

A Guide to the Frederick County (Va.) Petitions for Re-Enslavement, 1859

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1859

A Collection in the Library of Virginia
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2026

History

Processed by: S. Nerney

Title Statement

A Guide to the Frederick County (Va.) Petitions for Re-Enslavement, 1859
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Publication Statement

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Profile Description

Creation: Machine-readable finding aid derived from MS Word by C. Collins, 01 July 2026
Language Usage: Description is in English

Descriptive Summary

Language
English
Collector
Frederick County (Va.) Circuit Court.
Extent
1 item
Location
Library of Virginia
Repository
The Library of Virginia

Administrative Information

Access Restrictions
Frederick County (Va.) Petitions for Re-Enslavement, 1859, 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 were transferred to the Library of Virginia from Frederick County (Va.) as part of an undated accession.

Processing Information

Frederick County Petitions for Re-Enslavement were originally described as part of the Frederick County (Va.) Free and Enslaved Records, 1761, 1795, 1820-1861, but were removed to the present Frederick County (Va.) Petitions for Re-Enslavement, 1859, record to enhance discoverability in July 2026.

These records have been processed, scanned, and indexed by S. Nerney, L. Neuroth, and LVA staff for the purposes of digitizing them for the digital project Virginia Untold: The African American Narrative.

Encoded by C. Collins: July 2026

Preferred Citation

Frederick County (Va.) Petitions for Re-Enslavement, 1859. Local government records collection, Frederick County Court Records. The Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia.

Adjunct Descriptive Data

Related Material

See also: [Frederick County \(Va.\) Free and Enslaved Records, 1761, 1795, 1820-1861](#)

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

Additional Frederick 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.](#)"

Historical Information

Context for Record Type: Petitions for Re-enslavement consist of petitions of free Black individuals choosing to be re-enslaved. An act passed by the Virginia General Assembly in 1806 required formerly enslaved people to leave the commonwealth within twelve months of being granted their freedom. Individuals were forced to leave behind family, friends, and community who remained enslaved. In addition, many emancipated people did not have the financial means or social support to move to a free state. One option to preserve family and relationships was to return to slavery. In 1856, the Virginia legislature passed an act allowing free Black individuals who desired to remain in the commonwealth to petition for re-enslavement. Only a small number of free Black Virginians petitioned the courts to re-enslave themselves to an enslaver of choice, and an even smaller percentage succeeded. Many petitioners chose enslavers they knew well or who owned a spouse or family member. These petitions include the petitioner's name, previous enslaver, means of emancipation, and new desired enslaver.

Locality History: Frederick County was named in honor of Frederick Louis, Prince of Wales and eldest son of King George II. It was formed from Orange County by a statute of 1738 that stipulated that when the population was large enough the new county government would begin to function. The county court first met on 11 November 1743. Part of Augusta County was added in 1754. The county seat is the city of Winchester.

Scope and Content

Frederick County (Va.) Petitions for Re-Enslavement, 1859, include the petition of Thomas Champe, who sought permission to enslave himself to General James H. Carson. In his petition, Champe stated he had been a resident of Frederick County since his birth.

Arrangement

This collection is arranged

- Series I: Petitions for Re-Enslavement, 1859, arranged chronologically.

Contents List

Series I: Petitions for Re-Enslavement, 1859

Extent

Extent: 1 item

Physical Location Library of Virginia

Arrangement

Arranged chronologically

Barcode number 1117610: Free and Enslaved Records, 1795-1871

Library of Virginia