

A Guide to the Northumberland County (Va.) Health and Medical Records, 1826-1869

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A Collection in the Library of Virginia 0007813841
Library of Virginia
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History

Processed by: T. Harter

Title Statement

A Guide to the Northumberland County (Va.) Health and Medical Records, 1826-1869

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Profile Description

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Descriptive Summary

Barcode Number

0007813841

Language

English

Creator

Northumberland County (Va.) Circuit Court

Extent

.1 cubic feet (1 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 Northumberland County, accession number 43487.

Preferred Citation

Northumberland County (Va.) Health and Medical Records, 1826-1869. Local government records collection, Northumberland County Court Records, The Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia.

Adjunct Descriptive Data

Related Material

See also the [Northumberland County \(Va.\) Coroners' Inquisitions, 1794-1896](#) at the Library of Virginia.

Northumberland County is one of Virginia's Lost Records Localities. Additional Northumberland County Records may be found in the Virginia Lost Records Localities Collection at the Library of Virginia. Search the [Lost Records Digital Collection](#).

For more information and a listing of lost records localities see [Lost Records research note](#).

Additional Northumberland 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.

See also: Fiduciary Records. 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.

First known as commissions, the Justice of the Peace office originated with the county quarterly court in 1623. Commanders of Plantations (1607-1629) were predecessors of the commissioners, who since 1662 have been called justices of the peace. They have traditionally had both civil and criminal jurisdiction, and have served other functions, including performing coroners' and lunacy inquisitions. Until 1869 justices served both as judges of the county court and as individual justices; since then they have had only the latter function.

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.

Northumberland County was named probably for the English county. It was formed about 1645 from the district of Chickacoan, the early-seventeenth-century name for the region between the Potomac and the Rappahannock Rivers. The date of the county's formation is conjectural because the act of assembly creating it is no longer extant, but internal evidence shows that the county was functioning in 1645. The county suffered some losses in a fire in the clerk's office on October 25, 1710. Volumes beginning in 1650 that record deeds, court orders, and wills exist. The county seat is Heathsville.

Scope and Content

Northumberland County (Va.) Health and Medical Records, 1826-1869, consist of Mental Health Records, 1826-1869.

Mental Health Records, 1826-1869, may include warrants, orders, petitions, depositions, reports, etc. for or by justices of the peace and others regarding the mental condition of five individuals (Henry Bayless [or Bailey], Joseph M. Burton, James Conway, Ferriol Walker, and Cyrus Eubank), who were examined and released to the recognizance of a family member or who were recommended to be committed to the mental hospital in Williamsburg. Fiduciary records such as estate inventories of a person judged insane may also be present.

Arrangement

This collection is arranged into the following series:

- Series I: Mental Health Records, 1826-1869, chronological by date coroner filed inquisition in the local court.

Contents List

Series I: Mental Health Records, 1826-1869

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Physical Location Library of Virginia

Arrangement

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

Barcode number 0007813841: Coroners' Inquisitions, 1794-1896

Library of Virginia