

A Guide to the Warwick County (Va.) Birth and Death Records, 1912-1916

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1912-1916

A Collection in the Library of Virginia 1183936

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Descriptive Summary

Barcode number

1183936

Language

English

Collector

Newport News (Va.) Circuit Court

Physical Characteristics

1 box.

Location

State Records Center - Archives Annex, Library of Virginia

Repository

The Library of Virginia

Administrative Information

Access Restrictions

There are no restrictions.

Use Restrictions

RESTRICTED Birth records are closed for 100 years after the date of birth. (Code of Virginia 32.1-271, 42.1-78).

For copies of birth certificates within the 100 year restriction, contact the Virginia Department of Health, Office of Vital Records and Health Statistics.

Acquisition Information

These items came to the Library of Virginia in shipments of court papers from the city of Newport News.

Preferred Citation

Warwick County (Va.) Birth and Death Records, 1912-1916. Local government records collection, Newport News (City) Court Records. The Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va. 23219.

Adjunct Descriptive Data

Related Material

Warwick County Vital Statistic Records can be obtained through the [Virginia Department of Health](#).

Additional Warwick County Vital Statistic Records can be found on microfilm at The Library of Virginia web site. Consult ["A Guide to Virginia County and City Records on Microfilm."](#)

Additional Warwick County Court Records can be found with Warwick County Court records on microfilm at The Library of Virginia. Consult [A Guide to Virginia County and City Records on Microfilm](#).

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

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

Historical Information

Newport News was located in Warwick County, which is now extinct. The origin of the name is uncertain but the phrase "Newport News" appeared in documents as early as 1619 and probably commemorated Christopher Newport, who made five voyages to Virginia between 1607 and 1619. Newport News was a small settlement until late in the nineteenth century, when it became the eastern terminus of the Chesapeake and Ohio Railway. It was established in 1880 and incorporated as a city by act of the General Assembly in 1896 without ever having been incorporated as a town. Newport News was enlarged by consolidation with the city of Warwick in 1858.

Warwick County (extinct) was named either for Robert Rich, earl of Warwick, a prominent member of the London Company, or for the county of Warwick in England. The county was originally called Warwick River and was one of the original shires, or counties, first enumerated in 1634. The shorter name was adopted in 1643. Warwick County became extinct in 1952, when it became the city of Warwick. The new city was consolidated with the city of Newport News in 1958 and took the latter's name. Denbigh was the county seat.

County court records were destroyed at several times with most destruction occurring during the Civil War. The clerk's office was burned on 15 December 1864. County court minute books and loose records from 1787 to 1819 were destroyed by the fire. Additional records were burned in Richmond on 3 April 1865, where they had been moved for safekeeping during the Civil War.

Laws requiring the recording of births and deaths in Virginia were enacted as early as 1632, when a law directed ministers or churchwardens in each parish to present a "register of all burials, christenings, and marriages" yearly at the June meeting of the court. A similar act passed in 1659 stated that "enquiries are often made for persons imported into the collonie, of whose death no positive certificate can be granted for want of registers." Few records survive from these early decades.

In 1713, the General Assembly noted that earlier acts had "for a long time been disused" and once again directed the recording of births and deaths by the minister or clerk of each parish. A return made the same

year noted that the list of births and deaths was not complete since many parishes failed to make returns "for tis a thing so new to the people that neither they care to Register their Births and Burials, nor are the Parish Clerks yet brought into a regular method of transmitting them."

The recording of vital statistics continued to be an ecclesiastical function throughout the colonial period. With the disestablishment of the Anglican church after the American Revolution and the rise of other religious denominations, the record-keeping process for vital statistics fell more and more to the individual family. By the mid-nineteenth century, however, medical science began to recognize the advantages of accurate birth and mortality information in controlling and treating communicable diseases. Pressure from local and national health organizations and medical professionals resulted in the passage of vital statistics registration laws. Virginia was one of the earliest states to pass such a law.

A law requiring the systematic statewide recording of births and deaths was passed by the General Assembly on April 11 1853. Every commissioner of revenue registered births and deaths in his district annually, at the same time personal property subject to taxation was ascertained. The commissioner recorded births and deaths that had occurred prior to 31 December of the preceding year and returned the record to the clerk of court by 1 June. Information was obtained from heads of family, physicians, surgeons, or coroners. The law imposed penalties for failing to furnish or collect the information.

The clerk of court in each locality entered the information supplied by the commissioner into registers and prepared an accompanying alphabetical index. A copy of each register was forwarded to the Auditor of Public Accounts. The law went into effect on 1 July 1853, and continued until 1896, when an economy-conscious legislature repealed the recording provisions.

There was no statewide recording of births and deaths between 1896 and 1912. Several metropolitan areas continued to keep records of births and deaths for all or part of the period between 1896 and 1912. Systematic statewide registration began again in June 1912.

Scope and Content

Warwick County (Va.) Birth and Death Records, 1912-1916, consist of birth and death registers.

Information is occasionally missing from the records. If an infant had not been named at the time of birth or death, the entry would record only the surname or note "Smith, infant."

Index Terms

Corporate Names:

Newport News (Va.) Circuit Court

Subjects:

Public records -- Virginia -- Warwick County

Geographical Names:

Newport News (Va.) -- History -- 20th century

Warwick County (Va.) -- History -- 20th century

Newport News (Va.) -- Genealogy

Warwick County (Va.) -- Genealogy

Genre and Form Terms:

Birth records -- Virginia -- Warwick County

Death records -- Virginia -- Warwick County

Local government records -- Virginia -- Warwick County

Vital statistics -- Virginia -- Warwick County

Added Entry - Corporate Name:

Warwick County (Va.) Circuit Court

