

DICTIONARY OF TERMS, ABBREVIATIONS & SYMBOLS

Researchers encountering unfamiliar terms, abbreviations, and symbols in the records of Washington County may be helped by this guide.

A

administrator: in legal terms, this refers to the person appointed to administer a decedent's estate. Administrator records are found in Chancery Court (Record Group 4), Sub-Group 4.3: Probate Records, Series B: Administrator's Bonds and Letters and Series F: Administrator Settlements.

administrator de bonis non cum testament annexo: an administrator appointed by a probate court to take over the management of probate proceedings when the original named executor dies, leaving the job unfinished. (Among other instances where it may be found, this term is found in the will of Bettie Dewald [1919], Record Group 4, Sub-Group 4.3: Probate Records, Series A: Wills).

adultery: sexual intercourse between a married person with some person not his or her husband or wife.

ad valorem: according to the value.

ad valorem tax: a tax of a fixed proportion of the value of the property to be charged, an appraisal being a prerequisite to the determination of the amount of the tax. Merchant Ad Valorem volumes are found in County Clerk Records (Record Group 5).

affidavit: a voluntary statement made in writing and sworn to before someone legally authorized to administer an oath or affirmation.

aka: abbreviation for the phrase "also known as"; an alias.

alimony: an allowance for the support and maintenance of a divorced spouse.

alimony docket: a written record of details in an alimony case. The record may include the names of cases, court costs, disbursements, name of person paid, and the decree on the amount of alimony to be paid. Such dockets are found in Circuit Court Clerk Records (Record Group 3), Sub-Group 3.2, Series B.1.

appearance docket: a type of docket that provides the case number, case name, names of solicitors involved, what is being pleaded, date of filing, and any orders or continuances related to a case. Such a docket is found in Clerk and Master Records (Record Group 4), Sub-Group 4.2: Chancery Court Records, Series B.1.

assault: a threat to do physical harm to another person without actually doing the hurt that is threatened.

assumpsit: a common law action by which compensation in damages may be recovered for the nonperformance of a contract, written or verbal, but not under seal or of record. (Found in *Greene County, Tennessee Minutes of the Court of Common Pleas, 1783-1795* by Goldene Fillers Burgner (1982), p. 26)

attachment: a legal proceeding taken to attach or collect a debt by the seizure and disposition of the debtor's property.

B

bastardy: the state of being a bastard, a bastard being a person begotten out of wedlock, illegitimate.

bastardy bond: a bond given by the father of a bastard to insure the child's support

battery: the unlawful striking or use of force on another person.

beward: to guard or protect.

bill: the word has various meanings, including a complaint in a lawsuit; a document presented to a legislative body for enactment into a law; a charge made against the accused in an indictment; etc.

bill single: a written engagement, generally under seal, for the payment of money without a penalty. Sometimes referred to as a "single bill."

bird of passage: a person who leads an unsettled, wandering or migratory life; an immigrant. It is sometimes applied to immigrants to the United States that intended to earn enough money to return to their country of origin and purchase land.

bond: a written obligation that binds a signatory to pay a certain sum of money upon the happening of a specified event. It is a security that the obligation will be completed.

bond book: a volume containing a written record of bonds.

C

capias: a writ to be executed by seizing property or the person of the defendant.

Captain's Company: the method by which county government was organized politically in Tennessee during the frontier era and early statehood years. It was replaced by the Civil District in the 1834 state constitution. A captain's company was a specific geographic area of the county. It was based on militia company and was composed of the adult men in that area. It was named for the captain of that militia unit, so that names change and vary over the years for the same geographic area. The captain's company will be cited in early tax lists, county court records, and other legal documents.

cash book or cash journal: a record of cash amounts received by an office, the name of the person making the payment, and in court cases, a listing of the case name involved. Such volumes are found in Circuit Court Clerk Records (Record Group 3) and Clerk and Master Records (Record Group 4).

caveat deed: a deed that includes a formal notice of an unregistered interest in land. Once lodged with the Register of Deeds, this notice prevents the register from recording any dealing affecting the estate or the interest claimed.

certiorari: a writ or petition usually issued by a superior court to an inferior court or officer requiring the certification and return of the record and proceedings in order that the court record may be revised and corrected in matters of law.

Chancellor: a judge of the Chancery Court. Records related to the chancellor are found in the Clerk and Master Records (Record Group 4).

Chancery Court: a court of equity. See the term Equity. Records of Chancery Court are found in the Clerk and Master Records (Record Group 4).

circa: approximately.

civil case: a court case involving private individuals seeking legal remedies to disputes.

Civil District: the method by which county government was organized in Tennessee between 1835 and 1980. The county was divided for representational purposes on the County Court into specific geographic areas called civil districts. Boundaries altered at times depending on census reapportionment and also when Unicoi County was created from Washington County in 1875 out of the original 7th and 18th Civil

Districts. Records in which civil districts may be cited include deeds, county court records, census records, and other legal documents.

Circuit Court: a court presided over by a judge or judges that is held at different places in the same district. Records for this court are found in Circuit Court Clerk Records (Record Group 3).

Clerk and Master: this county official is appointed to a specified term by the Chancellor. Responsibilities of the office include recording the transactions of Chancery Court and has custody of the records created by that court. See Clerk and Master Records (Record Group 4).

col.: this abbreviation for “colored” sometimes appears in early county records and refers to a person of African-American origin.

commitment: an order to confine someone, generally referring to confinement in a mental health facility, in earlier times known as an insane asylum.

consanguine, consanguinity: related by blood.

constable: a peace officer of a county or town whose special duty is the execution of process in and of the courts of justices of the peace. In medieval England and France, this was once a high office of the crown having both judicial and military duties.

conveyance: a deed transferring title to land from one person to another, being an abbreviation of the expression “deed of conveyance.”

cost docket: a docket that documents expenses in a case, usually giving the individual’s name, case name, execution docket page, the amount of any money paid, and the date paid. Such dockets are found in Circuit Court Clerk Records (Record Group 3) and Clerk and Master Records (Record Group 4).

Court of Pleas and Quarter Sessions: This was the original name for County Court, currently known in Tennessee as the County Commission. Originally established in February 1778 for Washington County, the court had both an administrative function (granting licenses, setting and collecting local taxes, laying off roads, etc.) and a judicial function. It had original jurisdiction in civil cases in the county and in criminal cases. The court’s verdicts could be appealed to the Superior Court of Law and Equity. Members of the Court of Pleas and Quarter Sessions were known as justices of the peace (J.P.s) or magistrates. Records for this court are found in the County Clerk Records (Record Group 5). For a greater description, see the guide for that record group.

cr: In accounting terminology, this is an abbreviation for the word “credit.” Credit comes from the Latin word credere, which means “to believe.” For the abbreviation for debit, see “dr”.

criminal case: a court case prosecuting a person for a criminal offense, the state of Tennessee being the plaintiff.

D

day book: a written record (sometimes called a diary or journal) kept by an individual or office recording the transactions or events handled, the record generally being kept in chronological order.

D. B.: an abbreviation for “Deed Book.”

D.C.: an abbreviation for “Deputy Clerk” found on many court documents. Sometimes it is written without the periods following the initials.

de bonis non: see de bonis non administratrix.

de bonis non administratrix: of goods not administered.

decendent: a person who has died.

decree: the judgement of a court.

dedimus: We have given.

deed: a written instrument conveying real property or an interest therein. Sometimes more formally called a deed of conveyance. Deeds are found primarily in Register of Deeds Records (Record Group 15).

deed of release: See Quitclaim deed and Release deeds.

deed of trust: a form of deed instrument that conveys property as security for the payment of a debt. The difference between a deed of trust and a mortgage is the former is executed in favor of a disinterested third party, while the latter is executed directly to the creditor for security against a loan.

defendant: the party or person against whom an action or suit is brought.

demise: demise has several meanings, including 1) the death of a person or thing; 2) the conveyance of an estate by will or lease; 3) the instrument by which such a conveyance is accomplished; and 4) the passing of property by descent or bequest.

deposition: the written testimony of a witness given under oath.

detinue: a common-law remedy for the recovery in specie of chattels wrongfully withheld from the plaintiff.

ditto: means a thing mentioned previously or above and used to avoid repeating a word or phrase. It is often symbolized by inverted commas or apostrophes.

divorce: the dissolution of a marriage between husband and wife. Early in Tennessee history, divorces had to be granted by the Tennessee General Assembly. Later, they could be granted at the county-level in either of two courts: Circuit Court or Chancery Court. Researchers looking for a divorce may need to check the records of all three granting bodies.

docket: a record book containing a list of cases heard by a court and the proceedings held in the case. It is not a record in detail or extended form as might be found in a journal or minute book of the court.

Doe, John: see John Doe.

dower: the legal right or interest that the wife acquires by marriage in the real estate of her husband. In common law, it consists in the use of a widow during her lifetime of one-third of her husband's property. Dower records will be found in County Court minutes (see County Clerk Records (Record Group 5), Series) and in Clerk and Master Records (Record Group 4), Sub-Group 4.3: Probate Records, Series G.4: Homestead and Dower Records.

dr: In accounting terminology, the word debit is sometimes abbreviated as "dr". Debit comes from debere, which means "to owe, deriving from the Latin word debitum, which means "debt." For the abbreviation for credit, see "cr". "Dr." is an abbreviation for "Doctor," i.e., a physician or professor.

E

enrolling docket: a written volume documenting a court case that generally includes the case name, a summary of the case, and may include bonds, exhibits, and decrees involved in the case. Such dockets are found in Circuit Court Clerk Records (Record Group 3), Sub-Group 3.2: Circuit Court Records, Series B.3: Enrolling Dockets and Clerk and Master Records (Record Group 4), Sub-Group 4.2: Chancery Court Records, Series B.4: Enrolling Dockets.

equity: an attempt to apply justice in particular cases wherein the prescribed or customary forms of ordinary law seem to be inadequate. Equity courts would include the Superior Court of Law and Equity (Record Group 18) and Chancery Court (Record Group 4).

estate: the property (real and personal) left by a decedent.

estray: a beast or livestock, such as a cow, horse, or pig found wandering or lost and its owner being unknown; a stray. (There is a document with an example of this found in Record Group 5, County Clerk Records, Series F.1: County Court Judicial Records.)

E. T.: an abbreviation sometimes used for “Entry Taker.”

et. al.: an abbreviation for et alli, which means “and others.”

etc.: an abbreviation for et caetera, which means “and others” or “and other things” or “and so on.”

et seq: an abbreviation for et sequential, which means “and following” or “subsequent.”

et ux: an abbreviation for et uxor, which means “and wife.” It sometimes is used in a deed of conveyance.

execution docket: a written volume documenting aspects of a court case. It generally includes such information as the case name, costs related to the case, and decrees made in the case. Such dockets are found in Circuit Court Clerk Records (Record Group 3) and Clerk and Master Records (Record Group 4).

ex rel.: an abbreviation for the Latin words ex relatione, meaning “upon being related” or “upon information.” It is used in the title of a case filing where a private individual seeks to have the government enforce his/her rights as well as those of the public. An example of such a caption would read: State of Tennessee ex rel. John Smith vs. Franklin Products Company.

F

felony: a term for certain high crimes such as murder, treason, robbery, larceny, etc.

fieri facias (sometimes abbreviated as fi. fa.): a writ of execution against an executor, as such, on account of a debt due from his testator and which can only be levied on property that belonged to the testator.

forgery: the crime of falsely and fraudulently making or altering a document.

G

garnishment: a proceeding by a creditor to obtain money owed them by a debtor. Generally, the money is secured by having it deducted from job wages earned by the debtor.

Grand Jury: a body composed of citizens of a county selected to inquire into crimes committed in that county, the determination of the probability of guilt, and the finding of indictments against supposed offenders.

grant: a conveyance or transfer of real property, especially of public lands. Early land grants made in Washington County when a part of North Carolina can be found where they were later recorded in deed books. See Register of Deeds Records (Record Group 15).

grantee: a person to whom a grant is made. In a deed, this is the person purchasing or receiving the property.

grantor: a person who makes a grant. In a deed, this is the person who sells or conveys the property.

“GTT”: Abbreviation for “Gone to Texas.” The term has been found in County Court minutes when referring to certain individuals no longer present in the county. The expression is found sometimes in documents of the 1830s and 1840s.

guardian: a person appointed by a court to take custody and control of an individual or estate, or both. Generally, guardianship is for someone unable to manage their own affairs such as an infant, lunatic, or incompetent person. For Washington County, most guardian records will be found in the Clerk and Master Records (Record Group 4), though early in the county’s history, this function was often performed by County Court. So the minute books for the Court of Pleas and Quarter Sessions (County Court) found in the County Clerk Records (Record Group 5) may also need to be consulted.

guardianship records and settlements: these records document the actions of a court-appointed guardian. See “Guardian” entry above for record groups where such records will be found.

H

hearing docket: a written volume documenting court case hearings. The dockets generally include such information as the case name, names of solicitors, cause involved, date of filing, and any orders or continuances. Such dockets are found in Clerk and Master Records (Record Group 4), Sub-Group 4.2: Chancery Court Records, Series B.7: Hearing Dockets.

homestead: as a legal term, a homestead is a provision to be made out of property of a decedent for the benefit of any surviving spouse and minor children. See records are found in Clerk and Master Records (Record Group 4), Sub-Group 4.3: Probate Records, Series G.4: Homestead and Dower Records.

hypothecate: to enter into a contract whereby certain specified real or personal property is designated as security for the performance of an act, without transfer of the possession of the property.

I

ignoramus: as a noun, it can be used to describe an ignorant person. As a verb, in legal terms, this usually means not to know or to take no notice. A grand jury may endorse this on the back of a bill of indictment when they believe the charge being made is groundless or for which there is not enough evidence for the grand jurors to know and judge the situation. Sometimes they will add the term “no true bill” to the bill of indictment.

indenture: a deed executed by both the grantor and grantee. The term derives from the old practice of actually “indenting” the deed, whereby the deed was made in two parts formed by cutting or tearing a single sheet across the middle in a jagged or indented line, so that the two parts might be subsequently matched. The practice eventually was discontinued, but the term continued to be used.

indictment: an accusation or charge made by the grand jury against an individual or individuals for the suspicion of a crime.

inferior court: a court of limited jurisdiction, such as court having original jurisdiction in a case as opposed to an appellate or superior court exercising control over it.

in esse: alive; living.

insolvent: a person or business that has ceased to pay debts owed or cannot pay the debts as these become due.

inure: to accrue to the benefit of a person; to devolve upon a person; to come into operation; to take effect.

inventory: an itemized list or record of articles, personal property, goods, etc.

J

J.P.: an abbreviation for "Justice of the Peace." Sometimes it is written without the periods following the initials.

John Doe: a fictitious name of a person which is often substituted in an action or proceeding for a party's real name until the latter can be ascertained. It was also used in legal documents as a substitute name to protect the identity of a witness or a party to a court case. In some legal documents, John Doe is used as a substitute for the plaintiff's name and Richard Roe is used as a substitute for the defendant's name.

justice of the peace: Also referred to as magistrate, the position was a member of the County Court (originally known as the Court of Pleas and Quarter Sessions) elected by popular vote, generally by political district sub-divisions within the county. Originally, the justice had both administrative duties in managing county government and a judicial function hearing minor civil and political court cases. This judicial function was eventually extinguished with the establishment of the General Sessions Court in Tennessee. It was an office of ancient origin established first in England and later in the American colonies. Records for this office will be found in the County Clerk Records (Record Group 5).

K

KIA: abbreviation for the phrase "killed in action."

L

larceny: stealing or theft.

lewdness: open and public indecency.

libel: a malicious publication in either print, writing or other non-verbal form of communication intended to damage an individual's or company's reputation. See also slander.

lien: a charge against property for the payment of a debt or duty.

M

magistrate: a judge or justice of an inferior court, generally permitted to hear misdemeanor cases and to conduct preliminary hearings on charges of more serious offenses. A justice of the peace is also sometimes referred to as magistrate.

magistrate docket: a volume that records the actions record actions taken by the justices of the peace in hearing cases brought before them. Information varies from volume to volume but generally includes the following: case number, case name, date of trial, judgment and amount of judgement, name of the returning officer, witnesses claiming and amount claimed, receipts, costs, and officer's returns. Such dockets are found in the County Clerk Records (Record Group 5), Series F.2.B: Magistrate Dockets.

malice aforethought: premeditated design; thought out beforehand.

malicious mischief: the willful and unlawful destruction or injury of the property of another with the intent to injure the owner.

M. G.: an abbreviation for "Minister of the Gospels" meaning a minister or preacher of the Christian faith. Often found following the name of the minister in marriage license records.

minute books: a book in which the minutes or summary of proceedings of a court are entered by the clerk of the court; or the proceedings or activities of a corporation or other group or organization.

minutes: a record or memorandum summarizing the proceedings of a court, board of directors, or other organization's meetings or activities.

misdemeanor: an indictable offense not amounting to a felony.

mittimus: a warrant of commitment to a jail or prison.

mortgage: a security or lien (usually on property) for the performance of an obligation; a conveyance of property to secure the performance of some obligation.

murder: the killing of one human being by another with malice aforethought.

N

nazeranna: a voluntary payment made to a government in recognition of a bestowal of a land grant or a public office.

N.B.: an abbreviation for the Latin words "nota bene", meaning "note well."

N.M.N.: abbreviation for “no middle name.” This is sometimes found in marriage license entries or other records.

notary public: a person authorized to attest to the genuineness of documents, thus to render the documents available for evidence. In Tennessee, notary publics are appointed by the local County Commission of the county in which they reside to hold this authority for specific periods, which can be renewed.

nuncupative will: a verbal will; a will declared orally before witnesses; generally to be proven the words had to be written down and attested to by witnesses.

O

oath: any form of attestation whereby a person pledges to be bound to perform an act or duty.

original jurisdiction: the jurisdiction conferred on or inherent in a court, i.e., the jurisdiction of a trial court that had the initial hearing of a case as opposed to an appellate court that heard the case later on appeal.

out-cry: another name for an auction.

P

pbo: an abbreviation for “proven by oath.” This is sometimes found in records such as County Court minutes where a deed or other transaction is brought into court to be proven and recorded. (For example, see volume 1 of the Court of Pleas and Quarter Sessions, page 526.)

pedigree: a record of ancestry; the descent of a pure-bred animal as registered. There is a pedigree record found in County Clerk Records (Record Group 5), Series G.13: Pedigree Record.

petition: various meanings, including: the pleading by which the plaintiff in a civil action sets for the cause of action and invokes the jurisdiction of the court; a formal written request to one in a position of power or to a body, such as a legislature, signed by a number of persons.

plaintiff: the party complaining in an action, the person who brings a suit.

plea: the answer required by law of one formally accused of a crime.

poll tax: deriving from the Middle English word for “head” and sometimes known as a head tax, this is a tax of a fixed amount imposed upon all the persons of a certain class resident within a specific territory without regard to their property or the occupations in which they may be engaged. Such tax records are found in the archive in the tax lists. See County Clerk Records (Record Group 5), Series L: Tax Records.

privilege license: a license issued to an individual or firm exercising taxing privileges (such as collecting sales tax).

privilege license books: contains duplicates of licenses issued to an individual or firm exercising taxable privileges. Generally, the books include the name of the licensee, date issued, license number, amount of tax collected, the privilege authorized to exercise, and the clerk’s signature. Volumes of this type of record are found in Record Group 5, County Clerk Records.

probate: the legal proceeding whereby an instrument is judged to be a valid will and ordered to be recorded.

Probate Court: a court with jurisdiction to probate wills and handle matters related to the administration of a decedent’s estate, guardianships, etc. In Tennessee, this power originally was held by the Court of Pleas and Quarter Sessions (County Court). Currently, probate jurisdiction resides with Chancery Court. Probate records will be found in Clerk and Master Records (Record Group 4).

procedendo: an order or writ issued by an appellate court commanding an inferior court to proceed to judgment in a case pending before it but not interfering with what judgment that inferior court should make. A volume of procedendoes minutes is found in Clerk and Master Records (Record Group 4).

promissory note: a written contract for the payment of money.

P.T.: This abbreviation can stand for “paid taxes” and is sometimes found in early tax lists.

Q

quit claim deed: a deed in which the grantor conveys whatever interest the grantor may have in the property specified in the deed to the grantee, thus quitting any claim to the property. Same as release deed.

Quorum Court: another term for County Court or Quarterly Court. Minutes of the Quorum Court generally vary from the regular County Court/Quarterly Court minutes in that these focus on special functions of the court such as probating wills

(when the County Court had that jurisdiction), other probate actions such as the appointments of administrators and executors of estates, the appointment of guardians, filing of oaths of office by county officials, name changes, actions related to juvenile cases (when the county judge was also the juvenile judge), and other actions of the court.

R

recognizance: a term used interchangeably with bail bond; an obligation entered into before a court or duly authorized magistrate, containing a condition to do some particular act, usually to appear and answer an accusation.

release deed: See quitclaim deed.

revenue docket: a financial recording of revenue collected by a county official. Such dockets are found in Circuit County Clerk Records (Record Group 3), Sub-Group 3.2: Circuit Court Records, Series B.11; Clerk and Master Records (Record Group 4), Sub-Group 4.2: Chancery Court Records, Series B.10; and County Clerk Records (Record Group 5), Series A.2.b.

Richard Roe: a fictitious name of a person which is often substituted in an action or proceeding for a party's real name until the latter can be ascertained. It was also used in legal documents as a substitute name to protect the identity of a witness or a party to a court case. In some legal documents, John Doe is used as a substitute for the plaintiff's name and Richard Roe is used as a substitute for the defendant's name. (See also John Doe.)

robbery: the illegal taking of money, goods, or valuables from another person or business.

Roe, Richard: See Richard Roe.

rule docket: volumes documenting procedures followed in a court case, generally including such information as the case number and name, actions taken in the case, and rulings made by the court. Such dockets are found in in Circuit County Clerk Records (Record Group 3), Sub-Group 3.2: Circuit Court Records, Series B.12 and Clerk and Master Records (Record Group 4), Sub-Group 4.2: Chancery Court Records, Series B.11.

S

scire facias: a writ to obtain a judgment where none has before existed or as a writ of execution or continuation of a judgment previously entered.

single bill: a written engagement, generally under seal, for the payment of money without a penalty. Sometimes referred to as a “bill single.”

slander: the speaking of defamatory words that tend to damage an individual’s or company’s reputation. See also libel.

solicitor: another name for an attorney. In British jurisprudence, solicitors are not members of the bar and are not heard in superior courts (for which barristers are used).

stayor: a person who guaranteed the payment of a judgment to stop a garnishment or execution on a judgment. The "stayor" only had to pay if the original debtor did not pay the judgment within a certain period of time. Civil cases prior to the 1950s and the creation of General Sessions Court often began in Justice of the Peace courts. If a litigant did not receive a favorable decision there, he/she could appeal the case to the next term of Circuit Court. That is when friends or relatives of the litigant stepped in and “stayed” the judgment so that it would not go into effect until after being appealed. The person(s) signing this request were known as the “stayor.” [This word is found in various county documents including in the J. C. Campbell magistrate docket volume and is listed in the “Note” section of magistrate dockets in County Clerk guide.]

subpoena: a writ issued by the court clerk under the authority of a judge to compel a witness to appear in court.

sui juris: being of full capacity; capable of entering into a contract or other legal document.

summons: a legal order to appear before a court.

superior court: a term applied to courts of general jurisdiction; in some instances, it may be a term for an appellate court.

Superior Court of Law and Equity: The second earliest court in Washington County, established in 1784, this court handled equity cases and had appellate jurisdiction. It was replaced in 1808 by Circuit Court. Records for this court are found in Superior Court of Law and Equity Records (Record Group 18).

supersedeas: a writ that suspends a judgment pending appeal.

surety (plural: sureties): an obligation by which a person(s) pledge to answer for and pay a debt in the event of a default by another person.

T

tippler: To tipple was to indulge in alcoholic beverages. A tippler operated under license issued by the County Court an establishment that sold such beverages to be consumed on the premises.

tippling: See tippler.

trial docket: a volume used to record various actions of a court, generally including such information as the case number and name, names of attorneys, and orders of the court. Such dockets are found in the Circuit County Clerk Records (Record Group 3), Sub-Group 3.2: Circuit Court Records, Series B.14: Trial Dockets and in Clerk and Master Records (Record Group 4), Sub-Group 4.2: Chancery Court Records, Series B.12. Often there are copies for the bar, clerk, and judge.

trover: an action to recover damages for the conversion of personal property. An example is found in Circuit Court case file: 1834: Ellis, John, Sr. vs. John Ellis, Jr., involving a horse.

trust deed: See deed of trust.

U

Uniform Reciprocal Support Docket: a volume that records the payment of child support. Such a docket is found in Circuit Court Clerk Records (Record Group 3), Sub-Group 3.2, Series B, Sub-series B.15.

V

v: an abbreviation for “versus” found in court cases. Sometime a period is placed after the letter.

vendition: a selling; a sale.

vendue: an auction sale.

venire: a writ summoning jurors.

venire facias: a writ for summoning jurors.

viddus: a widower.

vidua: a widow.

vital records: records compiled under law relative primarily to the subject of health, commonly this refers to records of birth and death. Such records are found in County Clerk Records (Record Group 5), Series M: Vital Records.

voucher: a receipt or other evidence of payment.

vs: an abbreviation for “versus” found in court cases. Sometime a period is placed after the letter s.

W

warrant: 1) a court order authorizing the arrest of a person; 2) an order or draft on the treasury of a public body (such as the county) payable on presentation when funds are available.

warranty deed: a type of deed where the grantor or seller guarantees that he/she holds clear title to the property being sold and has the right to sell it.

waste book: a rough account in which entries are made of all transactions (purchases, sales, receipts, payments, etc.) at the time of their occurrences, to be posted afterwards into more formal books.

will: an instrument by which a person makes a disposition of his/her property to take effect after his/her death.

workhouse: a prison or jail where persons convicted of minor offenses and misdemeanors may be confined and required to do labor.

writ: a court order authorizing the arrest of an individual; or an order authorizing the seizure of property sufficient to satisfy the amount of a judgment against the defendant.

X

Y

Z

SIGNS

@ = at

& = This sign is called an ampersand, and it represents the word “and.”

= This sign equals the word “number.”

~ = The tilde symbol when used before a number or figure means “approximately equal to.” Sometimes the tilde symbol is used singly, sometimes as a double-tilde (≈), but the meaning is the same.