

A Guide to the York County (Va.) Free Negro and Slave Records, 1806-1861

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Author: Catherine G. O'Brien

History

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Descriptive Summary

Barcode number

0007432087

Language

English

Collector

York County (Va.) Circuit Court.

Physical Characteristics

.25 cu. ft. (1 box)

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 York County.

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York County (Va.) Free Negro and Slave Records, 1806-1861. Local government records collection, York County Court Records. The Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va. 23219.

Adjunct Descriptive Data

Related Material

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

Historical Information

York County originally was named Charles River County, for Charles I, and was one of the eight shires formed in 1634. The present name was given in 1643, probably in honor of James, duke of York, the second son of Charles I.

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.

Free Negro Lists were compiled by the commissioner of the revenue for tax purposes.

An act passed by the Virginia legislature in 1806 prohibited free Negroes from carrying a firelock of any kind without a license.

Scope and Content

York County (Va.) Free Negro and Slave Records, 1806-1861. The collection contains a petition to allow John Wallace DeRozaro, a free person of color, to keep firearms, 1806; an affidavit certifying the emancipation of Joe from Sarah Cary, 1811; William Newman's application to remain in the state as a free man, 1817; two depositions relative to the desertion of slave Prince to the British, 1822; a bill of sale for the sale of Billy, formerly belonging to the Hubbard family, from the estate of William Gilliam, 1826; the application of William Newman to remain in York County as a free man, 1817; the free Negro registration of John Roberts, 1833; an order advising the Overseers of the Poor to bind out an orphan child, 1837; a warrant to commit Otway Sparrow as a runaway, 1845; an affidavit certifying the free birth in York County of Harriet Banks, 1859; a list of free negroes returned for nonpayment of the capitation tax, 1861; and an undated free negro registration for William and Thomas James.

The petition to allow John Wallace DeRozaro to keep firearms indicates that De Rozaro was a gunsmith and stocker, a property holder, and a person held in high regard by his neighbors. It is signed by thirty people. Also included are the statements of William Coleman and Richard Coke attesting to their satisfaction with DeRozaro's repair of their guns.

The Sarah Cary affidavit certifies that Joe was freed by the late William Cary, with the caveat that Sarah Cary would have the right to determine whether "by his conduct" toward her he "deserved it." In the affidavit, Sarah Cary states, "I think he does deserve it from me, therefore I concur with his master's desire and he is free from me."

The application of William Newman to remain in York County includes the affidavit of Benjamin Waller testifying to Newman's good character and sacrifice during the War of 1812, when Waller entrusted Newman with specie and personal papers when the British were coming up the James River.

Depositions relative to the desertion of Prince to the British around 1813 state that the slave had belonged to Mrs. E. Gibbons of Yorktown.

The registration of John Roberts includes a physical description of him and his age and indicates that he was born of free parents in York County.

The warrant to commit Otway Sparrow contains the statement of Baker P. See, justice of the peace, indicating the Sparrow is a slave, the property of William Jackson of Charles City County, and that he was taken up in February in the town of York.

The order bind to out the orphan, Adolphus, indicates he is the child of Charlotte Houston, deceased. It advises the Overseers of the Poor to bind the child to Robert Anderson until the child reaches the age of 21. It indicates that the child has been living with Anderson for a year or two to learn the business of a house servant.

The List of Free Negroes was compiled by the sheriff; it contains 58 names and the capitation tax assessed for each.

The undated registrations for William and Thomas James are rough drafts of physically descriptive information to be used for free negro registrations.

Index Terms

Corporate Names:

York County (Va.) Circuit Court.

Subjects:

Domestics--Virginia--York County.

Free African Americans--Virginia--York County.

Free African Americans--Employment--Virginia--York County.

Fugitive slaves--Virginia--Charles City County.

Gunsmiths--Virginia--York County.

Slaveholders--Virginia--York County.

Slavery--Law and legislation--Virginia--York County.

Slaves--Emancipation--Virginia--York County.

Geographical Names:

Charles City County (Va.)--History--19th century.

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

York County (Va.)--History--War of 1812.

Genre and Form Terms:

Affidavits--Virginia--York County.

Bills of sale--Virginia--York County.

Certificates--Virginia--York County.

Emancipations--Virginia--York County.

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

Free negro lists--Virginia--York County.

Free negro registrations--Virginia--York County.

Free papers--Virginia--York County.

Local government records--Virginia--York County.

Overseers of the Poor records--Virginia--York County.

Warrants--Virginia--York County.