

PROCESSING OF CIRCUIT COURT CASES COMPLETED

A processing project lasting two-and-one-half years was recently completed making available for the first time over 150 years of Washington County Circuit Court cases. This involves **24,183** civil and criminal court cases, spanning a period from the early 1800s into the mid-20th century, that are now usable. These records offer researchers the ability to dig deep into an ancestor's life or into various aspects of the history of Washington County.

Circuit Court records are particularly helpful in providing a picture of a society or community at a given period of history. You learn what a turbulent and violent time it was during and in the years immediately following the Civil War. You learn a lot about the nature of slavery and the efforts at emancipation during the antebellum years. You see the impact of war has on domestic relations in the skyrocketing number of World War II-era divorces. You witness the debilitating effects on society caused by illegal liquor manufacture during the Prohibition era in the county. Family relationships are often brought out in civil disputes over property, debt, or inheritance. Etc. Etc. Etc.

Among the types of cases found are those involving debt, divorce, damages, land disputes, assault and battery, tippling, lewdness and adultery, robbery, larceny, forgery, transporting moonshine, and notable murders, among many other civil disputes and criminal actions. Among the types of documents found in the case files are bonds, correspondence, petitions, notices, bills, injunctions, complaints, subpoenas, depositions, exhibits, court decrees, and writs.

An online guide provides a listing of these cases that is keyword searchable on the department's website at the following url: <https://wctnarchives.org/record-groups/>.