

WASHINGTON COUNTY, TENNESSEE

DEPARTMENT OF RECORDS MANAGEMENT AND ARCHIVES

FOURTH ANNUAL REPORT

2015-2016



Submitted by
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By the Numbers

The following is the county archive year (July 1st, 2015-June 30th, 2016) by the numbers:

- 585,087.62 = dollars spent for archive building renovation and furnishings (May 2015-June 2016)
- 248,868.08 = revenue dollars raised by the archive filing fee
- 241,281 = dollars appropriated in the department budget
- 149,147.43 = dollars spent from the department budget
- 5,103 = linear feet of shelving storage space in archives building
- 1,701 = number of archival storage shelves
- 489 = number of reference inquiries handled
- 243 = shelving units in archive building
- 53 = number of hours contributed by others to archive
- 52 = number in attendance at public presentations given on the county archive
- 34 = number of states from which reference inquiries were received: Tennessee, Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Delaware, Florida, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, Nevada, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Texas, Utah, Virginia, Wisconsin, Wyoming, and Washington, D. C.
- 28 = number of meetings attended
- 23 = number of volunteers
- 16 = number of Friends of the Archives members
- 12 = number of media items about the archives (newspaper articles, television news segments, listservs, and other social media, including Facebook)
- 1 = research inquiry from a foreign country (British Columbia, Canada, 6-22-16)

Note: The photograph on the cover page shows the new front door and signage at the entrance to the county archive building at 103 West Main Street in Jonesborough.

NARRATIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

The chief development during the 2015-2016 fiscal year was the renovation of the former county office building at 103 West Main Street in Jonesborough. When completed, the project finally provided a home for the county archive. This work is described below under “Archive Building Progress”. While waiting on the building, reference service continued to be provided from a temporary office in the courthouse. The trend of public inquiries from people researching family and local history continued its’ increase. And an archive assistant was selected, the first additional staffing in the archives. The year was probably the most momentous since the first year of the department’s establishment.

Archive Building Progress

On April 29th, 2015, I moved from the archive building into a temporary office in the courthouse in Jonesborough. Other county offices had already moved out. I moved back on Wednesday, May 4th, 2016.

Quite a bit changed about the building between those two dates. Demolition work opened up a building previously housing county offices and made it capable of housing the county’s historic records. A new electrical system was run; a new heat and air system was installed; asbestos was safely removed; new ceilings were hung and new lighting installed; an air handling unit was placed on the roof to cycle fresh air into the building; a natural gas meter and gas line was connected to provide heat for warming that fresh air during the cold winter months; a chandelier was hung; a new storefront style front entrance replaced the old double doors; a smoke and fire alarm system was put in place; a security system with monitoring cameras was installed; a new handicapped-accessible public restroom was constructed; an emergency fire exit from the building into the alleyway was built; new carpet flooring was laid down; new paint was applied; a new communication system was connected; and a wireless system was installed to permit public internet access.

How long did the project take? Mike Smith, J. E. Green Construction Company’s job superintendent, came on the job site on May 13, 2015. He left for the last time on January 15, 2016. A certificate of substantial completion of the construction phase was issued on February 24, 2016. So by late winter, excepting some items on the punch list, the work was done. Additional adjustments with the HVAC system as well as the pre-existing chilling system for the building were completed about the end of the fiscal year just prior to the 4th of July.

From March 31-April 2, 2016, a five man crew from Flood Brothers, Inc., of La Vergne, Tenn., installed 100 double-faced units and 43 single-faced units of archival standard metal shelving to house the historic records of Washington County. The shelving was manufactured by Tennsco Corp./Estey, a Tennessee company based in Dickson. The total cost of the shelving and installation was \$75,996.22. While this may seem expensive, this shelving is a one-time purchase that will provide for all building storage needs in the future. The first records went on these shelves in early July 2016.

The following costs were involved in the renovation project: Beeson, Lusk & Street of Johnson City, Tenn., architect, \$37,000; J. E. Green Construction Company of Johnson City, Tenn., general contractor, \$477,037; Fleenor Security Systems of Johnson City, Tenn., \$6,296.57; BCTI of Gray, Tenn., \$11,052.70; Tennsco Corp./Estey of Dickson, Tenn., \$75,996.22; PBI Commercial Interiors of Asheville, N. C., \$5,521.13. The original estimate of the project was \$437,000 for the construction phase and approximately another \$100,000 to cover furnishings, security systems, etc. A bond issue of \$530,000 was let to cover this cost. There was approximately a three-year delay from the time of the original estimates until actual construction work began causing an increase in the overall cost of the project of \$84,622.62. The total cost for construction and furnishings was **\$612,903.62**. The final construction phase cost of \$477,037 was \$6,995 under the final amended budget.

Sub-contractors and vendors not mentioned above that were involved in the project included the following: AMP Electrics; Barnard Roofing Company, Inc. of Gray, Tenn.; Albert F. G. Bedinger Consulting Engineers, P. C., of Knoxville, Tenn.; Creative Masonry of Greeneville, Tenn.; E. S. Dockery, Inc. of Gray, Tenn.; Gardner Paint Service, Inc. of Johnson City, Tenn.; E. Luke Green Company, Inc. of Johnson City, Tenn.; General Shale of Johnson City, Tenn.; HST Interior Elements of Nashville, Tenn.; Pierce Metals of Bristol, Tenn.; Precision Electrical Company, Inc. of Kingsport, Tenn.; Simplex-Grinnell of Gray, Tenn.; Trimble Company, Inc. of Johnson City, Tenn.; S. B. White Company, Inc. of Johnson City, Tenn.; Vreeland Engineers, Inc. of Knoxville, Tenn.; and Whitt Company, Inc. of Johnson City, Tenn.

An electric audit of the archive building was conducted by Johnson City Power Board staff on February 4th, 2016 to identify issues with the electrical usage of the building and ways in which the building's electric utility costs can be reduced.

Records Management

Assistance continued to be provided to departments having records stored in the Archive Annex. Circuit Court Clerk staff visit the Annex on a weekly basis retrieving and refiling case files. Archives staff provided record retrieval service for the Clerk and Master's

office when they needed old Chancery Court case files now housed in the Annex. Assistance was also provided during the year to the Register of Deeds office seeking old records.

Circuit Court transferred 109 boxes of records from the Justice Center to the Archive Annex in October 2015. The records pertained to General Sessions Court State and Civil cases and some Juvenile Court records. Juvenile Services added records to storage in the Annex in March 2016. Old tax books (1994-2005) totaling 113 volumes were transferred from the Trustee's office to the Annex in October-November 2015 joining other tax books already being housed there.

Following the approval of the Public Records Commission, the Bookkeeping Department shredded old school bond coupons from the late 1960s-early 1970s.

Public Service

Though not open to the public, archive staff assisted researchers from 34 states and Canada. Nearly 500 inquiries were handled either in-person or via mail, email, or telephone. This was a 33% increase from the archives' first year. It is anticipated that inquiries will increase again with the public opening of the archive building.

The county archivist also provided support and advice to other archive programs in Tennessee during the year. This included the Rutherford County Archives in Murfreesboro and efforts to establish a county archive program in neighboring Carter County. On November 19th, 2015, along with representatives from the Tennessee State Library and Archives, I addressed Carter County commissioners and Public Records Commission members in an informational meeting about establishing a Carter County Archive as well as giving tours of the Washington County building to some commissioners. At its December 2015 meeting, the Carter County Commission approved creation of a Carter County Archive modeled on the one in Washington County. This was a very positive outcome for a lot of work by a lot of people over a long period of time.

Archives Staffing

Donna Cox Briggs began work as the department's first archive assistant on July 5th, 2016. Donna has been a great help as a volunteer over the past four years and knows the county records and history well from this work and her own research in the records over many years. Her insights and knowledge will be invaluable as the department prepares to open to the public.

Friends of the Archives

The Friends of the Washington County Archives has a current membership of 16. Volunteers from that group have been very helpful in various tasks in the archives during the year. The group's support going forward is important to the long-term success of the archive program.

The Year Ahead

After much work and much waiting, the Washington County Archives is set to open to the public sometime in fiscal year 2016-2017. A formal dedication ceremony will be held at that time. No one is more eager for this than the county archivist.

With the completion of the archive building renovation, an effort will be made in 2016-2017 to address issues at the Archive Annex, including a need for a new HVAC system and new lighting.

The Archive Annex is nearing records storage capacity. It now houses records from 13 different county departments and offices. Many of these records are not destined for permanent preservation in the county archive but instead should be housed in a county records center. Such a facility was originally planned in the development of the Justice Center but was cut due to cost overruns on the Center building itself. The need is still there. The records center is especially important for the storage of court records, which are permanent in nature. Such records continue to grow at an increasing rate and that pattern will continue in the future. To handle this future records growth, a records center is essential for the proper long-term management of a county records management program. Such a building is needed to handle storage the Archive Annex cannot provide. Planning for such a facility will begin during fiscal year 2016-2017.