



April 23, 2025

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# Administration - Historical Notes

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We hope this information will be useful to you; reference to it will assist you with many of the questions that will arise in your tenure with county government. However, the *Tennessee Code Annotated* and other relevant laws or regulations should always be consulted before any action is taken based upon the contents of this document.

Please feel free to contact us if you have questions or comments regarding this information or any other CTAS website material.

Sincerely,

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# Administration - Historical Notes

## **County Clerk**

The following acts once affected the office of county clerk in Greene County. They are included herein for historical purposes.

1. Public Acts of 1917, Chapter 47, set the salary of the Greene County Clerk to \$2,000 per annum.
2. Private Acts of 1923, Chapter 613, set the salary of the county court clerk at \$3,500, with all the fees of that office to go into the county general fund.
3. Private Acts of 1933, Chapter 829, set the maximum annual compensation of the county court clerk at \$3,000, payable from the fees of the office.

## **County Legislative Body**

The following acts once applied to the quarterly court or the county legislative body of Greene County and are included herein for historical purposes.

1. Acts 1793, Chapter 2, set the dates for holding the court of pleas and quarter session in Greene County on the third Mondays in February, May, August and November.
2. Acts of 1794, Chapter 8, changed the date of the court of pleas and quarter sessions in Greene County to the second Monday in February, May, August and November.
3. Acts of 1797, Chapter 6, specified that the court of pleas and quarter sessions would meet in Greene County on the fourth Mondays in January, April, July and October.
4. Acts of 1809, First Session, Chapter 93, specified that the court of pleas and quarter sessions would meet in Greene County on the fourth Mondays in January, April, July and October.
5. Acts of 1815, Chapter 51, provided that Alexander Brown was to receive all the official papers of any justice of the peace who resigned in Greene County, and that such vacancies were to be filled by the county court.
6. Private Acts of 1821, Chapter 127, provided that the court of pleas and quarter sessions in Greene County was to be held for two weeks in January and July, rather than in quarterly terms of one week.
7. Private Acts of 1919, Chapter 419, set the per diem of Greene County Justices of the Peace at \$2.50, plus \$.05 per mile for travel expenses.
8. Private Acts of 1921, Chapter 921, raised the per diem of magistrates in Greene, Washington, Carter, Johnson and Unicoi counties to \$4.00.
9. Private Acts of 1929, Chapter 260, made it unlawful for any justice of the peace of the state to have an office for the transaction of his official business in any other civil district of his county than the one in which he was elected to.

## **County Mayor**

The references below are acts which once applied to the office of county judge, or county executive in Greene County. They are included herein for historical purposes only.

1. Private Acts of 1929, Chapter 785, as amended by Private Acts of 1933, Chapter 831, created the office of county judge in Greene County. The office of chairman and chairman pro tem of the county court was abolished and all power and duties of that office were conferred to the county judge. The county judge was elected for an eight (8) year term with a salary of \$1,500 per annum.
2. Private Acts of 1955, Chapter 107, vested the county judge of Greene County the jurisdiction to issue fiats for all extraordinary process.

## **County Register**

The following acts once affected the office of county register in Greene County, but are no longer operative. Also referenced below is an act which repealed prior law without providing new substantive provisions.

1. Acts of 1805, Chapter 12, provided that all deeds, or certified copies thereof, that had been registered in the register's office of Greene County be considered in law as legal and to be admitted as evidence in any court of justice in the state.
2. Acts of 1805, Chapter 27, released James Stinson, register of Greene County, Ewen Allison and David Russell from the payment of a judgement recovered against them by the governor of

Tennessee, in the superior court of the Hamilton District.

3. Private Acts of 1827, Chapter 116, authorized George Brown, register of Greene County, to keep his office at his own house in the town of Greenville.
4. Private Acts of 1831, Chapter 162, provided that all deeds of conveyance and other instruments of writing registered in Greene County be read in evidence in trials at law or in equity.
5. Public Acts of 1917, Chapter 47, set the salary of the Greene County Register of Deeds to \$2,000 per annum.
6. Private Acts of 1923, Chapter 613, as amended by Private Acts of 1925, Chapter 57, to make it applicable to Greene County, set the salary of the register at \$2,500 per year.
7. Private Acts of 1933, Chapter 828, set the annual salary of the Greene County Register at \$2,500. This act was repealed by Private Acts of 1937, Chapter 778.

### **County Trustee**

The following acts once affected the office of county trustee in Greene County, but are no longer operative.

1. Public Acts of 1917, Chapter 47, set the salary of the Greene County Trustee to \$2,000 per annum.
2. Private Acts of 1923, Chapter 613, set the salary of the Greene County Trustee at \$3,500 per annum.
3. Private Acts of 1933, Chapter 833, lowered this salary to \$3,000 per annum.
4. Private Acts of 1937, Chapter 781, authorized the trustee to appoint a deputy trustee who would be responsible for the collection of delinquent poll taxes.

### **General Reference**

The following private or local acts constitute part of the administrative and political history of Greene County but are today no longer operative because they have either been superseded, repealed, or failed to receive local approval. Also referenced below are acts which repeal prior law without providing new substantive provisions.

1. Acts of 1786, Laws of North Carolina, Chapter 23, pardoned and consigned the offenses and misconduct of certain persons in the counties of Greene, Washington, Sullivan and Hawkins for withdrawing their allegiance from the State of North Carolina. This act was amended by Acts of 1787, Laws of North Carolina, Chapter 27 and Acts of 1788, Laws of North Carolina, Chapter 4, which extended the pardons to all persons who may have withdrawn their allegiance from the State of North Carolina.
2. Acts of 1789, Laws of North Carolina, Chapter 7, repealed Acts of 1786, Laws of North Carolina, Chapter 23 and all amendatory acts.
3. Private Acts of 1819, Chapter 100, was an unusual early act, appointing county commissioners for Greene County. The county commissioners, William Dixon, Valentine Sevier, Alexander M. Nelson, George T. Gillispy, John Harmon, Sr. and Alexander Sevier, were given control of the public monies of the county, with authority to collect any monies due from public officers or citizens. This act was amended by Private Acts of 1820, Chapter 131, to authorize these commissioners to loan public monies, provided that two securities were given, and to require an annual report to the county court of the status of the county's finances. These acts were repealed by Private Acts of 1822, Ex. Sess., Chapter 173.
4. Private Acts of 1819, Chapter 143, authorized the county court to sell the old courthouse and to deed any title or interest Greene County had in such property.
5. Private Acts of 1821, Chapter 29, authorized the state treasurer to pay John Williams, the Greene County coroner, \$32 as compensation for conveying Eleanor Woods, "a decrepit woman charged with murder of an infant" from Greene County to Jonesborough and back and for her maintenance for six months.
6. Private Acts of 1825, Chapter 105, authorized Jotham Brown of Greene County to seal and stamp all bushels, half bushels, pecks and half pecks, made or manufactured in his shop, which were agreeable to the proper standard for Greene County, and such measures, when sealed and branded by Mr. Brown, were considered as good as if branded by the proper standard keeper. This act was repealed by Private Acts of 1931, Chapter 97.
7. Public Acts of 1825, Chapter 103, authorized Sind M'Cardle of Greene County to sue and be sued, contract and be contracted, with, in her own name, and in her own behalf, and that she was given

- full power and authority to sell, dispose of, and convey, all or any part of such property or estate as she may acquire.
8. Private Acts of 1826, Chapter 40, provided for the judge of the first circuit court of Greene County to hear and determine a petition from Thomas G. Watkins to divorce his wife Susan W. Watkins.
  9. Private Acts of 1827, Chapter 102, authorized the justices of the peace in Greene County to lay and collect a tax for the purpose of finishing a courthouse.
  10. Private Acts of 1831, Chapter 249, Section 2, empowered Amey Harris, wife of William Harris of Greene County, to have, possess and enjoy property, both real and personal, to sue and be sued, plead and be impleaded, and in all respects to enjoy the rights and privileges of an unmarried woman excepting the privilege of intermarrying with another man.
  11. Private Acts of 1832, Chapter 2, authorized Henry Ripley of Greene County to emancipate his slave William.
  12. Private Acts of 1832, Chapter 35, authorized Sarah Stacy of Greene County to exhibit her petition for a divorce to the judge of the circuit court of said county.
  13. Private Acts of 1832, Chapter 65, authorized Alexander Brown, keeper of the justices' records for Greene County, to appoint a deputy keeper of said office.
  14. Private Acts of 1832, Chapter 80, required the secretary of state to furnish the keeper of the justices' record of Greene County with the first volume of the Haywood and Cobbs' Revisal.
  15. Private Acts of 1832, Chapter 135, authorized the register of East Tennessee at Knoxville to issue a grant to John Rymall of Greene County for sixteen and three fourth acres of land, situated in Greene County on the south side of the Nolichucky River.
  16. Private Acts of 1833, Chapter 131, authorized Catharin Hale, of Greene County, to execute a deed of conveyance to Daniel Lowry for eighty acres of land in McMinn County.
  17. Private Acts of 1833, Chapter 226, Section 2, authorized John Weems to emancipate his slave, provided, that Mr. Weems gave a bond with approved security that his slave would not become a public charge to any county in this state.
  18. Private Acts of 1833, Chapter 252, authorized the register of East Tennessee to issue a grant of three hundred acres in Greene County to John Balch.
  19. Private Acts of 1833, Chapter 275, authorized the county court of Greene County to emancipate slaves Charles and Delpha.
  20. Private Acts of 1917, Chapter 463, authorized the town of Greenville to appropriate money for the purpose of building and furnishing, jointly with Greene County, a high school building, within the corporate limits of said town, to be used jointly by the town of Greenville and Greene County.
  21. Private Acts of 1919, Chapter 66, exempted Greene County from the general law regulating the salaries of county officials.
  22. Private Acts of 1919, Chapter 213, made women over twenty-one eligible to serve as deputy register in Greene County, with all the powers, rights and responsibilities of that office.
  23. Private Acts of 1919, Chapter 274, provided that women, either single or married, over the age of twenty-one, could serve as a deputy clerk of the chancery, circuit and county courts as well as a deputy register or deputy trustee, in the counties of Greene, Weakley, Rutherford, Montgomery, Giles or Fayette. This act required the women to post bond of \$2,500 before assuming office, and it also abolished the defense of coverture, a common law presumption that a married woman's legal existence was "covered" by that of her husband. Under coverture, she could not be held legally responsible for her actions; her husband was. Acts such as these abolished this defense, and by making a woman responsible for her actions, a barrier to her employment was removed.
  24. Private Acts of 1931, Chapter 769, provided that the Greene County Quarterly Court could borrow money to pay premiums on county bonds, and issue interest-bearing notes for the repayment of those borrowed funds.
  25. Private Acts of 1933, Chapter 832, set out the procedure by which county officers could employ and pay deputies.
  26. Private Acts of 1935, Chapter 738, removed the minority of Jefferson Davis Sluder.
  27. Private Acts of 1935, Chapter 739, removed the minority of Anna Murray Monk.
  28. Private Acts of 1982, Chapter 212, would have created a finance and budge committee for Greene County, but this act was rejected by the proper authorities of Greene County and therefore never became law.

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