

A Guide to the Brunswick County (Va.), Health and Medical Records, 1799-1954

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Author: Catherine G. O'Brien and Tracy Harter

History

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Author: Tracy S. Harter

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Profile Description

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Language Usage: Description is in English

Revision Description

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

Descriptive Summary

Language

English

Collector

Brunswick County (Va.) Circuit Court

Physical Characteristics

1.7 cu. ft. (3 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 a transfer of court papers from Brunswick County.

Preferred Citation

Brunswick County (Va.) Health and Medical Records, 1799-1954. Local government records collection, Brunswick County Court Records. The Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va. 23219.

Adjunct Descriptive Data

Related Material

Additional Brunswick County court records can be found on microfilm and in the Chancery Records Index at the Library of Virginia. Consult ["A Guide to Virginia County and City Records on Microfilm"](#) and [The Chancery Records Index](#).

Historical Information

Mental Health Records may consist of a variety of documents that historically were referred to as lunacy papers in the courthouses of Virginia localities and municipalities.

In March 1882 a 300 acre tract of land was purchased by the City of Petersburg and given to the state for the purpose of constructing a permanent mental health facility for African Americans. Construction of the new facility near Petersburg was completed in early spring 1885. This later included a special building to house the criminally insane apart from the rest of the hospital population. In 1894, Central Lunatic Asylum was officially renamed Central State Hospital. It is important to note that another state institution located in Staunton, Virginia went by the name Central Lunatic Asylum between the years of 1861 and 1865. Its name was later changed to Western Lunatic Asylum, and is a separate facility with no connection to the Richmond/Petersburg hospital for African Americans.

In 1863, the Virginia General Assembly passed two pieces of legislation affecting persons committed to mental hospitals. In February, it passed legislation amending an 1836 act concerning John Haskins, Sr., of Brunswick County. This allowed for Haskins' committee to sell any stock owned by Haskins and for any proceeds beyond that necessary for his care to be invested in any stock, to include Confederate bonds. In March, the General Assembly widened the scope of this by passing legislation authorizing any fiduciaries such as the committee or trustee of the estate of any person to petition their circuit court to allow them to invest any part of estate funds in Confederate bonds or certificates.

In 1792, the General Assembly passed an act to consolidate previously passed acts regulating smallpox inoculation. The new act required a license from the county court to administer vaccinations. It included a penalty of \$1,500 or six months' imprisonment for anyone willfully spreading smallpox in a manner other than specified by the act.

Brunswick County was named for the duchy of Brunswick-Luneburg, one of the German possessions of George I. It was formed in 1720 from Prince George County, but, because of the sparse population, county government was not organized until 1732. In the latter year Brunswick County was enlarged by the addition of parts of Surry and Isle of Wight Counties.

Scope and Content

Brunswick County (Va.) Health and Medical Records, 1799-1954, consist of Mental Health Records and Smallpox Epidemic Records.

Smallpox Epidemic Records consist of one document: The minutes of a meeting of the justices concerning William Stokes inoculating for smallpox, 1799 Jul 2. The county justices of the peace met to decide whether Doctor Stokes should be allowed to continue inoculating patients for the small pox at his hospital know by the name of White Oak Grove. They concluded he had opened the hospital contrary to law without obtaining consent of the majority of local residents within two miles of the hospital, and ordered him to discontinue inoculating patients until such consent was obtained.

Mental Health Records, 1802-1954 include warrants, orders, petitions, depositions, reports, etc. for or by justices of the peace and others regarding the mental condition of individuals who were released to the

recognizance of a family member or who were committed to a mental hospital. Fiduciary records such as estate inventories of a person judged insane may also be present.

Arrangement

The Mental Health Records are arranged chronologically by year, then alphabetically by last name of individual.

Contents List

Series I: Health and Medical 1799-1954

Barcode number 1208256: Health and Medical (and Various Series) 1799-1903

Barcode number 0007765232: Health and Medical: Mental Health Records, Fiduciary Records: Estates of Insane 1802-1901

Barcode number 1044693: Mental Health Records 1901-1954

Barcode number 1125041: Mental Health Records 1908-1944