

A Guide to the Middlesex County (Va.) Marriage Bonds and Ministers' Returns, 1740-1854

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History

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Title Statement

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2013-11-21 Converted to schema conforming EAD by dtd2schema.vh.xsl.

Descriptive Summary

Barcode numbers

1048878-1048881

Language

English

Collector

Middlesex County (Va.) Circuit Court

Physical Characteristics

4 boxes

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

These items came to the Library of Virginia in shipments of court papers from Middlesex County.

Preferred Citation

Middlesex County (Va.) Marriage Bonds and Ministers' Returns, 1740-1854. Local government records collection, Middlesex County Court Records. The Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia.

Adjunct Descriptive Data

Related Material

Additional Middlesex County Court Records can be found on microfilm at The Library of Virginia web site.

Consult ["A Guide to Virginia County and City Records on Microfilm."](#)

Middlesex County is one of Virginia's Lost Records Localities. Additional Middlesex 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 web site.

Historical Information

Middlesex County probably was named for the English county. It was formed from Lancaster County about 1669.

Numerous loose records from the nineteenth century including chancery, Marriage Bonds and Ministers' Returns, and commonwealth causes are missing. Most volumes including deed books, will books, and order books exist because court clerk Philemon T. Woodward removed them from the courthouse for safekeeping during the Civil War.

Middlesex County (Va.) Marriage Bonds and Ministers' Returns dates from 1740 to 1854. 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.

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. In order to have a record of all marriages, ministers were required to sign a certificate to be filed with the county clerk. The signed document certified that a minister had performed the actual marriage ceremony between the named individuals on a certain date. 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.

Scope and Content

Middlesex County (Va.) Marriage Bonds and Ministers' Returns, 1740-1854 consist of Marriage Bonds 1740-1852, and Ministers' Returns for 1785-1811, 1813, and 1823-1854. There are three miscellaneous records. There is an 1813 receipt, one 1824 execution and paper with an advertising quote, and one voucher that has two illegible dates for the year.

There are three undated and incomplete marriage bond. One bond has a consent for Mr. John R. Carlton to

marry Miss Sarah McKern which is signed by John Street. Mr. Carlton and Mr. Street signed the marriage bond but the clerk did not fill in the information. Two other bonds that were not filled. Benjamin F. Robinson and his security signed one bond. W. W. Seward and Edward Seward, his security signed the other bond.

Index Terms

Corporate Names:

Middlesex County (Va.) Circuit Court.

Subjects:

Marriage -- Virginia -- Middlesex County.

Geographical Names:

Middlesex County (Va.) -- History.

Genre and Form Terms:

Marriage Bonds and Ministers' Returns -- Virginia -- Middlesex County.

Marriage records -- Virginia -- Middlesex County.

Local government records -- Virginia -- Middlesex County.

Arrangement

Chronological

Contents List

Barcode number 1048881: Marriage Bonds, 1740-1797

Scope and Content

Barcode Number 1048881 contains Marriage Bonds, 1740-1797, Box 1.

Barcode number 1048880: Marriage Bonds, 1798-1824

Scope and Content

Barcode Number 1048880 contains Marriage Bonds, 1798-1824, Box 2.

Barcode number 1048879: Marriage Bonds, 1825-1843

Scope and Content

Barcode Number 1048879 contains Marriage Bonds, 1825-1843, Box 3.

Barcode number 1048878: Marriage Bonds and Ministers' Returns, 1785-1854 (bulk 1823-1854)

Scope and Content

Barcode Number 1048878 contains Marriage Bonds, 1844-1852, 3 undated marriage bonds; Ministers' Returns, 1785-1811, 1813, 1823-1854; and 3 miscellaneous documents.