

A Guide to the Staunton (Va.) Deeds of Emancipation, 1811, 1817

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1811, 1817

A Collection in the Library of Virginia
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History

Processed by: C. O'Brien

Title Statement

A Guide to the Staunton (Va.) Deeds of Emancipation, 1811, 1817

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Profile Description

Creation: Machine-readable finding aid derived from MS Word, created by Caroline Collins, 6 November 2024

Language Usage: Description is in English

Descriptive Summary

Language

English

Collector

Staunton (Va.) Circuit Court

Physical Characteristics

2 items.

Location

Library of Virginia

Repository

Library of Virginia

Administrative Information

Access Restrictions

Staunton (Va.) Deeds of Emancipation, 1811, 1817, 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 Staunton (Va.) circa 1988 under accession number 33143.

Processing Information

Staunton (Va.) Deeds of Emancipation were originally described as part of the Staunton (Va.) Free and Enslaved Records, 1845-1861, but were removed to the present Staunton (Va.) Deeds of Emancipation, 1811, 1817, record to enhance discoverability in November 2024.

These records were processed, scanned, and indexed by C. O'Brien, L. Neuroth, 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 C. Collins: November 2024.

Preferred Citation

Staunton (Va.) Deeds of Emancipation, 1811, 1817. Local government records collection, Staunton (Va.) Court Records. The Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia.

Administrative Information

Related Material

See also: [Staunton \(Va.\) Free and Enslaved Records, 1845-1861](#)

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

Additional Staunton (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."](#)

Historical Information

Context of Record Type: Deeds of emancipation and manumission record an enslavers' intent to emancipate enslaved people from bondage. Some of the earliest legal manumissions in Virginia occurred in the early 1770s. However, there was a sharp rise following the 1782 manumission act that allowed enslavers to privately emancipate enslaved people "by last will and testament or other instrument in writing sealed." They were no longer required to seek a special act from the General Assembly. These documents sometimes include an enslavers' intent for emancipation ranging from religious and moral motivations to binding legal agreements.

Deeds of emancipation and manumission essentially provide the same information and there is little difference between the two. Both include the name of the enslaver, the name of the enslaved person to be freed, the date of anticipated freedom, the date the manumission was proved or certified, and as mentioned, sometimes a reason why the enslaver decided to emancipate the enslaved person. In a deed of manumission, an enslaver directly freed an enslaved person by manumission. In a deed of emancipation, an enslaved person could be freed after the enslaver's death by those executing a last will and testament. This collection also includes court orders that record the date or age when enslaved individuals were to be emancipated by deed as stipulated in an enslaver's will.

Locality History: Staunton, in Augusta County, was named, according to most authorities, for Rebecca Staunton, wife of Sir William Gooch, lieutenant governor of Virginia from 1727 to 1749. Staunton was laid out in 1748 at the site of the Augusta County courthouse and was established as a town in 1761. It was incorporated as a town in 1801 and as a city in 1871.

Scope and Content

Staunton (Va.) Deeds of Emancipation, 1811, 1817, consist of two deeds of emancipation. The deeds typically record the name of enslaver, the name of the enslaved person or persons to be freed, the date the enslaved person or persons achieved freedom, and the date the manumission was proved or certified. Sometimes, the deeds describe the reason for emancipation or manumission.

These records are comprised of a deed, 1811, in which John Bell freed Israel following his service to Samuel Wilson. The verso includes the original 1809 apprenticeship indenture in which Bell initially bound Israel to Samuel Wilson. In the second deed, 1817, Edmund Edington emancipated Lavinia and her four children: Maria, Gustavus Vassa, Martha Ann, and Nancy.

Arrangement

This collection is arranged

- Series I: Deeds of Emancipation, 1811, 1817, arranged chronologically.

Contents List

Series I: Deeds of Emancipation, 1811, 1817

Extent

2 items

Physical Location Library of Virginia

Arrangement

Arranged chronologically

Barcode number 1138036: Free and Enslaved Records, 1811-1863

Library of Virginia