

A Guide to the Accomack County (Va.) Military and Pension Records, 1775-1861, undated

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A Collection in the Library of Virginia
Library of Virginia
2013

History

Processed by: G. Crawford

Title Statement

A Guide to the Accomack County (Va.) Military and Pension Records, 1775-1861, undated

Subtitle: Accomack County (Va.) Military and Pension Records

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Publication Statement

Date: © 2013 By The Library of Virginia. All Rights Reserved.

Publisher: Library of Virginia

Profile Description

Creation: Machine-readable finding aid derived from MARC record, created by Greg Crawford, 15 May 2013

Language Usage: Description is in English

Descriptive Summary

Language

English

Collector

Accomack County (Va.) Circuit Court

Extent

3.4 cu. ft. (4 boxes); 2 v.

Location

Library of Virginia

Repository

The Library of Virginia

Administrative Information

Access Restrictions

The majority of the loose records in this series are unprocessed. All records remain tri-folded or in original bundles and may be fragile. Contact Archives Research services for availability.

Use Restrictions

There are no restrictions.

Acquisition Information

These records came to the Library of Virginia in a 2023 transfer of court papers under the accession number 54030 and an undated transfer of court papers from Accomack County.

Processing Information

Military and pension records, 1775-1861, undated, were partially separated from Accomack County court records and processed by G. Crawford, but the majority of the records in this series remain housed in boxes with other Accomack County court records. These records are mostly unprocessed.

Encoded by G. Crawford: May 2013; update by M. Long: February 2025.

Preferred Citation

Accomack County (Va.) Military and Pension Records, 1775-1861, undated. Local government records collection, Accomack County Court Records. The Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia, 23219.

Adjunct Descriptive Data

Related Material

See also:

[Accomack County \(Va.\) Declarations for Revolutionary War Pensions, 1829-1833, undated](#) at the Library of Virginia.

[Accomack County \(Va.\) Military Drills Handbook, undated](#) at the Library of Virginia.

Additional Accomack County Court Records can be found on microfilm at The Library of Virginia. Consult "[A Guide to Virginia County and City Records on Microfilm.](#)"

Accomack County is one of Virginia's Lost Records Localities. Additional Accomack County Court Records may be found in the [Lost Records Localities Digital Collection](#) available on the Library of Virginia website.

Historical Information

Context for Record Type: Keeping large bodies of militia in the field required an elaborate system of support based on the purchase of goods and services from civilians, in addition to the usual pay and allowances to officers and soldiers. The result was the creation of a large number of records concerning the state's disbursements to both soldiers and civilians. Many claims for payment went unsatisfied until 1821. Locality military and pension records consist largely of pay and muster rolls, accounts and vouchers concerning supplies, claims for reimbursement for services rendered, and military pension applications. Pension applications summarize the applicant's service record and may include medical evaluations; information about income and property; and, in the case of widows, the date and place of marriages.

During the Revolutionary War, commissioners were appointed in each county to impress supplies and non-military services (such as driving cattle or wagons) for the war effort. Officials provided certificates or receipts so that individual suppliers could be reimbursed by the state government. Beginning in 1782, claims for reimbursement could be submitted to county courts. These "publick claims," known as court booklets and lists, exist for almost all Virginia counties. Between 1777 and 1785, the Virginia General Assembly passed several laws authorizing pensions for disabled soldiers and for widows of soldiers who died while on active duty.

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. The Virginia General Assembly passed several Confederate pension acts beginning in 1888. The initial act provided pensions to Confederate soldiers, sailors, and marines disabled in action and to the widows of those killed in action. A 1900 act broadened the coverage to include veterans disabled by "infirmities of age" and widows whose husbands died after the war. African Americans who had served "faithfully" as servants, cooks, laborers, hostlers, or teamsters for the Confederate army were eligible for pensions beginning in 1924. District of Columbia residents became eligible in 1926; previously, all pension applicants were required to be residents of Virginia.

Locality History: Accomack County was named for the Accomac Indians, who lived on the Eastern Shore at the time of the first English settlement in Virginia. The word means "on-the-other-side-of-water place" or "across the water." It was one of the original eight shires, or counties, first enumerated in 1634 and spelled Accomac without the k. The county's name was changed to Northampton County in 1643. The present county was formed from Northampton about 1663. In October 1670, the General Assembly temporarily

reunited Accomack and Northampton Counties as Northampton County. In November 1673, Accomack County was again separated from Northampton. In early records, the county's name was spelled many ways. In 1940 the General Assembly adopted the present spelling, Accomack. The county gained a small part of the southern end of Smith's Island from Somerset County, Maryland, in 1879, after the United States had approved boundary changes between Virginia and Maryland that had been agreed to in 1877. The county seat is Accomac.

Lost Locality Note: Accomack County is one of Virginia's Lost Records Localities. A significant number of loose records from the 1700s suffered extreme water and pest damage. Volumes that record deeds, court orders, and wills exist.

Scope and Content

Accomack County (Va.) Military and Pension Records, 1775-1861, undated, consist of military service records, accounts and vouchers, and claims for reimbursement by civilians and service members. The majority of these records are unprocessed. Records include:

County militia papers, 1775-1855, undated, include militia appointments, fines, delinquency records, officer commissions and certificates of qualifications, lists of officers to be appointed, and a handbook of militia drills. Also included was an 1823-1849 volume of Second Regiment militia records.

Revolutionary War issues papers, 1778-1783, include petitions for military exemptions, allowances for soldiers' wives, and circular letters.

Pension papers, 1792-1861, consist of records related to veterans and their families seeking reimbursement, service rewards, or other support promised by the government in recognition of their time in the military. Most papers include regiment, commanding officer names, and other details about wartime service. Records include applications and certificates.

Civil War issues papers, 1861, include receipts for military supplies and militia payments.

Arrangement

This collection is arranged into the following series:

- **Series I: Military and Pension Records, 1775-1861, undated**, separated between two volumes and four boxes of loose papers. The loose papers are unprocessed and housed in boxes with other unprocessed Accomack County court records.

Contents List

Series I: Military and Pension Records, 1775-1861, undated

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Separated between two volumes and four boxes of loose papers. The loose papers are unprocessed and housed in boxes with other unprocessed Accomack County court records.

Barcode number 1122037: School Records; Military and Pension Records; Miscellaneous Records, 1775-1891 circa

Barcode number 1048660: Road and Bridge Records; Bonds, Commissions, Oaths; Tax and Fiscal Records; Military and Pension Records; Fiduciary Records, 1735-1850 circa

Barcode number 0007431156: Military and Pension Records; Free and Enslaved Records, 1778-1861 undated

Barcode number 0007687282: Military and Pension Records, 1806-1850 circa

Barcode number 1121830: Militia Record Book [includes Muste, 1798 Aug-

1822 Nov

Barcode number 0007867596: Second Regiment Militia Records, 1823-1849

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