

A Guide to the Rockingham County (Va.) Apprenticeship Indentures, 1805-1852

Rockingham County (Va.) Apprenticeship Indentures, 1805-1852
1805-1852

A Collection in the Library of Virginia
Library of Virginia
2026

History

Processed by: LVA Staff

Title Statement

A Guide to the Rockingham County (Va.) Apprenticeship Indentures, 1805-1852

Subtitle: Rockingham County (Va.) Apprenticeship Indentures, 1805-1852

Author: Mary Ann Mason

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, created by Mary Ann Mason, 22 June 2026

Language Usage: Description is in English

Descriptive Summary

Language

English

Collector

Rockingham County (Va.) Circuit Court

Extent

Digital Images.

Location

Library of Virginia

Repository

Library of Virginia

Administrative Information

Access Restrictions

Rockingham County (Va.) Apprenticeship Indentures, 1805-1852, concerning Black and Multiracial child 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

Digital images of Rockingham County Apprenticeship Indentures, created by Library of Virginia Staff and are part of accession 54921

Processing Information

After Local Records Staff completed the processing, indexing and digitization for Rockingham County apprenticeship indentures included in Virginia Untold, the records were returned to the locality by request of the clerk. At that time, the box barcodes and catalog records were deleted, while the digital images remained in Virginia Untold. In 2026, the Virginia Untold Project Manager and Local Records Staff decided to recreate these catalog records and assign digital barcodes to the images to help with internal tracking and to provide researchers with extended context for these records.

Encoded by M. Mason, June 2026.

Preferred Citation

Rockingham County (Va.) Apprenticeship Indentures, 1805-1852. Local government records collection, Rockingham County Court Records. The Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia.

Custodial History

These items came to the Library of Virginia in a transfer of court papers from Rockingham County (Va.) Circuit Court in 2003. Original documents returned at request of Circuit Court Clerk of Isle of Wight County in 2019.

Adjunct Descriptive Data

Related Material

See also: [Rockingham County\(Va.\) Free and Enslaved Records](#)

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

Additional Rockingham 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."](#)

Location of Originals

Original apprenticeship indentures are housed at the Rockingham Circuit Court. Contact the clerk of the Circuit Court for access.

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: Rockingham County was named for Charles Watson-Wentworth, second marquis of Rockingham, who supported the colonies during the years before and during the Revolutionary War. The county was formed from Augusta County in 1778. The county seat is the city of Harrisonburg.

Lost Locality History: Created in 1778. A courthouse fire in 1787 destroyed wills and estate records, primarily. In June 1864 during the Civil War, court records (mostly volumes) were removed from the courthouse and loaded on a wagon to be taken to place of safety on or beyond the Blue Ridge. The wagon was overtaken by Union troops near Port Republic and set on fire, which was put out by local citizens. Many order books, deed books, will books, and fiduciary books, however, were lost or severely damaged by the fire. The loose records that remained at the courthouse were undamaged. Pre-1865 records including deeds

and wills were rerecorded following an act of assembly passed in November 1884.

Scope and Content

Rockingham County (Va.) Apprenticeship Indentures, 1805-1852, 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.

Currently, identified material only includes indentures of Black and Multiracial children. Additional apprenticeship indentures concerning white children may be found with other records or in the locality.

Arrangement

This collection is arranged

- Series I: Apprenticeship Indentures, 1805-1852

Contents List

Series I: Apprenticeship Indentures, 1805-1852

Extent

digital images

Physical Location Library of Virginia

Barcode number 0007748024: Apprenticeship Indentures, 1805-1852

Barcode number 1050325: Apprenticeship Indentures 1849-1852

Library of Virginia