

A Guide to the Wise County (Va.) Convict Register, 1936-1960

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History

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Descriptive Summary

Barcode number

1097962

Language

English

Collector

Wise County (Va.) Circuit Court.

Physical Characteristics

1 v. (40 leaves)

Location

State Records Center - Archives Annex, 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 original volume came to the Library of Virginia in a transfer of court papers from Wise County.

Preferred Citation

Wise County (Va.) Convict Register, 1936-1960. Local government records collection, Wise County Court Records. The Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va. 23219

Adjunct Descriptive Data

Related Material

Additional Wise 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

Wise County was formed in 1856 from Lee, Scott, and Russell Counties. The county is named for Henry Alexander Wise, governor of Virginia from 1856 to 1860.

During the 1869-1870 session, the General Assembly passed an "Act to Secure Identification of Persons Convicted of Criminal Offences." On 2 November 1870, the act was approved. The act specified that "every clerk of the court of each county and corporation shall keep a register of full and accurate descriptive lists of person convicted in his own or any other court of record of his county or corporation, of felony or other infamous offence, and a duly certified and attested copy of any such descriptive list may be used as prima facie evidence of the facts therein stated in any question of identity. Such registers shall be kept written up, well indexed, and shall be open to public inspection at reasonable hours. The register shall follow a set form and each descriptive list shall be attested by said clerk."

In addition, "the clerk of every court of record of each county or corporation, other than the county or corporation court, shall within ten days from the date of conviction of any person in his court of any offence mentioned in the first section of this act, deliver to the clerk of the county or corporation court, for record in said register, an attested descriptive list of the person so convicted, in the form hereinbefore prescribed." The judges of the respective courts are responsible for seeing that the provisions of the act are "punctually and properly carried out" by their respective clerks. The act was amended on 18 January 1871 and outlined the following: "For the services mentioned in this or the first section of this act, the clerk shall be entitled to a fee of fifty cents, to be paid out of the state treasury." By and large, the county and circuit court clerks went about compiling these registers throughout the counties of Virginia as late as the 1960s.

Scope and Content

Wise County (Va.) Convict Register, 1936-1960, is a "register of persons convicted of felony, etc." Based on a form, the listings of each conviction include the individual's name in full and any aliases, the present and last known residence of the accused, the color or race of the individual (white, black or colored), the individual's height, eye color, hair color and any identifying marks, the apparent or known age of the accused, his or her occupation, the offence, the court in which convicted, the date of conviction and page of record and whether the judgment was reversed or pardon granted and date thereof. Since this type of register was mandated by the General Assembly in 1870, this volume differs from similar county registers due to its later records.

Leaves 1 and 2 mention no dates but mid-way down leaf 3, there is a notation of reports made in 1936. An earlier volume may be found in the Circuit Court Clerk's Office. There are a series of blank forms found in the volume, Leaf 40, which have the names of various convicts with their descriptions and offenses. These forms contain no dates. In addition, the volume has an internal index. The index is arranged alphabetically (A-Y) by the surname of the convict in the order that it appears in the volume.

Index Terms

Corporate Names:

Wise County (Va.) Circuit Court.

Subjects:

African American prisoners--Virginia--Wise County.

African Americans--Employment--Virginia--Wise County.

African Americans--History--1877-1964.

African Americans--Virginia--Wise County.

Occupations--Virginia--Wise County.

Prisoners--Virginia--Wise County.

Public records--Virginia--Wise County.

Geographical Names:

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

Genre and Form Terms:

Criminal court records--Virginia--Wise County.

Local government records--Virginia--Wise County.

Registers (lists)--Virginia--Wise County.