

A Guide to the Gloucester County (Va.), Health and Medical Records, 1886-1900

Gloucester County Health and Medical Records, 1886-1900
1886-1900

A Collection in the Library of Virginia 1171526
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History

Processed by: T. Harter

Title Statement

A Guide to the Gloucester County (Va.), Health and Medical Records, 1886-1900

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Profile Description

Creation: Machine-readable finding aid created in EAD by Tracy S. Harter, 22 June 2020

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Descriptive Summary

Collection Number

1171526

Language

English

Creator

Gloucester County (Va.) Circuit Court

Extent

1 folder

Repository

The Library of Virginia

Administrative Information

Access Restrictions

There are no restrictions.

Use Restrictions

There are no restrictions.

Acquisition Information

This collection came to the Library of Virginia in a transfer of court papers from Gloucester County Circuit Court.

Preferred Citation

Gloucester County (Va.) Health and Medical Records, 1886-1900. Local government records collection, Gloucester County Court Records, The Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia.

Adjunct Descriptive Data

Related Material

Additional Gloucester County court records can be found on microfilm and in the Chancery Records Index at the Library of Virginia. Consult ["A Guide to Virginia County and City Records on Microfilm"](#) and [The Chancery Records Index](#).

Historical Information

Mental Health Records may consist of a variety of documents that historically were referred to as lunacy papers in the courthouses of Virginia localities and municipalities.

In March 1882 a 300 acre tract of land was purchased by the City of Petersburg and given to the state for the purpose of constructing a permanent mental health facility for African Americans. Construction of the new facility near Petersburg was completed in early spring 1885. This later included a special building to house the criminally insane apart from the rest of the hospital population. An early institutional history notes that treatment at Central Lunatic Asylum during the 1890s was humane and emphasized the value of work and the benefits of recreation. However, practices at the facility also included seclusion, mechanical restraints, and the administering of hypnotics.

In 1894, Central Lunatic Asylum was officially renamed Central State Hospital. This piece of legislation also altered the names of the other mental health facilities in Virginia in an attempt to inspire a more positive image of the institutions, and of mental health treatment in general. It is important to note that another state institution located in Staunton, Virginia went by the name Central Lunatic Asylum between the years of 1861 and 1865. Its name later was changed to Western Lunatic Asylum, and is a separate facility with no connection to the Richmond/Petersburg hospital for African Americans.

Gloucester County was named probably to honor Henry, duke of Gloucester, the third son of King Charles I, or it may also have been named for the English county. It was formed from York County in 1651. The county seat is Gloucester.

Scope and Content

Gloucester County (Va.) Health and Medical Records 1886-1900, consist of one folder of Mental Health Records for eleven individuals typically jailed as lunatics. Documents primarily consist of agreements or bonds pertaining to the care of these persons and an estate inventory of one person judged insane. Documents for two African Americans are also present: An 1886 agreement between the jailer and the county clerk regarding compensation for Henry Smith's care until he can be admitted to the Central Lunatic Asylum at Petersburg, and c.1895 documentation regarding Marcia Selden, who was released from jail to the care of Beverly Jones, who was to be compensated for her care.

Records post-1900 have not been processed, and are restricted for 125 years, and therefore are not open for research nor part of this finding aid.

Index Terms

Corporate Names:

Gloucester County (Va.) Circuit Court.
Central Lunatic Asylum for Colored Insane, Virginia.
Central State Hospital (Petersburg, Va.).

Subjects:

African Americans--Mental health--Virginia--Gloucester County.
County courts--Virginia--Gloucester County.
Insanity--Jurisprudence--Virginia--Gloucester County.
Jails--Virginia--Gloucester County.
Mental health facilities--Virginia.
Mental illness--Virginia--Gloucester County.
Psychiatric hospitals--Virginia.
Public records--Virginia--Gloucester County.

Geographical Names:

Gloucester County (Va.)--History--19th Century.

Genre and Form Terms:

Health and Medical--Virginia--Gloucester County.
Local government records--Virginia--Gloucester County.

Arrangement

Chronological by year, then alphabetically by last name of individual.