

A Guide to the Accomack County (Va.) Apprenticeship Indentures, 1744, 1786-1796, 1820-1872

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A Collection in the Library of Virginia

Library of Virginia

2010

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History

Processed by: E. Jordan and LVA Staff

Title Statement

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Subtitle: Accomack County (Va.) Apprenticeship Indentures, 1744, 1786-1796, 1820-1872

Author: Louise Jones

Publication Statement

Date: © 2010 By The Library of Virginia. All Rights Reserved.

Publisher: Library of Virginia

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Profile Description

Creation: Machine-readable finding aid derived from being created directly into EAD, created by Louise Jones, 10 March 2010

Language Usage: Description is in English

Revision Description

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

Descriptive Summary

Language

English

Collector

Accomack County (Va.) Circuit Court

Physical Characteristics

.675 cu. ft. (2 boxes); 3 volumes; 5 microfilm reels; 1 item

Location

Library of Virginia

Repository

The Library of Virginia

Administrative Information

Access Restrictions

IN PROGRESS: Accomack County (Va.) Apprenticeship Indentures, 1744, 1786-1796, 1820-1872, involving white and Black and multiracial individuals are digitized and available through [Virginia Untold: The African American Narrative Digital Collection](#) on the Library of Virginia website. Please use digital images.

Use Restrictions

There are no restrictions.

Acquisition Information

These records came to the Library of Virginia in a transfer of court papers from Accomack County (Va.) as part of an undated accession. The Accomack County (Va.) Apprentice Indentures, 1820-1835, volume was transferred to the library in December 2023 under accession number 54030.

Processing Information

One Accomack County certificate, dated 1744, was originally described as part of the Accomack County (Va.) Free and Enslaved Records, 1758, 1799-1861, but was removed to the present Accomack County (Va.) Apprenticeship Indentures, 1744, 1786-1796, 1820-1872, record to enhance discoverability in October 2024.

The Accomack County (Va.) Reel No. 345 was generated by Backstage Library Works though the Library of Virginia's Circuit Court Records Preservation Program at an unknown date. Additional microfilm reels (Reel No. 127, 142, 193, and 199) were generated at an unknown date.

These records were scanned and indexed by E. Jordan and LVA staff for the purposes of digitizing them for the digital project Virginia Untold: The African American Narrative at an unknown date.

Encoded by L. Jones: March 2010; Updated by C. Collins: October 2024.

Preferred Citation

Accomack County (Va.) Apprenticeship Indentures, 1744, 1786-1796, 1820-1872. Local government records collection, Accomack County Court Records. The Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia.

Alternative Form Available

The Accomack County (Va.) Apprentice Indentures, 1786-1795, is available on microfilm, Accomack County (Va.) Reel No. 193.

The Accomack County (Va.) Apprentice Indentures, 1798-1820, is available on microfilm, Accomack County (Va.) Reel No. 127 and 199.

The Accomack County (Va.) Apprentice Indentures, 1820-1835, is available on microfilm, Accomack County (Va.) Reel No. 127 and 142.

The Accomack County (Va.) Apprentice Indentures, 1835-1859, is available on microfilm, Accomack County (Va.) Reel No. 345.

The Accomack County (Va.) Apprentice Indentures, 1850-1872, is available on microfilm, Accomack County (Va.) Reel No. 345.

Adjunct Descriptive Data

Related Material

See also: [Accomack County \(Va.\) Free and Enslaved Records, 1758, 1799-1861](#)

Records related to free and enslaved people of Accomack County (Va.) and other localities are available through the [Virginia Untold: The African American Narrative Digital Collection](#) on the Library of Virginia website.

Additional Accomack County (Va.) 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.](#)"

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

Historical Information

Context for Record Type: In 1765, the General Assembly established that illegitimate children of "woman

servants, Negroes, white women by Negroes were to be bound out" until the age of 21 for males and 18 for females. In the late eighteenth century, the General Assembly established the Overseers of the Poor, an appointed body that provided food, clothing, shelter, and medical treatment for people who were too poor to support themselves or too ill to provide for their basic needs. They also bound out children whose parents could not support them and those who were orphaned through apprenticeship contracts. These agreements arranged for white children to be taught a trade or domestic skills as well as educated in reading, writing, and arithmetic. In 1805, the General Assembly amended the previous act to no longer require the master of "black or mulatto orphans" to teach reading, writing, or arithmetic, with the intent that this would prevent Black children from learning these skills.

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: 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.) Apprenticeship Indentures, 1744, 1786-1796, 1820-1872, consist of contracts or agreements binding out white, Black, or multiracial children, sometimes those who were orphaned, to learn a particular trade or craft. These indentures may be written agreements between the family of the apprentice and those responsible for the indentured. In many cases this includes the direct involvement of the Overseers of the Poor. They typically contain the name of the person or institution binding out, the person to whom bound, the name of the person being indentured, the length of the apprenticeship, and the responsibilities of the person taking on the indenture.

These records are comprised of three bound volumes, 1820-1872; loose apprenticeship indentures, 1786-1796, 1835-1862; and various records related to apprenticeship indentures, 1744, 1846-1865.

The first volume, 1820-1835, is comprised of about 201 apprenticeship indentures. All of the indentures are standardized forms with the relevant information handwritten in the spaces provided.

The second volume, 1850-1872, consists of around 114 apprenticeship indentures. Many of the indentures are accompanied by bonds. Some indentures are entirely handwritten and attached to pages in the volume, while others are standardized forms with the relevant information handwritten in the spaces provided.

The third volume, 1835-1859, contains about 104 apprenticeship indentures. All of the indentures are standardized forms with the relevant information handwritten in the spaces provided.

The loose apprenticeship indentures, 1786-1796, 1835-1862, are comprised of 21 original indentures, 1786-1796, 1851-1856; four folders of facsimile indentures from the bound volumes, 1835-1862; and one folder of indenture templates, 1786-1796. The original indentures include the indentures of 17 white individuals, as well as the indentures of five Black and multiracial individuals: Isaac, identified as a "black free boy," to George Marshall, 1789; Mary and John Gaskins to Elijah W. Wright, 1851; Olivia Drummond to William H. Bayne, 1852; and Julia A. Selby to James Johnson, 1856.

Additionally, these records consist of various record types, 1744, 1846-1865, related to apprenticeship indentures. These records include accounts, bonds, certificates, and orders, in which the person bound, or in the process of being bound, is named. They also contain such information as the name of the person to whom each individual was bound and the name of the person binding the apprentice(s). For example, a certificate, 1744, records the "free consent" given by Sarah Aleworth for Jacob Aleworth, her son, to be bound to Moses Killiam until the age of 21.

Arrangement

This collection is arranged:

- Series I: Bound and Loose Apprenticeship Indentures, 1786-1796, 1820-1872, arranged chronologically.
- Series II: Records Related to Apprenticeship Indentures, 1744, 1786-1865, arranged chronologically.

Contents List

Series I: Bound and Loose Apprenticeship Indentures, 1786-1796, 1820-1872

Extent

.675 cu. ft. (2 boxes); 3 volumes

Physical Location Library of Virginia

Arrangement

Arranged chronologically

Barcode number 1121822: Apprentice Indentures, 1850-1872

Barcode number 1121823: Apprentice Indentures, 1835-1859

Barcode number 1134357: Apprentice Indentures and Records Related to Indentures, 1786-1865

Barcode number 0007596882: Apprentice Indentures [print copies], 1835-1872

Barcode number 0007867616: Apprentice Indentures, 1820-1835

Series II: Records Related to Apprenticeship Indentures, 1744, 1786-1865

Extent

.45 cu. ft. (1 box); 1 item

Physical Location Library of Virginia

Arrangement

Arranged chronologically

Barcode number 1138011: Free and Enslaved Records, 1744-1861

Barcode number 1134357: Apprentice Indentures and Records Related to Indentures, 1786-1865