

Historical Resources on Microfilm:
Henderson County, Tennessee

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West Tennessee Heritage Study Center
Univ. of Tennessee at Martin

Henderson County

In mid October 1818, Andrew Jackson and Kentucky governor Isaac Shelby successfully strong-armed Chickasaw Indians into ceding lands of the tribe's cultural region lying east of the Mississippi River. Land south of the Ohio River and north of the Kentucky-Tennessee border became the Jackson Purchase; land south of that line within Tennessee became the Western District. Earlier that year the first settler known to establish themselves within current Henderson County was Joseph Reed's two sons Jack and William, who located on Beech River, about five miles east of the site that became Lexington, the county seat, about five years later. The Tennessee legislature passed an act to organize the Western District region into new counties November 7, 1821 (*Acts of Tennessee* 1821, p.39). Seventeen counties were created during the next few years to organize this section politically, three of which straddled the Tennessee River. Henderson County was one of these, chartered barely a week after the initial act and named in honor of Col. James Henderson, who had commanded Tennessee troops at the Battle of New Orleans. Until the independent organization became effective in early 1822, the Henderson County region was under the administration of Stewart County.

County boundaries have been relatively stable. In 1845 a three-mile strip along the southeastern boundary was administratively transferred to the newly formed Decatur County. In 1868 the extreme northwest corner lying beyond of Griffin Creek, a tributary to the Middle Fork of the Forked Deer River, was attached to Carroll County. The southwestern quarter of the county was combined with parcels from Madison, Hardeman, and McNairy counties to form Wisdom County. This was repealed but the same sections were reauthorized in 1879 for the formation of Chester County, which took effect in 1882.

In 1863 the courthouse in Lexington was accidentally burned by members of the Third Michigan Cavalry who were quartered there. Most county records existing at that time are said to have been consumed. The structure which replaced it in 1867 was likewise destroyed by fire in 1896.

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Book and film holdings of the West Tennessee Heritage Study Center may be searched via the Internet by pointing a browser to <<http://wthsc.utm.edu>> and following the link to the Paul Meek Library catalogue.

MICROFILM

WTHSC
Film reel

Contents

Federal census¹

463	1830 census
474	1840 census
504	1850 census, free schedule
525	1850 census, slave schedule
546	1860 census, free schedule
573	1860 census, slave schedule
601	1870 census
655	1880 census
684	1890 census, Union veterans and widows schedules
706	1900 census
750	1910 census
791	1920 census
837	1930 census

Maps

406	Sanborn Fire Insurance Co. maps (Lexington)
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¹ County boundaries changed dramatically between nineteenth census enumerations. Researchers can follow changes graphically in William Thorndale and William Dollarhide's *Map Guide to the U. S. Federal Censuses, 1790–1920* (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing, 1987).