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Found in the Archives no. 93 Circuit Court Clerk's Office Historic Records Center

Illegal Gaming Charges in Fairfax County



Happy New Year, and welcome to Found in the Archives, a publication of The Clerk of the Fairfax Circuit Court, 19th Judicial Circuit, who proudly serves The City of Fairfax & Fairfax County. In the first edition of Found in the Archives for 2024, we will look at charges for Illegal Gaming in some of our historic court records.

Charges for Illegal Gaming, or gambling, mostly appear in our Term Papers collection and our Court Order Books. Our Term Papers consist of what may be thought of as regular court cases, like civil or criminal charges brought against individuals. Court Order Books functioned as a docket or record of cases heard in

court each session and typically contain very few case details. The very first record of someone being charged with Illegal Gaming in Fairfax County was in 1753, before the Revolutionary War, when six men were charged with Gaming and each ordered to pay a fine of Five Pounds.

John Wost Son? abraham Barner, Baldrun Dado, Townshond Dado Michael Hall and Company to Low John Bayloy being Convicted of Gaming before Daniel M. Carty, John Carlylo & William Ramsay Gent. Justices of the Peace from whose Judgment they appealed to this Court and on hearing the luidences it is Considered that the Judgment gwen by the said Justices be affirmed & that the churchwardens of Jure Parish recover against lach

Fairfax Court Order Book 1749 page 331

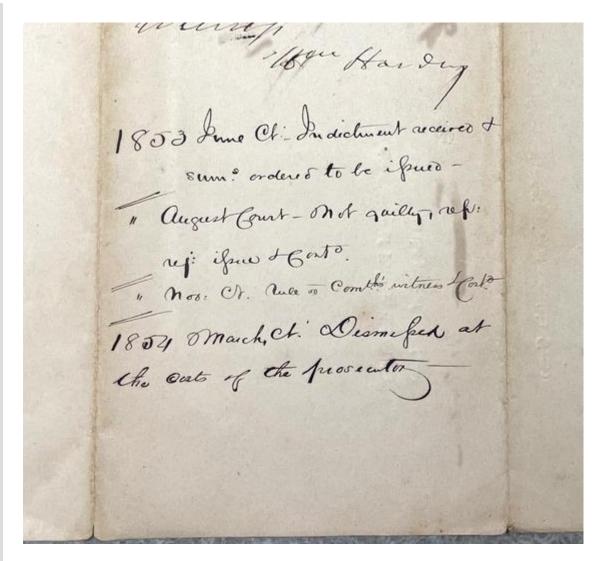
The last Illegal Gaming charge that appears in our records is in our Term Papers collection in 1898, however, many years of our Term Papers are still unprocessed, so it is likely there are later charges we have yet to discover.

In 1854, several men received charges of Illegal Gaming at the house of William P. Dickey, who was also charged separately for Retailing Ardent Spirits without a License. It is not uncommon to see these charges brought together as people would gather in groups to drink alcohol and gamble or play cards.

	late of the County of Pairfax, did on the
	one thousand eight hundred and Action The
9	a public place in the county, aforesaid, and within the jurisdiction of the said bounts
	played with Cards
	to wit, a game called Bluff and seven up a all fours
	against the form of the Act of the General Assembly in that case made and provided and against the
	of the Commonwealth.
Mor	The information of the country of farfung Co

Excerpt from Fairfax Term Papers 1854-070

These charges were eventually dropped at the cost of the prosecutor, but the surviving documents do not contain the full story of the case.



Excerpt from Fairfax Term Papers 1854-070

While many of these cases do not specify the charge beyond Illegal Gaming or Gambling, some of them do name the games individuals were playing. Some of the more commonly named games are Chuckaluck, Seven-Up, or Bluff. All Fours, a traditional English Pub card game, is also named in some of the charges, as well as Billiards. There are also some cases of individuals being charged with Gaming on the Sabbath.

Considered the Arguments of the 30 Order that the Def shall volver to the Old the teilliard

Table which he purchased of the It and that each party shall pay his own costs. Jiven 4

under our hands this 20th June 1754. John Hed? Jet Wagener. I Whowever it is

considered that the said suit be Dismist & that each party bay his own costs.

William Honner an Evidence for Dorhand Evell Gon! ag. Nathaniel Smith having a

Attended vix days ordered that he pay him for the same & thrice coming & going hom & &

Yorthumberdand one hundred & hoonly live miles nine hundred bounds of Tobacco?

Grand Jury.

Fairfax Court Order Book 1754 page 125



Fairfax Court Order Book 1756 page 581

These documents are all an example of how you can use different record groups to learn about a topic here at the Historic Records Center. While Term Papers and Court Order Books offer different information about Illegal Gaming in Fairfax County, they are both valuable tools for researchers looking into all different topics.

If you would like to learn more about these and other court records, come visit the Historic Courthouse on Saturday, February 3rd during the Chocolate Lovers Festival. The Courthouse will be open with documents on display from 10am-3pm, with a mock trial taking place at 10am and a game show at noon.