

A Guide to the Winchester (Va.) Convict Register,, 1874-1906

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History

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Descriptive Summary

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Language

English

Collector

Winchester (Va.) Circuit Court.

Extent

1 v.

Location

State Records Center--Archives Annex, Library of Virginia

Repository

The Library of Virginia

Administrative Information

Access Restrictions

There are no restrictions.

Use Restrictions

There are no restrictions.

Acquisition Information

This volume came to the Library of Virginia in a shipment of court records from Winchester(City.)

Preferred Citation

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Adjunct Descriptive Data

Related Material

Additional Winchester (City) Records can be found on microfilm at the Library of Virginia. Consult [A Guide to Virginia County and City Records on Microfilm](#).

Historical Information

The City of Winchester, in Frederick County, was first known as Opequon, then as Frederick's Town (or Fredericktown), and, finally, upon establishment as a town in 1752, as Winchester. According to tradition, one of the town's founders, James Wood, named the town in honor of his birthplace in England. Winchester was incorporated as a town in 1779 and as a city in 1874. It was enlarged by annexation from Frederick County in 1970.

During the 1869-1870 session, the General Assembly passed an "Act to Secure Identification of Persons Convicted of Criminal Offences." On 2 November 1870, the act was approved. The act specified that "every clerk of the court of each county and corporation shall keep a register of full and accurate descriptive lists of every person convicted in his own or any other court of record of his county or corporation, of felony or other infamous offence, and a duly certified and attested copy of any such descriptive list may be used as prima facie evidence of the facts therein stated in any question of identity. Such registers shall be kept written up, well indexed, and shall be open to public inspection at reasonable hours. The register shall follow a set form and each descriptive list shall be attested by said clerk."

In addition, "the clerk of every court of record of each county or corporation, other than the county or corporation court, shall within ten days from the date of conviction of any person in his court of any offence mentioned in the first section of this act, deliver to the clerk of the county or corporation court, for record in said register, an attested descriptive list of the person so convicted, in the form hereinbefore prescribed." The judges of the respective courts are responsible for seeing that the provisions of the act are "punctually and properly carried out" by their respective clerks. The act was amended on 18 January 1871 and outlined the following: "For the services mentioned in this or the first section of this act, the clerk shall be entitled to a fee of fifty cents, to be paid out of the state treasury." By and large, the county and circuit court clerks went about compiling these registers throughout the counties of Virginia as late as the 1960s.

Order books and/or Minute books record all matters brought before the court when it was in session and may contain important information not found anywhere else. A wide variety of information is found in order/minute books--including individuals convicted of felonies.

The original records, from which this volume was compiled, were created by the Corporation Court. The Corporation Court, in jurisdictions incorporated as independent cities, was the town/city equivalent of the County Court. It was presided over by Justices under the Mayor of the town/city and heard civil and criminal matters. Civil actions on appeal and criminal matters resulting in conviction were sent to the next higher court (Corporation Court to Circuit Court) for further action.

Scope and Content

Winchester (Va.) Convict Register, 1874-1906, is a "descriptive list of persons convicted of a felony, or other infamous offences, in the Corporation Court of Winchester, Virginia, since 20 July 1874." Based on a set form, the listings of each conviction include the individual's name in full and any aliases, the present and last known residence of the accused, the color or race of the individual (including white, black, mulatto, brown, copper, light mulatto, yellow, dark brown, dark complexion, ginger cake colored, ginger cake, light ginger cake, bright mulatto, ginger or colored), the individual's height, eye color, hair color and any identifying marks, the apparent or known age of the accused, his or her occupation, the offence, the court in which convicted, the date of conviction and page of record and whether the judgment was reversed or pardon granted and date thereof. The volume has 147 leaves but only a small portion of the volume was actually

used. The entries include the convict's full name and are arranged by date of conviction. There are 3 loose pages in the beginning of the volume with additional information and an unrelated copy of court executions from 1797 which may have been used as a page marker. At the beginning, the volume contains an index.

Index Terms

Corporate Names:

Winchester (Va.) Circuit Court.

Subjects:

African American prisoners--Virginia--Winchester.

African Americans--Employment--Virginia--Winchester.

African Americans--History--1863-1877.

African Americans--History--1877-1964.

African Americans--Virginia--Winchester.

Occupations--Virginia--Winchester.

Prisoners--Virginia--Winchester.

Public records--Virginia--Winchester.

Racially mixed people--Virginia--Winchester.

Geographical Names:

Winchester (Va.)--History.

Genre and Form Terms:

Criminal court records--Virginia--Winchester.

Judicial records--Virginia--Winchester.

Justices of the peace--Virginia--Winchester.

Local government records--Virginia--Winchester.

Minute books--Virginia--Winchester.

Order books--Virginia--Winchester.

Registers (lists)--Virginia--Winchester.

Added Entry - Corporate Name:

Winchester (Va.) Corporation Court.

Arrangement

This volume is arranged by date and the index is arranged alphabetically by surname and date of conviction.