

These are but a few of the Inquests that can be found in the Franklin County files for the Court Order Books, the original papers can be found at the Library of Virginia. Copies of the other Inquest files have been ordered for the Clerk's Office in Rocky Mount and will be transcribed if there is enough interest. If anyone is interested in helping with this project please respond to me at beverlym@swva.net. This is just one of the current projects and if depending on the interest it could take precedence over others.

If anyone is interested in assisting with this or other projects please contact me. There are many, many "loose papers" at LVA and the only way we will know what is there and have access is to order copies and work from there. The "loose papers" are stored in boxes, not indexed and have never been microfilmed.

John Abshire

Inquisition indented taken at the house of John Atkins in the cty aforesaid the 3rd day of October 1846 before me Joab Early and of the County of the commonwealth for the County aforesaid upon the view of the body of John Abshire late of said County then and there lying dead and upon the Oaths & affirmation of Henry Moore Edward Moore Leo Turner Matthew W Cabiness Joel Harper Benjamin Betz Jacob Beckner Abram Teel James Montgomery Sutherland (Ross) Anderson Starkey Wm. *Palmor* good and lawfull men of the County aforesaid who being sworn & affirmed and charged to inquire on the part of the said Commonwealth when where how and after what manner the said John Abshire came to his death do say upon their Oath and affirmation that the cause of his death by the accidental falling back of the stump of a tree upon him on the plantation of George Doran which crushed him ~~to death~~ of which he instantly died and so the Jurors aforesaid upon their Oaths and affirmation do say that casually

Randolph Abshire

Inquisition indented taken in the County aforesaid the 3rd day of March in the year 1848 before me Stephen Wood one of the Justices of the Peace for the Commonwealth for the County aforesaid, upon the view of the body of Randolph Abshire late of the County aforesaid then & There lying dead and upon the oaths of Skelton Simmons William Hix Samuel Board Moses Payne Elisha Simmons John Beard Turner Richardson John Brown Josephus Meador Pleasant Beard Henry G. Hopkins & John C. Simmons, good and lawful men of the County aforesaid who being sworn and charged to inquire on the pard of the said Commonwealth when where how and after what manner the said Randolph Abshire came to his Death do say upon their oath that the said Randolph Abshire on the morning of the 3rd day of March in the year aforesaid near the plantation of Wilson Amos in the County aforesaid was found Dead that he had no marks of violence appearing on his body and died in a state of intoxication and lying exposed to the clemency of the weather and not otherwise in witness where of as well the aforesaid Justice as the Jurors aforesaid have to this inquisition put their seals on the 3rd day of March aforesaid and at the place aforesaid

John Ashinghurst

An inquisition taken at the dwelling house of John Ashinghurst in the County of Franklin on the 12th day of June in the year 1854 before me a Justice of the said County, upon the view of the body of John Ashinghurst there lying dead. The Jurors sworn to enquire when how and by what means the said John Ashinghurst came to his death upon their oaths do say that they have no doubt his death was occasioned by a bullet discharged from a rifle; on yesterday evening 11th

instant. The ball entered the head a little over the right rear making a hole large enough to introduce the finger of a grown person - The skull was extensively fractured extending over half the head or more. Whether the rifle was discharged accidentally or by his own voluntary act we have no means of positively ascertaining - but are almost constrained to conclude by the latter

Boy John

Inquisition indented taken at the dwelling home of Armstead L. Bernard in the county aforesaid the 4th day November in the year 1845 before me Joab Early one of the Coroners of the Commonwealth for the County aforesaid upon the view of the body of John a negro Boy the property of Patrick Hix and there lying dead and upon the Oath of Henry Moore Edw Moore Nehemiah Kennett Wm Palmore John R Palmore John P Palmore James Wright Fletcher Simmons Pleasant Beard Edw Beard John Beard and Thomas Ferguson good and lawful men of the county aforesaid who being sworn and charged to inquire on the part of the Commonwealth, when, where, how and after what manner the said boy John came to his death, do say upon their Oath that the above named Boy John was Killed by the discharge of a gun pointed at him by a negro named Jupiter a slave of John D. Taylor in the home occupied by Wiley Clingenpeel on the 3rd day of this month in the county of which gun supposed to be shot which entered the neck and cheek of the said boy John just before the left ear and between the mouth and the ear and of which the said boy John died in a short time

The evidence of Wily ClingenPeel states that on the 3rd this month whilst at his Shop he was alarmed by his children coming to him from his dwelling home and stating that Jupiter had Killed the Boy John That on going to his home he found the Boy John in the yard and as he supposed ding from a wound in the neck and cheek and the boy Jupiter standing near - the gun which he had left in the rack in his home - was empty and sitting near the stairs he further states that there was blood near the fire place or also on the floor

The evidence of Susan Clinging Peel states that on the 3rd of the month she left her house and went to the Shop of her husband that whilst at the Shop she heard a gun and that when she left her house she left the Boy John in the hay with his children and that the boy Jupiter was in the yard cutting wood and directed him not to go in the hay - fooling with the children but to make a (can't read) in the other hay and that as he returning from the shop she found the boy John in the yard having been shot and as she supposed ding

Daniel H. & Paschal Brown

An inquisition taken at the dwelling house of Wiatt Brown in the County aforesaid on the 28th day of July 1854. Before me Peter L. Hancock J.P. acting as coroner of the Said County upon the View of the *body*s of Daniel H. & Paschal Brown there lying dead the jurors Sworn to enquire with the assistance of Dr. George A. Terry when and how and by what means the Said Daniel H. & Paschal Brown came to their deaths upon their oaths do Say that they suppose that the Said Daniel H. & Paschal Brown came to their death by being shocked by lightning whilst wading the Staunton River near the shallow ford - which might have caused them to have drowned or by Some other unknown cause

An Inquisition taken at the Dwelling hous of Robert Pasley in the county of Franklin on the 5th day of August 1859 *befour* me Lewis Dillion a justice of the Said county upon the view of The

body of Francis *Pasly thare lyn dec* the jurors Sworn to inquire when how and by what means the Said Francis Pasley came to her *deth* upon there oath Say that they believe She came to her *deth* by hanging herself with a rope round *hur* neck by the evidence of Henry *Knapff* James Sink and George *Knapff* In testimony where of the Said justice of the piece and *jurours* here to set their hands this 5th day of August 1859

Evan *Gelaspy*

Inquisition indented taken at the home of Joseph Adkins the County *afforsaid* the 9 day of March in the year 1848 before me Peter Saunders one of the Coroners of the Commonwealth for the County *afforesaid* *appon* the view of the body of Evan Gelaspy late of the County *afforsaid* then and there lying dead and *uppon* the oaths Lemuel C. Gilbert James S. Waid Samue(l) Coleman Michael Scott Randolph Cheatwood Edmund Waid Eli Hambrick William Jones Shelton Lavender William *Miniffee* John Parsel Joel Parsel - - good and lawfull men of the County *afforsaid* how and after what manner the Said Evan Gelaspy came to his death do Say *uppon* their oaths that the Said Evan Gelaspy on the 8 day of March in the year 1848 near the house of *Motent* T. Woods in the County *afforesaid* was found dead that he had no marks or blistered appearing on his body and died by the Visitation of God in a natural Way and Not otherwise in Witness *Whareof* as We the *afforsaid* Coroner as the jurors *afforsaid* have to this inquisition put there Seals on the 9 day of March in the year *afforsaid* and the place *afforsaid*

Lafayette N Hatcher

Inquisition indented Taken at Thomas F. Hatcher's in the County aforesaid the 26" day of February in the year 1848 before me Josiah Turner Justice of the Peace of this Commonwealth for the County aforesaid upon the view of the Body of Lafayette N Hatcher late of said County then and there *lieing* Dead and upon the *Oathes* of George Turner James O Turner Whitfield R Turner Jubel Turner Cyrus E Pinckard Alexander Ingrum *Grandason* B *Lesueuer Meshic* Turner Catlet James John Jones Constant Turner James W Leseuer good and lawful men of the County aforesaid who being Sworn and Charged to Enquire on the part of the said Commonwealth when where how and after what manner the dead Lafayette N Hatcher came to his *Deth* do say upon there oath that the said Lafayette N Hatcher in the County of Franklin not having God before his Eye but being seduce and moved by the instigation of the Devil at the County aforesaid in a Certain Barn at the County aforesaid standing and being the Said Lafayett N Hatcher being then and there along with a certain Chain and Leather string of the value of 25 cents which he then and there had and held in his hands and one end thereof then and there put about his neck and the other End thereof tied about a collar beam of Said Barn himself then and there with the chain and to the string aforesaid *vulunterally* and feloniously and of his Malice alone hanged and *sufercated* and to the Jurors aforesaid upon these oaths say that the said Lafayett N Hatcher then and there in Manner and form aforesaid as a felon of himself feloniously voluntarily and of his Malice aforethought himself Killed strangled and Murdered against the peace given under our hands and seals this 26" day of February 1848

Martha Janney's Child

September 16, 1856

Evidence of Dr McCorkle taken at an inquest taken at the dwelling house of Wm Janney upon view of the body of Martha Janney's child

Question How do you suppose this child came to its death?

Answer - I think it *proble* that an *absess* I found {can't read} the diaphragm and the lower part of the sternum might have produced death

Sally Janney says

The child had a {can't read} of {can't read} *biled* on its Breast bone I knew it to have fits previous to its death it died about 12 *oclock* on Sunday the 14th Sept 1856 don't recollect any persons being present when the child died except the family

Question did you stick a pin in the *biles* under the child's breast:

Answer no

Mary Janney sworn says the child was well till Friday *sept* 12th it sucked the morning before it died Never saw Martha give it any thing like medicine or poison and never told any person so

Agnes Martin sworn says I was not present when the child died heard Martha Janney say she would kill the child don't know whether she was *jisting* or not heard Mary Janney say she saw Martha giving Ivy tea to the child last week & week before

Peggy Martin sworn says she heard Martha Janney threaten to kill the child and heard Mary Janney say that Martha Janney had given the child Ivy tea & Poison oak to drink

Mariah Justice sworn says she heard Mary Janney say that Martha was in the habit of giving the child Ivy tea and poison oak to drink - know the child be a healthy child

John Martin sworn says I {blurred} Wm Janney's house & saw Martha Janney slap her child very hard I reproved her for it and she said she did not care much if she killed it

Eleanor *Rareford* sworn says - I know nothing of Martha Janney's ~~child~~ treatments of her child except from hearsay

Wm Allen jr sworn says I was at the House of Wm Janney on Sunday *sept* 14th had heard the child was sick and asked Martha Janney how her child was - went to the bed and found it was dead Martha did not tell me it was dead at the time till I had examined it

Betty {can't read} the Janney Slaves says I know nothing about the case except that I saw it die

John Thompson sworn says I was at Wm Janney's on Saturday *sept* 15th the child was sick at that time I saw its mother put it to the breast & it could not suck

All of the forgoing testimony taken and sworn to before me this 16th Sept 1856
Isaac Cannaday J.P. & acting Coroner

Marthy, a negro girl

An Inquisition taken at *Jeferson* Wades in the County of Franklin on the 4th day of December 1850 before me Lewis B Taylor a Justice of the peace acting as Coroner of the said County upon

the View of the body of Marthy a negro girl the property of Jefferson Wade there lying dead. The Jurors sworn to enquire when how and by what means the said Martha came to her death upon their oaths do say that she Occasioned her own death by hanging herself

Betsey Sigmon

An inquisition taken at James H Cannadays mill in the County of Franklin on the 22 day of July in the year 1863 before me a justice of said County acting as Coroner upon the view of the body of Betsey Sigmon there lying dead

The jurors sworn to enquire when how and by what means the said Betsey Sigmon came to her death upon their oaths do say that the said Betsey Sigmon came to her death on the 21st day of July 1863 in the County of Franklin by violence inflicted upon her by the hand of some person to them unknown

The following depositions were taken before me Stephen Thomas acting as coroner on the 22nd day of July 1863 at James H Cannadays mill in the county of Franklin as evidence before the jury of inquest then and there held upon the view of the body of Betsey *Sigman* to ascertain where and how she came to her death Viz: Joseph Sigmon him first duly sworn *deposeth* & with I think from all the circumstances attending her departure from home Betsey Sigmon that she left home on the 21st of the present instant about 11 *oclock* to go to *Wilis* Peters in the county aforesaid and that she lived about one mile from the place at which her body was found which is about 200 yards off the direct road leading to said Peters her body was found about one *oclock* in the morning of the 22nd inst and further this deponent *sayeth* not

John C. Sigmon being first duly sworn *deposeth* and saith I and Peter Sigmon found the body of Betsey Sigmon about one *oclock* on the morning of the 22nd day of July 1863 but we did not change her position in any manner whatever She was bout one hundred and fifty yards or upwards from the direct road leading from the late residence of Betsey Sigmon to *Wilis* Peters and further this deponent saith not

Willis Hairston being first duly sworn *deposeth* and saith I was noticed to attend for the purpose of examining the body of Mrs Sigmon which I did I am a practicing Physician & made my investigation as such I found a wound about one inch & a half in length upon the back part of the head upon farther examination I found the scull fractured from the neck to the crown but rather on one side (the right side) & extending from that to the jaw bone passing through the temple bone and separating the scull into two portions & one of those portions was also fractured I also found that her neck was either dislocated or broken but I did not examine with sufficient accuracy to ascertain precisely which I also found some injuries which I took to be scratches of finder nails I am fully of opinion from my investigation that she was murdered either of the injuries above referred to except the scratches was sufficient to produce sudden death I am fully convinced that no fall from her feet in the locality in which I found her body this morning could have produced both those injuries & further this deponent saith not

DP Heckman being first duly sworn *deposeth* and saith I reached the place at which the corpse was found on the morning of the 22nd July 1863 & found the deceased lying on her back with her head down the hill with a large pool under her head which was evidently the {can't read} of

some wound inflicted after examining the body turned over & removed the hair I was present when Dr Hairston examined the body & found the injuries as represented by Dr Hairston & fully concur with Dr Hairston that the deceased came to her death by violence inflicted by some unknown hand & further this deponent saith not

Viz: Joseph Sigmon him first duly sworn *deposeth* & with I think from all the circumstances attending her departure from home Betsey Sigmon that she left home on the 21st of the present instant about 11 *oclock* to go to Willis Peters in the county aforesaid and that she lived about one mile from the place at which her body was found which is about 200 yards off the direct road leading to Peters her body was found about one *oclock* on the morning of the 22nd inst and further this deponent *sayeth* not

John C Sigmon being first duly sworn *deposeth* and saith I and Peter Sigmon found the dead body of Betsey Sigmon about one *oclock* in the morning of the 22nd day of July 1863 but we did not change her position any manner whatever She was bout one hundred and fifty yards or upwards from the direct road leading from the late residence of Betsey Sigmon to *Wilis* Peters and further this deponent saith not

William Hairston being first duly sworn and saith I was noticed to attend for the purpose of examining the body of Mrs Sigmon which I did I am a practicing Physician & made my investigation as such I found a wound about one inch & a half in length upon the back part of the head upon farther examination I found the skull fractured from the neck to the crown but rather on one side (the right side) & extending from that to the jaw bone passing through the temple bone and separating the skull into two portions & one of those portions was also fractured I also found that her neck was either dislocated or broken but I did not examine with sufficient accuracy to ascertain precisely which I also found some injuries which I took to be scratches of finger nails I am fully of opinion from my investigation that she was murdered either of the injuries above referred to except the scratches was sufficient to produce sudden death I am fully convinced that no fall from her feet in the locality in which I found her body this morning could have produced both those injuries & further this deponent saith not

Peter Via

County of Franklin to wit An inquisition taken at the house of Peter Via dec'd in the County of Franklin aforesaid on the twenty ninth day of September the year 1854 before me Peter Saunders Sr Coroner of the said County upon the review of the body of Peter Via there lying dead: The jurors sworn to enquire when how and by what means the said Peter Via came to his death upon their Oaths do say that in their opinion the said Peter Via came to his death from a blow on his head from and which William Via held in his hands

HARRIET WAID

The evidence of R.E. Hale after having been first duly sworn *deposeth* says"

Ques State when this death occurred?

Ans On the 3rd day of *sept* abut 3 *oclock* pm

Ques Where did it occur?

Ans On Pig River bridge on Norfolk & Western R Road No 1833

Ques Do you know whether or not by due precaution the accident could have been avoided?

Ans It could not possibly have been avoided

Ques How far from the bridge could the engineer or fireman have seen her before striking her?

Ans One hundred and fifty or two hundred feet. After striking the woman the engine ran about three car lengths before stopping

Ques Did the Engineer & crew after stopping the train go down to see about the accident?

Ans They did. The Engineer blew the warning whistle but he was a short distance off & the train was running down a heavy grade on a sharp curve - The train crew left the body in my care until the proper authorities could be notified to take charge of it
R.E. Hale

Testimony of Saml Hancock who after being duly sworn *deposith* and testifies as follows:

Ques Did you see the accident when it actually occurred?

Ans No Sir, but I heard the whistle blow & suspected some one was on the track & I went at once & found Harriet Wade lying under the trestle dead the train had stopped when I got there & the train crew came at once to see about the matter. I also saw two of her toes lying on the cross ties showing they were cut off by the train

Ques How far from the bridge could the Engineer or fireman have seen her before striking her & with due precaution do you think the accident could have been avoided?

Ans I do not know. There is a short curve at the bridge and the train was coming around the curve going north. Do not think the accident could have been avoided
S.H. Hancock

Testimony of *Duffie G. Waid* who after being duly sworn *deposeth* and says

Ques State what you know concerning the death of Harriet Wade?

Ans I was in the corn field near the railroad about one mile from where the accident occurred pulling fodder. The Engineer only blew one signal at crossing just north of Waid'sboro until it blew the warning signal for the woman to get off the track

Ques How many signal posts are there between the point at which they blew & the trestle at Pig River

Ans Two and I know they did not blow a signal at either of these two places

Ques Where are these signal posts

Ans Above the rock cut and about 1 ½ miles from the bridge the next signal post is only a short distance from the bridge where the woman was killed on Dr J M Williams land
Duffie G. Waid

This is to certify that I examined the body of Harriet Waid and found that she came to her death by wounds of her body as follows: left foot being partly cut off let broken, left side badly bruised & three wounds in head

For Franklin County to wit:

An inquisition taken at the dwelling house of Harriett Waid Col. in the County of Franklin Va on the 4th day of Sept 1901 J.H. Bernard a Justice of said County acting as Coroner on the view of the body of Harriett Waid there lying dead. The Jurors sworn to inquire when, how and by what means the said Harriett Waid came to her death, upon their oaths do say: that the said Harriett Waid came to her death by being struck by Engine No. 16 on Pig Trestle or bridge known as trestle No. 1833, the said Harriett Waid was knocked off of said bridge and fell to the ground.

The Engine at the time was being run by Engineer Thom Brown. In testimony whereof the said coroner and Jurors hereto set their hands