

GUIDE TO THE COUNTY'S HISTORIC WILLS NOW AVAILABLE ONLINE

Over 7,500 loose wills recorded in Washington County are now processed and accessible for research. These wills span from the earliest one for John Wood of 1773 (under the Watauga Association) into the 1980s. A guide inventorying these wills is available online on the archive webpage at the following url:

<https://wctnarchives.org/record-groups/>.

“One thing we have learned in processing these wills, is that a will can be written on anything, and it just about has been,” said County Archivist Ned Irwin. “The wills provide not only much information related to specific individuals and families, thus aiding genealogists in their study of family history, they also provide many unique and interesting insights into the times in which the decedents lived, the experiences they had, and the material culture that was part of their lives. So both genealogists and historians should find a rich trove for research.”

Several archive volunteers worked for nearly a year on the project to unfold, flatten, clean, and store these loose wills in acid-free folders and boxes, and create the written guide. Among the volunteers contributing to the processing project were Georgia Greer, Janette Guinn, Shirley Hinds, Betty Jane Hylton, Kyle Johnson, Lisa Shockley, and Jewell Susong. The wills for many years were stored in the basement of the courthouse in downtown Jonesborough. Now they are more readily available to researchers.