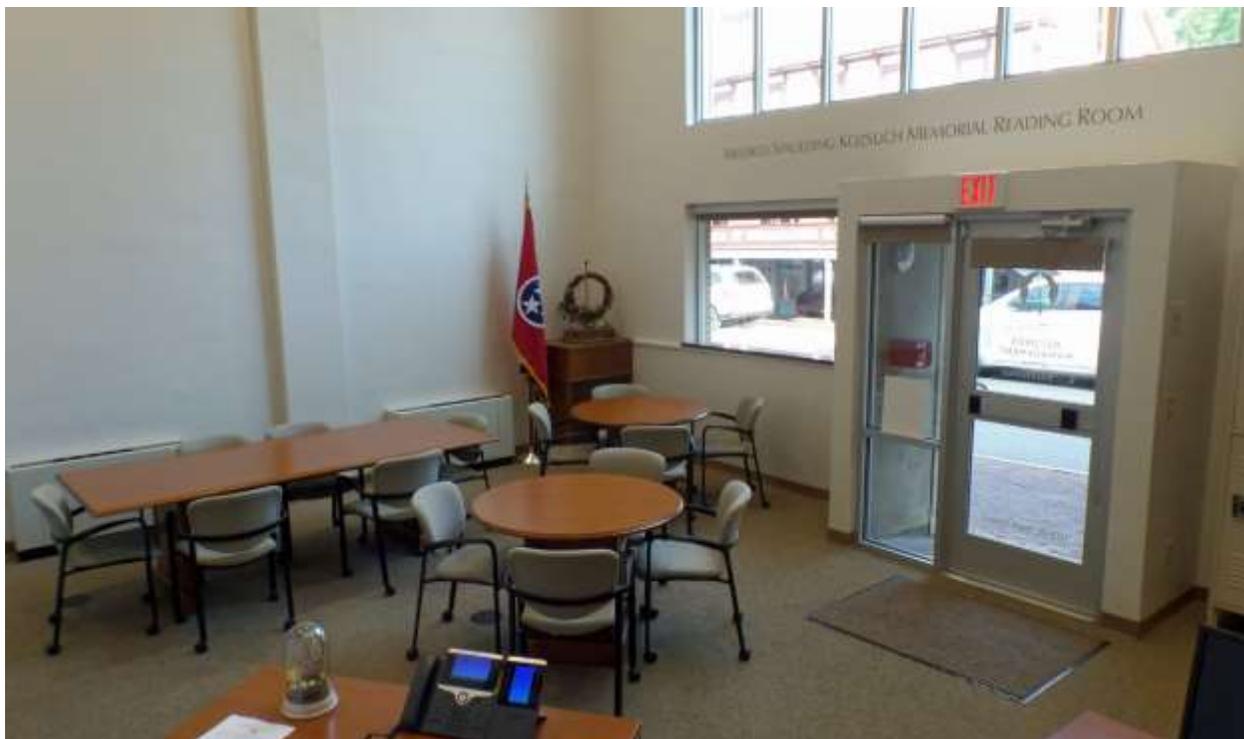


# WASHINGTON COUNTY, TENNESSEE

## DEPARTMENT OF RECORDS MANAGEMENT AND ARCHIVES

### SIXTH ANNUAL REPORT

2017-2018



The Mildred Spaulding Kozsuch Memorial Reading Room

Submitted by  
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WASHINGTON COUNTY, TENNESSEE  
DEPARTMENT OF RECORDS MANAGEMENT AND ARCHIVES  
ANNUAL REPORT, 2017-2018

**By the Numbers**

The following is the county archive year (July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017-June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2018) by the numbers:

- 257,181.16 = revenue dollars raised by the archive filing fee.
- 241,800 = dollars appropriated in the department budget.
- 21,000 = dollars donated to Friends of the Archives in memory of Mildred Kozsuch.
- 9,872 = linear feet of records housed in the archives.
- 7,492 = loose wills housed in the archives.
- 4,534 = visitors to archive webpage.
- 4,262 = boxes of county records housed in the archives.
- 3,675 = volumes of county records housed in the archives.
- 3,000 = dollars contributed by Friends of the Archives.
- 1,766 = number of hours contributed by others to archive.
- 950 = number of reference inquiries handled.
- 138 = number in attendance at public presentations given on the county archive.
- 36 = number of states from which reference inquiries were received
- 29 = number of Friends of the Archives members.
- 22 = number of media items about the archives.
- 13 = number of volunteers.
- 2 = number of foreign countries from which research inquiries were received. (England and Philippines)

## NARRATIVE SUMMARY

### Introduction

It was an eventful year. In July, Donna Cox Briggs became a full-time employee of the archives. In November, we hosted the annual statewide meeting of the Society of Tennessee Archivists. In June, plans were made for renovating the Archive Annex. And, in between, much more happened. It is all examined in more detail in this report.

### **Administrative and Fiscal Management**

The management of the archives in specific aspects is given in the various sections below. Here I would note two significant accomplishments. The first was the creation of a written “Manual of Operations” for the department. This provides a general and detailed guide to all areas and functions, covering both the archive building operations, the Archive Annex operations, and staff functions.

The second accomplishment was the successful completion of the first department audit conducted by state auditors with the Tennessee Comptroller’s office. A recommendation of the audit was implemented with the establishment of an archive copy fund account with the Trustee’s office. All monies received for copies are deposited as required by law with that office. To date, \$457.40 has been deposited. These funds are available when needed for archive expenses.

### **Building Management**

#### Archive Building



The major improvement to the archive building was the installation of an Inergen clean agent fire suppression system by Simplex-Grinnell during June-July 2017. The Cherokee Nation uses the same system to protect their tribal records in their archive in Cherokee, North Carolina. The total cost was \$109,538.46.

On November 20<sup>th</sup>, 2017, locksmith Bryan Stoots of QSI, Inc., opened the large safe inside 1<sup>st</sup> floor vault allowing us to recover some old county records and making the safe available for future use.

At its' April 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2018 meeting, the County Commission approved resolution 18-04-10 naming of archive Reading Room as "The Mildred Spaulding Kozsuch Memorial Reading Room" as a memorial to the late Washington County Historian. A dedication ceremony is planned for later in the next fiscal year.

A Knox shunt trip box was installed at the building entrance in May 2018 to replace one installed during renovation that was not adequate. Also in May, three new dehumidifiers were installed in the basement. These units control moisture levels and have greatly improved the basement environment.

On May 7<sup>th</sup>, 2018, downtown Jonesborough experienced a major power surge in the electrical system. This burnt-out the building's water pump. It was rebuilt by Valley Equipment of Jonesborough and reinstalled by S. B. White Company, Inc. at a total cost of \$2,526.29.

### Archive Annex

Beginning in February 2018, plans began for the renovation of the Archive Annex. On February 26<sup>th</sup>, 2018, the County Commission approved the transfer of \$250,000 from the archive reserve fund to pay for the project (Resolution 18-02-12). In March 2018, Thomas Weems of Johnson City was hired as the architect for the project. The project will involve upgrading electrical

and lighting, installing a new HVAC system, enclosing the exterior windows of both floors, and re-roofing the lower roof of the Annex. Because a bid was not let on this project before the end of the fiscal year, the project funding will have to be reapproved by the County Commission in fiscal year 2018-2019.

## Collection Management

### County Records

Two important processing projects begun in 2016-2017 were completed during 2017-2018. Over 7,500 loose wills (1773-1992) were arranged into acid-free folders and boxes and the typed box and folder list was added to the County Clerk Records (Record Group 5) online guide. Nearly 5,000 old Chancery Court case files (1792-1942) were similarly arranged and described. Records formerly stored in 98 record center boxes are now housed in 262 manuscript boxes. These cases are now listed in the revised guide to the Clerk and Master Records (Record Group 4).

Processing began and is on-going with volunteer assistance on County Court judicial loose records and on Circuit Court case files. These large collection projects will take considerable time and labor to complete. Reorganizing the loose marriage licenses was also begun. Conservation work was done on water-damaged loose wills formerly stored in the courthouse basement.

Also processed were the following sets of records:

- \* Assessor of Property Records (Record Group 1): old tax assessment books, 1857-1940 (687 volumes/41 linear feet)
- \* Homestead and Dower records (in Record Group 4): 496 dowers, 1803-1969 (9 boxes/4.5 linear feet)
- \* Trustee Records (Record Group 19): old tax books, 1814-1960 (151 volumes/75 linear feet).

Volunteers scanned early county tax lists from 1778-1882. Digital images for the tax lists of 1778-1799 are now available to researchers on the department's website (url: <https://wctnarchives.org/early-tax-lists/>).

### Book Collection

In July 2017, the most significant donation to date was made to the archives' book holdings when Dr. William Kennedy of Jonesborough gave his 66 volumes of rare and important works on Washington County and Tennessee history. This donation was appraised by George Webb of Rogersville, Tenn., at \$6,395.



The *Colonial and State Records of North Carolina* set of 28 volumes, an invaluable resource containing transcriptions of many of the important documents related to this area and not found in the records of the archives, was purchased with a \$1,000 donation from Sandhi Kozsuch, son of the late County Historian Mildred Kozsuch, to honor Judge John Kiener, the present Washington County Historian, supplemented by a generous \$500 donation from the Watauga Association of Genealogists.

During the year, the Friends of the Washington County Archives purchased an additional 17 books and 7 maps related to Tennessee, Washington County, and regional history for the benefit of the department.

Five other private donations of books were made during the year. Edward Speer of Elizabethton, Tenn., donated *Black's Law Dictionary* and *The Tennessee Encyclopedia of History & Culture*. Kenneth E. Byrd of Indianapolis, Indiana donated two volumes on the Looney family, *Most Distinguished Characters on the American Frontier: Robert Looney...and some of his descendants...* Stephen D. Watson of Santa Teresa, New Mexico donated a copy of his "Watson Family of Washington County" genealogy book. Larry and Nancy Watson of Embreeville, Tenn., donated the two-volume *Annotated Code of Tennessee (1917-1918)*; and Carolyn Usary Page of Taylors, S. C., donated a copy of her ETSU thesis on Jonesborough author and artist Rhea Wells.

The Book Collection has grown from a handful of volumes when the archives began to 384, as of June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2018.

### Manuscript Collections

No new additions were made to the manuscript holdings in 2017-2018. Guides for five collections were placed on the archive website.

### Map Collections



A new collection of documents was added to the archives to assist researchers when we began building a collection of maps in the summer of 2017. Several important collections were donated, as follows: Charles M. Bennett and Loraine Bennett Rae Map Collection (61 maps); Betty Jane Hylton Map Collection (35 maps); and Gordon Edwards Digital Map Collection (270 scanned maps, including the 61 Bennett-Rae maps). Betty Jane Hylton donated the first two collections mentioned. Some additional miscellaneous maps were purchased by the Friends of the Washington County Archives. The Map Collection has 373 maps (either in hard copy or digital form) as of June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2018. Most of these maps are U. S. Geological Survey topographic quadrangle maps. Guides to these maps are available to researchers on the archives webpage (url: <https://wctnarchives.org/map-collection/>). Scanned images of 270 of these maps in the Edwards collection may be viewed using the public reference computer in the archives' Reading Room.

### **Records Management**

At its' September 25<sup>th</sup>, 2017 meeting, the County Commission adopted resolution 17-09-12. Proposed by the county archivist and recommended by the Washington County Public Records Commission, the resolution requires that all county offices and departments use the records retention schedules devised by the County Technical Advisory Service to determine the proper disposition of records.

In September, the county archivist coordinated with Circuit Court Clerk Karen Guinn on moving the following records into the Archive Annex: Criminal Court (101 boxes); Civil (90 boxes); Bookkeeping (36 boxes), and Juvenile Court (24 boxes) for a total of 251 boxes.

During the year, the department assisted the Zoning Department on retention of old records. Zoning donated a map cabinet (8-drawer) to the archives. This was moved to the Archive Annex and will be used to house old zoning maps and drawings.

The department assisted the Legal Services Department in consolidating and disposing of records and equipment housed in the Archive Annex.

An additional 16 volumes of marriage record books (1955-1972) was transferred from the County Clerk's office to the archives, April 5<sup>th</sup>, 2018.

### **Reference and Public Service**

Reference requests continued to increase by more than 12% from 2016-2017 figures. Much of this increase is the result of being opened to the public for the entire fiscal year and increasing awareness of the archives both locally and nationally. A total of 950 research inquiries were handled.

Inquires came from 36 states and two foreign countries. This included Tennessee, Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Texas, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, Wisconsin, England, and the Philippines. Since beginning, the archives has received research inquiries from 47 states, the District of Columbia, and five foreign countries. We lack only Montana, New Hampshire, and South Dakota.

At the public presentations given by the county archivist and archives assistant, a total of 138 individuals attended. This included talks to the Jonesborough Senior Center, Friends of the Washington County Archives, Society of Tennessee Archivists, and the Watauga Association of Genealogists.

An archive email distribution list was developed to broadcast news, interesting facts, and happenings related to the archive. Over 100 people are now receiving these emails.

Via social media, 396 individuals follow us through the Friends of the Archives Facebook page. We use this page to occasionally share interesting items found in the archives, dates the archives are closed and announcements.

In August 2017, the department hosted the Society of Tennessee Archivists board of directors meeting and then hosted the society's annual statewide conference at the International Storytelling Center in Jonesborough on November 1-3, 2018. Over 50 individuals attended this statewide meeting with professional archivists from across Tennessee. Noted Appalachian author Sharyn McCrumb was the keynote speaker. Tours of the archive building was provided along with displays of historic county documents.



Donna Briggs, Sharyn McCrum, and Ned Irwin

The archives was featured on the Archives Month poster distributed statewide for October 2017 and sponsored by the Society of Tennessee Archivists.

The county archivist provided advice and assistance regarding archive filing fee funding to representatives of the Cumberland County Archives, Hawkins County Archives, and Madison County Archives. The archivist also met with officials of Jonesborough's F&AM Rhea Masonic Lodge #47 about the lodge's historic records.

Five different displays of historic county documents were designed, created, and installed by staff during the year. Two display cases now house a permanent exhibit on the history of the Washington County Courthouse and are located in the main lobby of the historic courthouse in downtown Jonesborough.

The archives worked with Heritage Alliance and the Washington County-Jonesborough Library on developing a joint brochure to assist researchers using the various collections. It is hoped this project will be completed during 2018-2019.

### Website

Usage by the public on the department's website has greatly increased since it went live in March 2017. From July 1, 2017 through June 30, 2018, a total of 28,079 view have been made of pages on the site by a total of 4,534 visitors. These visitors come from 20 different countries, as follows: the United States, Australia, Canada, China, Ecuador, European Union, Germany, Hong Kong, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Israel, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Philippines, Romania, Russia, South Korea, and the United Kingdom.

If you really want to know about the department and its' holdings, please check out the website (url: <https://wctnarchives.org/>). On the website, you can find contacts, information for visitors, guides to the collections, a photo gallery of several categories of images of Washington

County both historic and current, digital collections, research aids, news articles, old annual reports, and much, much more. The site is constantly being updated and enhanced. So please take a look. The Friends of the Archives funds the website's annual WordPress costs.

### **Staffing and Volunteers**

The most significant staffing event was that of Donna Cox Briggs going from a part-time position to a full-time position as archive assistant. This began on July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017. Briggs has proven invaluable in the operations of the department and in assisting researchers.

Volunteers contributed 1,766 hours of service time to the department during the year. This is the equivalent of having an additional full-time employee 236 days in the archives. At the government rate of \$26.79 calculated for non-profit organizations, this equates to \$47,311.14 being financially contributed!

A great deal we get accomplished is the result of the behind-the-scenes work of these volunteers, especially in areas of collection processing and scanning. The following worked as volunteers during the year: Mike Briggs, Georgia Greer, Janette Guinn, Shirley Hinds, Margaret Hougland, Betty Jane Hylton, Gary and Mary Alice Irwin, Kyle Johnson, Jessica Newell, Kari Roueche, Lisa Shockley, Jewell Susong, and Nancy Trivett.

Betty Jane Hylton, one of our first volunteers, received the prestigious National Daughters of the American Revolution Historic Preservation Recognition Award on October 5, 2017.



On Tuesday, December 19<sup>th</sup>, 2017, the department hosted its' first Volunteer Appreciation Day, to honor those who had volunteered in the archives in the past year. Those attending were Mary Alice Irwin, Georgia Greer, Betty Jane Hylton, Janette Guinn, Shirley Hinds, Nancy Trivett, and Kyle Johnson.

### **Public Records Commission**

The Washington County Public Records Commission (PRC) held three meetings during the year: on September 6<sup>th</sup>, 2017, February 7<sup>th</sup>, 2018, and April 5<sup>th</sup>, 2018. Among the major actions of the commission in support of the department was approval of its' budget; approval of the renovation and funding for the Archive Annex; and approval of naming the archive Reading Room in memory of Mildred Kozsuch, a former chairwoman of the commission. The first set of written bylaws for the group was also adopted in April 2018.

Members of the PRC are Chairman Dr. Sam Humphreys, Vice-Chairman Commissioner Mike Ford, Gene Hurdt, Ned Irwin, Register of Deeds Ginger Jilton, Dr. William Kennedy, Judge John Kiener, Chancellor John Rambo, and County Clerk Kathy Storey.

### **Friends of the Archives**

As noted previously regarding volunteer help, the help of the Friends of the Washington County, Tennessee Archives (FOA) is essential to the department's welfare. The group supports the archives in many ways, including purchasing materials for the department and helping secure volunteers to work in the archives.

During the fiscal year, the FOA purchased 45 books at a total cost of approximately \$2,030.88 for the department's reference Book Collection. This included the wonderful set of volumes in the *Colonial and State Records of North Carolina* series. To help decorate the Reading Room, the FOA purchased an American and Tennessee flag set. A reproduction of Gilbert Stuart's famous painting of George Washington based on the original at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, Mass., was purchased for the archive Reading Room.



In total, over \$3,000 was spent on behalf of the archives during the year by the FOA. The group also funded and served refreshments for the Society of Tennessee Archivists annual conference held in Jonesborough in November 2017 and sponsored by the department.

In addition to regular membership dues, the FOA received \$21,000 in donations during the year from Sandhi Kozsuch in memory of his mother Mildred Kozsuch, who did so much to promote the creation of the Washington County Archives. The Watauga Association of Genealogists also made a generous donation of \$500 to the Friends. Other donations totaling \$1,315 were made during the year.

There were 29 members of the group during the year. The FOA held its' annual meeting on Thursday, June 14<sup>th</sup>, 2018 in Reading Room. Dr. Colin Baxter spoke on his new book *The Secret History of RDX: the Super-Explosive that Helped Win World War II*. The book documents the production of this explosive at Kingsport, Tenn., an operation that employed many Washington County residents. The meeting was well attended.

### **The Year Ahead**

- Complete the renovation of the Archive Annex.
- With volunteer assistance, continue efforts to process and make records publicly accessible.
- There is a need to begin planning for a records center building. The archive storage space is filling up rapidly, and officeholders are running out of records storage space.