

A Guide to the Warren County (Va.) Coroners' Inquisitions, 1833-1950

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Descriptive Summary

Barcode number

0007624851

Language

English

Collector

Warren County (Va.) Circuit Court

Physical Characteristics

.45 cu. ft.

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 shipments of court records from Warren County.

Preferred Citation

Warren County (Va.) Coroners' Inquisitions, 1833-1950 (bulk 1924-1950). Local government records collection, Warren County Court Records. The Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA 23219.

Historical Information

Warren County was named for Joseph Warren, of Massachusetts, 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 Shenandoah and Frederick Counties in 1836. The county seat is Front Royal.

The separate office of coroner appeared in Virginia about 1660. The judicial duty of the office is to hold inquisitions in cases when persons meet sudden, violent, unnatural or suspicious death, or death without medical attendance. The coroner would summon a jury to assist him in determining cause of death. Prior to November 1877, the jurors numbered twelve. Between November 1877 and March 1926, the jurors numbered six. The jury viewed the body of the deceased and heard the testimony of witnesses. The coroner was required to write down witness testimony. After seeing and hearing the evidence, the jury delivered in writing to the coroner their conclusion concerning cause of death referred to as the inquisition. After March 1926, only the coroner determined cause of death. He could require physicians to assist him with determining cause of death. If a criminal act was determined to be the cause of death, the coroner was to deliver the guilty person to the sheriff and the coroners' inquests would be used as evidence in the criminal trial.

Scope and Content

Warren County (Va) Coroners' Inquisitions, 1833-1950 (bulk 1924-1950), are investigations into the deaths of individuals who died by a sudden, violent, unnatural or suspicious manner, or died without medical attendance. Causes of death found in coroners' inquisitions include murder, infanticide, suicide, domestic violence, exposure to elements, drownings, train accidents, automobile accidents, and natural causes, or as commonly referred to in the 19th century, visitation by God. Documents commonly found in coroners' inquests include the inquisition, depositions, and summons. Criminal papers such as recognizance bonds can be found in coroner inquisitions. Information found in the inquisition include the name of the coroner, the names of the jurors, the name and age of the deceased if known, gender and race of the deceased, and when, how, and by what means the deceased came to his or her death. If the deceased was African American, the inquest would identify the deceased as a slave or free person if known. If the deceased was a slave, the inquest would include, if known, the name of the slaveowner and the slaveowner's residence. Information found in the depositions include the name of the deponent and his or her account of the circumstances that led to the death of the deceased. Slaves were deponents in coroner investigations.

Index Terms

Corporate Names:

Warren County (Va.) Circuit Court

Subjects:

African Americans--History

Coroners--Virginia--Warren County

Death--Causes--Virginia--Warren County

Murder--Investigation--Virginia--Warren County

Murder victims--Virginia--Warren County

Slaveholders--Virginia--Warren County.

Slaves--Virginia--Warren County.

Geographical Names:

Warren County (Va.)--History

Genre and Form Terms:

Death records--Virginia--Warren County

Local government records--Virginia--Warren County

Reports--Virginia--Warren County

Arrangement

Chronological by date coroner filed inquisition in the court.

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