

Henderson County Locality Guide (20 May 2022)

Geographic Area

Henderson County was named for James Henderson, a soldier in the War of 1812. The County is located in the west central area of the state. ([FamilySearch Wiki - Henderson County TN](#))



The Tennessee General Assembly created Henderson County on November 7, 1821, and named it in honor of Colonel James Henderson, who served under Andrew Jackson and commanded Tennessee troops at the battle of New Orleans. Several of the county's early settlers served under Henderson's command during the War of 1812 and during the Natchez and Creek Indian campaigns. The original area contained the present county, a large part of

Chester County, and smaller portions of Decatur and Madison Counties. Major John Troxell Harmon surveyed the county seat of Lexington in 1822 and laid out the town facing northeast, making it crosswise to traditional orientation. At 720 feet, Lexington is also highest in elevation of all the West Tennessee county seats.

The Tennessee Highland Ridge (also known locally and historically as Feather Ridge and Purdy Range) divided the county into two distinct cultural and geographical sections. All water falling east of the ridge flows to the Tennessee River, while water west of the ridge flows to the Mississippi River. The Tennessee Highland Ridge enters Henderson County at the Chester County line near Laster, separates the Middlefork and Palestine communities, and follows a northerly pattern west of Lexington across Sand Ridge between Bargerton and Union Cross before entering Carroll County. Most of the plantation and slave-owning settlers of the county lived west of the ridge, where the ground was less hilly. The land east of the ridge becomes increasingly hilly toward the Tennessee River and was largely unsuitable for plantation farming.

Three rivers, the Beech, the White Oak, and the Forked Deer, drain Henderson County. Nine recreational lakes dot the county, including two within Natchez Trace State Park. The trace that gives the park its name was a route used on the western side of the Tennessee River. Though not as famous as its Middle Tennessee counterpart, this trail proved just as important to the area's early settlement and economic development. Today, the park contains forty-eight thousand acres, making it one of the largest in the state park system. Within the park is one of North America's largest pecan trees. The park offers hiking trails, camping and picnic sites, opportunities for swimming and fishing, and playing fields.

In 1823 Middle Fork Primitive Baptist Church became the first organized congregation in the county. It was followed by Jacks Creek Baptist Church in 1828, Mud Creek Primitive Baptist in 1830, Mt. Gilead Cumberland Presbyterian in 1826, and a Methodist Church near Olive Branch in 1832.

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Mifflin, now in Chester County, was the earliest and largest of the settlements in Henderson County and the site of the first county commission meetings until the surveying of Lexington. Lexington has been the home of four courthouses. One burned during the Civil War, and another was destroyed by fire during the 1890s, leaving the county with few early records. Governor William Carroll appointed the first commissioners: James Baker, John Crook, John Essary, John Haliburton, Jere Hendricks, Dewey Middleton, John Purdy, William Ray, Abner Taylor, John Wilkes, and Samuel Wilson. Jere Hindricks was the first executive. John Purdy surveyed the first roads, and the original county seat of McNairy County, Purdy, was named in honor of him. The first sheriff was John Troxell Harmon.

The county supplied regiments for both sides during the Civil War, with the western portion of the county following the Confederacy, and the areas east of the Highland Ridge remaining with the Union. County Confederate units were attached to the 13th, 27th, 51st, 52nd, and 154th Confederate infantries, and the 18th, 21st, and 55th Southern cavalries. Both Lexington and Parkers Crossroads were battle sites during General Nathan Bedford Forrest's West Tennessee campaign of 1862. Parker's Crossroads Battlefield is listed in the National Register of Historic Places and has interpretive signs explaining the course of events during the battle. The Federals organized six companies in the 7th Tennessee Cavalry. In later years, these areas organized politically along the same lines, with former Confederate areas voting Democratic and former Union areas supporting the Republican Party. In the last few decades, much of this historic separation and adherence to old alliances has eroded, but regional voting patterns still can be discerned.

In the course of its history, Henderson County has been the site of a number of mysteries and oddities. Stories have long circulated that a large amount of gold was buried and lost by Federal troops on Owl Creek near Lexington. Various outlaws and gangs, including John Murrell and the Moore Gang, roamed the countryside from the 1830s through the 1870s. Henderson County was the site of a turn-of-the-century resort called Hinson Springs. And one of the world's largest men, Mills Darden, is buried near the Chapel Hill community.

In 2000 Henderson County contained 25,552 people; incorporated areas include Lexington, Parker's Crossroads, Scotts Hill and Sardis. Other villages include Huron, Luray, Life, Crucifer, Broadway, Juno, Blue Goose, Poplar Springs, Independence, Union Cross, Rock Hill, Chesterfield Darden, Safford, Middleburg, Shady Hill, Reagan, Cedar Grove, Hickory Flats, Union Hill, Lula, Stegall, Center Hill, Wright Town, Garner Town, Farmville, Moore's Hill, Warren's Bluff, and Stringtown. Henderson County lost the villages of Jacks Creek, Clarks Creek, Mifflin, Roby, and Center Point in 1882 with the creation of Chester County. ([Tennessee Encyclopedia](#))

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Record Loss – (Family Search)

1896 Fire damaged courthouse records.

Lost marriage records: 1821 and 1892

Lost probate records: 1821 to 1894

[FamilySearch Wiki - Henderson County TN](#)

[FamilySearch Henderson County Catalog](#)

TnGenWeb Project – [Henderson County](#)

Contact – [Jerry Butler](#)

Record Location Table

Record Type	Location	Record Notes
Birth	County Clerk Office	County Registrations began 1908
	Tennessee Vital Records Office	Keeps for 100 years then they are sent to TSLA
Marriages	County Clerk Office	County Registrations began 1893
	Tennessee Vital Records Office	Keeps for 50 years then they are sent to TSLA
Divorce	Chancery Court Clerk	
	Tennessee Vital Records Office	TSLA
Deaths	County Clerk Office	County Registrations began 1908
	Tennessee Vital Records Office	Keeps for 50 years then they are sent to TSLA
	TSLA	1908-1912
	TSLA	1914-1933
Land Deeds		County Registrations began 1856
	County Register	County Register of Deeds
	TNGenWeb	Index to Deeds (1date range)
List of Microfilmed [County] County Records	TSLA-PDF	

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Pension Applications	Tennessee State Archives & Library	County Index to Tennessee Confederate Pension Applications
Probate Records	Chancery Court	County Registrations began 1861
Tennessee Enumeration of Male Voters	Ancestry.com (\$) Ancestry.com	Tennessee Enumeration of Male Voters
World War I Veterans	Tennessee State Archives & Library	Research Collection

County Repositories

[Henderson County Public Library](#)

[Yesterday's Henderson County](#)

Current Area Information

[Henderson County Chamber of Commerce](#)

[Henderson County Government](#)

Resources

General

[Tennessee County Database \(TNGS\) – Henderson County](#)

[Henderson County Wiki \(Family Search\)](#)

[Linkpendium – Henderson County](#)

[Tennessee State Library & Archives – Henderson County Facts Sheet](#)

[TNGenWeb – Henderson County](#)

[USGenWeb Archives - Henderson County Tennessee](#)

[Genealogical Trails History Group – Henderson](#)

[Tennessee Genealogy – Ancestry Research & Family History](#)

[Roadside Thoughts-Shady Hill](#)

[Goodspeed – Henderson County](#)

Maps

TDOT Map of Henderson County

The [Rhea Map](#) (1832)

Henderson County [Boundary Changes](#)

Henderson County [Range and Section Lines](#), 9th Surveyor's District

Henderson County [Civil Districts](#), January 7, 1836

Henderson County [Civil Districts by Census Year](#)

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Henderson County, [18 and 20 Civil Districts](#), 1850-1900

[Henderson County - 1888](#)

Henderson County, [7 Civil Districts](#), 1910-1960

[1950 Civil Districts for Henderson and Adjacent Counties](#)

Cemeteries

[Henderson County Cemeteries - Find-a Grave](#)

[Henderson County Cemeteries - USGenWeb](#)

[Henderson County Cemeteries - Genealogy Trails](#)

Newspapers

Tennessee State Archives & Library

[Check Online Catalog for Henderson Newspaper Details & Dates Held.](#) We do not necessarily hold all published issues of the newspapers.

Newspaper.com - No Henderson County Papers; Check Jackson, Memphis, or Nashville for surrounding area sections

Genealogybank.com - Lexington Progress 1/10/1913 - 12/29/1922

Tennessee State Archives & Library

Selected Published County Histories

- Henderson County (Stewart, 1979) [*name index*]*
- Henderson County Historical Calendar, 1821-1996 (Fiddler, 1995)
- Henderson County, Tennessee: A Pictorial History [3 vols.] (Fiddler, 2012) [*name index for series in volume 3*]
- Henderson County, Tennessee: A Pictorial History (Fiddler & Davis, 1996) [*name index*]*
- Henderson County, Tennessee Connections: A Pictorial History (Fiddler, 2005) [*name index*]
- Henderson County's History (Bolen, 1922)
- History of Henderson County (Powers, 1930)
- History of Tennessee From the Earliest Time to the Present; Together with a Historical and a Biographical Sketch of Henderson, Chester, McNairy (Goodspeed, 1978)

Published Local Records

- 1836 Henderson County, Tennessee Tax Listing and Civil Districts (Douthat, 2012) [*name index*]
- 1880 Census Henderson County, Tennessee (Sistler, 2001) [*alphabetical by surname*]*
- Crossing the Dark River: Henderson County, Tennessee, Obituaries, 1827-1950 (Fiddler, 1999) [*name index*]

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- Dr. Charles Elsworth Bolen Birth Record Book Wildersville, Tennessee May 14, 1899–May 9, 1944: Includes Marriage Dates, Death Dates and Burial Sites (Story, 2015) [section 1 alphabetical; section 2 arranged by surname of mother]
- Genealogical Miscellany, Henderson County, Tennessee [7 vols.] (Smith, 1997) [*surname index in each volume*]
- Henderson County, Tennessee, Cemetery Inscriptions [3 vols.] (Harris, 1976) [*surname index in vol. 3*]*
- Henderson County, Tennessee, Court Minutes, 1860–66 (WPA, 1938) [*name index*]
- Henderson County, Tennessee, Will Book no. 3, 1895–1932 (WPA, 1938) [*name index*]
- Lexington Cemetery (Henderson County, Tennessee) (Donahue, 2001) [*alphabetical*]*
- Ninth Census of the United States, 1870, Henderson County Tennessee (Green, 1983?) [*surname index*]
- Promise of Good Things: Longfield Baptist Church, 1831–1981 (Hutton, 1982)
- Seventh Census of the United States, 1850: Henderson County, Tennessee (Carpenter, 1971) [*surname index*]*
- Tennessee, Records of Henderson County, Bible Records & Tombstone Inscriptions (WPA, 1939) [*name index*]
- Tombstone Inscriptions From Black Cemeteries in Henderson County, Tennessee (Smith, 1995) [*surname index*]*

Selected Manuscripts Material

- Christian Chapel Church of Christ Records. Henderson County, 1860–1943 (Microfilm Manuscript #550, 1 reel)*
- Henderson County Miscellaneous Records, 1789–1953 (Microfilm Manuscript #521, 1 reel)*
- Middlefork Primitive Baptist Church Records. Henderson County, 1823–1978 (Microfilm Manuscript #694, 1 reel)*
- Rock Hill Baptist Church Records. Henderson County, 1884–1985 (Microfilm Manuscript #888, 1 reel)*
- Union Baptist Church Records. Henderson County, 1842–1986 (Microfilm Manuscript #909, 3 reels)*
- Union Baptist Church Records. Lexington, 1915–1993 (Microfilm Manuscript #1433, 1 reel)*
- Wildersville Baptist Church Records. Henderson County, 1871–1976 (Microfilm Manuscript #924, 1 reel)*

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- Tax Years on Microfilm (Pre 1900) : 1836, 1837, 1895–1899
- Published Indexes: *1836 Henderson County, Tennessee Tax Listing and Civil Districts*

Bibliography

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[The Land Laws of Tennessee \(Whitney, 1891\) Google Books](#)

Library Titles	Author / Date	TSLA	GRH&GC	MPL
A brief history of 100 years of Beech River Baptist Association	Deere, J.A., 1971	Y		
A cultural history of the education of Henderson County. MSU thesis	Butler, Virginia, 1962	Y		
A genealogical miscellany, Henderson County, Tennessee	Smith, Johnathan K.T., 1997			Y
Biographical directory, 1796-1969 (Henderson County, Preliminary #12).	TN General Assembly	Y		
Catherine Stewart of Henderson County	Wadley and Goddard, 1978			Y
County court minute book; 1860-1866.	THR Survey, 1938			Y
Crossing the dark river: Henderson County, Tennessee, obituaries, 1827-1950.	Fiddler, Brenda Kirk.	Y		
Forrest at Parker's Crossroads: The dawn of lightning war.	Kennerly, Dan, 1993	Y	Y	
Goodspeed's history of TN (Henderson County, pp. 798-806, 841-862).	Goodspeed, 1887.	Y	Y	
Henderson County	Stewart, George T., MSU Press, 1979	Y	Y	Y
Henderson County	Stewart, Dunn, Crawford			Y
Henderson County history. Murfreesboro, The Home Journal	Bolen, H.J., 1922	Y		Y
Henderson County, Tennessee cemetery inscriptions.	Harris, R.H., 1976	Y		
Henderson County, Tennessee Circuit Court minutes V2-3	[microform]			Y
Henderson County, Tennessee newspaper, marriage, & family records.	Cogdell, Wilma Sutton, 1977, 1986	Y		
Henderson County, Tennessee, Cemetery inscriptions.	Harris, Richard H, 1976			Y
Henderson County, Tennessee, chancery Court (Loose Record)	[microform]			Y
Henderson County, Tennessee, court records	[microform]			Y
Henderson County, Tennessee, deeds	[microform]			Y
Henderson County, Tennessee, marriages	[microform]			Y
Henderson County, Tennessee, miscellaneous records	[microform]			Y
Henderson County, Tennessee: A pictorial history.	Davis, Emily and Brenda Kirk Fiddler, 1996	Y	Y	Y
Henderson County, TN history: a bibliography. (p 91-116)	WTHSP 36 (1982)	Y		
History of Henderson county : comprising an account of the facts connected with the early settlement of the county, the origin and the development of the county, slavery, the Civil War, and the Reconstruction days, the World War and present conditions	Powers, Auburn, 1965			Y
History of Marl Bluff Presbyterian Church, Henderson County, Tennessee, 1853-1953.	Warren, Thomas B, 1953		Y	

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Lexington progress, 1884-1946: a project of the Henderson County Bicentennial Committee.	W.V. Barry, 1995	Y	Y	
Oak Grove Missionary Baptist Church: the early years, 1873-1908, with church covenant & articles of faith from original church record book of 1873.	Harrison, Bethany J.	Y		
Renshaw reflections.	Renshaw, Grace Parke, 1983		Y	
The history of Scotts Hill, TN	Turner, Gordon H. 1977	Y	Y	
The John Pearson family of Henderson County, Tennessee.	Pearson, Charles E, 1997		Y	
Tombstone inscriptions from Black cemeteries in Henderson County, Tennessee	Smith, Johnathan K.T., 1995			Y
Will book no. 3- 1895-	THR Survey, 1938			Y
Wind out of Beech River Bottoms & Isanabelle's last visit with Henry. TN Folklore Soc. Bull. 55 (1991), pp. 56-59.	Holmes, Tony	Y		