

A Guide to the Grayson County (Va.) Records Related to the Registration of Free Persons, , 1812,1823,1834

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A Collection in the Library of Virginia
Library of Virginia
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History

Processed by: L. Neuroth

Title Statement

A Guide to the Grayson County (Va.) Records Related to the Registration of Free Persons, , 1812,1823,1834

Subtitle: Grayson County (Va.) Records Related to the Registration of Free Persons, 1812,1823,1834

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Profile Description

Creation: Machine-readable finding aid derived from MS Word, created by Mary Ann Mason, 17 August 2026

Language Usage: Description is in English

Descriptive Summary

Language

English

Collector

Grayson County (Va.) Circuit Court

Extent

3 items, digital images.

Location

Library of Virginia

Repository

Library of Virginia

Administrative Information

Access Restrictions

"Free Negro" registrations 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 Grayson County under an undated accession.

Processing Information

Grayson County "free negro" registrations were originally described as part of the Grayson County Free and Enslaved Records, but were removed to the present Grayson County (Va.) Records Related to the Registration of Free Persons, record to enhance discoverability in July 2026.

Encoded by M. Mason, July 2026

Preferred Citation

Grayson County (Va.) Records Related to the Registration of Free Persons, 1812,1823,1834,. Local government records collection, Grayson County Court Records. The Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia

Adjunct Descriptive Data

Related Material

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

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

Additional Grayson 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

p>Context for Record Type:

"Free Negro" Registrations

In 1793, the Virginia General Assembly specified that "free Negroes or mulattoes" were required to "be registered and numbered in a book to be kept by the town clerk, which shall specify age, name, color, status and by whom, and in what court emancipated." These entries often coincided with the creation of a loose certificate containing largely the same identifying information.

Documents in this record group differ from the bound volumes referred to as "registers." These registration records typically appear in the form of certificates or handwritten statements recording the free status of a Black or Multiracial person. They can include the free person's name, sometimes age, a brief physical description, and the circumstances of the person's freedom or emancipation, parents, former enslaver, place or date of emancipation. There are also affidavits that were given by individuals affirming a free person's status, as well as written descriptions of free people. In some cases, a person would not have a registration to submit to the court. Instead, they produced some other form of identification proving their free status, for example, a deed of emancipation, a will, an apprenticeship indenture, or an affidavit of someone testifying to their character and status.

Locality History: Grayson County was named for William Grayson, a delegate to the Continental Congress from 1784 to 1787 and one of the first two United States senators from Virginia. It was formed from Wythe County in 1792, and a part of Patrick County was added in 1810.

Scope and Content

Grayson County (Va.) Records Related to the Registration of Free Persons, 1812,1823,1834, consists of three loose registrations, John Wilson, 1812; Nicolas Rickman, 1823; and Celia Rickman, 1834.

Arrangement

This collection is arranged

- Series I: "Free Negro" Registrations, 1812,1823,1834

Contents List

Series I:"Free Negro" Registrations, 1812,1823,1834

Extent

Extent: 3 items; Digital images [use digital images]

Physical Location Library of Virginia

Barcode number 1187170: Free and Enslaved Records, 1812-1846

Library of Virginia