



July 05, 2024

---

# Court System - Historical Notes

---

Dear Reader:

The following document was created from the CTAS website ([ctas.tennessee.edu](http://ctas.tennessee.edu)). This website is maintained by CTAS staff and seeks to represent the most current information regarding issues relative to Tennessee county government.

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,

The University of Tennessee  
County Technical Assistance Service  
226 Anne Dallas Dudley Boulevard, Suite 400  
Nashville, Tennessee 37219  
615.532.3555 phone  
615.532.3699 fax  
[www.ctas.tennessee.edu](http://www.ctas.tennessee.edu)

Table of Contents

<b>Court System - Historical Notes .....</b>	<b>3</b>
--	----------

# Court System - Historical Notes

## **Board of Jury Commissioners - Jurors**

The following acts once affected jurors or boards of jury commissioners in Decatur County, but are no longer operative.

1. Acts of 1907, Chapter 98, created the Board of Jury Commissioners for Decatur County which would consist of three members to be appointed by the Circuit Court Judge from different parts of the County, no more than two to be from the same political party, who would have no suit pending in court, nor any interest in any, and who would not seek to be appointed to the position. The Clerk of the Court would notify them of their appointment setting a time for meeting at least thirty days prior to the next term of court. The members would gather on that day and be sworn with the oath set out verbatim in the act. The Jury Commissioners would then select 25 jurors, or more, if the Judge ordered. Those selected would have their names certified and entered upon a book kept by the Circuit Court Clerk. At least ten days before the opening of Court, the Clerk would deliver the first 25 names to the Sheriff to be summoned. Provisions were made to summon special panels and to replenish panels if, and when, they might become exhausted. No one would be excused except by the Judge and then only for the reasons stated in the act. The Grand Jury would be selected from those chosen for the term. The Commissioners could be punished for a willful failure to serve and would be paid \$2.00 for each day actually spent in the discharge of these responsibilities.
2. Private Acts of 1911, Chapter 115, created Boards of Jury Commissioners for the counties of Hardin, Chester, Benton, Decatur, and Madison. There would be three member Boards appointed by the Circuit, or Criminal, Court Judges. They must be residents of the county, of good moral character, with no suit pending, and with no record of having solicited the position. If there were more than one court, each Judge would appoint a Board for the court over which he presided, and submit their names to the Clerk of the Court serving him. The members would meet, after being notified, at least 30 days before the term of the court, and be sworn according to the oath in the act. The Board would then proceed to select 37, or more if ordered, names from the tax rolls, or other public sources, who would serve as the Grand and Petit Jurors for that term of court. The remainder of the terms and conditions of this act, including the compensation of the Board members, were similar to those stated in the analysis of the preceding act.
3. Private Acts of 1915, Chapter 565, declared that hereafter in Decatur and Cumberland Counties every juror would be entitled to receive \$2.00 for each days' attendance as a juror, and such mileage, ferriage, and tolls as were provided by law.
4. Private Acts of 1941, Chapter 488, provided for a six member Board of Jury Commissioners for Decatur County who would be appointed by the Circuit, or Criminal, Court Judge. They could not be attorneys or county officials, or have a suit pending, or an interest in any, nor could they solicit the appointment. At the end of two years, three members would be appointed for two years, and three members for four years, with all vacancies to be filled in the same way. The members must take the oath prescribed in the act, and select a Chairman from among their own number. The Circuit Court Clerk, or his deputy, if desired, would serve as Clerk to the Board, after also being sworn according to the oath in the act. On the first Monday in July, and every two years thereafter, or within 20 days thereof, the Board would meet and select from the tax rolls, or from other public sources of information, the names of upright, honorable men, equal to 1/5 of the number voting in the last presidential election, but, in no case, to be more than 2,000 nor less than 800 names. These would be the jury list for the courts needing them for the next two years, the names being certified by the Board and properly recorded by the Clerk. One-sixth, or two-fifths, if preferred, of these names would be selected and recorded separately as prospective Grand Jurors. All names would also be written on separate slips of paper, placed in a box for each type of jury, which would then be locked and sealed, and not opened except in the presence of the Judge to whom the box would be delivered and from which the Judge would draw the names of both Grand and Petit Jurors, and the boxes resealed, all ten days before the opening of court. The list as then constituted, would be sent to the Sheriff who would summon them as jurors. Penalties were provided for all who might thus violate the terms of this act, the terms of which would not apply to the Chancery Courts of the County. Jury Commissioners would receive \$3.00 per day for each day actually spent in service under this act.
5. Private Acts of 1957, Chapter 367, would have set the per diem compensation for jurors in Decatur County at \$6.00 per day for each day, or part thereof, spent in service as a juror, plus ten cents per mile of actual travel between home and court house if the juror lived more than five

miles away. The Foreman and the Clerk of the Grand Jury would be paid \$8.00 per day and ten cents per mile. All of the above was made subject to approval by the people in a referendum. This Act was rejected by the Quarterly Court of Decatur County and never became an effective law because of the Home Rule provisions of the State Constitution.

6. Private Acts of 1959, Chapter 368, set the compensation of the Foreman of the Grand Jury in Decatur County at \$8.00 per day for each day the Grand Jury was actually in session, which would be paid out of the county treasury in the same way as other jurors are paid. This Act was properly ratified by the Quarterly Court of the County but does not exceed the amount allowed under the general laws of the State.

### **Chancery Court**

The following acts form an outline of the development of equity jurisdiction in Decatur County, although they no longer have the force of law since they have either been superseded by general law, repealed, or failed to receive local ratification. Also referenced below are acts which repeal prior law without providing new substantive provisions.

1. Acts of 1847-48, Chapter 125, provided that the citizens of Perry and Decatur County may at their option file their Bills in Chancery Court at Lexington or at Huntington.
2. Acts of 1853-54, Chapter 42, created the Sixth Chancery Division of the State which would be composed of the counties of Carroll, Benton, Humphreys, Dickson, Hickman, Perry, Decatur, Henderson, McNairy, Hardin, Wayne, and Lawrence. The terms of Court would start in Decaturville on the third Monday in June and December of each year. The Chancellor of the new Sixth Division would appoint a Clerk and Master for the Chancery Courts in Benton, Decatur, Perry, and McNairy Counties.
3. Acts of 1853-54, Chapter 101, formed Decatur County and Perry County into a separate Chancery Division whose Courts would be held by the Chancellor of the Western Division at the Courthouse in Decaturville on the third Monday in June and December.
4. Acts of 1853-54, Chapter 119, stated that, after the passage of this Act, the citizens of Decatur County shall have the privilege of filing their suits in Chancery at Savannah, in Hardin County, or, at Lexington, in Henderson County, or, at Huntington, in Carroll County, or, at Waynesboro, in Wayne County, at their discretion.
5. Acts of 1855-56, Chapter 112, changed the date for the terms of Court in the 6th Chancery Division which was then composed of the Counties of Carroll, Henderson, McNairy, Hardin, Wayne, Lawrence, Hickman, Dickson, Humphreys, Benton, Perry, and Decatur where the Courts would convene on the first Monday in April and October at Decaturville.
6. Public Acts of 1857-58, Chapter 88, divided Tennessee into the East, Middle, Western, Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Chancery Divisions. The 6th Division was made up of the Counties of Carroll, Henderson, McNairy, Hardin, Wayne, Lawrence, Hickman, Dickson, Humphreys, Benton, Perry, and Decatur whose courts would continue to meet on the first Monday in April and October in Decaturville.
7. Acts of 1859-60, Chapter 187, Section 3, reset the terms of the Chancery Court of Decatur County to the second Monday in June and November.
8. Public Acts of 1861 (1st Ex. Sess.), Chapter 16, rescheduled the terms of the Chancery Court for Perry and Decatur County. Decatur would start the Chancery Court terms on the second Monday in May and December.
9. Public Acts of 1865-66 (2nd Ex. Sess.), Chapter 14, Section 2, changed the starting dates for the terms of the Chancery Court in Decatur County to the first Monday in June and December.
10. Public Acts of 1866-67 (2nd Ex. Sess.), Chapter 4, rescheduled the dates for the Chancery Court terms for all the counties in the 5th Chancery District which was then composed of the Counties of Hickman, Dickson, Humphreys, Henderson, McNairy, Hardin, Wayne, Lawrence, Perry, and Decatur where the terms of Court would begin on the first Monday in June and December.
11. Public Acts of 1869-70 (2nd Ex. Sess.), Chapter 32, divided the State into twelve Chancery Districts. The Ninth Chancery District contained the Counties of Benton, Hickman, Henderson, McNairy, Lawrence, Dickson, Humphreys, Decatur, Lewis, Perry, Hardin and Wayne.
12. Acts of 1869-70, (2nd Ex. Sess.), Chapter 47, set up the Chancery Court term schedules for every county in the state. Decatur County would take up the Chancery Court docket on the first Monday in February and August.
13. Public Acts of 1870-71, (2nd Ex. Sess.), Chapter 10, rearranged the starting dates for the

Chancery Court terms in all the counties of the 9th Chancery District shifting Decatur County to the third Monday in February and August at Decaturville.

14. Public Acts of 1873, Chapter 5, set up a different schedule of Chancery Court terms in the 9th Division. The Chancery Court for Decatur County would meet at Decaturville on the third Monday in March and September.
15. Public Acts of 1879, Chapter 88, changed the terms of some of the Chancery Courts in the Ninth Chancery Division but did not change Decatur County from the third Monday in March and September.
16. Public Acts of 1881, Chapter 162, reset some of the Chancery Court terms in the Ninth Division which was still composed of the same counties enumerated above but Decatur County would continue to hold the Chancery Court on the third Monday in March and September.
17. Public Acts of 1885 (Ex. Sess.), Chapter 20, reorganized the entire lower court system in Tennessee, creating eleven Chancery Divisions in the process. The Seventh Division had in it the Counties of Maury, Giles, Lawrence, Lewis, Wayne, Hickman, Hardin, Perry, Decatur, Benton, and Dickson. The Chancery terms in Decatur would start on the third Monday in March and September as they had for several years. This Act was one of several considered by the Supreme Court in Flynn v. State (1958), 203 Tenn. 341, 313 S.W.2d 249.
18. Public Acts of 1887, Chapter 5, altered the court dates for the Counties in the Seventh Chancery Division. Decatur would convene the Chancery Courts on the third Monday in May and November.
19. Public Acts of 1899, Chapter 427, was a complete renovation of the lower judicial system of the State which organized the equity courts into ten Chancery Divisions. The 8th Chancery Division contained the Counties of Decatur, Hardin, Chester, Benton, McNairy, Crockett, Henderson, Carroll, Henry, Madison, and Perry. Court would begin in Decatur County on the first Monday in January and June.
20. Acts of 1903, Chapter 36, changed the terms of the Court in the 8th Chancery Division assigning Decatur County to the third Monday in April and October.
21. Public Acts of 1931 (2nd Ex. Sess.), Chapter 38, was the last major change in the court system which was reported in the private acts. This Act provided for fourteen Chancery Divisions, of which the 8th Chancery Division consisted of the Counties of Carroll, Henry, McNairy, Crockett, Hardeman, Henderson, Hardin, Benton, Chester, and Decatur where the terms of Court would commence on the third Monday in April and October.
22. Public Acts of 1967, Chapter 22, changed the terms of the Decatur County Chancery Court to the second Monday in May and November by amending Section 16-244, Tennessee Code Annotated.
23. Private Acts of 1982, Chapter 366, vested jurisdiction of probate matters and the administration of estates in the General Sessions Court and County Clerk in Decatur County. This act failed to receive local approval.

### **Chancery Court - Clerk and Master**

The reference list below contains acts which once applied to the clerk and master in Decatur County. Also referenced below are acts which repeal prior law without providing new substantive provisions.

1. Private Acts of 1911, Chapter 177, provided that the Clerk and Masters of the Chancery Court of Decatur County, identified by the use of the 1910 Federal Census figures, would be paid an annual salary of \$500 if the Clerk and Master would file a sworn, itemized statement with the County Judge, or the Chairman, showing the total amount of the fees collected in that office for the year. If the fees were less than the salary, the county would pay the difference to the Clerk and Master out of the regular funds, but, if the fees were more than the salary, the excess could be retained as his own.
2. Private Acts of 1919, Chapter 493, amended Private Acts of 1911, Chapter 177, Item One, above, by increasing the salary of the Clerk and Master from \$500 to \$750 per year under the same terms and conditions as were stated in the 1911 Act.
3. Private Acts of 1935, Chapter 783, stated that the Clerk and Master of Decatur County shall be paid an annual salary of \$1,000, payable equally on January 1, April 1, July 1, and October 1, of each year, provided the Clerk and Master filed a sworn, itemized account on those dates with the County Judge, or the Chairman, showing the total amount of the fees collected by that office. If the fees were less than the salary, the county paid, but, if the fees were more than the salary, the Clerk and Master was allowed to retain the excess.
4. Private Acts of 1943, Chapter 369, amended Private Acts of 1935, Chapter 783, by changing the

census year quoted from 1910 to the year 1930 (which would make the act applicable to Decatur County because the figures would not then fit the 1930 Census figures of 10,106). The Clerk and Master's annual salary was raised under this Act from \$1,000 to \$1,200.

5. Private Acts of 1945, Chapter 441, declared that the Clerk and Master of Decatur County would be paid \$1,200 per year in equal monthly installments out of the regular funds of the County Treasury, and all the fees and commissions of the office would be and become the properties of the County. The Clerk and Master was still required to file the sworn, itemized statement of fees with the County Judge on or before the 15th of each month except when the fees exceeded the salary and the Clerk and Master was allowed to retain the excess.
6. Private Acts of 1949, Chapter 824, amended Private Acts of 1945, Chapter 441, by raising the annual salary of the Clerk and Master of Decatur County from \$1,200 to \$1,500 and he was permitted to keep all the fees of the office.
7. Private Acts of 1953-54, Chapter 54, established the fifth and sixth Chancery Divisions of Tennessee. Chancery court would be held at Decaturville for Decatur county on the third Mondays in June and December.

### **Circuit Court**

The following acts were once applicable to the circuit court of Decatur County but now have no effect, having been repealed, superseded, or having failed to win local approval. Also referenced below are acts which repeal prior law without providing new substantive provisions.

1. Acts of 1845-46, Chapter 21, added Benton and Decatur Counties to the 14th Judicial Circuit.
2. Acts of 1849-50, Chapter 70, added Hickman County to the 14th Judicial Circuit which now was composed of the Counties of Perry, Wayne, Lawrence, McNairy, Hardin, and Decatur. Court terms would begin in Decatur County on the first Monday in March, July, and November.
3. Acts of 1855-56, Chapter 158, attached the Circuit Court of Decatur County to the 10th Judicial Circuit and fixed the opening dates for the terms of Court on the third Monday in January, May, and September with directions that all process and appearance bonds be made to conform to those times.
4. Acts of 1857-58, Chapter 82, provided that the Circuit Court of Decatur County shall hereafter commence on the first Monday in March, July, and November and the courts are hereby attached to the 11th Judicial Circuit as the Circuits are currently numbered under the law in the revised Code.
5. Acts of 1865, Chapter 37, assigned the Counties of Wayne, Hardin, Hickman, Perry, Henderson, McNairy, and Decatur to the 12th Judicial Circuit as a first step in the post Civil War judicial recovery. Court would begin in Decaturville on the first Monday in May, August, and November.
6. Public Acts of 1865-66, (2nd Ex. Sess.), Chapter 14, rearranged the 12th Judicial Circuit. Decatur would call the Circuit Court order on the second Monday in April, August, and December.
7. Public Acts of 1866-67 (2nd Ex. Sess.), Chapter 40, changed the schedule of term for the Circuit Courts in the 12th Judicial Circuit but only changed Decatur County to start on the first Monday in April, August, and December instead of the second Monday in those months.
8. Public Acts of 1867-68, Chapter 8, changed court terms for the 12th Judicial Circuit which contained the Counties of Hardin, Wayne, Perry, McNairy, and Decatur where court would begin its term on the fourth Monday in the months of March, July, and November.
9. Public Acts of 1868-69 (2nd Ex. Sess.), Chapter 15, set the term of court for an apparently reconstituted 12th Judicial Circuit which now named the Counties of Lewis, Hickman, Perry, McNairy, and Decatur where the Court terms would begin on the third Monday in April, August, and December.
10. Public Acts of 1869-70 (2nd Ex. Sess.), Chapter 31, was a complete reorganization of the Judicial Circuits in Tennessee, forming fifteen regular and one special, Judicial Circuits. The 11th Judicial Circuit contained the Counties of Hardin, Wayne, Lewis, Hickman, Perry, Decatur, Henderson, and McNairy.
11. Public Acts of 1869-70 (2nd Ex. Sess.), Chapter 46, scheduled the opening dates for the annual three terms of the Circuit Courts for every county in the state of Tennessee. Decatur County's Circuit Court would open on the second Monday in February, June, and October.
12. Public Acts of 1871, Chapter 17, rearranged the opening dates for the Circuit Courts of all the counties in the 11th Judicial Circuit. Decatur County would begin the terms of the Circuit Court on the first Monday in February, June, and October.

13. Public Acts of 1871, Chapter 70, is a duplicate of Acts of 1871, Chapter 17, above.
14. Public Acts of 1875, Chapter 18, brought about more changes in the Circuit Court terms of the counties in the 11th Judicial Circuit. The Circuit Courts in Decatur County would start on the third Monday in February, June, and October.
15. Public Acts of 1881, Chapter 83, reset the Circuit Court terms in the 11th Judicial Circuit, changing Decatur County to the first Monday in March, July, and November.
16. Acts of 1881, (Ex. Sess.), Chapter 2, changed court terms for some of the counties in the 11th Judicial Circuit but left Decatur's Circuit Court to begin on the first Monday in March, July, and November.
17. Public Acts of 1885, (Ex. Sess.), Chapter 20, was a major overhaul of the lower Judicial system of the state. Fourteen regular, and one special, Judicial Circuits were created. The 11th Circuit was formed by the Counties of McNairy, Chester, Madison, Henderson, Perry, and Decatur where the Court would begin the terms on the second Monday in January, May, and September.
18. Public Acts of 1887, Chapter 94, rescheduled the three annual Circuit Court terms for all the counties in the 11th Judicial Circuit. Decatur County's Court would convene on the fourth Monday in March, July, and November.
19. Public Acts of 1895, Chapter 46, established a separate criminal division of the Circuit Courts in Madison, Chester, McNairy, Henderson, Decatur, Perry, and Benton Counties whose jurisdiction would be coextensive with the boundaries of the 11th Judicial Circuit. The Act set up terms of court for the new division in all the counties named above fixing the dates for Decatur County on the first Monday in May, September, and January. The court would determine all criminal offenses under the same authority and jurisdiction formerly possessed and exercised by the Circuit Courts. The Clerk of the Circuit Court would transfer all the records of a criminal nature to this Court, and all outstanding process and bonds would be made to conform to the terms and conditions of this Act. The Governor was required to appoint a judge for the new division who would serve until September 1, 1896, when his successor, elected by the people in August's general election, would take over. The Attorney-General of the 11th Judicial Circuit would prosecute in the new division.
20. Public Acts of 1895, Chapter 124, fixed different terms of Court for some of the counties in the criminal division of the 11th Judicial Circuit. Decatur County's Criminal Court would hereafter start on the fourth Monday in January, May, and September.
21. Public Acts of 1899, Chapter 155, abolished the Criminal Courts of the 11th Judicial Circuit and the act creating the same, Acts of 1895, Chapter 46, is specifically repealed, the criminal jurisdiction being returned to the Circuit Courts where it reposed before the passage of that Act.
22. Public Acts of 1899, Chapter 409, Section 10, specifically conferred the criminal jurisdiction of Henderson, Benton, Decatur, Perry, Madison, Chester, and McNairy counties upon the Circuit Court and its judge, but Madison County would remain a part of the 11th Judicial Circuit for civil cases only, and Benton County was moved to the 12th Judicial Circuit. Court terms were scheduled to begin in Decatur county on the second Monday in January, May, and September.
23. Public Acts of 1899, Chapter 427, was a general reorganization of all the courts in the lower judicial system of the state forming the counties into fourteen Judicial Circuits. The 12th Judicial Circuit comprised the Counties of Hardeman, McNairy, Hardin, Chester, Henderson, Decatur, and Madison. Court would begin in Decaturville on the first Monday in March, July, and November.
24. Acts of 1901, Chapter 264, changed the terms of the Circuit Courts of Perry County and Decatur County which would open the court on the fourth Monday in March, July, and November.
25. Acts of 1901, Chapter 374, was an exact duplicate of Chapter 264, Item 24, above.
26. Acts of 1905, Chapter 192, stated that the Circuit Courts in the 12th Judicial Circuit would begin their terms as listed in this act. Decatur County fell on the second Monday in April, August, and December. All process and appearance bonds would be made to conform to those dates.
27. Acts of 1905, Chapter 464, changed the opening dates of the Circuit Court terms in Perry County and in Decatur County where the court would meet the first Monday in March, July, and November, at Decaturville.
28. Acts of 1907, Chapter 338, rescheduled the terms of the Circuit, setting the fourth Monday in February, June, and October as the opening dates for the Circuit Court in Decatur County.
29. Public Acts of 1931 (2nd Ex. Sess.), Chapter 38, was the last great revision of the lower courts in Tennessee which appeared in the Private Acts, all subsequent legislation in this regard being incorporated into the Tennessee Code Annotated. Twenty Judicial Circuits were formed for the 95

counties including the 12th which consisted of the counties of Madison, for criminal jurisdiction only, Chester, Henderson, Hardin, and the Decatur Court was set to start on the fourth Monday in February, June, and October.

30. Public Acts of 1965, Chapter 204, Section 5, created the 22nd Judicial Circuit placing in it the counties of Carroll, Benton, Hardin, and Decatur whose courts would start on the third Monday in February, June, and October. All cases, except those pending and under advisement, were to be transferred to the new Circuit. The Judge and the District Attorney were to be elected in August, 1966, and take office on September 1, 1966. The Judge, when elected, was authorized to employ a Secretary at \$1,500 per year who would serve at his pleasure and direction.

### **Circuit Court - Clerk**

The following acts have no current effect, but once applied to the Decatur County Circuit Court Clerk. They were repealed, superseded, or never received local approval. Also referenced below are acts which repeal prior law without providing new substantive provisions.

1. Acts of 1847-48, Chapter 84, made it the duty of the Circuit Court Clerk of Decatur County to transcribe all judgements, orders, and decrees which may have been rendered or made by the said Circuit Court since the organization of Decatur County, into a well-bound book which constitute the record of that court in Decatur County and be entitled to due and full faith and credit as such. The Clerk would also deliver to the Circuit Court Clerk of Perry County, on or before next July 1, all the records of cases which were in his hands before the County was divided. The Clerk of Perry County's Circuit Court was empowered to issue any necessary additional process in these cases.
2. Acts of 1903, Chapter 255, was a salary act with statewide effect which concerned only the Circuit Court Clerks. The salaries were set according to the population class of the county in which the Clerks were located and provided the Clerks would file a sworn, itemized report with the County Judge, or Chairman, each year showing the total amount of fees collected in that office. If the fees failed to equal the salary, which in the case of Decatur County was \$500 per year, the County would pay the difference, but, if the fees exceeded the salary, the Clerk was allowed to retain the excess. This was one of a series of similar salary acts, or anti-fee bills, which preceded the current law on this manner.
3. Private Acts of 1919, Chapter 165, provided that the Circuit Court Clerk of Decatur County, identified by the use of the 1910 Federal Census figures, would be paid an annual salary of \$800, provided the Clerk complied with the conditions of filing a sworn, itemized account as stated above.
4. Private Acts of 1919, Chapter 347, amended Private Acts of 1919, Chapter 165, above, by changing the population figures quoted in that act, so as to make the act apply to Decatur County.
5. Private Acts of 1935, Chapter 226, amended Private Acts of 1919, Chapter 165, and Private Acts of 1919, Chapter 347, so as, to increase the annual salary of the Circuit Court Clerk from \$800 to \$1,000 with all other terms and conditions to remain as they were stated in above acts.
6. Private Acts of 1945, Chapter 442, set the annual salary of the Circuit Court Clerk of Decatur County at \$1,200, payable in the equal monthly installments out of regular funds of the County, provided the Clerk filed a sworn, itemized statement with the County Judge, or the Chairman, by the 15th day of the month showing the amount of fees collected the preceding month. The report was not required if the fees exceeded the salary, the excess becoming the property of the Clerk.
7. Private Acts of 1949, Chapter 825, amended Private Acts of 1945, Chapter 442, above by increasing the annual salary of the Circuit Court Clerk from \$1,200 to \$1,500, all other conditions to remain unchanged.
8. Private Acts of 1961, Chapter 152, provided that the Circuit Court Clerk of Decatur County would be paid an additional \$1,800 per year for being the Clerk of the General Sessions Court which amount would be over and above, and in addition to the salary allowed the Clerk under Section 8-2405, Tennessee Code Annotated, and which was permissible under Public Acts of 1959, Chapter 109, Section 16, which created the Courts of General Sessions. The Act was not approved by the Quarterly County Court of Decatur County and failed to become an effective law.

### **District Attorney General - Assistants and Criminal Investigators**

The following acts once affecting Decatur County are no longer in effect but are listed here for historical purposes. Also referenced below are acts which repeal prior law without providing new substantive provisions.



1. Public Acts of 1899, Chapter 199, declared that the Attorney-General of the 11th Judicial Circuit shall attend upon and perform the duties of that office, as prescribed by law, in the Circuit Courts of the counties which composed the circuit, which were Madison, Chester, McNairy, Henderson, Decatur, Perry, and Benton.
2. Public Acts of 1899, Chapter 311, concerned only the county of Madison in the 11th Judicial Circuit.
3. Private Acts of 1919, Chapter 166, repealed Private Acts of 1907, Chapter 381, which attempted to create the position of Assistant Attorney General in Decatur County.
4. Public Acts of 1967, Chapter 65, created the office of Assistant District Attorney General for the Twenty-Second Judicial Circuit.
5. Public Acts of 1976, Chapter 560, created an additional office of Assistant District Attorney General for the Twenty-Second Judicial Circuit.

### **General Sessions Court**

The following act once affected the general sessions court of Decatur County, but is no longer in effect and is included herein for reference purposes.

1. Private Acts of 1982, Chapter 366, would have placed probate jurisdiction in the General Sessions Court and made the County Clerk the clerk of the court. There was a deadline of September 1, 1982 for this act to be ratified locally. We are advised that the Decatur County Commission never took a vote on Chapter 366 which renders it void, thus leaving probate jurisdiction in the Chancery Court of Decatur County.

### **Secretarial Assistance**

The following act is no longer in effect but is listed here for historical purposes.

1. Public Acts of 1939, Chapter 71, authorized the Chancellor of the 8th division, to which Decatur County belonged, to employ a Secretary to serve at his pleasure and discretion.

---

**Source URL:** <https://www.ctas.tennessee.edu/private-acts/court-system-historical-notes-18>