

A Guide to the Westmoreland County (Va.) Reports of Indigent Soldiers' Families, 1861-1865

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1861-1865

A Collection in the Library of Virginia 1176632-1176633
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History

Processed by: Rachel Muse

Title Statement

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Descriptive Summary

Barcode numbers:

1176632-1176633

Language

English

Collector

Westmoreland 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 shipments of court papers from Westmoreland County (Va.).

Preferred Citation

Westmoreland County (Va.) Reports of Indigent Soldiers' Families, 1861-1865. Local government records collection, Westmoreland County (Va.) Court Records. The Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va. 23219.

Historical Information

Westmoreland County was named for the English county. It was formed from Northumberland County in 1653, and part of King George County was added in 1777.

Throughout the Civil War, the principal responsibility for Virginia's indigent soldiers' families lay with the locality. The Virginia State Convention in 1861 gave the responsibility entirely to counties and incorporated towns and authorized whatever actions had already been taken. Acts of Assembly in 1862 and 1863 expanded the localities' powers to provide for their needy, and in 1863 some minimal state assistance was added in. At first relief was provided as money, but as the monetary system collapsed, relief was distributed in kind. Agents of the court maintained lists of eligible families, gathered goods for distribution and paid for them, and impressed supplies if necessary. Virginia was unique amongst the southern states in that it assigned the provisioning of needy families almost solely to the locality.

Scope and Content

The Westmoreland County (Va.) Reports of Indigent Soldiers' Families is primarily made up of reports and accounts of funds gathered and supplies distributed to indigent soldiers' families. These reports include the names of soldiers and family members and the needs of the families or the supplies provided to each family and the cost of these items. Also included are court orders to issue bonds for the purchase of supplies and an authorization for Westmoreland County to issue currency notes for this purpose. Lists of indigent soldiers included with these records include detailed descriptions of the fate of the soldiers and their family situations, including childrens' ages, and crops and livestock in the families' hands. The reports record that funds were to be used for specific foods such as corn and pork and household items such as cotton, clothing and shoes.

Index Terms

Corporate Names:

Westmoreland County (Va.) Circuit Court

Subjects:

Families of military personnel--Virginia--Westmoreland County

Poor--Virginia--Westmoreland County

Public welfare -- Virginia -- Westmoreland County

Geographical Names:

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

Westmoreland County (Va.)--History--Civil War, 1861-1865

Genre and Form Terms:

Accounts--Virginia--Westmoreland County

Local government records--Virginia--Westmoreland County

Reports--Virginia--Westmoreland County

Arrangement

Chronological.

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