

A Guide to the Frederick County (Va.) Petitions to Remain in the Commonwealth, 1816-1850

Frederick County (Va.) Petitions to Remain in the Commonwealth, 1816-1850
1816-1850

A Collection in the Library of Virginia
Library of Virginia
2026

History

Processed by: S. Nerney

Title Statement

A Guide to the Frederick County (Va.) Petitions to Remain in the Commonwealth, 1816-1850

Subtitle: Frederick County (Va.) Petitions to Remain in the Commonwealth

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Publication Statement

Date: © 2026 By The Library of Virginia. All Rights Reserved.

Publisher: Library of Virginia

Profile Description

Creation: Machine-readable finding aid derived from MS Word by C. Collins, 08 July 2026

Language Usage: Description is in English

Descriptive Summary

Language

English

Collector

Frederick County (Va.) Circuit Court.

Extent

15 items

Location

Library of Virginia

Repository

The Library of Virginia

Administrative Information

Access Restrictions

Frederick County (Va.) Petitions to Remain in the Commonwealth, 1816-1850, 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 Frederick County (Va.) as part of an undated accession.

Processing Information

Frederick County Petitions to Remain in the Commonwealth 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 to Remain in the Commonwealth, 1816-1850, 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 to Remain in the Commonwealth, 1816-1850. 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: Sometimes referred to as "Applications to Remain," these records are applications that formerly enslaved individuals submitted to state and local courts for permission to remain in Virginia with their free status. The Virginia General Assembly passed a law stating that all formerly enslaved people freed after 1 May 1806 who remained in Virginia more than twelve months could be put on trial by the state. Individuals who wished to remain in the commonwealth were to petition the state legislature. In 1816, a new Act of Assembly gave the local courts power to grant permission to remain. The documents in these cases will include: the name(s) of the petitioner(s), the circumstances of free status, and a request to remain in the county. Individuals needed to prove that they had in fact been emancipated. Therefore, application packets might also include supporting documents such as the formerly enslaved person's register, a copy of a will or deed of emancipation, or witness statements known as affidavits.

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 to Remain in the Commonwealth, 1816-1850, consist of 15 records related to the petitions of eight people. These petitions are applications that formerly enslaved individuals submitted to state and local courts for permission to remain in Virginia with their free status. The petitions often include the formerly enslaved individual's name, their method of emancipation, name of their former enslaver, and whether the application/petition was successful or not. Petitions may also include affidavits signed mainly by white residents or witness statements again provided by white residents. Additional names of enslaved or free Black and Multiracial individuals can be found in these records.

These records include the following petitions: 1816, of James Beesick (or Besick), who was emancipated by Jane Graham; 1816, of Isaac, who provided a reference by Susan B. Taylor and received permission to remain in the county; 1817, of Brutus, who was emancipated by the executors of Mary Meade and ultimately allowed to remain; 1817, of Reuben Strange and Courtney, his wife, who were freed by Edward McGuire and given leave to remain; 1843, of Billy Williams (also referred to as William Williams), who was given leave to remain; 1843, of Frank Robinson, whose petition was rejected by the court; and 1850, of Edward Kean, who was granted permission to remain.

Arrangement

This collection is arranged

- Series I: Petitions to Remain in the Commonwealth, 1816-1850, arranged chronologically.

Contents List

Series I: Petitions to Remain in the Commonwealth, 1816-1850

Extent

Extent: 15 items

Physical Location Library of Virginia

Arrangement

Arranged chronologically

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

Library of Virginia