

WASHINGTON COUNTY, TENNESSEE

DEPARTMENT OF
RECORDS MANAGEMENT
AND ARCHIVES

SEVENTH ANNUAL REPORT

2018-2019



The top two floors of the former county jail are now the Archive Annex, housing county records. This space was renovated during 2018-2019. Enclosing the exterior windows was part of the project.

Submitted by
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By the Numbers

The following is the county archive year (July 1st, 2018-June 30th, 2019) by the numbers:

- 366,285.35 = dollars spent for Archive Annex renovation
- 263,194 = revenue dollars raised by the archive filing fee
- 239,355 = dollars appropriated in the department budget
- 59,195 = total views of archives website
- 35,598 = loose marriage licenses and bonds housed in the archives
- 10,000 = dollars donated to Friends of the Archives in memory of Mildred Kozsuch
- 4,951 = visitors to archive website
- 1771 = date of earliest document in the archives
- 1,571.5 = number of hours contributed by others to the archives
- 1,024 = number of reference inquiries handled. (includes 13 on grand jury visit of Sept. 12, 2018 and 8 American Heritage girls and leaders on November 27th, 2018)
- 227 = number of marriage record searches for the County Clerk's office
- 475 = number of volumes in Book Collection
- 72 = number in attendance at public presentations given on the county archive.
- 36 = number of states from which reference inquiries were received: Tennessee, Alabama, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, Nevada, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, South Dakota, Texas, Utah, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, Wisconsin
- 25 = countries from which researchers accessed the archive website.
- 16 = number of Friends of the Archives members
- 11 = number of volunteers
- 11 = number of media items about the archives (newspaper articles, radio and television news segments, and social media)
- 3 = number of foreign countries from which research inquiries were received (Israel, England, and Canada)

NARRATIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

Two major efforts were undertaken during the year: the renovation of the Archive Annex (see more under “Building Management”) and the recovery of county records not in the custody of the county (see more under “County Records” and “Public Records Commission” sections). Both efforts stretched across 2018 and 2019. It was a productive year in terms of records processed and made available for researchers. And the year saw a tremendous increase in research use of the collection. The department is becoming more widely known, which is a good thing. The archives isn’t meant to be a warehouse. It is becoming what it was intended to be, a preservation facility for the county’s historic records and a lure for heritage tourism.

Financial Management

The department operated under a \$239,355 budget during 2018-2019. Funds for this budget do not come from the county general fund but from the archive filing fee levied on specific county documents when these are created (such as marriage licenses, new car titles, etc.) This fee is authorized by state statute, and the monies earned from the fee must be dedicated specifically for the county archives and its efforts to preserve county records.

The archive fee fund (reserve fund) balance was \$458,183.73 at the beginning of the fiscal year (July 1, 2018). The fee raised \$263,194.02 during the fiscal year. From the fund balance \$343,784.35 was spent to pay for the Archive Annex renovation project (more on that below under the heading “Building Management.”) At the end of the fiscal year (June 30, 2019), \$212,675.73 was expended in the department’s budget. This left an unspent savings of \$26,679.27, which along with savings from the Archive Annex project being completed under budget, returned \$33,515.63 to the department’s reserve fund, which ended the year with a balance of \$164,916.65.

The department continues to pay on a county capital outlay note of \$530,000 that was used to finance the renovation of the archive building in 2015-2016. The annual payment is \$49,000. It is anticipated that the final payment of this 12-year bond will be in 2025. So we are about at the halfway point on that debt payment.

We continue our efforts to be good stewards of the monies we are asked to manage, and we believe we have done so again this year.

Building Management



Interior view of Archive Annex storage area following renovation, showing enclosed windows, new lighting, and a new HVAC system.

Archive Annex

Since starting my job in 2012, one of my chief goals was to renovate the Archive Annex (old county jail) space. After years of planning and saving money, this was finally accomplished during 2018-2019. The renovation project involved installing a new heat, air, and ventilation (HVAC) system (the space had never had air conditioning); upgrading the electrical system for the new HVAC system; installing new lighting; installing a new roof where the HVAC air units were set; and enclosing exterior windows on the building.

Construction on the project began on November 13th, 2018 and finished on March 19th, 2019. Thomas Weems of Johnson City was the architect. His fees were \$22,500. Preston Construction Company of Johnson City was the general contractor. The \$350,622 construction project was actually finished under budget. The final cost was \$343,785.35. The unused \$6,836.36 was returned to the department's reserve fund. The original project bid came in over budget at \$440,000 and had to be revised. This meant leaving enclosing the exterior windows on the north side with metal panels until later.

In addition to the architect and general contractor, the following firms were involved on the project: S. B. White Company, Johnson City, Tenn. (HVAC and plumbing subcontractor); Morristown Roofing, Whitesburg, Tenn. (roofing subcontractor); Kingsport Armature and Electric, Kingsport, Tenn. (electrical sub-contractor); Witt Company, Johnson City, Tenn. (drywall sub-contractor); and Gardner Paint, Johnson City, Tenn. (painting sub-contractor).

As part of a separate courthouse exterior renovation project on which Burleson Construction was general contractor, the roof of the Archive Annex building was replaced. Morristown Roofing was again the sub-contractor on this roof.

Archive Building

The department's digital scanning station was moved upstairs from the archive workroom in November 2018 to provide more volunteer workspace downstairs. An additional large work table was moved into the workroom at that time.

Three new dehumidifiers were installed in the archive basement to replace old models that stopped working. These new units have considerably reduced the moisture levels in the basement.

In the Reading Room, the monitor screen used for presentations was moved from the east wall to the north wall for better visibility.

A new awning over the rear building entrance was installed by Omar Awning on March 8th, 2019, replacing a dilapidated one that was at least 16 years old.

Collection Management

County Records

A. Acquisitions.

The most significant addition of county records to the archives was the tax books for 1939-1971 moved from the County Trustee's basement in July 2018. These records were processed and total 213 boxes (120 linear feet). The archives now has county tax books from 1814-2010.

The Zoning Department transferred records related to the recent county redistricting to the archives. This included committee minutes and a redistricting map. This material was added to Record Group 23: Zoning Office Records and was processed. (.5 linear foot.)

Four magistrate docket books and miscellaneous warrants from Fred Hilbert's tenure as a justice of the peace were donated to the archives by Joel Conger of Jonesborough.

Note: See also about additions received as part of effort to recover missing county records below.

B. Processing.

Several important projects to preserve, organize, and make records available to researchers occurred during the year:

- Reprocessed, re-organized, and re-housed loose marriage records from the County Clerk's office. There are a total of 35,599 marriage licenses or bonds in this collection for the period of 1781-1950.
- Processed Education Records series of County Clerk Records, 1833-1936 (15 boxes/6.5 linear feet).
- Processed 8 boxes (4 linear feet) of county records transferred originally from Duke University into the Superior Court case file series.
- 18th century wills (66) were scanned and added to website's digital collections.

- A project was begun to scan and digitize 18th century marriage licenses and bonds.
- Volunteers continued to process early loose County Court judicial records. This project began in the fall of 2017. An inventory for 1778-1825 case files was placed on the archives' website in July 2019.
- Staff and volunteers continue processing Circuit Court case files. To date files for the years 1808-1859 have been processed.
- Volunteers continue processing Johnson City Law Court case files.



Donna Briggs and Ned Irwin received the box containing 1788-1793 County Court minutes from Sarah Baxter of the Tennessee State Library and Archives, April 10th, 2019.

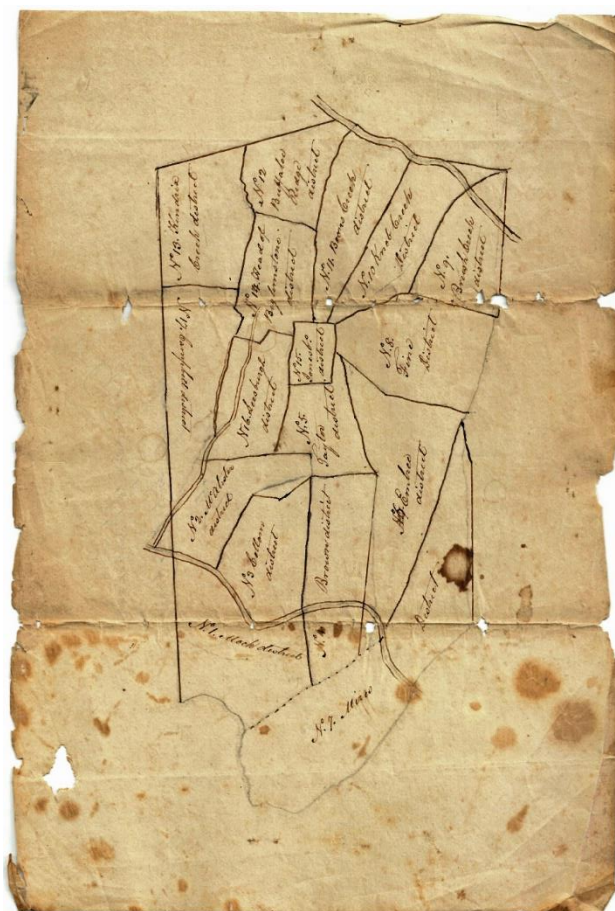
Recovery of Historic County Records

The recovery of county records not presently in the county's custody was a major effort undertaken by the department during 2018-2019. Under Tennessee law, public records are always public records and possession by a private individual does not change this right of ownership. Our initial focus was on county records that were once in the personal possession of the late Paul Fink of Jonesborough. The effort was authorized by the Washington County Public Records Commission and County Mayor Joe Grandy. Allyson Wilkinson, staff county attorney, provided expert legal assistance and insight.

The documents originally held by Fink had been scattered over the years both by Fink himself, and, following his death in 1980, by his heirs. We identified three main repositories housing these records and proceeded to seek the recovery of the county records from the following institutions: Special Collections at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville; the Calvin M. McClung Historical Collection of the Knox County Public Library in Knoxville; and Special

Collections at Appalachian State University in Boone, N. C. Other Fink connected county documents remain in private hands, and we will seek their return in the future as these are identified.

In July 2019, Donna Briggs and I examined the Fink-Dulaney Collection at Special Collections at the University of Tennessee. We identified documents in the collection that were official county records. A formal request was made for the return of these records. Negotiations regarding this request continued into the spring of 2019. On May 1st, 2019, we again traveled to Knoxville and brought back the county records found at UT. This amounted to approximately 1,128 documents. Over the following months, these documents were processed into the appropriate record groups held in the county archives.



The original 1836 map first dividing Washington County into civil districts, returned from the University of Tennessee in May 2019.

In March 2019, a formal request was made for the return of county records found in the Paul Fink Papers at the McClung Historical Collection in Knoxville. This request was granted. As part of the agreement, McClung requested permission to copy the documents for researcher use prior to returning the documents to the county archives. It is estimated there are approximately

10,000 documents in this collection. We anticipate the return of the county records in the early part of fiscal year 2019-2020.

In March 2019, a formal request was made for the return of county records found in the Paul Fink Papers at Appalachian State University. Following extensive negotiations, twenty of twenty-four identified official county records were returned on June 17th, 2019. Four documents were disputed by the Special Collections staff and have not yet been returned. We continue in discussions with the university and legal staff over the return of these four Washington County documents. **Addendum Note:** These last four documents were finally retrieved by department staff from Boone on August 21st, 2019.

The archives was also fortunate during the year to have 25 historic county documents returned from an anonymous collector. These included state of Franklin and other important court records. These documents were at one time in the possession of Paul Fink. It is hoped more such records will be returned from private individuals, as we make a concerted effort in the coming fiscal year to secure such documents.

In April 2019, Myers Brown and Sarah Baxter of the Tennessee State Library and Archives (TSLA) returned a Washington County Court of Pleas and Quarter Sessions minute book for 1788-1793 found at the TSLA as they make preparations to move to a new building in 2020. This was an unexpected and much appreciated windfall.



Donna Briggs and Ned Irwin recovered this box of county records from the University of Tennessee, May 1st, 2019.

Book Collection

The department's collection of monographs increased considerably. As of June 30, 2019, the Book Collection contained 475 volumes. The collection nearly doubled in the year. The primary reason for this was a major donation of local history and genealogy books by Cheryl Wexler of Kingsport, Tenn. She donated 220 volumes that had belonged to her husband's late aunts Dorothy and Ruth Wexler of Kingsport.

The Friends of the Archives (FOA), as always, made important book purchases on behalf of the department. During the year, the FOA purchased eight books at a total cost of \$285.60. In addition, the following individuals or organizations made book donations to the collection: Cheryl A. Christensen Bennett, Lucy Gump, Margaret Hougland, Betty Jane Hylton, Johnson City Public Library, Paul Kennedy, Dr. William E. Kennedy, Dr. A. B. Pruitt, and Tom Roberts.

Manuscript Collections

The following additions were made to the department's manuscript holdings:

- March 29th, 2019: Sandhi Kozsuch of Dunwoody, Ga., donated his mother Mildred Kozsuch's photographic slide collection of historic locales in Washington County. This was processed as Mildred Spaulding Kozsuch Collection, Accession Number 11.
- April 4th, 2019: Martha Whaley of Elizabethton, Tenn. donated material on Embreeville and Bumpass Cove. This was processed as Embreeville and Bumpass Cove Collection, Accession Number 10.
- May 2019: Historic newspapers were transferred from the University of Tennessee at Knoxville from the Fink-Dulaney Collection. This was processed as the Historic Newspapers Collection, Accession Number 13.

Map Collections

Several significant maps or digital copies were donated, as follows:

- August 20, 2018: Gordon Edwards donated digital copies of Sanborn Fire Insurance maps for Jonesborough, Tenn., scanned from original maps owned by the Heritage Alliance [16 sheets for following years: 1888 (1), 1892 (1), 1907 (2), 1913 (3), 1924 (5), 1939 (4)]. These digital copies were made accessible on the public reference computer in the reading room. Some of these maps are not included in the Library of Congress collection of Sanborn maps.
- The Tennessee State Library and Archives donated (at an earlier time) the county block maps for the 2000 census for Washington County (31 sheets).
- June 3rd, 2019: Cheryl Wexler of Kingsport donated two maps: "Fincastle County, Virginia, 1772-1777" (J. R. Hildebrand. 1968) and "A Settlement Map of Wythe County, Virginia, giving the Names and Locations of Many of the Early Adventurers in the Territory from 1745-1858" (J. R. Hildebrand, F. B. Kegley and Mary B. Kegley, 1974. (Two copies).
- June 14th, 2019: A map cabinet was donated to the archives by the Assessor of Property's office and moved to the Archive Annex.

Photograph Collection

In addition to the Mildred Spaulding Kozsuch Collection noted above under Manuscript Collections, a small number of miscellaneous photographs of Washington County scenes were donated by Betty Janey Hylton of Johnson City and Ernestine Renfro of the Lamar community.

Records Management

The renovation of the Archive Annex provided better access and control for records stored there by 13 county offices and departments. During the year, archives staff assisted the following offices on multiple occasions in retrieving records for their offices from archival storage areas, including the Benefits and Human Resources Office, Bookkeeping Office, Circuit Court Clerk, Clerk & Master, and the County Attorney's office. The Register of Deeds office was advised and assisted on the disposal and transfer of old accounting records.

Reference and Public Service

It was a busy year in the archives. Public activities greatly increased. Staff assisted over 1,000 researchers, who represented 36 different states and three foreign countries. This was an increase of 10% over the previous fiscal year. Use of the department's website showed an even greater year-to-year increase. There were 59,195 views of the website by 4,951 visitors representing 25 different countries. Website views more than doubled, and visitors to the site increased about 10%.

The following are countries that had visitors using our website: United States, American Samoa, Argentina, Austria, Brazil, Canada, China, Czech Republic, European Union, France, Germany, Hong Kong, Honduras, India, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Mauritius, Mexico, Netherlands, Portugal, South Africa, Spain, Thailand, and the United Kingdom.

In-person visitors to the archive totaled 585 individual researchers. The majority (528) were Tennessee residents. There were 57 researchers from a total of 19 other states. Among the states represented were Alabama, Arkansas, California, Florida, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Missouri, New Mexico, North Carolina, Oregon, Texas, Virginia, Washington, and Wisconsin. The furthest individual visited from Hawaii! These *heritage tourists* had an economic impact on our local economy. They stayed in local hotels, ate in local restaurants, got gas at local stations, and shopped in local stores. Several spent more than one day in Washington County. As a magnet for such tourists, the archives will bring more such researchers into our community in the years ahead. **Note:** Statistics for in-person research use of the archives did not begin until August 10th, 2018, so the figures cover from that date through June 30th, 2018, about six weeks less than a full fiscal year.

In conjunction with the Washington County-Jonesborough Library and Heritage Alliance of East Tennessee and Southwest Virginia, the department designed and produced a joint brochure to promote research and heritage tourism in Jonesborough and Washington County titled *Passport to History: Researching Washington County*.

Public presentations were made at Heritage Alliance's "History Happy Hour" on September 20th, 2019 and to a group of American Heritage Girls on November 27th, 2019.

The department provided a letter of support of a grant the Heritage Alliance was awarded to scan their photograph collections. The county archivist provided archival and historical consultation to the following: Gene Hurdt on the vertical files of the Washington County-Jonesborough Library; Tom Roberts of DeLand, Fla., on his *Postcard History Series: Johnson City* book published by Arcadia Press in 2019; Jack Goins, Hawkins County Archives; Ronni Wood, ETSU MALS graduate student; and Jo Stakley, Monroe County Archives.

We also assisted the Keefauver family and the City of Johnson City with the nomination research through old tax records dating the house construction that led to the site being granted a state historical marker by the Tennessee Historical Commission. This marker was unveiled at a public ceremony on June 7th, 2019 at which the department's assistance was recognized.

Website

Several additions were made to the department's website during the year. Scanned images of original documents for both the Watauga Association era and the state of Franklin era were added to the "Digital Collections" sub-page. The digital collections are getting heavy usage. The major record group collection guides were updated and new guides were added for Record Group 23 (Zoning Office Records), Record Group 24 (Tennessee State Court Records), and for loose wills. Numerous images were added to the "Photo Gallery" sub-page, including those in the Mildred Spaulding Kozsuch slide collection. Numerous articles were added to the "News & Events" and "Hidden Voices" sub-pages keeping the public informed about the on-going work of the department and of interesting discoveries found in the collection. The webpage is constantly revised and updated, so please view it on a regular basis. The url is: www.wctnarchives.org.

For more on website statistics and usage, see earlier in this section.

Staffing and Volunteers

The department remains a staff of two full-time employees. In addition to their daily duties, both County Archivist Ned Irwin and Archive Assistant Donna Briggs contributed to the community through service, consultations, etc. Both contributed articles to the *Bulletin of the Watauga Association of Genealogists*. Donna served on the Heritage Alliance board of directors for the second year.

Without volunteers, we could not do all that is done in the archives. We are lucky to have a dedicated group that helps us. Eleven volunteers contributed a remarkable **1,571.5 hours** of service to the department. This is the equivalent of an employee working 209.5 work days. Those individuals contributing their valuable time were Mike Briggs, Georgia Greer, Janette Guinn, Shirley Hinds, Margaret Hougland, Betty Jane Hylton, Gary Irwin, Mary Alice Irwin, Kyle Johnson, Kari Roueche, and Nancy Trivett. We were pleased to welcome Britney Helton of Church Hill, Tenn., an ETSU history undergraduate with an interest in pursuing an archival career, in the summer of 2019.

Public Records Commission

The Washington County Public Records Commission (PRC) works in close conjunction with the department to insure the preservation of county records. At its' July 31st, 2018 meeting, the PRC approved resolutions asking the County Commission to transfer \$375,000 (for construction) and \$7,500 for architectural services for the renovation of the Archive Annex. This request was subsequently approved by the County Commission.

The term for the existing PRC members ended August 31st, 2018. The County Commission adopted a proclamation honoring retiring Chairman Dr. Sam Humphreys at its' August 27th, 2018. Dr. Humphreys had served for the previous eight years as chairman of the PRC.

In September 2018, a four-year term on the PRC began for the following members: Register of Deeds Teresa Bowman, Commissioner Mike Ford, Gene Hurdt, Ned Irwin, Dr. William Kennedy, Judge John Kiener, Chancellor John Rambo, and County Clerk Kathy Storey. Mrs. Bowman was the only new member appointed.

At its' March 5th, 2019, the PRC elected new officers, as follows: Mike Ford, Chairman; John Kiener, Vice-Chairman; and Ned Irwin, Secretary. Also at the meeting, the members unanimously adopted a resolution authorizing "Ned Irwin, the County Archivist and Records Manager, to work with the County Attorney's office to locate and recover any and all government records wherever they may be found; such records include but are not limited to those papers previously held by Paul Fink, which may now be found in at least three known locations (University of Tennessee Special Collections Department at Knoxville, Belk Library, Appalachian State University at Boone, North Carolina, and the Calvin M. McClung Collection of the Knox County Library.)" Those efforts are described earlier in this report under the heading "Recovery of Historic County Records."

Friends of the Archives



Actual scene near Jonesborough and painting of it by Jonesborough artist Peggy Nichols Root now displayed in the archives Reading Room.

The Friends of the Washington County, Tennessee Archives (FOA) continued to provide strong and sustaining support for the county archives. During 2018-2019, it funded the department's Volunteer Appreciation Day luncheon held at the Main Street Café in Jonesborough

on December 18th, 2018; purchased copies of 17 Tennessee State Supreme Court case files of cases originating in Washington County that supplement original case files already held in the archives; paid for printing of a new departmental brochure and for three brochure display stands; purchased eight reference books for the Book Collection; and paid for the moving of the monitor in the Reading Room.

The most significant effort during the year for the FOA was its' commissioning of artist Peggy Nichols Root of Jonesborough for two large landscape paintings of Washington County scenes to be placed on permanent loan display in the archives' Reading Room. The first of the completed paintings featuring a Spring landscape near Jonesborough titled "Early Spring: Old House, Mill Springs Road" was installed on July 23rd, 2019. It is anticipated that Root will also paint seasonal landscapes for Summer, Fall, and Winter to display in the Reading Room in the coming fiscal year.

The FOA received several generous donations earmarked for support of the archives. This included a significant donation of \$10,000 by Sandhi Kozsuch in memory of his mother, late County Historian Mildred Kozsuch; a \$500 donation from the Watauga Association of Genealogists (WAGS); and a \$100 donation from Peggy N. Daugherty, a researcher from Santa Ana, California.

A total of \$6,888.91 was spent by the FOA in support of the archives during the fiscal year.

The Year Ahead

- Following funding approval by the County Commission, June 24th, 2019, authorizing \$110,000 from county capital projects funds, we will proceed with enclosing the exterior windows of the Archive Annex on the north side of the building (the side facing the rear of the courthouse proper).
- Staff will focus more on records management collaboration with county office holders, especially regarding electronic record-keeping.
- There is a continuing need for additional records storage space for contemporary county records, ideally a separate records center facility for in-active but not historic county records. Storage space in the archive building and Archive Annex is rapidly being filled.