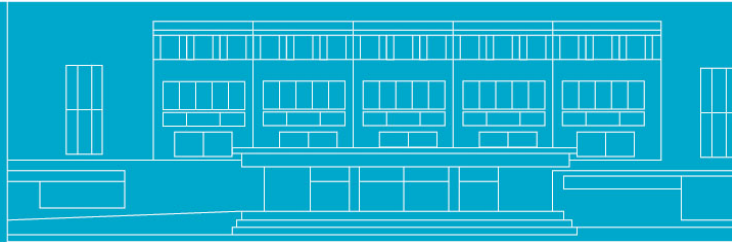


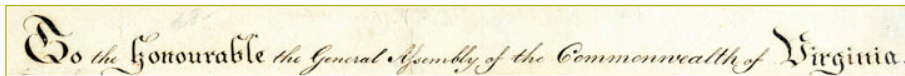
Digital Collections Search Tips



Search Tips for Finding African American Names in Legislative Petitions

To search for topics related to slaves and free African Americans in these records, use the “subject” drop down menu feature on our [Legislative Petitions](#) digital collection page. There you’ll find “Free Negroes” as well as “Slaves/Slavery” listed as subjects.

LEGISLATIVE PETITIONS DIGITAL COLLECTION



Petitions to the General Assembly were the primary catalyst for legislation in the Commonwealth from 1776 until 1865. Public improvements, military claims, divorce, manumission of slaves, division of counties, incorporation of towns, religious freedom, and taxation were just some of the concerns expressed in these petitions. The petitions often contain hundreds of signatures and are a useful tool in genealogical research. Frequently, the petitions contain supplementary support documents useful in research, including maps, wills, naturalizations, deeds, resolutions, affidavits, judgments, and other items.

See the following link for an in-depth description of legislative petitions: [Research Notes Number 18](#).

Search the collection:

You may only search two of the three options below at any time. Why [?](#)

Keyword:

Locality:

Subject:

- Four Inspection/Industry
- Free Negroes**
- Indians
- Land/Real Estate
- Manufacturers/Manufacturing Companies
- Militia/Public Guard
- Mining/Mining Companies
- Miscellaneous
- Name Changes
- Navigation/Navigation Companies
- Organizations
- Paper Money
- Pardons/Release from Fines, Judgments, etc.
- Private Relief/Compensation
- Prohibition/Temperance
- Railroads/Railroad Companies
- Revenue/Taxation
- Roads/Turnpike Companies
- Schools/Universities
- Slaves/Slavery
- Tobacco Inspection/Industry

Petitions related to issues and individuals concerning enslaved and free African Americans can be found by searching either the Free Negroes or the Slaves / Slavery subject headings.

You can further refine your search EITHER by selecting a locality to search OR by adding a keyword to your search.

Keep in mind, though, that African American names may be found in petitions that aren't tagged with a “Free Negroes” or “Slaves/Slavery” subject. Additionally, not all petitions with these subjects necessarily contain names.