

A Guide to the Lancaster County (Va.) Criminal Court Records, circa 1787-1931

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A Collection in the Library of Virginia 1134605, 1134628, 1134634-1134639, 1134641, 1134643, 1134644, 1135003

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Title Statement

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Profile Description

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Revision Description

2013-11-21 Converted to schema conforming EAD by dtd2schema.vh.xsl.

Descriptive Summary

Barcode numbers

1134605, 1134628, 1134634-1134639, 1134641, 1134643, 1134644, 1135003

Language

English

Collector

Lancaster County (Va.) Circuit Court

Physical Characteristics

5.4 cu. ft. (12 boxes)

Location

Library of Virginia

Repository

The Library of Virginia

Administrative Information

Access Restrictions

There are no restrictions.

Use Restrictions

There are no restrictions.

Acquisition Information

These items came to the Library of Virginia in shipments of court papers from Lancaster County.

Preferred Citation

Lancaster County (Va.) Criminal Court Records, circa 1787-1931. Local government records collection, Lancaster County Court Records. The Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va. 23219.

Adjunct Descriptive Data

Related Material

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

Additional Lancaster County criminal records may be found at the Lancaster County Courthouse and the Library of Virginia.

Historical Information

Lancaster County was named for the English county. It was formed from Northumberland and York Counties in 1651.

Scope and Content

Lancaster County (Va.) Criminal Court Records, circa 1787-1931 are criminal court cases and consist primarily of warrants, summons, indictments, and verdicts handed down by grand juries and other legal authorities in order to prosecute individuals who violated the penal code. These offenses ranged in severity from murder, rape, assault and battery, and larceny to tax evasion and slander. Criminal offenders and victims who appear in cases prior to the abolition of slavery in Virginia in 1865 included both free and enslaved persons.

Warrants were issued by grand juries, judges, and justices of the peace directing law enforcement officials to either arrest and imprison a person suspected of having committed a crime or to cause an individual to appear in court to answer accusations made against them. Peace warrants directing an offender to "keep the peace of the Commonwealth" or to restrain from any violent acts are commonly found in assault and battery cases.

Summonses were used to call a suspected person to appear in court. A summons could also be issued to direct witnesses or victims to come before the court in order to provide evidence or information deemed pertinent to a case.

An indictment is the official, written description of the crime that an accused individual is suspected of committing, which is approved by a grand jury and presented to a court in order to begin legal proceedings. Due to this process, indictments are often referred to as "presentments."

Verdicts are the formal pronouncements made by juries on issues submitted to them by a judge or other law enforcement official. In the case of a guilty verdict, a judge will sentence the offender. Sentences may include a fine, corporal punishment, and/or imprisonment. Coroners also submitted verdicts such as "death by suicide," "death by natural causes," etc. when determining the cause of a suspicious or sudden death.

Index Terms

Corporate Names:

Lancaster County (Va.) Circuit Court

Subjects:

African Americans -- History
Assault and battery -- Virginia -- Lancaster County
Crime -- Virginia -- Lancaster County
Criminals -- Virginia -- Lancaster County
Larceny -- Virginia -- Lancaster County
Libel and slander -- Virginia -- Lancaster County
Murder -- Virginia -- Lancaster County
Rape -- Virginia -- Lancaster County
Slaveholders -- Virginia -- Lancaster County
Slavery -- Virginia -- Lancaster County
Slaves -- Virginia -- Lancaster County
Tax evasion -- Virginia -- Lancaster County

Geographical Names:

Lancaster County (Va.) -- History

Genre and Form Terms:

Indictments -- Virginia -- Lancaster County
Summons -- Virginia -- Lancaster County
Verdicts -- Virginia -- Lancaster County
Warrants (Law) -- Virginia -- Lancaster County

Arrangement

Chronological