

Rockingham County Health and Medical Records	
Collection Summary	
Title	Health and Medical Records
Collection Reference Code	Hmr
Inclusive Dates	1892-1976
Extent	4 boxes; one bound volume
Language	English
Location	Rockingham County Circuit Court
Access and Restrictions	<p>This work has been identified as being free of known restrictions under copyright law, including all related and neighboring rights.</p> <p>(https://creativecommons.org/publicdomain/mark/1.0/)</p>
Bio/Historical Note	<p>According to Kelly M Pyrek in an article title, "An Introduction to the US Medico-Legal Death Investigation System," a coroner is a public official, appointed or elected, a particular geographic jurisdiction, whose official duty is to make inquiry into death in certain categories. (Pyrek, https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-012370861-8/50008-5) While the office of the coroner has been around for centuries, coroner's official duties have changed throughout their history. In contemporary times, the coroner typically inquires into a death and then completes a certificate of death. Coroners are different from medical examiners and jurisdiction often determines which of the two are required to inquire into the death of an individual. A medical examiner is a registered physician who is expected to bring medical expertise into the examination. A coroner is not required to be trained in medicine. In the following records you will find both Medical Examiner's Reports and Coroner's Inquests, which fall under the category of post-mortem investigations. Additionally, there are some records related to "Lunacy cases." The term "lunacy" is, of course, an antiquated term generally referring to those considered epileptic or mentally ill. While the term lunacy has been used since the early modern period, the "Lunatic Asylum" to which many of the records allude to, was a creation of the 19th century in America. This was due, in part, to the humanitarian reform movements of the century, as well as to an opposing development; the increased restrictions through institutional power and criminalization. The majority of "Lunacy records" for Rockingham County are housed at the Library of Virginia, located in Richmond, VA as part of their Western State Hospital records. A link to the full finding aid is supplied here:</p> <p>https://ead.lib.virginia.edu/vivaxtf/view?docId=lva/vi00937.xml;query=lunacy;brand=default#top.</p>

Scope and Content	The following collection is divided in into three series: Medical Registers, Post-Mortem Investigations, and Lunacy Records. The Medical Register is a bound volume containing a record of all physicians registered within the Rockingham County Court's jurisdiction from 1968-1985. This book is labeled volume two, however, it seems volume one was not retained. Within the Post-Mortem series there are two subseries: Coroner's Inquest and Medical Examiner Investigations. Coroner's Inquests contain information regarding the appearance of the body upon investigation, made by an appointed coroner. These inquest also contain depositions made by individuals who came into contact with the deceased shortly before their death. These depositions typically relate where the deceased had been, any unusual behavior they may have exhibited, their health, and their relationships with others. Medical Examiner's reports contain much less detail regarding the lives of the deceased leading up to their death. Here, information regarding the name, age, sex, cause/date/time of death, and a narrative summary of circumstances surrounding the death are relayed (typically no more than a paragraph). Lunacy Records are divided into two subseries: Costs Allowed and Depositions. If an individual was suspected of "lunacy" a court investigation would be made. This included the examination of witnesses who answered questions related to the accused's name, age, occupation, martial status, children, education, indications of insanity, frequency of attacks, prominent symptoms and several others. Costs Allowed are records detailing the costs of caring for any person deemed "insane" who were care for by an individual of the community. Evidence had to be supplied of the attempt to commit the insane to the local asylum, then once proven, any costs associated with their upkeep were accessed by the court.	
Arrangement	Within each series and their subseries, the records are arranged chronologically.	
Subject	Medical records--History, Post-mortem examinations, Post-mortem inquisitions, Insane asylums	
Processing Information	Processed by Kayla Heslin April 2020.	
Contents		
Series I	Medical Register	Location
Volume II	1968-1985	D.006_002_003
Series II	Post-Mortem Investigations	
Subseries I	Coroner's Inquest	Location

Box I	1892-1943	D.006_003_004
Subseries II	Investigation	Location
Box II	1969	D.006_003_004
Box III	1971	D.006_003_004
Box IV	1972-1973	D.006_003_004
Series III	Lunacy Records	
Subseries I	Costs Allowed	Location
Box IV	Folder Title: Lunacy Case Costs Allowed	D.006_003_004
Subseries II	Depositions	Location
Box IV	Folder Title: Lunacy Records Depositions	D.006_003_004