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INSTRUCTIONS FOR USING THE COUNTY RECORDS

AS SOURCE MATERIAL

Second Edition

Manual of Instructions for Preparation of Forms SP21 Revised

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The Historical Records Survey  
Nashville, Tennessee  
1939

### Preface to the Second Edition

The first edition of the manual of instructions for the preparation of Forms SP21 was issued in May, 1938, with the expectation that both the manual and the form might require future revision. Since then the work has proceeded far enough in several counties to bring to light certain imperfections in the original manual and form. It is believed that the second edition of the manual will remove some of the difficulties now existing in the preparation of Forms SP21. This manual will introduce a new form, SP21 Revised, which replaces the old SP21.

Even with due regard for the imperfections of the first manual, the State Office is convinced that practically all of the errors which have occurred in the preparation of Forms SP21 may be assigned to the failure of the workers to study the manual and to follow faithfully the instructions. By "studying" the instructions, considerably more than a casual perusal is implied. The manual should be read, and re-read if necessary, with the purpose of Forms SP21 Revised kept in mind.

Supplements to this edition will be issued from time to time.

Nashville  
January 20, 1939

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INSTRUCTIONS FOR USING THE COUNTY RECORDS  
AS SOURCE MATERIAL

To facilitate the preparation of the historical sketch and legal sections of each county records inventory and to show that the county records are a valuable source for historians and writers, workers in each county are being instructed to go to the public county records to obtain information which may be used. It should be clearly and definitely understood by both workers and county officials that this phase of the work is aimed at improving and making more adequate the historical and other essay sections of the published inventory and in no way whatsoever is directed at viewing, examining, auditing, critically inspecting or otherwise touching any records an official may regard as personal, private, not open to inspection, or which in any way could not serve any public purpose if such information were made public. As a matter of fact, we are interested as much, if not more so, in historical and non-current records as we are in current or active records.

The Haywood County Inventory represents an approach to the goal of using the county records to supplement and illustrate the development of the various county offices. By showing many vital phases of life in the county, both of the present and earlier times, we are able to give that county more adequate treatment than has been done heretofore. Although only the surface was scratched in Haywood County, we are convinced that the possibilities of such usage of the county records are almost limitless.

To attempt to state here all the possible valuable and interesting items that could be obtained from the records in each county would be hopeless, since there are hidden in the records literally thousands of items which we could use, and in accomplishing the purpose of this phase of the work, we will naturally have to rely to a great degree on the initiative, imagination, interest and industry of the worker assigned to this undertaking in each county. In addition to proceeding directly in an attempt to gather such material, the worker should maintain a constant vigilance, while making HR Forms, for items of historical and legal interest.

It is imperative to state exactly, clearly, and unmistakably any information submitted. Unless permission is obtained beforehand from the State Office, no sources except the records are to be used. Particularly is Goodspeed's History of Tennessee to be avoided. This rule against Goodspeed does not imply any reflection on that worthy book, but it is available to this office and use of it in the field would constitute duplication. The tendency of the workers in several counties to resort to this History has made it necessary that it be specifically prohibited. The officials, of course, may be of great help, but the workers should rely on them only to the degree that they may make valuable suggestions as to what records may contain the desired information. In other words, we are using the records, not the officials. This does not mean that we could not rely on the officials, but merely that we want the citations so sound that anyone, now or fifty years from now, could go

directly and without delay to the source you cite in stating, for example, that the tax rate for the year 1930 was \$1.60 per one hundred dollars. In making your citations, therefore, you must state the exact title of the record containing such information so as to eliminate completely any possibility that, if any one desired or decided to recheck a statement we may make, he could not find the record cited by us.

The fundamental principal, then, upon which the making of Forms SP21 Revised is based is to gain a clear picture of the historical development of the county and its offices. To that end, we emphasize getting material from the earliest records and the most recent ones to show the amazing complexity and diversity to which the county has grown. For example, we are able to embellish our Haywood County Department of Education essay somewhat by illustrating, in terms of expenditures, the growth of the department during the past century. In 1845 expenditures for public education in the county amounted to \$1199.41 ("Revenue Docket", "A", "1828", pp. 4-6, entry 14 in the Haywood County Inventory), whereas during the fiscal year ending September 1, 1938, educational expenditures amounted to \$123,590.57 ("Annual Report of Haywood County Trustees, Period Sept. 1st, 1937 to Sept. 1st, 1938", in "Miscellaneous Papers", entry 1, "Minute Book", "17", pp. 70, 150, entry 4). We are further able to show that seventy-three cents of the total tax levy of \$2.20 is for school property ("Minute Book", "17", p. 156, entry 4), and to give enrollment and statistical matters relating to the department ("Annual Statistical Report for the School Year Ending June 30, 1938," in "Annual Statistical Report", entry 239). By no means, however, are the intervening years between the beginnings of the county and the present time to be overlooked. They, too, contain a rich store of facts which should prove a valuable contribution to the published inventory.

The information should be gathered from the records of the county, and from the records only, and to assure correctness and accuracy, the citation to the record must not be defective. To facilitate this effort, a form has been drawn up to provide for all the necessary information. Not only must the record be identified, but the particular volume, the page number, and the date when an item was recorded are all necessary for a complete and exact citation. If you were looking, for instance, for a report of the chairman of the quarterly county court in 1930, you would first look in the minute book of the court. If so, then your citation might read: exact title "Quarterly Minutes," series or HR title "Minutes of Quarterly Court," labeling "A", covers dates "1921-1935", entry date "Jan. 1, 1930", page "345", HR number "C-6", located in "County Court Clerk's office." All of this information is essential in order that it may be used for reference at any time.

Or you might discover that the Trustee collected \$100,000 in 1860. If this information came from the minutes of the quarterly county court, you might give as your citation. Annual Report of the Trustee, as recorded in "Minutes of the County Court", Book "2", Jan. 3, 1861, page 2. But, assume you did not get this information from the "Minutes", but from a far more trustworthy and valid source, the trustee's original

report, which is filed among the papers in the County Court Clerk's office. Your citation might be, if the original report bears a title: "Annual Report of the Trustee for 1860 to the County Court", "Jan. 3, 1861", in "Original Papers"; file box "134", "County Court Clerk's office", or something similar. The attached form below illustrates the manner in which information will be entered and the sources cited.

To repeat, not only must the information given from the record be absolutely correct, but the citation must be accurate and adequate. This work will be rechecked from time to time by a representative of the State Office and the worker and local supervisor will be held strictly accountable.

Abstracting and digesting certain records will be permitted when a certain vital fact could otherwise be gleaned only from long and tortuous entries, but direct and brief quotations are preferable when there could be any doubt about the meaning of any entries in the records. If long attachments must be made, they should be made on separate sheets and attached to the forms so they may be properly filed. The space at the bottom of the form and the reverse side of the form should be exhausted before you resort to attachments. Notes quoted word for word must be enclosed by quotation marks and must be quoted exactly as they appear in the records regardless of whether they are understandable or make sense to you. Changing the wording, punctuation, spelling, capitalization, grammar, or what have you, of any quoted statement is a form of dishonesty that will not be tolerated. If Andrew Jackson misspelled a word, said "ain't", did not capitalize his own name, or committed any other offense, it is not up to us to correct him. Certain usages in capitalization, punctuation, and spelling at certain periods are well known to this office, and any changes of statements, remaining enclosed by quotation marks, will soon be discovered.

For example, the very first entry in the oldest surviving Wilson County Court Minute Book is. "Samuel Calhouns list of taxable property for the year 1803 to-wit, two black poles and paid taxes for same -----". Now this sentence is incomplete, it has no period at the end, and it is almost meaningless. Nevertheless, the clerk made the entry this way and under no circumstances has anyone license to state, "Samuel Calhoun presented his list of taxable property for 1803 to the county court in December of that year, and paid taxes on two black slaves." A circuit court minute book may state. "John Smith vs richard roe." It says that and does not say "John Smith versus Richard Roe."

If any word is illegible, faded, badly written, or otherwise not clear, you indicate this situation by leaving the word out and substituting a dash enclosed in parentheses. If you think you can read a cloudy or faded word, but are not quite certain, put what you think it is but follow the word with a question mark enclosed in parentheses, thus: (?)

In many instances it will be impossible to make direct quotations. For example, if you tell us there were 500 marriage licenses issued in

1937, all you can do is count them and let it go at that. One whole record series may be needed to prove 600 merchants' licenses were issued in 1930. Here the whole series may have to be cited on one form. There will, of course, be many less obvious situations and in these the worker must use his own judgment.

Moreover, caution should be exercised lest you assume too much from a record. For example, you cannot safely state there were 1000 births in your county in 1937, for the good reason that you have no way of knowing, since there is not a county in the state in which all births are registered, and births may be registered at any time. Neither would it be of any value to state that "there were 1000 births registered in 1937", unless to illustrate something of the volume of business transacted by the county court clerk during a single calendar year. The only valid statement, assuming it is true, that you may make is that "one thousand births, occurring in 1937, have been registered thus far."

The first instrument registered in "Deed Record", Book "A", may bear a half dozen dates but none necessarily means that the instrument was registered then. It may be important to know the date that an instrument was executed, but that date cannot be represented as the date the instrument was registered in the register's office. The same situation may prevail in circuit and chancery courts, where the dates of action and filing must not be confused with the dates of entry in the record at hand. Papers for a case may be brought up one year, but not enrolled until two years later - so the distinction is very important.

As already mentioned, it is impossible to list all of the items we could use, just as it is impossible to suggest a complete list of records which probably contain valuable and usable information. The following standard records, however, should prove to be valuable sources in any county:

Minutes and Enrollment Dockets of the County (Quarterly and Probate), Circuit, and Chancery Courts, Appropriation Dockets, Cash Books, Revenue Dockets, Birth and Death Records, Marriage Records, Deed Books, Entry-Taker's Book, AAA Contracts, Juvenile Dockets, Reports to the Quarterly Court, Scholastic Census Records, Superintendent's Annual Statistical Reports, Tax Books and Records of all descriptions, Audit Reports, Trustee's Reports, Poll Tax Receipts, Automobile Registers, Vital Statistics Records, Professional Registrations, Privilege License Duplicates, and Poll Tax Receipts, to mention a very few.

The minute books should prove to be the most prolific source. The reports to the quarterly county court (or court of pleas and quarter sessions or county court) should supply much information on the finances of the county, and on roads, education, health, and agriculture - subjects in which we are deeply interested. The trustee's records will give a further insight into the receipts and expenditures of the county. Likewise, the records of the road commission, superintendent of schools, health department, and farm agent should supplement material obtained from the quarterly minutes. If one record is not available, try another

record. The quarterly minutes, for example, will mention the poor commission and we may gain some insight into the administration of poor relief even though the minutes of the poor commission have been lost or discontinued. A deed book might give the first register's name and could be cited, instead of allowing the question to go by in the absence of the first minutes of the quarterly court.

The two samples below show Form SP21 Revised before and after it has been filled out by a field worker. Somewhere, in the attached list of suggested questions, there may be a question. "What was the tax rate in 1930? (Show Breakdown, If Any)." And this question was found to be fully answered in a book entitled "Quarterly Minutes", which was a volume labeled "31", and a part of the record series which on the HR12-13 has the title "Minutes of Quarterly County Court." In addition to giving directly and concisely the information desired, the worker filling out the form made a few additional notes that may or may not prove valuable at some later date.

The worker should experience no difficulty in filling in the blanks. In the upper left corner, there is the name of the county, the date the form is mailed to the State Office, the name of the worker, and the bureau to which the record belongs. The proper bureau is determined in exactly the same way as in making HR Forms, that is, you do not necessarily assign a record to the bureau to which the question and answer relate but you assign it to the bureau of custody as if Form SP21 Revised were HR12-13. The space marked "File" in the upper center of the form must not be filled by the worker.

The "Source of Information" column is equally simple.

The "Exact Title" rule is the same as in HR12-13 except that "Exact Title" means the exact title of the volume or other record used and not necessarily the title of a series which in making HR Forms is controlled by the title of the most recent volume. The exact title must be enclosed in quotation marks.

The "Series or HR Title" line is used if the "Exact Title" is not the same title which is used on the original HR Form for the whole record series. In other words, on Form SP21 Revised the "Exact Title" line becomes the place to show variations of title, if the title of the individual volume or other part of a record series cited varies from the record series title on the original HR Form. "Series or HR Title" must be in quotation marks, as on the original HR Form.

Assigned or explanatory titles for volumes are shown in "Series or HR Title" lines, in parentheses, as on the original HR Form.

Difficulties will arise in citing unbound material. If a report or other paper cited has a title, such as "Annual Report of Trustee", or "Annual Statistical Report of Superintendent", this title should be placed in the "Exact Title" line. If, however, the paper is hopelessly lost in a group of file boxes and has no title, an assigned title, in

parentheses and not enclosed in quotation marks, should be placed in the "Exact Title" line, with the "Series or HR Title" line bearing the series title which appears on the original HR Form.

The rules governing "Labeling" are well known, on the forms give the exact labeling of the individual volume, file box, or other container used. "Exact labeling" does not mean "by years", or "alphabetically", but the actual labeling which appears, such as "A", "1937", "District 15", or "45."

"The Page Nos." line must be filled when citing a volume. In most instances, the information given will come from one page. If more than one page is used, and this is done only in giving the same or very closely related information, all pages used are given. Individual page numbers are separated by a comma, inclusive page numbers by a dash. However, if only two consecutive pages are used, the numbers should be separated by a comma. The following examples are illustrative. one page is cited thus. 547. Individual page numbers are cited in this manner. 547, 550, 560, meaning that three different pages were used. Inclusive numbers are indicated. 547-560, this meaning that all pages from 547 to 560, inclusive, were used. Two, and only two, consecutive pages are cited as. 547, 548.

The "Entry Date" calls for the month, day, and year when a record or the entry in an extended record was made. If an answer covers an entire year, it would be impossible, of course, to give a single day and month in the "Entry Date", and in these instances give the inclusive dates, such as "6-13-1937 to 3-25-1938." The "Entry Date" must be as complete and exact as possible. In the "HR No." line you should write in the identification number of the HR Form covering this record. In this manner, we shall make a check on the accuracy of the forms. This requirement, of course, can not apply to counties which have been reopened by new workers for the express purpose of making Forms SP21 Revised and who were left no notes by the makers of the original inventories, but there are no other exceptions.

The "Volume Covers Dates" line, used when volumes are cited, calls for the inclusive dates of the single volume at hand, and not the dates of a record series of more than one volume. This should be done without regard for the labeling, even though the two entries are identical.

The "No. of Question" blank should contain the number of the question, as listed below, asked and answered. If a revision of a question is made, follow the number by "R". In the "Question" line, the question asked and answered should be stated clearly. The matter of questions and answers is discussed at a later point.

It is absolutely essential that an answer be clear and sensible, so that the editor may be able to judge and weigh it. It is not sufficient to answer "yes", but a concise explanation drawn directly from the records is expected. Additional pertinent information is to be urged. If it is impossible to answer the question, the worker should frame one as



nearly related as possible to the ones asked in this manual. These questions and suggestions from the State Office are made with a view to obtaining certain information which is basic to the preparation of the sketches for the inventory. This does not preclude any salient features which the worker may submit, but it does mean that the basic information requested should serve as a guide to further research along those lines indicated.

There are certain features of the history of your county which you should uncover. We expect this to be done. The State Office, of course, cannot be thoroughly familiar with the local situation in each county, but the suggestions made should point out possibilities for research by the worker. Thus, the evidence and notes gathered by the worker along the lines suggested should bring additional information at our command. From time to time specific questions will be supplied to verify or substantiate the facts already at hand. Several Forms SP21 Revised should be accessible while the actual inventory of records is under way so that valuable and interesting items may be recorded at the time of their discovery.

The State Office, through its use of the public and private acts of the legislature, knows the general set up of the government in each county. What we need is specific examples and information to supplement that general view. If, for instance, we can show that the quarterly court actually elected a certain commission on a certain date, that makes the presentation of the county government that much clearer. The mere presence of a law on the statute books is not conclusive proof of a compliance. An office essay built entirely on constitutional, statutory, and other legal provisions is rather futile unless we can state definitely whether the unadorned law presents a true picture. Only by examination of the records, and by citations to them, may we view the county government as a functioning organism. Then too, we are able to reveal interesting sidelights in the development of offices and the differences which a certain county might have. The ranger is a constitutional officer, yet only a handful of counties still elect one. The failure of the quarterly court to record the election of a ranger is prima-facie evidence that the office has been allowed to become defunct. In 1879 the legislature, by general law, authorized the quarterly court to revive the office of entry-taker or to confer the duties of the entry-taker on the surveyor or the register (P.A. 1879, ch. 46, sec. 1). Whereupon the legislature forgot the entire matter. Only by examination of the records can we determine what then took place in each county. If the job was handed over to the register, then automatically, an entry-book became a required record of the register.

The success of this undertaking will largely depend on the adoption of an historical point of view on the part of those who are closest to the sources of information, that is, the workers in the field. Not only do we want the historical sketch for each county to be distinctive, but we want the office essays to be essays of each office and bureau in each county and not general essays on the offices throughout the state. For example, when we write the legal essay on the circuit court in a

particular county, we want the essay to be descriptive of the circuit court in that particular county. It will be of interest to know that Cordell Hull was circuit judge in Smith County, and in the Smith County Inventory we will state that he was judge of the circuit court for many years. This fact, although it is well known, can be easily proved by any of hundreds of entries in the records of the circuit court clerk of that county. We have found records relating to Davey Crockett in Washington, Crockett and Lawrence Counties. And in Lawrence County, the record is a Justice of the Peace docket kept by him. It will be of interest to know that he was at one time a Justice, and we will, in the Lawrence County Inventory, note the fact, either in the county historical sketch or in the office essay on Justice of the Peace. It will also be of interest in the historical sketches of several counties to be able to state, as we will, that one of the largest land-owners was the register of the land office.

We know that the Haywood County Court of pleas and quarter sessions paid \$600 for its first temporary courthouse ("Day Book", page 16, in "Minute Book", entry 4, in Haywood County Inventory), and paid \$185 for its first jail (ibid., pp. 89, 106). We can show that the first court of pleas and quarter sessions of Haywood County met at the home of Richard Nixon on March 8, 1824 and that the first action taken was to elect Nixon chairman ("Day Book", pp. 1, 2, in "Minute Book", entry 4). And we know with a fair degree of certainty, that the circuit court in Haywood County is almost as old as the county itself or that it dates from 1824, for at that same first session of the court of pleas and quarter sessions sitting at Nixon's home, twenty-five residents of the county were ordered to serve as grand and petit jurors in circuit court (ibid., p. 8).

We also know that the first instrument registered in the Wilson County register's office was a North Carolina land grant certificate issued at Fayetteville, N. C. in 1789, in pursuance to an act for the "relief of the officers and soldiers of the continental line..." ("Deed Record," "A", p. 3, entry 77 in the Wilson County Inventory). We may state that Wilson was badly in need of a law court in 1810 for the first circuit judge, Thomas Stuart, ordered the first case transferred to Sumner County, September 24, 1810, because all parties agreed that a fair and impartial trial was impossible in Wilson County ("Minute Book 1810-1821", page 2, entry 97). It is interesting that the first final decree handed down in Wilson County Chancery Court was in a case, Barker et al. vs. Fields et al., involving the right of property in some slaves named Kate, Rachel, Amy, John, Jim, Buck, and Mingo ("Minutes", "A", Wilson Chancery Court", page 3, entry 130, "Enrolling Book" (1), pp. 1-9, entry 131).

Some idea of the volume of business transacted by the county court clerk, and also an insight in the trend of affairs in Wilson County, may be had by showing that in 1937 the clerk issued 269 marriage licenses ("Marriage Bonds and Record", "10", pp. 305-440, entry 63 in the Wilson County Inventory), that he has registered 357 births occurring in 1937 ("Record of Births", "1", entry 66), and 296 deaths ("Record of Deaths",

No. "1", entry 67). The net total collections by the trustee was easily determined by consulting his four quarterly reports to the quarterly county court.

Scores of similar items have been uncovered and used in the preparation of the Inventory of the Archives of Haywood County. Likewise, items of this nature will be used for each county. It must be kept in mind, however, that complete reference to the location of the information is essential to enable it to be used. Generally speaking then, there are two lines of approach. direct searching for specified types of information, and a constant vigilance, in the examination of records and preparation of forms, for significant items. You should realize that this is the first, and probably the last, opportunity your county will have to get its history adequately and accurately written from such authoritative sources as the county records.

A list of the counties and the date of their creation is included in the back of this manual. Usually the county was organized within a year after the date of creation. If a county was created after the beginning date given for an office, the assumption is that the office in that county began when the county was organized. The court of pleas and quarter sessions (after 1835 the quarterly county court) always existed from the time of the organization of the county. Therefore, its records should date from the beginning of the county. Circuit court was first created in 1809 and counties organized before that date should have circuit court records dating from 1810. Chancery court first appeared in 1824 and its first records in a county may date from some time between then and 1868.

The constitutional officers, the trustee, ranger, constable, justice of the peace, coroner and county court clerk all date from the organization of the county. Poor laws should be found at early dates, and the poor commission itself should be mentioned after 1826. Educational efforts should be revealed some time in the early eighteenthundreds. The office of superintendent of schools made recurring appearances between 1867 and 1873. There should be records of highways, road orders, and the appointment of road overseers dating from the beginning of the county's history. The full time county health departments may date from 1921, and in a few special instances earlier. However, if by accident, previous mention of health is found, it is highly possible that such mention may be in the year 1877-78. Mention of the county jail physician may be found as early as 1859, or again in 1871 or 1877, but in most counties the first definite mention of county physician will be found in 1885. The workhouse commission should date from 1891. The agricultural agents, that is the county agent and home demonstration agent, are not likely to be found earlier than 1913. This office may have been created and abolished several times over a span of years. The only solution is to examine the indexes of the quarterly court's minute books. This department will require considerable research, since it will be necessary for us to know the dates the offices of county agent and home demonstration were created, abolished, re-created, and so

on. Many counties had a county agent whose office was abolished and then re-created. Juvenile records should date from 1911, except in those counties with juvenile courts created by private acts. It is possible that in some counties optional agencies antedate the general law, as in the case of Blount County where the health department anticipated the general law by two years.

This outline of the development of county offices should be used by the worker as a reference in searching for a particular agency. With the date of the creation of the county as a guide, the general set-up at the time of the organization of the county may be roughly sketched out, and should be used to facilitate the making of forms.

In general, there should only be one fact, or a closely related set of facts making an item all from the same source and location, on a form. If the same fact is indicated by separate records, make separate forms. Do not worry about making too many forms.

SP21 Revised. File \_\_\_\_\_ Source of Information: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ County Exact Title \_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_ Series or HR Title \_\_\_\_\_  
Worker \_\_\_\_\_ Labeling \_\_\_\_\_ Page \_\_\_\_\_ Entry Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Bureau \_\_\_\_\_ Vol. covers dates \_\_\_\_\_ HR No. \_\_\_\_\_  
No. of Question \_\_\_\_\_ Location \_\_\_\_\_  
Question: \_\_\_\_\_

SP21 Revised. File \_\_\_\_\_ Source of Information: \_\_\_\_\_  
Wilson County Exact Title "Quarterly Minutes"  
Date December 15, 1938 Series or HR Title "Minutes of Quarterly Court"  
Worker Joe Doakes Labeling AA Page 547,548 Entry Date 7-6-1929  
Bureau County Court Clerk Vol. covers dates 1927-1931 HR No. C-5  
No. of Question 35 Location County Court Clerk's Vault  
Question: WHAT WAS THE TAX RATE IN 1930? (SHOW BREAKDOWN, IF ANY).

"The budget committee recommended that the following tax on real estate be adopted for the year 1930:

"State Rate	.08
"County Fund	.25
"Elementary School	.40
"High School	.10
"Sinking Fund	.17
	<u>\$1.00</u>

"On motion of Esquire Smith, the rate was adopted without change by a vote of 25 to 16. The fixing of road, poll, marriage, and privilege taxes deferred until next day."

(Most of these counties were probably organized within a year after the date of their creation as given below)

DATES COUNTIES CREATED

Anderson (Clinton)	1801	Lauderdale (Ripley)	1835
Bedford (Shelbyville)	1807	Lawrence (Lawrenceburg)	1817
Benton (Camden)	1835	Lewis (Hohenwald)	1843
Bledsce (Pikeville)	1807	Lincoln (Fayetteville)	1809
Blount (Maryville)	1795	Loudon (Loudon)	1870
Bradley (Cleveland)	1835	McMinn (Athens)	1819
Campbell (Jacksboro)	1806	McNairy (Selmer)	1823
Cannon (Woodbury)	1836	Macon (Lafayette)	1842
Carroll (Huntingdon)	1822	Madison (Jackson)	1821
Carter (Elizabethton)	1796	Marion (Jasper)	1817
Cheatham (Ashland City)	1856	Marshall (Lewisburg)	1836
*Chester (Henderson)	1879	Mauzy (Columbia)	1807
Claiborne (Tazewell)	1801	Meigs (Decatur)	1836
Clay (Celina)	1870	Monroe (Madisonville)	1819
Cocke (Newport)	1797	Montgomery (Clarksville)	1796
Coffee (Manchester)	1846	Moore (Lynchburg)	1871
Crockett (Alamo)	1872	Morgan (Wartburg)	1817
Cumberland (Crossville)	1856	Obion (Union City)	1823
Davidson (Nashville)	1783	Overton (Livingston)	1806
Decatur (Decaturville)	1845	Perry (Linden)	1821
DeKalb (Smithville)	1837	Pickett (Byrdstown)	1879
Dickson (Charlotte)	1803	Polk (Benton)	1839
Dyer (Dyersburg)	1823	Putnam (Cockeville)	1842
Fayette (Somerville)	1824	Rhea (Dayton)	1807
Fentress (Jamestown)	1823	Roane (Kingston)	1801
Franklin (Winchester)	1807	Robertson (Springfield)	1796
Gibson (Trenton)	1823	Rutherford (Murfreesboro)	1803
Giles (Pulaski)	1809	Scott (Huntsville)	1849
Grainger (Rutledge)	1796	Sequatchie (Dunlap)	1857
Greene (Greeneville)	1783	Sevier (Sevierville)	1794
Grundy (Altamont)	1844	Shelby (Memphis)	1819
Hamblen (Morristown)	1870	Smith (Carthage)	1799
Hamilton (Chattanooga)	1819	Stewart (Dover)	1803
Hancock (Sneedville)	1844	Sullivan (Blountville)	1779
Hardeman (Belivar)	1823	Sumner (Gallatin)	1786
Hardin (Savannah)	1819	Tipton (Covington)	1823
Hawkins (Rogersville)	1786	Trousdale (Hartsville)	1870
Haywood (Brownsville)	1823	Unicci (Erwin)	1875
Henderson (Lexington)	1821	Union (Maynardsville)	1850
Henry (Paris)	1821	Van Buren (Spencer)	1840
Hickman (Centerville)	1807	Warren (McMinnville)	1807
Houston (Erin)	1871	Washington (Jonesboro)	1777
Humphreys (Waverly)	1809	Wayne (Waynesboro)	1817
Jackson (Gainesboro)	1801	Weakley (Dresden)	1823
Jefferson (Dandridge)	1792	White (Sparta)	1806
Johnson (Mountain City)	1836	Williamson (Franklin)	1799
Knox (Knoxville)	1792	Wilson (Lebanon)	1799
Lake (Tiptonville)	1870		

\* Chester County was not organized until 1882

### SUGGESTED QUESTIONS

The questions below are basic for our purposes, but the list is by no means inflexible. Moreover, the worker should not limit his efforts to answering the questions here suggested.

As previously indicated, reasonable revision of a question is permissible when, for local reasons, it is impossible to answer the question as originally framed. The loss of records will, of course, prevent full answers on some of the questions. Otherwise, the worker should answer all of the questions below, or very closely related ones of his own composition, for each question has a place in the general pattern of the historical and office essays.

1. When and where did the first county court meet to organize the county? (Copy first entry).
2. Who were the members of the first county court?
3. What was the first action taken by the county court?
4. Who were elected to what offices by the first county court?
5. What was the first civil action heard by the county court?
6. What was the first criminal action heard by the county court?
7. How many tax lists were received by the first county court?
8. What other important actions were taken by the first county court?
9. What was first (or earliest) tax rate?
10. Did the county court suspend at any time between 1861-65?
11. How many members does the present county court have?
12. What was the most recent tax levy?
13. Who was elected county judge in 1856 (this was provided by a general law repealed at the next session of the legislature)?
14. Who was the first county judge elected under the special act creating the present office for your county?
15. What were the contents of the last four quarterly reports of the county judge (or chairman) to the quarterly court? (Copy)
16. Who was the first county court clerk?
17. How much revenue did the county court clerk collect in the earliest year for which records are available?
18. How much revenue did the county court clerk collect in the most recent year?
19. How many cases were heard by the county judge as probate judge in the most recent year?
20. How many 1938 motor vehicle licenses were issued?
21. To whom was the first marriage license issued?
22. How many marriage licenses were issued in the earliest year for which records are available?
23. How many marriage licenses were issued in the most recent year?
24. When was circuit court first convened and organized? (Copy the first entry)
25. Who was the first circuit judge?
26. Who was the first circuit court clerk - What was his exact title?
27. What was the first case in circuit court - give the style, parties, judgment, etc.?
28. Is there any mention of the superior court of law & equity in the first records of circuit court?

Suggested Questions

29. If there are any records of the superior court of law & equity, in circuit or chancery records, give some information from them.
30. How many justices of the peace cases were appealed to circuit court last year?
31. How much revenue did the circuit court clerk collect in the earliest year for which records are available?
32. How much revenue did circuit court clerk collect in the most recent year?
33. How many civil cases did circuit court hear last year?
34. How many criminal cases did circuit court hear last year?
35. Did circuit court suspend operations during the Civil War?
36. When was chancery court first convened and organized? (Copy first entry)
37. Is there any indication that chancery cases were formerly heard in circuit court or in some adjoining county's chancery court?
38. Who was the first chancellor?
39. Who was the first clerk and master?
40. What was the first case in chancery court? (Give the style, judgment, parties, etc.)
41. How much revenue did the clerk and master collect in the earliest year for which records are available?
42. How much revenue did the clerk and master collect in the most recent year?
43. How many cases heard by chancellor last year? Breakdown into original bills, mesne proceedings, and final decrees.
44. Is there a full time health officer, the head of the county health department, in addition to the county or jail physician? (Do not confuse health officer with county physician).
45. When was the health department organized, if there is a department?
46. Who makes up the board of health?
47. How many deaths recorded for most recent year?
48. How many births recorded for most recent year?
49. What was amount appropriated for the health department last year?
50. How many pupils in school last year, ending June 30th?
51. How many teachers are employed?
52. Average salary of teachers?
53. Any new school buildings recently erected or improvements made?
54. What were the school receipts and expenditures for the last fiscal year?
55. How many school buildings does the county maintain?
56. How much money was spent by the county for education at a very early date? Include or add any additional information on early education.
57. When was the county agent first appointed?
58. Show all lapses in and re-creations of the office of county agent.
59. How much was appropriated for the county agent last year?
60. Show something of the county agent's activities.
61. How many farms in the county?
62. Average acreage of farms, if possible to get this.
63. Per cent of farms mortgaged?
64. What are chief crops?
65. Are dairy and cattle interests very prominent?



Suggested questions

66. How many participate in the soil conservation program?
67. Give all information you can about appointment, duties, and composition of agricultural extension committee.
68. When was a home demonstration agent first appointed?
69. If there have been any lapses in office of home demonstration agent, show them.
70. How much is appropriated for home demonstration agent?
71. Show something of activities of home demonstration agent.
72. How many miles of roads in the county, paved and otherwise?
73. Show something of road construction activities at a very early date.
74. What were receipts and disbursements for road purposes last year?
75. What is the county's share of the gas tax refund?
76. Any major road construction at present time?
77. Copy some of the highway commission's recent reports.
78. Who was the first trustee?
79. Total collections last year of trustee: Itemize.
80. Total disbursements made by trustee last year: Itemize.  
(Reference may be made to a copy of the trustee's annual report, if you have sent a copy to this office, in lieu of answering questions 79 and 80).
81. How much taxes were collected at earliest time for which there are records?
82. How many poll taxes paid last year?
83. Who is largest single taxpayer, either person or corporation?
84. Who was the first sheriff?
85. How much does the sheriff receive for boarding a prisoner?
86. How many persons were committed to jail last year?
87. How many deputies-sheriff are there?
88. What was assessed valuation of real and personal property in the most recent year? (See tax books)
89. Give some assessment figures for an early year.
90. When was the first poor commission created? (Try 1826 to 1831)
91. How was poor relief administered prior to that time?
92. Give all available figures on poor relief at present time, or last year. (Appointment of commissioners, appointment of superintendent, persons cared for, money spent, etc.).
93. Who was the first register?
94. What was the first instrument registered?
95. What was the first conveyance registered?
96. From where were the first land warrants issued?
97. Where did the early settlers (as evidenced by the owners of land) come from?
98. How many instruments registered in register's office during the first year of the county's history? Itemize.
99. How many instruments registered in register's office last year? Itemize.
100. How many cases heard in juvenile court (by county judge or chairman) last year?
101. How many commitments by juvenile court last year?
102. When was the first jury list drawn up?
103. How many grand jury inquisitions last year?

Suggested Questions

104. How many true bills returned last year by the grand jury?
105. Does your county have a jury commission? If so, copy something of its composition and activities from its records or those of the circuit or criminal court.
106. What was the net result of the action of the board of equalization in the most recent year?
107. Who was the first surveyor?
108. If possible, give some early indications of his work.
109. Is there a surveyor at the present time?
110. Is there any evidence of consolidation of the offices of entry-taker and surveyor? (See 1870, 1875, 1879).
111. Does your county still have a coroner?
112. When was a coroner elected last?
113. How many coroner's inquests were held last year?
114. When was the last coroner's inquest held?
115. When was a ranger first elected, and who was he?
116. Does your county still have a ranger?
117. If there is a ranger, does he perform any duties?
118. Look in 1891 minutes for appointment of workhouse commission.
119. Show recent statistics on workhouse commission; commitments, work done, etc.
120. What is the present bonded indebtedness of the county?
121. Compare the present county debt with the figures of several years ago.
122. What rate of interest is paid on the latest issuance of bonds?
123. Are the officials paid by salary or fees?
124. When were courthouses built in your county (the state office will try to give the approximate dates for your research)? Full information is requested.
125. How much was expended in building the present courthouse?
126. Who were the first ministers in the county, as shown by marriage records?
127. Any indication that troops in the Civil War passed through the county or that battles were fought there? (Court minutes, 1861-1865, should be useful).
128. When was county seat established? (The early county court minutes should contain much interesting information).
129. If possible give some information from the records on the natural resources of the county: soil, water, minerals, etc.

