

A Guide to the Goochland County (Va.), Health and Medical Records, 1802-1906

Goochland County Health and Medical Records, 1802-1906
1802-1906

A Collection in the Library of Virginia 0007777605
Library of Virginia
2020

History

Processed by: T. Harter

Title Statement

A Guide to the Goochland County (Va.), Health and Medical Records, 1802-1906

Subtitle: Goochland County (Va.), Health and Medical Records, 1802-1906

Collection: 0007777605

Author: Tracy S. Harter

Publication Statement

Date: © 2020 By The Library of Virginia. All Rights Reserved.

Publisher: Library of Virginia

Profile Description

Creation: Machine-readable finding aid created in EAD by Tracy S. Harter, 9 July 2020

Language Usage: Description is in English

Descriptive Summary

Collection Number

0007777605

Language

English

Creator

Goochland County (Va.) Circuit Court

Extent

.225 cf; 1/2 hollinger box

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 Goochland County Circuit Court.

Preferred Citation

Goochland County (Va.) Health and Medical Records, 1802-1906. Local government records collection, Goochland County Court Records, The Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia.

Adjunct Descriptive Data

Related Material

Additional Goochland 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.

A fiduciary is an individual who enters into a confidential and legal relationship which binds them to act on behalf of another. Guardians are legally invested to take care of another person, and of the property and rights of that person. Thus, some records referred to as insanity papers are housed with fiduciary records and not with mental health records.

During its session begun in November 1769, the House of Burgesses passed an act establishing a hospital in Williamsburg for the mentally ill. The Eastern Lunatic Asylum (now Eastern State Hospital) was the first institution in America constructed as a mental hospital. The first patients were admitted in October 1773.

In January 1825 the Virginia General Assembly passed legislation providing for the construction of an asylum in the western part of the state. The institution, which became known as Western Lunatic Asylum, was constructed close to the town of Staunton, west of the Blue Ridge Mountains, and was the second mental health facility built in the Commonwealth of Virginia. The buildings and surrounding gardens were designed to embrace the idea of "moral therapy" for mentally ill patients by providing an aesthetically pleasing and tranquil atmosphere in which patients lived comfortably, exercised and worked outdoors.

Western Lunatic Asylum opened in 1828, accepting both male and female patients suffering from a variety of mental disorders. It should be noted that the hospital underwent a short-lived name change between 1861 and 1865, when it was known as Central Lunatic Asylum. (It should not be confused with an asylum of the same name later built in Petersburg, Virginia to house African American patients). From 1865 to 1894 the name was again Western Lunatic Asylum. However, in 1894 the General Assembly passed legislation changing the name to Western State Hospital.

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.

Goochland County was named for Sir William Gooch, lieutenant governor of Virginia from 1727 to 1749. It was formed from Henrico County in 1728.

Scope and Content

Goochland County (Va.) Health and Medical Records 1802-1906, comprises one half hollinger box, .225cf; and consists of 6 folders of Mental Health Records, 1802-1906, and one folder of Smallpox Epidemic Records, 1899-1900.

Mental Health Records, 1802-1906 may include warrants, orders, petitions, depositions, reports, etc. for or by justices of the peace and others regarding the mental condition of individuals who were released to the recognizance of a family member or who were committed to a mental hospital. Fiduciary records such as estate inventories of a person judged insane may also be present. Various asylums/hospitals are referenced, including a "Pinel Hospital" at Richmond. Several cases 1880-1899 pertain to African-Americans recommended or sent to Central Lunatic Asylum at Petersburg. The physical folders for these cases have been denoted with an asterisk.

Smallpox Epidemic Records, 1899-1900, consist of papers relating to quarantines and hospitals for the containment and/or treatment of smallpox outbreaks in Goochland County.

Index Terms

Corporate Names:

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

Subjects:

African Americans--Mental Health--Virginia--Goochland County.
County courts--Virginia--Goochland County.
Insanity--Jurisprudence--Virginia--Goochland County.
Jails--Virginia--Goochland County.
Medical laws and legislation--Virginia--Goochland County.
Mental illness--Virginia--Goochland County.
Physicians--Virginia--Goochland County.
Psychiatric hospitals--Virginia.
Public health--Virginia.
Public health administration--Virginia.
Public records--Virginia--Goochland County.
Quarantine--Virginia--Goochland County.
Smallpox--Virginia--Goochland County.

Geographical Names:

Goochland County (Va.)--History--18th Century.
Goochland County (Va.)--History--19th Century.

Genre and Form Terms:

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

Arrangement

Chronological by year/month/day.

Documents of Interest

Mental Health Records (selected)

John Markham, 1807.

Scope and Content

Discharged as cured from the Hospital for the maintenance and cure of persons of unsound mind

Discharged as cured, from the Hospital for the maintenance and cure of persons of unsound mind, Williamsburg.

Susanna Massie, 1807-1818.

Scope and Content

Committed to the public hospital for persons of unsound mind at Williamsburg in 1807, and in 1818 documentation regarding her estate was presented, which included "one negro woman with two children, the labour of one of the children may be worth diet & clothing, one other negro woman with two small children..."

Austin Cousins, 1846.

Scope and Content

Jailed in Feb. 1846 as a runaway slave; proved in March to be a free man of color, but of unsound mind; in an Apr 3 letter, superintendent of the Eastern Asylum John M. Galt assured there was room for him, and he was transferred there in mid-June. Expenses between Feb-June were to be paid to the jailor from the Commonwealth, according to court document of October.

Elizabeth Pope, 1878.

Scope and Content

Transferred to Western Lunatic Asylum after having been at the "Pinel Hospital" (penal hospital) in Richmond, as the Goochland jail was full and there had been no room at two other asylums at the time.

Kate Tibbs, 1889.

Scope and Content

Was to be examined at the schoolhouse at Second Union Church (Colored).

Walter Jackson, 1895.

Scope and Content

Escaped from Central Lunatic Asylum at Petersburg; may also be the same Walter Jackson examined in 1883.

Smallpox Epidemic Records (selected)

Preston Bates and Taylor Spindle , July 1899.

Scope and Content

Court order directing the sheriff to apprehend Hobson, who broke quarantine near Manakin "breaking into the lines of said Quarantine." Fined \$5.00.

Jordan Dixon, Mathew Hobson and Warner Taylor, July 1899.

Scope and Content

Court order directing the sheriff to apprehend Hobson, who broke quarantine near Manakin "going outside of the lines of said Quarantine." Fined \$5.00.

Thomas Dewer (or Drewer), Oct 1899.

Scope and Content

Court order to investigate claim of Dewer for compensation for the use of his land and buildings as a smallpox hospital during the summer of 1899.

Eleanor Drewer, Aug 1900.

Scope and Content

Court order granting Drewer compensation of \$50.00 for use of her property as a smallpox hospital at an unspecified period of time. It is not clear whether this is the same property as Dewer/Drewer from the Oct. 1899 order.