds and licenses listed under the groom's surname and recorded from 1823-1852. These additions were handwritten and appeared at the end of the list. Misspellings of surnames were corrected in ink.

Index Terms

Corporate Names:

Mecklenburg County (Va.) Circuit Court.

Subjects:

Christian sects--Virginia--Mecklenburg County.

Clergy--Virginia--Mecklenburg County.

Free African Americans--Marriage--Virginia--Mecklenburg County.

Free African Americans--Virginia--Mecklenburg County.

Marriage--Virginia--Mecklenburg County.

Slaves--Marriage--Virginia--Mecklenburg County.

Slaves--Virginia--Mecklenburg County.

Geographical Names:

Mecklenburg County (Va.)--History.

Genre and Form Terms:

Indexes (reference sources)--Virginia--Mecklenburg County.

Local government records--Virginia--Mecklenburg County.

Marriage licenses--Virginia--Mecklenburg County.

Marriage records--Virginia--Mecklenburg County.

Ministers' returns--Virginia--Mecklenburg County.

Added Entry - Corporate Name:

Mecklenburg County (Va.) County Court.

Contents List

Barcode number 1095288/ Mecklenburg County (Va.) Reels 48 and 166: Ministers' Returns and Marriage Licenses, 1785-1842

Barcode number 1095298/ Mecklenburg County (Va.) Reel 166: Index to Ministers' Returns and Marriage Licenses (handwritten), 1785-1842

Barcode number 1095299/ Mecklenburg County (Va.) Reel 130: Index to Ministers' Returns and Marriage Licenses (typescript), 1785-1842