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Court System - Historical Notes

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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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Board of Jury Commissioners - Jurors

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

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1. Private Acts of 1831, Chapter 72, directed the Sullivan County Court to pay jurors of the circuit and county courts, \$1.00 per day for their services.
2. Acts of 1905, Chapter 341, created a board of jury commissioners for Sullivan County. This act prescribed the duties of members of said board and of the judges, provided jury lists and jury boxes. This act was amended by Private Acts of 1935, Chapter 296, so as to provide that the jury commissioners be appointed by the circuit judge instead of the governor of the State of Tennessee. Private Acts of 1943, Chapter 173, amended Acts of 1905, Chapter 341, so as to make it the duty of the jury commissioners to provide a jury list which comprised of names not numbering less than one-twentieth the whole number of votes cast in said county. Private Acts of 1951, Chapter 311, further amended Acts of 1905, Chapter 341, so as to increase the salary of the jury commissioners to \$5.00 per day.
3. Private Acts of 1943, Chapter 60, fixed the compensation of jurors in Sullivan County at \$3.00 per day. This act was amended by Private Acts of 1949, Chapter 6, so as to increase the salary of the jurors to \$5.00 per day.
4. Private Acts of 1955, Chapter 382, would have amended Acts of 1905, Chapter 341, so as to increase the salary of the jury commissioner to \$10 per day, however, this act was rejected or disapproved by Sullivan County and therefore never became law.

Chancery Court

The following acts form an outline of the development of equity jurisdiction in Sullivan County, although they no longer have the force of law since they have either been superseded by general law, repealed, or failed to receive local ratification.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. Public Acts of 1824, Chapter 14, set the time for holding the Sullivan County Chancery Court on the first Monday in May and November at Rogersville.
2. Public Acts of 1835-36, Chapter 4, established and divided the state into chancery districts. The counties of Sullivan, Carter and Washington composed the first chancery district of the Eastern Division. The time for holding said court for Sullivan County was set on first Mondays in February at Jonesborough.
3. Acts of 1851-52, Chapter 5, established a separate chancery district for Sullivan County. The chancery court was held in Blountville on the third Monday in May and November.
4. Public Acts of 1857-58, Chapter 88, set the time for holding the Sullivan County Chancery Court on the third Monday in May and November at Blountville.
5. Public Acts of 1865-66, Chapter 41, set the time for holding the Sullivan County Chancery Court on the third Monday in May and November.
6. Public Acts of 1869-70, Second Session, Chapter 32, divided the state into twelve chancery districts. The counties of Sullivan, Washington, Johnson, Carter, Hawkins, Greene, Hancock, Claiborne, Grainger, Jefferson, Cocke, Powell and Hamblen composed the first congressional district.
7. Public Acts of 1869-70, Second Session, Chapter 47, fixed the time for holding the Sullivan County Chancery Court on the third Monday in May and November.
8. Public Acts of 1877, Chapter 151, changed the time for holding the Sullivan County Chancery Court to the second Monday in June and December. This act was repealed by Public Acts of 1879, Chapter 140, Section 3.
9. Public Acts of 1879, Chapter 128, provided that the seventeenth civil district of Sullivan County constitute a chancery district and that said chancery court be held on the second Monday in June and December in Bristol.
10. Public Acts of 1879, Chapter 140, set the time for holding the Sullivan County Chancery Court on the fourth Monday in June and December at Blountville.

11. Acts of 1885 (Ex. Sess.), Chapter 20, divided the state into eleven chancery divisions. The first chancery division was composed of the counties of Sullivan, Washington, Johnson, Carter, Hawkins, Greene, Hancock, Claiborne, Grainger, Jefferson, Cocke, Hamblen and Unicoi. The time for holding said court in Sullivan County was set for the fourth Monday in June and December at Bristol.
12. Public Acts of 1899, Chapter 264, gave concurrent jurisdiction with the chancery and circuit courts of Sullivan County to the chancery and law courts at Bristol, of all civil actions which arose between persons who resided in the third and sixteenth civil districts of Sullivan County.
13. Public Acts of 1899, Chapter 427, divided the state into ten chancery divisions. The counties of Sullivan, Washington, Johnson, Carter, Unicoi, Greene, Hawkins, Hancock, Claiborne, Grainger, Hamblen and Cocke composed the first chancery division. The time for holding said court in Sullivan County was set for the third Monday in February and August in Bristol and on the fourth Monday in February and August in Blountville.
14. Acts of 1907, Chapter 230, changed the time for holding the Sullivan County Chancery Court to the first Monday in May and November at Blountville and on the first Monday in June and December in Bristol.
15. Private Acts of 1919, Chapter 737, established a chancery and a law court at Kingsport, in Sullivan County which was held on the third Monday of March and September.
16. Private Acts of 1927, Chapter 407, changed the time for holding the Sullivan County Chancery Courts to the first Monday in June and December at Bristol; the second Monday in April and October at Blountville, and on the second Monday in March and September at Kingsport.
17. Private Acts of 1929, Chapter 517, detached Sullivan County from the first chancery division and created a separate chancery division designated, The Chancery Division of Sullivan County. The time for holding said court in Sullivan County was set for the first Monday in January, May and September at Bristol; the fourth Mondays in March, July and November at Kingsport; and the fourth Mondays in January, May and September at Blountville. This act was amended by Private Acts of 1931, Second Extra Session, Chapter 40, so as to place Sullivan County in the first chancery division and set the time for holding said court on the first Monday in June and December at Bristol; the first Monday in May and November at Blountville; and on the second Monday in April and October.
18. Public Acts of 1931 (2nd Ex. Sess.), Chapter 38, completely reorganized the entire lower court system of the state. The first chancery division consisted of the counties of Sullivan, Washington, Johnson, Carter and Unicoi. The time for holding said court in Sullivan County was set for the first Monday in June and December at Bristol; the first Monday in May and November at Blountville; and on the second Monday in April and October in Kingsport.
19. Public Acts of 1961, Chapter 161, created a chancery district for Blountville and provided for the division into two parts of the chancery districts for Bristol, Kingsport and Blountville. This act also created a law court of Blountville and divided the law courts of Bristol, Blountville and Kingsport into two parts and fixed the time for holding said courts.
20. Private Acts of 1983, Chapter 33, created and established the Sullivan County Probate Court. This act defined the court's powers and jurisdiction and divested the county judge of the same; provided the court a judge and fixed the compensation the judge's additional duty and provided a clerk for said court. This act was repealed by Private Acts of 1988, Chapter 135.
21. Private Acts of 1994, Chapter 198, would have amended Private Acts of 1988, Chapter 135, relative to the Sullivan County Probate Court, however, this act was not ratified by Sullivan County and therefore never became law.

Chancery Court - Clerk

The reference list below contains acts which once applied to the clerk and master in Sullivan County. Also referenced below is an act which repealed prior law without providing new substantive provisions.

1. Private Acts of 1921, Chapter 521, set the salary of the Sullivan County Chancery Court Clerk at \$1,000 per annum. This act was amended by Private Acts of 1927, Chapter 142, to increase the salary of the chancery court clerk to \$1,500 per annum.
2. Private Acts of 1929, Chapter 338, fixed the compensation of the clerk and master of the chancery court at Kingsport, in Sullivan County, at \$1,800 per annum. This act was repealed by Private Acts of 1947, Chapter 480.
3. Private Acts of 1939, Chapter 186, fixed the compensation of the clerk and master of the Sullivan County Chancery Court at \$2,400 per annum. This act was amended by Private Acts of 1953,

Chapter 383, so as to increase the salary of the clerk and master to \$3,600 per annum.

Circuit Court

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

1. Acts of 1809 (1st Sess.), Chapter 49, divided the state into five judicial circuits. The counties of Sullivan, Greene, Carter, Washington, Hawkins, Grainger, Claiborne and Campbell composed the first judicial circuit. The time for holding said court in Sullivan County was set on the fourth Monday in the months of April and October.
2. Public Acts of 1835-36, Chapter 5, established and divided the state into eleven judicial circuits. The first judicial circuit was composed of the counties of Sullivan, Greene, Carter, Johnson, Washington, Hawkins, Grainger, and Claiborne. The time for holding said court in Sullivan County was set for the first Monday April, August and December.
3. Acts of 1837-38, Chapter 116, set the time for holding the Sullivan County Circuit Court on the third Mondays in March, July and November.
4. Public Acts of 1857-58, Chapter 98, placed Sullivan County in the first judicial circuit and set the time for holding said court on the third Monday in March, July and November.
5. Public Acts of 1865-66, Chapter 41, set the time for holding the Sullivan County Circuit Court on the first Monday in July, November and March.
6. Public Acts of 1868-69, Chapter 35, changed the time for holding the Sullivan County Circuit Court to the fourth Monday in November, March and July.
7. Public Acts of 1869-70 (2nd Sess.), Chapter 31, divided the state into fifteen judicial circuits. The counties of Sullivan, Washington, Hancock, Hawkins, Greene, Carter, Johnson and Boone composed the first judicial circuit.
8. Public Acts of 1869-70 (2nd Sess.), Chapter 46, set the time for holding the Sullivan County Circuit Court on the fourth Monday in March, July and November. This provision of Public Acts of 1869-70 (2nd Sess.), Chapter 46, was repealed by Public Acts of 1879, Chapter 140, Section 3.
9. Public Acts of 1879, Chapter 140, Section 3, set the time for holding the Sullivan County Circuit Court on the first Monday after the fourth Monday of July, November and March at Blountville.
10. Acts of 1885 (Ex. Sess.), Chapter 20, divided the state into fourteen judicial circuits. The first judicial circuit was composed of the counties of Sullivan, Washington, Johnson, Carter, Unicoi, Greene, Hawkins and Hancock. The time for holding said court in Sullivan County was set for the fourth Mondays in March, July and November at Bristol.
11. Public Acts of 1899, Chapter 427, divided the state into fourteen judicial circuits. The counties of Sullivan, Washington, Johnson, Carter, Unicoi, Greene, Hawkins, Hancock and Claiborne composed the first judicial circuit. The time for holding said court in Sullivan County was set for the third Monday in January, May and September at Bristol and on the fourth Monday in January, May and September in Blountville.
12. Acts of 1903, Chapter 198, set the time for holding the Sullivan County Circuit Court on the third Monday in January, May and September at Bristol; and on the fourth Monday in January, May and September in Blountville.
13. Acts of 1909, Chapter 49, placed Sullivan County in the first judicial circuit, along with the counties of Greene, Washington, Carter, Hawkins, Grainger, Claiborne and Campbell. The time for holding said court in Sullivan County was set for the fourth Monday in March and September.
14. Private Acts of 1911, Chapter 303, fixed the time for holding the Sullivan County Circuit Court on the fourth Monday in January, May and September at Blountville.
15. Private Acts of 1921, Chapter 303, fixed the time for holding the Sullivan County Circuit and Law Courts on the third Monday in January, May and September at Bristol and on the fourth Monday in March, July and November at Kingsport.
16. Public Acts of 1925, Chapter 96, provided for the holding of an election in the twentieth judicial circuit, which was composed of Sullivan, Greene, Hamblen and Hawkins counties, to fill the offices of circuit judge and attorney general. This act also set the time for holding the Sullivan County Circuit Court on the fourth Monday in January, May and September At Blountville; on the third Monday in January, May and September at Bristol; and on the third Monday in March, July and November at Kingsport. This act was amended by Private Acts of 1927, Chapter 306, to change the time for holding the Sullivan County Circuit Court at Blountville to third Monday in January,

May and September.

17. Public Acts of 1931 (2nd Ex. Sess.), Chapter 38, divided the state into twenty judicial circuits. The twentieth judicial circuit was composed of the counties of Sullivan, Greene, Hawkins and Hamblen. The time for holding said court in Sullivan County was set for the second Monday in September, January and May in Bristol; the third Monday in November, March and July at Kingsport; and on the third Monday in September, January and May at Blountville.

Circuit Court - Clerk

The following acts have no current effect, but once applied to the Sullivan County Circuit Court Clerk. They were repealed, superseded, or never received local approval.

1. Private Acts of 1831, Chapter 205, directed the treasurer of East Tennessee to pay William Anderson, clerk of the Sullivan County Circuit Court, \$71 for his, the sheriff's and state's witnesses' cost in the case of the state against James Harron on charge of murder, out of money not otherwise appropriated.
2. Private Acts of 1911, Chapter 675, amended Acts of 1903, Chapter 255, the general law which provided and regulated the compensation of circuit court clerks, so as to set the salary of the Sullivan County Circuit Court Clerk at \$1,500 per annum.
3. Private Acts of 1927, Chapter 771, fixed the salary of the Sullivan County Circuit Court at \$3,600 per annum.
4. Private Acts of 1935, Chapter 715, provided for Sullivan County, through the county judge or chairman of the county, to pay from the general fund of the county, the premiums on the official bonds of the circuit court clerk and his deputies of Sullivan County.

Criminal Court

The following acts once pertained to the Sullivan County Criminal Court, but are no longer current law. Also referenced below is an act which repealed prior law without providing new substantive provisions.

1. Public Acts of 1867-68, Chapter 90, Section 5, created a judicial criminal district which was composed of the counties of Sullivan, Washington, Johnson, Carter, Hawkins, Hancock, Greene, Jefferson, Grainger and Claiborne. Section 5 of this act was repealed by Public Acts of 1869-70 (1st Sess.), Chapter 11.
2. Public Acts of 1899, Chapter 427, set the time for holding the Sullivan County Criminal Court on the on the third Monday in January, May and September in Bristol and on the fourth Monday in January, May and September in Blountville.
3. Private Acts of 1925, Chapter 131, created a criminal court for Sullivan County. The time for holding said court on the second Monday in April, August and December at Blountville.
4. Public Acts of 1951, Chapter 73, created a criminal court for the counties of Sullivan, Greene, Hamblen and Hawkins which was known as the criminal court of the twentieth judicial circuit.
5. Public Acts of 1967, Chapter 228, removed Sullivan County from the jurisdiction of the criminal court of the twentieth judicial circuit and placed the county in its own criminal jurisdiction in the twenty-sixth judicial circuit.

District Attorney General - Assistants and Criminal Investigators

The following acts once affecting Sullivan County are no longer in effect but are listed here for historical purposes.

1. Acts of 1817, Chapter 65, established ten solicitorial districts in the state. The counties of Sullivan, Greene, Washington and Carter composed the first solicitorial district.
2. Private Acts of 1967-68, Chapter 55, authorized Sullivan County to provide one part-time administrative assistant for the office of district attorney general. Said administrative assistant received \$4,800 per annum.
3. Public Acts of 1968, Chapter 546, provided for an assistant district attorney general for the district attorney general of the twenty-sixth judicial circuit, which included Sullivan County.
4. Public Acts of 1969, Chapter 277, provided for an assistant district attorney general and for a criminal investigator for the twentieth judicial circuit, which included Sullivan County.
5. Private Acts of 1971, Chapter 98, authorized Sullivan County to supplement the salary of the office of assistant district attorney general for the twenty-sixth judicial circuit.
6. Public Acts of 1971, Chapter 139, provided an additional assistant district attorney general and a secretary to the district attorney general for the twenty-sixth judicial circuit, which included

Sullivan County.

7. Public Acts of 1976, Chapter 528, provided two additional assistant district attorneys general for the district attorney general for the twenty-sixth judicial circuit, which contained Sullivan County.

Secretarial Assistance

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

1. Private Acts of 1971, Chapter 166, would have authorized Sullivan County to supplement the salary of the secretary of the district attorney general of the twenty-sixth judicial circuit, however, this act was not ratified by Sullivan County and therefore never became law.

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