

A Guide to the Botetourt County (Va.) Certificates of Importation, 1794, 1796, 1815

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A Collection in the Library of Virginia
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2025

History

Processed by: LVA Staff

Title Statement

A Guide to the Botetourt County (Va.) Certificates of Importation, 1794, 1796, 1815

Subtitle: Botetourt County (Va.) Certificates of Importation

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Publication Statement

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Profile Description

Creation: Machine-readable finding aid derived from MS Word by Caroline Collins, 09 July 2025

Language Usage: Description is in English

Descriptive Summary

Language

English

Collector

Botetourt County (Va.) Circuit Court.

Extent

4 items

Location

Library of Virginia

Repository

The Library of Virginia

Administrative Information

Access Restrictions

Botetourt County (Va.) Certificates of Importation, 1794, 1796, 1815, 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 Botetourt County (Va.) as part of an undated accession.

Processing Information

Botetourt County Certificates of Importation were originally described as part of the Botetourt County (Va.) Free and Enslaved Records, 1801-1862, but were removed to the present Botetourt County (Va.) Certificates of Importation, 1794, 1796, 1815, record to enhance discoverability in July 2025.

These records were processed, scanned, and indexed by 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: July 2025.

Preferred Citation

Botetourt County (Va.) Certificates of Importation, 1794, 1796, 1815. Local government records collection, Botetourt County Court Records. The Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia.

Adjunct Descriptive Data

Related Material

See also: [Botetourt County \(Va.\) Free and Enslaved Records, 1801-1862](#)

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

Additional Botetourt 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."](#)

Botetourt County is one of Virginia's Lost Records Localities. Additional Botetourt 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 1778, Governor Patrick Henry enacted legislation preventing importation of enslaved people into the commonwealth. Those that did bring their enslaved people were required to register them with the county court and sign a certificate of importation agreeing that they were not bringing enslaved people into the commonwealth with the intent to sell. The enslaved person is sometimes named, but not always, and occasionally information is given as to age, birthdate, and the state from which the individuals were moving. According to Section 3 of the act "every slave imported into this commonwealth contrary to the true intent and meaning of this act, shall upon such importation become free." By this clause, those enslaved people who were brought into Virginia illegally could pursue their freedom in the local courts.

Locality History: Botetourt County was named for Norborne Berkeley, baron de Botetourt, the royal governor from 1768 to 1770. It was formed from Augusta County in 1769, and a part of Rockbridge County was added in 1785. The county court first met on 13 February 1770. The county seat is Fincastle.

Lost Locality Note: Many of the loose records including pre-1830 chancery and pre-1854 judgments suffered tremendous water damage as a result of a courthouse fire on 15 December 1970. Because of the near loss of records, the General Assembly passed the Virginia Public Records Act in 1975 for the purpose of preserving local records. Volumes that record deeds, court orders, and wills exist.

Scope and Content

Botetourt County (Va.) Certificates of Importation, 1794, 1796, 1815, sometimes entitled certificates of nonimportation, contain information whereby an enslaver swears that they have not imported the enslaved person from Africa and that the enslaver has not brought the enslaved person into Virginia with the purpose of selling the enslaved person. The enslaved person is sometimes named, but not always, and occasionally information is given as to age, birthdate, and the state the individuals are moving from.

These records are comprised of a certificate, 1794, which verifies that Ralph Crabb brought George, Peter, Phillip, Lydia, William, and Anna to Virginia from Maryland; a certificate, 1796, which verifies that Chance and Patience were transported into Virginia from Maryland by John Nave (alias John Nace); and a certificate, 1815, which verifies that Susanna and Elizabeth Madison brought Lewis into Virginia from Kentucky.

Arrangement

Arrangement

This collection is arranged

- Series I: Certificates of Importation, 1794, 1796, 1815, arranged chronologically.

Contents List

Series I: Certificates of Importation, 1794, 1796, 1815

Extent

Extent: 4 items

Physical Location Library of Virginia

Arrangement

Arranged chronologically

Barcode number 1138016: Free and Enslaved Records, 1790-1862

Library of Virginia