

Dyer County Locality Guide (17 July 2023)

Geographic Area and County History



Dyer County was named for Robert Henry Dyer (circa 1774–1826). The county is located in the northwestern area of the state. ([FamilySearch Wiki](#))

The Tennessee General Assembly established Dyer County in 1823 and named it in honor of Colonel Robert H. Dyer. John McIver and Joel H. Dyer donated sixty acres for the new county seat, named Dyersburg, at a central location within the county known as McIver's Bluff. In 1825 Joel Dyer surveyed the town site into eighty-six lots; the first courthouse was built on the square in 1827. The present Classical Revival-style courthouse, designed by Asa Biggs in 1911, centers a downtown historic district listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The county's population in 2000 was 37,279.

Fertile soil and plentiful stands of timber made Dyer County rich farming country. The early profitable crops of corn and tobacco were replaced in the post-Civil War era by a reliance on cotton, and the timber industry expanded. Situated at the head of steamboat navigation on the Forked Deer River, Dyersburg grew as a river town, especially once the Grey Eagle made the first successful steamboat trip in 1836. The county was spared the worst of the Civil War, as no major battles or other activity occurred within its borders. Dyersburg resident Otho F. Strahl raised a local Confederate infantry company in 1861 and then steadily advanced to the rank of brigadier general in the Army of Tennessee. On November 30, 1864, Strahl was killed at the battle of Franklin.

The county's first industrial boom dates to 1879, when the steamboat Alf Stevens shipped timber from A. M. Stevens Lumber Company of Dyersburg to St. Louis markets. The Stevens company established a large sawmill in 1880 and opened a planing mill in 1885. The Bank of Dyersburg opened in 1880, while another timber industry, Nichols & Co. Wooden Bowl Factory, began operations in 1881. The arrival of the Newport News and Mississippi Valley Railroad in 1884 further expanded market possibilities; a branch line, the Dyersburg Northern, soon linked the county seat to Tiptonville. The new railroad links encouraged the creation of new industries and businesses. In 1884, for example, investors established the Dyersburg Oil Company, a cottonseed factory. This company remained locally important through the twentieth century.

In 1904 and 1907 Dyersburg hosted two huge revivals conducted by evangelist George C. Gates. The 1907 revival alone converted seven hundred people. The revivals preceded Dyersburg's greatest boom as it emerged as a regional railroad hub. Between 1909 and 1914 Dyersburg became the junction point for three different lines, led by the Illinois Central Railroad. The Illinois Central expanded its facilities throughout the county, building in 1920 a new combination depot at the town of Newbern, a major cotton and livestock shipping point. Listed in the National Register, this depot survives and is one of

Dyer County Locality Guide (17 July 2023)

only two Amtrak passenger stops in Tennessee. Newbern is the county's second largest incorporated city. Smaller villages include Trimble, Fowkles, Finley, Bogota, and Heloise, the county's sole Mississippi River village.

By the 1920s the rich timber resources of Dyer County were gone; cotton was the county's leading resource. African Americans participated actively in the Rosenwald school-building program, sponsoring and constructing four schools across the county, while white officials put up most of the money for a modern sixteen-room industrial training school for blacks. Known as Bruce High School, it remained a segregated facility until it closed in 1966. In 1929 Dyersburg Cotton Products built a modern plant complete with company housing on the outskirts of Dyersburg. The town's largest industrial concern, the plant consumed about six million pounds of cotton each year from local farmers. The great Mississippi River floods of 1927 and 1937 devastated western Dyer County, especially lands between the Obion and Mississippi Rivers.

During World War II the Halls Air Base, located at the border of Lauderdale County and Dyer County, created many civilian jobs as it trained hundreds of B-17 bomber pilots. An emergency landing strip was also built in Dyersburg. After the war agriculture in Dyer County began to shift from cotton into new crops. By the mid-1980s soybeans composed the largest crop by far, followed by wheat, milo, corn, and cotton. Industry continued to expand and the county became a regional medical, educational, retail and distribution center. The establishment of Dyersburg State Community College in 1969 enhanced educational and cultural opportunities in the county. In the last two decades, two major projects have modernized the county's transportation system: Interstate I-155 links Dyersburg with Missouri via the only highway bridge (1976) over the Mississippi River between Cairo, Illinois, and Memphis, and the four-lane expansion of U.S. 412 connects Dyersburg to I-40 at Jackson. ([Tennessee Encyclopedia](#))

[Dyer County Chamber of Commerce](#)

Record Loss – Dyer County (Family Search)

1864 Courthouse burned and many records were damaged.

Lost marriage records: 1823 to 1859

Lost probate records: 1823 to 1853

FamilySearch Dyer County [Catalog](#)

TnGenWeb Project – [Dyer County](#) Contact – [Barry Reeves](#)

[Dyer County Tennessee History & Genealogy](#)

Dyer County Locality Guide (17 July 2023)

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 1850
	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 1881
	Tennessee Vital Records Office	Keeps for 50 years then they are sent to TSLA
	TSLA	1908-1912
		1914-1933
	TNGenWeb (Funeral Home Records)	J. W. Curry Funeral Home Records
Land Deeds		County Registrations began 1820
	County Register	County Register of Deeds
List of Microfilmed Dyer County Records	TSLA-PDF	Download PDF
Pension Applications	Tennessee State Archives & Library	County Index to Tennessee Confederate Pension Applications
Probate Records	Chancery Court	County Registrations began 1853
	TnGenWeb	
Tennessee Enumeration of Male Voters	Ancestry.com (\$)	Tennessee Enumeration of Male Voters

Dyer County Locality Guide (17 July 2023)

World War I Veterans	Tennessee State Archives & Library	Research Collection

County Repositories

[McIver's Grant Public Library](#)

[Dyer County Tennessee History & Genealogy](#)

[Dyer County Archives \(Access by Appointment Only\)](#)

Marilyn Holmes (Archivist)

(731) 334-8185

archives@co.dyer.tn.us

[Dyer County Museum](#)

305 College St

Dyersburg, Tn 38024

[Dyer County Historical Society \(Monthly 2nd Tues @ Dyer Museum\)](#)

Danny Walden - President

(731)-676-8075

dannywalden@icloud.com

[Dyer County Genealogy Group \(Monthly 4th Tues @ Dyer Museum\)](#)

Current Area Information

[Dyer County Chamber of Commerce](#)

[Dyer County Government](#)

Resources

General

[Tennessee County Database \(TNGS\) - Dyer County](#)

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

[Genealogy Trails - Dyer County](#)

[Linkpendium - Dyer County](#)

[Tennessee State Library & Archives - Dyer County Facts Sheet](#)

[TNGenWeb - Dyer County](#)

[USGenWeb Archives - Dyer County Tennessee](#)

[Tennessee Law, The Early Days](#)

Newspapers

Tennessee State Archives & Library

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

Dyer County Locality Guide (17 July 2023)

Newspapers.com - No Titles Available

Genealogybank.com - No Titles Available

Chronicling America - No Titles Available

Selected Published County Histories

Tennessee State Archives & Library

- Dyer County (Alexander, 1974) *[partial index]*
- Dyersburg (Koruvelas, 2011)
- Goodspeed's Dyer County History (1990) *[name index]*
- History of Dyer County [2 vols.] (Hulme, 1982-85)
- Official Souvenir Booklet Commemorating the 150th Anniversary of Dyer County, Tennessee 1823-1973 (1973?)
- Reflections of Our Past: A Pictorial History of Dyersburg/Dyer County (Childress, 1997)
- Tennessee, Dyer County: A Sketch of the Life and Imprisonment of Mary Neely (WPA, 1939) *[name index]*

Published Local Records

Tennessee State Archives & Library

- 1836 Dyer County, Tennessee Civil Districts and Tax Listing (Douthat, 2003) *[name index]*
- 1880 Census, Dyer County, Tennessee (Sistler, 2000) *[alphabetical by head of household]*
- Cemetery Inscriptions of Dyer County, Tennessee (Glass, 1977) *[name index]*
- Dyer Co., Tennessee, Gibson Co., Tennessee, Lake Co., Tennessee, Obion Co., Tennessee, Weakley Co., Tennessee: Enumeration of Male Inhabitants of Twenty-one [1891 enumeration of male voters] (Reed, 1990) *[name index]*
- Dyer County and Newbern, Tennessee: Being a History of 39 of the Earliest Families of this County (Ridens, 1979) *[name index]*
- Dyer County, Tennessee Deed Book[s] {vol. 1 1824-1831; vol. 2 1831-1835} (Crompton, 2001) *[name index]*
- Dyer County, Tennessee, Entry Book no. 1, 1820-1855 (WPA, 1941) *[name index]*
- Dyer County, Tennessee, Marriage Records, 1860-1880 (WPA, 1938) *[name index]*
- Dyer County, Tennessee Marriages, 1860-1879 (Sistler, 1989) *[alphabetical by bride and groom]*
- Dyer County, Tennessee, Record Minute Book, County Court, 1852-1856 (WPA, 1942)

Dyer County Locality Guide (17 July 2023)

- Dyer County, Tennessee, Will Book [1853-1893] (WPA, 1938)
- Dyer County, Tennessee, Wills [1853-1893] (Lambert & Gilmore, 1998) [*name index*]
- Polk's Dyersburg (Dyer County, Tenn.) City Directory (1961, 1963-64, 1966-67, 1969-89, 1992-93, 1995-99, 2001-2019)
- Private Acts of Dyer County, Tennessee (McIntyre, 1994)
- Seventh Census of the United States, 1850: Dyer County, Tennessee, Free Population Schedules (Carpenter, 1969) [*surname index*]

Selected Manuscripts Material

Tennessee State Archives & Library

- H.R.A. McCorkle Journals, 1848-1907 (Microfilm Manuscript #1834, 2 reels)
- Samuel Rankin Latta Diary, 1848-1857 (Microfilm Manuscript #84, 1 reel)
- Springhill Baptist Church Records, 1886-1959 (Microfilm Manuscript #2021, 1 reel)

Maps

[TDOT Map of Dyer County](#)

[Dyer County - 1888](#)

[Dyer County District Maps \(TnGenWeb\)](#)

[TnGenWeb Project - Maps Our Ancestors Followed](#)

Cemeteries

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

[Dyer County Cemeteries - USGenWeb](#)

[Dyer County Cemeteries - Genealogy Trails](#)

[Dyer County Cemeteries - TNGenWeb \(Cemetery\)](#)

Bibliography

[The Land Laws of Tennessee \(Whitney, 1891\) Google Books](#)
[Guide to Public Vital Statistics in Tennessee \(WPA 1941\)](#)

Library Titles	Author / Date	TSLA	GRH&GC	MPL
"Key Corner, Dyer County, TN." <i>WTHSP17</i> (1963)	Donaldson, R.C., 1974	Y		
1836 Dyer County, Tennessee civil districts and tax listing.	Douthat, James. L., 2003		Y	

Dyer County Locality Guide (17 July 2023)

A compilation of the history of Dyer County.	Hume, Albert L. , 1960	Y		
A history of Dyer County.	A.L. & J.A. Hume	Y		Y
A history of the Dyer, Tennessee community: the people and their work.	Dyer Heritage '86 Committee, 1986		Y	
Brigadier General Tyree H. Bell, C.S.A.: Forrest's fighting lieutenant	Hughes, Nathaniel Cheairs, Jr., 2004		Y	Y
Cemetery inscriptions of Dyer County, Tennessee.	Glass, Quintard, Mrs. 1977		Y	Y
Community information, Newbern, TN. Dyer County Area Chamber of Commerce, 1987.	Dyer County Area Chamber of Commerce, 1987.	Y		
Deed book "A"; 1824-1827	Tennessee Historical Records Survey.			Y
Dyer Co., Tennessee wills.	US-WPA		Y	
Dyer County (Tennessee) Deed Index: (1822-1878).	1973		Y	
Dyer County and Newbern, Tennessee: being a history of 39 of the earliest families of this county.	Ridens, Arahwana Hendren, 1979		Y	Y
Dyer county marriage record.	Tennessee Historical Records Survey.			Y
Dyer County Tennessee Deed Books: A-C, 1824-1835.	1973		Y	
Dyer County Tennessee Deed Books: D-E (1836-1843).	1973		Y	
Dyer County Tennessee Marriages (1860-1880).	1973		Y	
Dyer County Tennessee Vital Statistics (1908-1937): Wills (1853-1893) - Roll #104.	1973		Y	
Dyer County, Tennessee circuit court minutes: civil and criminal	Tennessee Genealogical Society			Y

Dyer County Locality Guide (17 July 2023)

Dyer County, Tennessee circuit court minutes: civil and criminal. Tennessee Genealogical Society	Tennessee Genealogical Society		Y	Y
Dyer County, Tennessee deed book A, 1824-1827, deed book B, 1827-1831, deed book C, 1831-1835.	Crumpton, Barbara, 2001		Y	
Dyer County, Tennessee wills, volume A: 1853-1893	US-WPA, 1938			Y
Dyer County, Tennessee, marriage records [microform] 1860-1879.				Y
Dyer County, the garden spot of the world. Dyersburg, Wallace Print. Co., 1974.	Alexander, Mai., 1974	Y		Y
Dyersburg	Kourvelas, Bonnie Daws, 2011			
Federal pensioners: 1840 census of. Bethel Springs, TN	Brown, Albert, 1989		Y	
First Presbyterian Church. One hundredth anniversary, 1854-1954	First Presbyterian Church, 1954	Y		
Goodspeed's history of TN (Dyer County).	Goodspeed, 1887.	Y		
History of Tennessee from the earliest times to the present: together with an historical and a biographical sketch of Gibson, Obion, Dyer, Weakley and Lake counties	Goodspeed history of Tennessee, 1978			Y
History of Tennessee: from the earliest times to the present; together with an historical and a biographical sketch of Gibson, Obion, Dyer, Weakley and Lake Counties;	Goodspeed Publishing Company, 1978		Y	
List of tombstones in the Sorrell's Chapel Cemetery: located off highway 20 in Dyer County, Tennessee	Smith, Floyd Newton, 1990		Y	
Newbern (TN) Centennial. Book Committee. Newbern, the first hundred years, 1857-1957: centennial celebration, August 14, 1957.	Newbern, 1957.	Y		
Newspaper clippings from the tri-city reporter, Dyer, Rutherford & Kenton cos.	Key, Betty.		Y	
Once upon a time.	Coleman, Tommye P., 1999		Y	
Selected records of the Tennessee Field Office of the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, 1865-1872 [microform]	Bur. Refugees, Freedmen, & Abandoned Lands.			Y

Dyer County Locality Guide (17 July 2023)

Seventh census of the United States, 1850 : Dyer County, Tennessee, free population schedules	Carpenter, V. K., Mrs., 1965			Y
Tennessee genealogical records: records of early settlers from state and county archives.	Whitley, Edythe Johns Rucker, 2010		Y	
Tennessee. Circuit Court (Dyer County). Dyer County Circuit Court: minutes, civil and criminal.	Tennessee. Circuit Court (Dyer County), 1970		Y	
The West Tennessee Historical Society papers.	West Tennessee Historical Society, 1947		Y	
West Tennessee death records.	Hays, Tony, 1987		Y	