

A Guide to the Southampton County (Va.) Ministers' Returns, 1817-1846

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Descriptive Summary

Barcode number

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Language

English

Collector

Southampton County (Va.) Circuit Court.

Physical Characteristics

1 v. (39 p.)

Location

State Records Center - Archives Annex, Library of Virginia

Repository

The Library of Virginia

Administrative Information

Access Restrictions

There are no restrictions.

Use Restrictions

There are no restrictions.

Acquisition Information

This original volume came to the Library of Virginia in a shipment of court papers from Southampton County.

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Southampton County (Va.) Ministers' Returns, 1817-1846. Local government records collection, Southampton County Court Records. The Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia 23219.

Adjunct Descriptive Data

Related Material

Additional Southampton County 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

Southampton County was formed in 1749 from Isle of Wight County, and part of Nansemond County was added in 1786. The county was named most likely for the borough of Southampton in England.

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 permitted to perform marriage ceremonies. In order to have a record of all marriages, ministers were required to sign a certificated 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 ministers' returns, found in this volume, were created by the County Court.

Scope and Content

Southampton County (Va.) Ministers' Returns, 1817-1846, records the returns made by individual ministers of marriages performed within the county. The majority of returns are in the form of lists which record when the marriage license was obtained, 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 sometimes the minister's denomination are also recorded. Marriages between "people of color or free negroes" are noted between 1818-1846. A two page index (B-W) is found at the front of the volume. The entries indicate the surname of the minister, the year or years of his returns and the corresponding page numbers. The pages of this volume are extremely fragile and must be handled with great care.

Index Terms

Corporate Names:

Southampton County (Va.) Circuit Court.

Subjects:

Christian sects--Virginia--Southampton County.

Clergy--Virginia--Southampton County.
Free African Americans--Marriage--Virginia--Southampton County.
Free African Americans--Virginia--Southampton County.
Marriage--Virginia--Southampton County.

Geographical Names:

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

Genre and Form Terms:

Local government records--Virginia--Southampton County.
Marriage records--Virginia--Southampton County.
Ministers' returns--Virginia--Southampton County.

Added Entry - Corporate Name:

Southampton County (Va.) County Court.

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