

A Guide to the Henry County (Va.) Sheriff's Accounts, Returns and Receipt Book, 1850-1861

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1850-1861



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History

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Title Statement

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Descriptive Summary

Barcode number

1098450

Language

English

Collector

Henry County (Va.) Circuit Court.

Physical Characteristics

1 v. (407 p.)

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

This volume came to the Library of Virginia in a transfer of court papers from Henry County.

Preferred Citation

Henry County (Va.) Sheriff's Accounts, Returns and Receipt Book, 1850-1861. Local government records collection, Henry County Court Records. The Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia 23219.

Adjunct Descriptive Data

Related Material

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

Related Material

For an excellent description of the role of sheriff in colonial times, consult "A History of Early Spotsylvania" by James Roger Mansfield, pages 112-113, found in the Library of Virginia's book collection.

Historical Information

Henry County was formed from Pittsylvania County in 1776. The county court first met on 20 January 1777. Part of Patrick County was added on 19 February 1858. Henry County was named , like Patrick County, for Patrick Henry, who was the first governor of the commonwealth of Virginia.

The sheriff was "the most powerful and the best paid of any county official in colonial times." Among his many duties, he collected the taxes, which were paid in tobacco, took custody of it and paid the county expenses as directed by the court. By doing so, he acted as a combination of both the commissioner of revenue and the county treasurer. The sheriff was also responsible for services rendered in the prosecution of court cases (law enforcement) and for the conduct of elections. He was appointed by the governor from a list of three names submitted by the county court. His term of office was for one year until 1731, after which it was two years. His two deputies, also known as sub (under) sheriffs, did most of the work.

In 1782, the General Assembly of Virginia enacted a major revision of tax laws of the Commonwealth. The act provided for the statewide enumeration on the county level of land and certain personal property. The act created a permanent source of revenue for the operation of government in Virginia.

This original volume was created by both the County and Circuit Courts.

Scope and Content

Henry County (Va.) Sheriff's Accounts, Returns and Receipt Book, 1850-1861, records the style of suit, type of case and date of the court case with a complete account of all fees incurred in the case. The volume covers judgments and commonwealth causes in both the county and circuit courts. Depending on the type of case, the sheriff made set notations. With regards to a judgment, the sheriff would note the principal debt and interest, the costs of the suit in court and the sheriff's commission and bond. A date was recorded when the costs of the suit and the sheriff's commission and bond were paid. A date was also listed for the sheriff's return--when the case was satisfied. The sheriff then issued receipts to the plaintiff of the case for fees won. Individual plaintiffs acknowledged the receipt with a signature and the date of the receipt was recorded.

In a commonweath cause, the sheriff would note the fees for the commonweath, the attorney, the clerk of

the court, the sheriff, the arrest and the commissions made by the sheriff. A date for the sheriff's return would also be included. The sheriff would issue receipts for the attorney and clerk of the court. The date of the receipt was listed. The volume also contains an internal index arranged alphabetically by the plaintiff's surname (judgment) or appearance in volume (commonwealth causes.) The volume was owned by Jesse Wootton. In the course of the volume, Jesse Wootton went from sheriff's deputy to sheriff. By 1861, however, he had passed away--receipts note the late sheriff Wootton.

Index Terms

Corporate Names:

Henry County (Va.) Circuit Court.

Subjects:

Costs (Law)--Virginia--Henry County.

Debt--Virginia--Henry County.

Public records--Virginia--Henry County.

Sheriffs--Virginia--Henry County.

Geographical Names:

Henry County (Va.)--History--19th century.

Genre and Form Terms:

Accounts--Virginia--Henry County.

Criminal court records--Virginia--Henry County.

Decisions--Virginia--Henry County.

Judicial records--Virginia--Henry County.

Local government records--Virginia--Henry County.

Receipts (financial records)--Virginia--Henry County.

Added Entry - Corporate Name:

Henry County (Va.) County Court.