



March 31, 2025

Administration - Historical Notes

Dear Reader:

The following document was created from the CTAS website (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

Table of Contents

Administration - Historical Notes	3
--	----------

Administration - Historical Notes

County Clerk

The following acts once affected the office of county clerk in Washington County. They are included herein for historical purposes. Also referenced below are acts which repeal prior law without providing new substantive provisions.

1. Private Acts of 1917, Chapter 14, made women over the age of 21 eligible to be appointed, and to serve, as deputy clerks in Washington County.
2. Private Acts of 1933, Chapter 609, provided for the appointment of deputies to the county court clerk of Washington County.
3. Private Acts of 1933, Chapter 628, authorized the Washington County Court Clerk to appoint assistants and fixed their compensation.
4. Private Acts of 1933, Chapter 651, set the maximum compensation of the Washington County Court Clerk at \$3,250 per annum.

County Legislative Body

The following acts once applied to the quarterly court or the county legislative body of Washington County and are included herein for historical purposes. Also referenced below are acts which repeal prior law without providing new substantive provisions.

1. Acts of 1794, Chapter 8, set the time for holding the Washington County Court on the third Mondays in February, May, August and November.
2. Acts of 1797, First Session, Chapter 6, set the time for holding the court of pleas and quarter sessions court in Washington County on the first Monday of February, May, August and November.
3. Acts of 1809, First Session, Chapter 93, set the time for holding the courts of pleas and quarter sessions in Washington County on the first Monday of February, May, August and November.
4. Private Acts of 1821, Chapter 127, set the time for holding the court of pleas and quarter sessions in Washington County to the second Monday of January, April, July and October.
5. Private Acts of 1831, Chapter 227, changed the times for holding the Washington County Court to the third Mondays in January, April, July and October.
6. Private Acts of 1833, Chapter 86, authorized the county court of Washington County at their discretion to collect and have securely bound in one or more books all the records of said court.
7. Private Acts of 1921, Chapter 921, set the per diem compensation of justices of the peace while attending the Washington County Quarterly Court at \$4.00.
8. Private Acts of 1929, Chapter 18, validated the issuance of \$500,000 in funding bonds used by Washington County, dated January 1, 1929, and the proceedings of the quarterly county court which authorized said bonds and provided for the levy and collection of a tax on all taxable property in said county for the purpose of paying the principal and interest of said bonds.
9. Private Acts of 1931, Chapter 187, validated the issuance of \$500,000 in funding bonds used Washington County, dated January 1, 1931, and the proceedings of the quarterly county court which authorized said notes, and provided for the levy and collection of a tax on all taxable property in said county for the purpose of paying the principal and interest of said notes.
10. Private Acts of 1937, Chapter 83, validated all actions taken by the Washington County Court in regard to a \$200,000 bond issuance dated January 1, 1937.
11. Private Acts of 1961, Chapter 85, set the time for holding the Washington County Quarterly Court on the first Mondays in January, April, July and October.

County Mayor

The references below are of acts which once applied to the office of county judge or county executive in Washington County. They are included herein for historical purposes only. Also referenced below are acts which repeal prior law without providing new substantive provisions.

1. Private Acts of 1931, Chapter 711, created and regulated the office of county judge for Washington County. The act fixed the county judge's salary, defined his duties and jurisdiction, fixed the term of office and abolished the office of the chairman of the Washington County Court. This act was repealed by Private Acts of 1935, Chapter 41.

2. Private Acts of 1935, Chapter 42, as amended by Private Acts of 1937, Chapter 434, Private Acts of 1949, Chapter 682, and Private Acts of 1955, Chapter 49, created in all counties having a population of not less than 45,805, nor more than 45,820, according to the Federal Census of 1930, the office of chairman of the county court. Such officer received as compensation for his services the sum of \$7,000 per annum and of that amount \$1,000 was deemed to be reimbursable expenses to the chairman in the discharge of his duties including travel within the county. The chairman was elected by the qualified voters for a term of four (4) years.
3. Private Acts of 1949, Chapter 682, amended Private Acts of 1935, Chapter 42, so as to increase the term of the office of county chairman, increase the compensation of said office and to define the qualifications of the person elected to or holding said office. This act was repealed by Private Acts of 1955, Chapter 48.

County Register

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

1. Public Acts of 1825, Chapter 18, provided that it was to be the duty of the surveyor general who last held the office in the sixth district to deposit all the books and other documents belonging to said office, with the county register of Washington County. The county register of Washington County was directed to give copies of plats and certificates of survey to any person or persons entitled to the same, in all cases where the original plats and certificates may have been lost or mislaid.
2. Public Acts of 1826, Chapter 42, provided that the county register of Washington County certify any balances of warrants in the sixth surveyor's office.
3. Private Acts of 1831, Chapter 162, provided that all deeds of conveyances and other instruments of writing registered in Washington County be good and valid in law and equity as if the same had been indorsed and certified in the most formal and legal manner. The deeds of conveyances were allowed to be read as evidence on trails at law or in equity, in all cases.
4. Private Acts of 1933, Chapter 646, fixed the maximum compensation of the Washington county register at \$3,250 per annum.

County Trustee

The following acts once affected the office of county trustee in Washington County, but are no longer operative. Also referenced below are acts which repeal prior law without providing new substantive provisions.

1. Private Acts of 1933, Chapter 625, provided for the appointment of a deputy trustee for Washington County and fixed his compensation.
2. Private Acts of 1933, Chapter 626, provided for the appointment of a deputy trustee at Jonesborough, Washington County.
3. Private Acts of 1933, Chapter 627, fixed the maximum compensation of the Washington County Trustee at \$3,250 per annum.

County Attorney

The following acts once affected the office of county attorney in Washington County, but are no longer operative. Also referenced below are acts which repeal prior law without providing new substantive provisions.

1. Private Acts of 2012, Chapter 69, created the office of county attorney for Washington County. Private Acts of 2015, Chapter 15, abolished the office of county attorney for Washington County.

Purchasing

1. Acts of 1779, Laws of North Carolina, Chapter 29, allowed settlers and inhabitants lying between the Holston River and the State of Virginia to have additional time for entering their respective lands, plantations and improvements until the first day of May.

General Reference

The following private or local acts constitute part of the administrative and political history of Washington 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 1799, Chapter 37, appointed commissions to settle the accounts of the commissions who

- had overseen the construction of the courthouse and jail in Washington County, as provided in Acts of 1794, Chapter 15. This act was repealed by Acts of 1801, Chapter 66.
2. Acts of 1801, Chapter 4, authorized the governor of the state to procure correct and authentic copies of land entries which were made in the office of John Carter, late entry taker of Washington County.
 3. Acts of 1805, Chapter 1, prevented the exportation of unmerchantable commodities. The places of inspection in Washington County were at Jonesborough, Brownsborough, Peter Range's mill and Boon's Creek.
 4. Acts of 1805, Chapter 71, appointed Isaac Depew, Joseph Young and Joseph Brown of Washington County as commissioners to contract for the public buildings and regulation of the Town of Jonesborough.
 5. Acts of 1811, Chapter 79, established a bank in Knoxville with a capital stock of \$400,000 which was divided among subscribers from several counties. David Deaderick, John M'Alister Jr. and Adam M'Kee of Washington County received 440 shares of the capital stock.
 6. Acts of 1812, Chapter 19, dissolved the bonds of matrimony between Elizabeth Woods and her husband John Woods of Washington County.
 7. Acts of 1812, Chapter 21, authorized the commissioner of East Tennessee to issue a duplicate certificate land warrant for sixty-eight acres to Joseph Brown of Washington County.
 8. Acts of 1813, Chapter 92, authorized the treasurer of East Tennessee to reimburse to Joseph Brown, sheriff and collector of Washington County, the sum of \$33.13½, which sum was over and above what he was bound to pay in taxable property.
 9. Private Acts of 1819, Chapter 81, authorized the removal of the surveyor's office of Alexander M. Nelson, of the sixth district, from Jonesborough in Washington County to Greenville in Greene County.
 10. Private Acts of 1825, Chapter 170, authorized a standard keeper to procure stamps and to stamp commodities as to the proper measure for Washington County.
 11. Private Acts of 1829-30, Chapter 213, authorized a survey of Washington County to determine the number of square miles therein.
 12. Private Acts of 1832, Chapter 16, extended the privileges granted to Samuel Mock in erecting and extending his dam in the Nolichucky River in Washington County, provided that he did not obstruct the navigation of said river.
 13. Private Acts of 1832, Chapter 124, provided that Benjamin Drane of Washington County have the privilege of making void an entry for twenty-four acres in the sixth surveyor's district, founded on part of warrant No. 1,242, originally issued to John Warren for two hundred acres.
 14. Private Acts of 1833, Chapter 119, dissolved the bonds of matrimony between Rebecca Kelly and Jesse Kelly of Washington County.
 15. Private Acts of 1833, Chapter 151, authorized the Washington County Court to emancipate the slaves of the estate of John Gates, deceased.
 16. Private Acts of 1833, Chapter 163, authorized the Washington County Court, upon application of Joseph Hunter, to emancipate the slave of the late John Hunter.
 17. Private Acts of 1833, Chapter 190, authorized Amos Holloway to stamp and seal measures agreeable to the proper standard of Washington County.
 18. Acts of 1851-52, Chapter 191, Section 20, authorized the counties of Washington, Jefferson, Greene, Hawkins, Carter, Sullivan, Grainger and Warren to take stock in the Nashville, Franklin and Columbia Railroad Company.
 19. Acts of 1855-56, Chapter 106, prescribed the duty of the Washington County Court in disposing of the sinking fund of said county created to pay railroad stock.
 20. Private Acts of 1857-58, Chapter 142, ratified and confirmed all of the official acts of Joseph R. Simpson and his deputies, Jonathan H. Tucker and Alexander Mathis of Washington County, acting in the capacity of surveyors.
 21. Private Acts of 1869-70, First Session, Chapter 57, Section 85, incorporated the Washington County Agricultural and Mechanical Society.
 22. Private Acts of 1919, Chapter 496, provided for the compensation for services of citizens of Washington County who may have been appointed as officers, judges, clerks, registrars, or assistant registrars, to hold or assist in holding elections in the county.

23. Private Acts of 1923, Chapter 330, limited the powers of the county workhouse commission and regulated the expenditure of county road funds in Washington County.
 24. Private Acts of 1937, Chapter 901, empowered the Washington County Court to provide for the establishment of districts or zones within those portions of the county which lie outside of municipal corporations and empowered said county court to regulate, within such zones or districts, the location, height and size of buildings and structures, the percentage of lot occupancy, the required open spaces, the density and distribution of population and the uses of land, buildings and structures. This act was repealed by Private Acts of 1989, Chapter 52.
 25. Private Acts of 1970, Chapter 310, would have authorized Washington County to negotiate contracts for the sale of crushed rock; however, this act was rejected by the local authorities and thus did not become law.
 26. Private Acts of 1978, Chapter 296, provided that no solid waste disposal system or landfill area would be put into operation or constructed without prior approval of the governing body over the site of the location. Fines were set up for those violating the terms of this act. We were not able to verify local ratification of this act
 27. The following act once affected the purchasing procedures of Washington County, but it is no longer operative.
 28. Private Acts of 1989, Chapter 52, which established the office of county zoning administrator for Washington County, was repealed by Private Acts of 2015, Chapter 16.
-

Source URL: <https://www.ctas.tennessee.edu/private-acts/administration-historical-notes-28>