

A Guide to the Warren County (Va.) Board of Supervisors Records, 1871-1959

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History

Processed by: Louise Jones

Title Statement

A Guide to the Warren County (Va.) Board of Supervisors Records, 1871-1959

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Profile Description

Creation: Machine-readable finding aid derived from being created directly into EAD, created by Louise Jones, 7 August 22013

Language Usage: Description is in English

Revision Description

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

Descriptive Summary

Language

English

Collector

Warren County (Va.) Circuit Court.

Physical Characteristics

1.8 cubic feet (4 boxes); 9 volumes

Location

Library of Virginia

Repository

The Library of Virginia

Administrative Information

Access Restrictions

Original Newspaper petitions in support of cutting off funds for integrated schools, 1959, are fragile and will not be served. Use photocopies.

Use Restrictions

There are no restrictions.

Acquisition Information

These records came to the Library of Virginia in a transfer of court papers from Warren County in an undated accession.

Petitions and letters related to public School integration came to the Library of Virginia in a transfer of court papers from Warren County in 2002 under accession 39750.

Processing Information

Board of Supervisors records, 1887-1917 was originally described with the Warren County (Va.) Overseer of the Poor records, but was moved in 2024 to the Board of Supervisors' Record for better contextualization.

Warren County Board of Supervisors Petitions and Letters for and Against Public School Integration, February-March 1959 was originally described as a single along record, but was moved in 2024 to the Board of Supervisors' Record for better contextualization.

Encoded by Louise Jones, 2013; Updated by M. Mason, January 2024

Preferred Citation

Warren County (Va.) Board of Supervisors Records, 1871-1959. Local government Records collection, Warren County Court Records. The Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va. 23219.

Adjunct Descriptive Data

Related Material

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

Historical Information

Context for Record Type:

Board of Supervisors

The Board of Supervisors is the basic governing body of the county. County law (called ordinances) may also be passed by this board. This form of government came into existence with the state constitution of 1869 when the counties were divided into a minimum of three townships each, with a popularly elected supervisor from each township. When the township system was abolished in 1875, the counties were divided into magisterial districts. The Board of Supervisors are the current elected representatives of these districts and meet in regular monthly public sessions. The board's duties are fixed by statute and are primarily concerned with maintenance and construction of county buildings and fiscal matters.

Until 1869 the county court-controlled construction, alteration of, and maintenance of roads. The state constitution of 1869 created overseers of the roads and road boards which fell under the jurisdiction of the county's board of supervisors.

Integration in Warren County Schools:

On May 17, 1954, the United States Supreme Court, in *Brown v. Board of Education*, Topeka, Kansas, declared segregated schools unconstitutional. To circumvent the court's decision, the Virginia General Assembly embarked on a program of "Massive Resistance" and passed legislation under the guise of states' rights to uphold systems of white supremacy. Through massive resistance, white politicians enacted policies designed to close schools ordered to integrate. In late August 1959, Judge John Paul of the United States District for the Fourth Circuit ordered Black students to be admitted to Warren County High School in Front Royal, Va.

Judge Simon E. Sobeloff of the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals heard the case on appeal but refused to overturn Judge Paul's order. Governor J. Lindsay Almond, Jr., placed the school under his control and ordered it closed as required by the massive resistance legislation. Thus, Warren County High School earned the distinction of being the first Virginia school closed under the massive resistance legislation. In January 1959, both the federal courts and the Virginia Supreme Court of Appeals ruled that the massive resistance laws concerning the closing of schools violated the United States and Virginia constitutions.

Warren County High School reopened in late February, but with only twenty-two Black students in attendance; the white students remained in the private school established when the high school closed. Segregationists took this to mean that the majority of white residents desired segregated schools, and while some undoubtedly did, many parents refused to disrupt their children's education further by switching schools in mid-year. The segregationists circulated petitions asking the Board of Supervisors not to allocate funding for integrated schools for the 1959-1960 school term, but to no avail. In September 1959, white students returned to the now desegregated high school.

Locality History: Warren County was named for Joseph Warren, the revolutionary patriot who sent Paul Revere and William Dawes on their famous rides and who was killed at the Battle of Bunker Hill. The county was formed from Frederick and Shenandoah counties in 1836.

Scope and Content

Warren County (Va.) Board of Supervisors Records, 1871-1959, contains Board of Road Commissioners Minutes, Description of Roads in Front Royal District, Plats and Surveys of Roads, Road Contract Book, Road Warrants, Toll Books, and Warrant Book.

Board of Supervisors records, 1887-1917, largely containing accounts allowed. These accounts contain financial statements concerning elections and polling locations, general accounts, medical expenses, "the poor," scalp claims, and sheep claims.

Board of "Road Commissioners Minutes, 1914-1915, which consists of minutes from the meetings of the Board of Road Commissioners (p. 1-4); accounts of the sale of toll tickets for 1917 January 22 -1918 June 20 (p. 140-142). Loose papers in the book include a plat and survey of a road, two road petitions, and a two page resolution.

Description of Roads in Front Royal District, 1883-1890, this volume gives a description of the condition of the roads.

Plats and Surveys of Roads, 1908-1924, this volume contains plats and surveys showing the location of roads in Warren County.

Road Contract Book, 1886-1905, which contains the contract for work to be done to the roads and bridges within Warren County.

Road Warrants, 1871-1910, consists of loose warrants, 1893-1910, (bills for the work done to the roads); and Warrant Book, 1871-1900, which is a volume containing bills for work done on the roads and bridges in Warren County.

Toll Books, 1916-1917, consists of four volumes (v. 1, v. 3, v. 4, and v. 5). These are the records of tolls paid to use a toll road or a toll bridge.

Petitions and letters related to Public School Integration, 1959 February-March, consisting of letters and petitions received by the Warren County Board of Supervisors from residents for and against public school integration. The letters, February and March 1959, primarily request the Board of Supervisors to adopt a normal school budget for the 1959-1960 school year and not close the public schools. Reasoning ranges from wanting free access to education, business and economic interests, patriotism, morality, and issues of equity. There is little in the letters representing any type of support for racial equality or empathy for Black students, but on the whole the letters represent the issue as maintaining access to a free education for white children. A letter from J. R. Orgain, Jr. asks the Board of Supervisors to cut off funds for integrated schools. This is the only letter representing this position.

The petitions are signed by residents who want to maintain segregated schools and do not want any money appropriated to operate integrated schools. These petitions are either printed forms or cut out from the newspaper in which they appeared as paid advertisements. The newspaper advertisement call for people to cut out the ad (opposing integration) and securing signatures in support which could then be sent to the court house. Also includes a newsletter, 1959 February 24, of the Warren County Committee for Public Schools clarifying why white students did not return to Warren County High School when the federal courts ordered the school re-opened and explaining that the remainder of the term would be substandard; and news clippings, 1959 March, from the Warren Sentinel, regarding the petitions and an appeal from local clergy to keep the public schools open.

Arrangement

This collection is arranged

- Series I: Board of Supervisors Records, 1887-1917
- Series II: Road and Bridge Records, 1871-1917
- Series III: Petitions and Letters for and Against Public School Integration, February-March 1959

Contents List

Series I: Board of Supervisors Records, 1887-1917

Extent

1 box

Arrangement

arranged by record type then chronologically

Barcode number 1120488: Board of Supervisors Records, 1887-1917

Series II: Road and Bridge Records, 1871-1917

Extent

2 boxes; 9 volumes

Arrangement

arranged by record type then chronologically

Barcode number 1096553: Board of Road Commissioners Minutes, 1914-1915

Barcode number 1096542: Description of Roads in Front Royal District, 1883-1890

Barcode number 1096533: Plats and Surveys of Roads, 1908-1924

Barcode number 1096561: Toll Book, 1916

Barcode number 1096564: Toll Book, 1916

Barcode number 1096590: Toll Book, 1916

Barcode number 1096562: Toll Book, 1917

Barcode number 1096583: Road Contract Book 1886-1905

Barcode number 1013602: Road Warrants, 1906-1910

Barcode number 1013603: Road Warrants, 11893-1902

Barcode number 1096600: Warrant Book, 1871-1900

Series III: Petitions and Letters For and Against Public School Integration, February-March 1959

Extent

1 box

Arrangement

arranged by record type then chronologically

Barcode number 1153061: Petitions and letters related to Public School Integration, 1959 February-March

Folder 1: Letters received in support of public schools, 1959 February 24-25

Folder 2: Letters received in support of public schools, 1959 February 26-27

Folder 3: Letters received in support of public schools, March, undated

Folder 4: Letter received from J. R. Orgain, Jr. calling for the Board of Supervisors to cut off funds for integrated schools, 1959 March 5

Folder 5: Newspaper clippings: Warren Sentienel, 1959 March

Folder 6: Newsletter from Warren County Committee for Public Schools, 1959 February 24

Folder 7-10: Newspaper petitions in support of cutting off funds for integrated schools [Photocopies], 1959

Folder 11: Petitions calling for Board of Supervisors to take no action leading to the operations of integrated schools without determining the wishes of the majority, 1959

Folder 12-13: Petitions in support of cutting off funds for public schools, 1959

Folder 14: Tally of total signatures and letters received, undated

Folder 15-17: Newspaper petitions in support of cutting off funds for integrated schools [Originals-DO NOT SERVE], 1959