

A Guide to the Southampton County (Va.) Ministers' Returns, 1850-1853

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1850-1853

A Collection in the Library of Virginia Barcode number 1110143/Southampton County (Va.) Reel 383

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Author: Callie Lou Freed

History

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Title Statement

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Descriptive Summary

Collection numbers

Barcode numnber 1110143/Southampton County (Va.) Reel 383

Language

English

Collector

Southampton County (Va.) Circuit Court.

Physical Characteristics

1 v. (17 p.); 1 microfilm reel.

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 copy, Southampton County (Va.) Reel 383.

Acquisition Information

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

Microfilm Reel 383 was generated by Backstage Library Works through the Library of Virginia's Circuit Court Records Preservation Program.

Preferred Citation

Southampton County (Va.) Ministers' Returns, 1850-1853. Southampton County (Va.) Reel 383, Local government records collection, Southampton County Court Records. The Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia 23219.

Adjunct Descriptive Data

Related Material

Additional Southampton 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

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, 1850-1853, records the returns made by individual ministers of marriages performed within the county. Returns are in the form of lists which record the date of marriage and names of both parties and individual certificates which record the date of marriage and date when certificate was issued. In the process of preparing and sending the returns, the name of the minister and the minister's denomination are also recorded. By 1853, more information was included the certificates from individual ministers such as the ages of the parties, where the parties resided, the occupation of the husband, the status of parties before marriage and where parties were married. In addition, the parents' names of both parties and the birthplaces of both parties were also noted. Marriages between "free negroes" are found from 1851-1853 on pages 3-4, 11 and 14. As noted in the historical section, these returns were not always completed and sent in a timely fashion. As a result, there were marriages performed in 1848 and 1849. In one instance, a marriage was performed in October 1845 (p. 5) but was not returned until July 1851. The volume also includes an internal index arranged by the surname of the groom (A-W.)

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.