

Hardin County Locality Guide (27 October 2023)

Geographic Area and County History



Hardin County was named for Col. Joseph Hardin, a Revolutionary War soldier and a legislative representative for the Province of North Carolina; the State of Franklin; and the Southwest Territory. The county is located in the southwestern area of the state. ([FamilySearch Wiki](#))

The story of Hardin County begins with the prehistoric mound builders of the Woodland and Mississippian Periods. Savannah, the modern county seat, is built partially within a wall and trench and amid a line of fourteen mounds on a bluff parallel to the Tennessee River. These prehistoric peoples also built a considerable structure covering approximately four acres in the northwest corner of the county near Middleton and several mounds at Pittsburg Landing in what is now the Shiloh National Military Park. After the Mississippian era, Hardin County, along with most of the rest of West Tennessee, became an area shared by various Indian tribes as a rich hunting ground.

Geologically, Hardin County lies in the Western Valley of the Tennessee River. The river enters the county at the middle of its southern border and flows northward in a west to east direction. The western side of the river, making up one-third of the county's six hundred square miles, is rich bottomland with some hills and ridges. The land east of the river is higher, with a steadily increasing elevation moving toward the eastern boundary. East Hardin County also contains extensive rich bottomland along the lower portion of several creeks and on the inside of river bends.

In 1780 John Donelson led the river party that rendezvoused with James Robertson's overland party in the establishment of Nashborough. According to Donelson's journal, his group stopped at what was probably Diamond Island, near Pittsburg Landing, in the Tennessee River; this is the first known record of whites on Hardin County soil.

In 1783 the North Carolina legislature designated land in West Tennessee for settlement by Revolutionary War veterans. The act creating land bounties anticipated a treaty with the Chickasaws, who claimed the area, and probably anticipated Tennessee statehood. The North Carolina Act allowed claims to be surveyed, and in 1786, either Isaac Taylor or W. A. Farrar laid off five thousand acres for Andrew Kerr and three thousand acres for Joseph Hardin.

After the Jackson Purchase, the Tennessee General Assembly in November 1819 created Hardin County, which extended from Wayne County to the Mississippi. Eleven days later, Shelby County was created, which removed present Shelby County and most of Fayette County from the western reaches of Hardin County. In 1823 the legislature created McNairy County, which established the current western boundary of Hardin County. Bits

Hardin County Locality Guide (27 October 2023)

and pieces were added or taken away over the years, until the county's present boundaries were established in 1856.

Hardin County was named for Colonel Joseph Hardin. He was born in Richmond, Virginia, removed to North Carolina at an early date, and came to Greene County and later Knox County following the Revolutionary War. He served as a representative of Washington and Greene Counties in the State of Franklin and in the Tennessee Territorial Assembly. Hardin died sometime between 1791 and 1801 in Knox County. Among the first settlers were Hardin's sons, a daughter, and their extended families. Like the Nashborough settlers, the Hardin families arrived in two groups: one by land and one by river. The boat party arrived in July 1816, with the land party not far behind.

The first session of County Court of Pleas and Quarterly Sessions was formed January 3, 1820, at the home of Colonel James Hardin near Cerro Gordo. The July 1822 session was held at Hardinville (now called Old Town) near the confluence of Turkey and Boone's Creeks. This site was determined to be the center of the county. The citizens of the county living west of the river strongly objected to the long trip, which included ferry costs, and initiated a successful effort to move the county seat. In 1829 Rudd's Ferry was selected as the county seat; the name was changed to Savannah in 1850, when the state legislature incorporated the town.

Mostly rural and agricultural, Hardin County had a mixed experience in the Civil War. Its allegiances were divided, with most of the western side of the river favoring the Southern cause and much of the eastern side supporting the North. Hardin was one of the few counties outside East Tennessee to vote against secession in both plebiscites. The war moved across the county several times. On April 5-7, 1862, the battle of Shiloh took place in an area between Shiloh Church and Pittsburg Landing. It is commemorated by a three-thousand-acre national park that attracts thousands of visitors each year.

Another Civil War attraction is the Cherry Mansion. Built on the bluff overlooking the river by David Robinson in 1830, the mansion became the headquarters of General Ulysses S. Grant during the battle of Shiloh. The Cherry Mansion is one of several nineteenth-century houses found in Savannah and Hardin County; perhaps the oldest is the James Graham house, built circa 1825.

The history of the county is tied to the waterways. Early industry included mills built along the creeks throughout the county. The first mills were used to grind grain, but later mills were built to take advantage of the natural resources of timber, rock, and minerals. Commercial goods moved into the county and various products from the forest or farm moved to markets by river transportation. In 1930 the Milo Lambert Bridge at Savannah became the first span across the river in the county. Further downriver, Shannonville became Saltillo, and White's Ferry became Cerro Gordo. Hamburg and Crump's Landing fell victim to the impoundment of the river into a lake by the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA). Pickwick Dam, completed by the TVA in 1938, created a recreational area, which

Hardin County Locality Guide (27 October 2023)

steadily increased the size and importance of Counce. The Tennessee River Museum, located in a historic post office building in Savannah, documents the river's influence on local history and folkways.

Savannah's population reached almost 1,000 in 1880 and today numbers almost 7,000. As the county seat, it has always been the political hub of the county. In 1963 the completion of the Estes Kefauver Bridge over the Pickwick Dam also made it the county's commercial hub. Like Savannah, the county has grown considerably and had a population of 25,518 in 2000.

Although the economic importance of the clothing industry has decreased considerably in the past two decades, Kraft paper, steel, mobile homes, plastics, chemicals, and wood-related products have added to the industrial base. Yet even with an increased emphasis on attracting industry and increases in jobs associated with recreational attractions, many Hardin Countians still depend on the farm for at least part of their livelihoods. Increased traffic on the Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway, improvements to U.S. Highway 64, and a new connector to Interstate 40 promise to open Hardin County to new and increased industrial opportunities. ([Tennessee Encyclopedia](#))

[Hardin County Chamber of Commerce](#)

Record Loss – Hardin County (Family Search)

1859, 1864, 1949 Fires damaged courthouse records.

- Lost marriage records: 1819 to 1863
- Lost probate records: 1819 to 1836

FamilySearch Hardin County [Catalog](#)

TnGenWeb Project – [Hardin County](#) Contacts – [Robert Grimes](#) and [Jerry W. Murphy](#)

[Hardin County Historical Society](#)

Record Location Table

Record Type	Location	Record Notes
Birth	County Clerk Office	County Registrations began 1881
	Tennessee Vital Records Office	Keeps for 100 years then they are sent to TSLA
Marriages	County Clerk Office	County Registrations began 1864

Hardin County Locality Guide (27 October 2023)

	Tennessee Vital Records Office	Keeps for 50 years then they are sent to TSLA
	TNGenWeb	
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
Land Deeds		County Registrations began 1820
	County Register	County Register of Deeds
	TNGenWeb	See Land Records Section
List of Microfilmed Hardin County Records	TSLA-PDF	Download PDF
Pension Applications	Tennessee State Archives & Library	Hardin County has no questionnaires
Probate Records	Chancery Court	County Registrations began 1825
	TNGenWeb	See Estates & Wills Section
Tennessee Enumeration of Male Voters	Ancestry.com (\$)	Tennessee Enumeration of Male Voters
World War I Veterans	Tennessee Virtual Archive (TN Res. Only)	WWI Record of Ex-Soldiers of Hardin County

County Repositories

[Hardin County Public Library](#)

[Hardin County Public Library – Tennessee Room \(Bottom of Page\)](#)

[Hardin County Historical Society](#)

[West Tennessee Heritage Study Center \(Paul Meek Library\)](#)

Hardin County Locality Guide (27 October 2023)

Current Area Information

[Hardin County Chamber of Commerce](#)
[Hardin County Government](#)

Resources

General

[Tennessee County Database \(TNGS\) – Hardin County](#)
[Hardin County Wiki \(Family Search\)](#)
[Linkpendium – Hardin County](#)
[Tennessee State Library & Archives – Hardin County Facts Sheet](#)
[TLSA Name Index – Hardin County \(Acts of Tennessee 1796–1850\)](#)
[TNGenWeb – Hardin County](#)
[USGenWeb Archives – Hardin County Tennessee](#)
[Tennessee Law, The Early Days](#)
[Tennessee River Museum](#)
[Shiloh National Military Park](#)

Newspapers

Tennessee State Archives & Library

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

News - Progress. Published Aug 21 1951 - ? 1960. w.

Savannah Courier. Published Sep 17 1885 – present. w.

Tennessee River News. Published Jan ? 1873 - ? w. Filmed with *Savannah Courier.*

Tennessee Transcript. Published ? 1873 - 1885? w. Filmed with *Savannah Courier.*

Newspaper.com - Savannah Courier 1885-1901

Genealogybank.com - Savannah Courier 1885-1901

Chronicling America –

1. [News-progress. \(Savannah, Tenn.\) 1951-1959](#)

2. [Savannah courier. \[online resource\] \(Savannah, Tennessee\) 1885-1979](#)

3. [Savannah courier. \(Savannah, Tenn.\) 1885-1979](#)

4. [Tennessee River news. \[volume\] \(Savannah, Tenn.\) 1873-1874](#)

5. [Tennessee transcript. \(Savannah, Tenn.\) 1874-1884](#)

Hardin County Locality Guide (27 October 2023)

Selected Published County Histories

Tennessee State Archives & Library

Autobiography of W.M. Wagner	Wagner & Hays, 2000
From Forest to Farm: Hardin County History to 1860	Hays, 1987 [name index]
Hardin County, Tennessee: A Pictorial History *	Hardin County His. Soc, 1994
Hardin County, Tennessee Pictorial History	Hardin County Hist. Soc, 2010
History of Hardin County, Tennessee.	Brazelton, 1965
History of Hardin County, Tennessee and Other Tall Tales	Cagle, 2012 [name index]
History of Tennessee From the Earliest Time to the Present; Together with a Historical and a Biographical Sketch of Henderson, Chester, McNairy	Goodspeed, 1978
Laurels of Big Ivy	Kerr, 1981
Moving Forward: Hardin County History from 1870 to 1930	Hays, 1987 [name index]*
No Man's Land: The Civil War and Reconstruction in Hardin County	Hays, 1986 [name index]
On the Banks of the River: A History of Hardin County, Tennessee	Hays, 1996 [name index]*
Pickwick People and TVA: How it was 1935, How it is 1985	Roberts, 1985
Shiloh Stories: Fact, Fiction & Folklore from the Battle of Shiloh	Hays, 2000
Short Life Sketches of Some Prominent Hardin Countians	Hitt, 1988 [name index]

Selected Manuscripts Material

Tennessee State Archives & Library

1820-1840 U.S. Census, Hardin County, Tennessee	1994? [name indexes]*
1833 Census of Hardin County, Tennessee	Brewington, 1992 [surname index]*
1840 U.S. Census, Hardin County, Tennessee	Curtis, 1972 [surname index]
1850 U.S. Census, Hardin County, Tennessee	Schunk, 1987 [surname index]*
1880 Census Hardin County, Tennessee	Sistler, 2001
1880 Census of Hardin County, Tennessee	Brown, 1994 [name index]*
1891 Voter's List for Hardin County, Tennessee	Smith, 2010 [name index]
1980 Cemetery Census of Hardin County, Tennessee	
Civil War Direct Tax, Hardin County, Tennessee	Brewington, 1992 [name index]
Death Notices and Obituaries, Savannah Courier, 1885-1890, Savannah, Tennessee, Hardin County, Tennessee	Brewington, 1992 [name index]*
First Hundred Years: Hardin County, Tennessee Records, 1818-1918	Hays, 1999 [alphabetical]*
Genealogical Research Maps of Hardin County, Tennessee	Hanna, 1991
Hardin Countians in the 19th Century: A Supplement to Hardin County's People	Hays, 1986 [name index]*
Hardin Countians in the Civil War: A Listing of all Men from Hardin County Known to have Served in the Confederate or Union Armies	Hays, 2000

Hardin County Locality Guide (27 October 2023)

Hardin County Court Minutes: An Annotated Index	Hays, 1999 [alphabetical]*
Hardin County Death Records, 1820-1900	Willey & Hays, 1988
Hardin County Deeds, 1820-1855	Hays, 1989 [alphabetical by deed book]*
Hardin County Directory 1820-1850	Hays, 1987 [name index]
Hardin County Hodgepodge [inventories & estate settlements 1865-1878; deed books 1837-1846; notes from circuit court 1841-1846]	Hays, 1987 [name index]*
Hardin County, Tennessee Deed Books [vol. 1 Aug 1835 - Feb 1851; vol. 2 Feb 1851 - June 1854]	Hutchings, 2002- [name index]*
Hardin County Tennessee General Admin. Settlement B 1836-42	WPA, 1939 [name index]
Hardin County Tennessee Marriage Records 1865-1868	WPA, 1938 [name index]
Hardin County, Tennessee Records, 1820-1860 [county court minutes]	Hays, 1985 [name index]
Hardin County's People : Miscellaneous Records from the 19th Century [county court minutes 1820-1835; war & reconstructions minutes 1861-1868; deeds 1835-1837, merchant's licenses 1879-1880; newspapers - random dates 1873-1901]	Hays, 1985 [name index]*
Marriage Records of Hardin County, Tennessee [Book 1, 1859-1878; Book 2, Jan. 1878-Feb. 1881]	Brewington, 1991- [name index]
Private Acts of Hardin County, Tennessee	McIntyre, 1981
Slave Schedules for Hardin County, Tennessee, 1850 & 1860	Brewington, 1992 [name index]*
Tennessee Records of Hardin Co.: Record A County Court Minutes 1820-1825	WPA, 1936 [name index]
Tennessee Records of Hardin Co.: Record D Inventory Bk 1842-1849	WPA, 1937 [name index]

Maps

[TDOT Map of Hardin County](#)

[Hardin County- 1857](#)

[District Map of Hardin County \(Brazelton's 1885 "History of Hardin County"\)](#)

[Hardin County - 1888](#)

[Hardin County - 1931 \(TEVA\)](#)

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

Cemeteries

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

[Hardin County Cemeteries - USGenWeb](#)

[Hardin County Cemeteries - Genealogy Trails](#)

Bibliography

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

[Guide to Public Vital Statistics in Tennessee \(WPA 1941\)](#)

Hardin County Locality Guide (27 October 2023)

TSLA = Tennessee State Library & Archives
 GRH&GC = Germantown Regional History & Genealogical Center
 MPL = Memphis Public Library

Library Titles	Author / Date	TSLA	GRH&GC	MPL
1909 cyclone, Pittsburg Landing, Tenn., Oct. 14, 1909.			Y	
A Hardin County directory, 1820-1850.	Hays, Tony, 1987	Y		
A history of Hardin County, Tennessee. Nashville, Tenn: Cumberland Presbyterian Publishing House, 1885.	Brazelton, B.G., 1885		Y	
Biographical directory, TN General Assembly, 1796-1969 (Hardin County, Preliminary #27)		Y		
Brazelton, B.G. A history of Hardin County, TN.	1885	Y		
Cemeteries, Hardin County, Tennessee	Brown, Albert, 1991		Y	Y
Death notices and obituaries: Savannah Courier, 1885-1890	Brewington, Ronney R., 1992		Y	
Federal pensioners: 1840 census of. Bethel Springs, TN:	Brown, Albert, 1989		Y	
First United Methodist Church (Savannah, TN).	1975	Y		
From forest to farm: Hardin County history to 1860.	Hays, Tony, 1986	Y		
Genealogical research maps of Hardin County, Tennessee.	Hanna, James H., 1991		Y	
Goodspeed's history of TN (Hardin County, pp. 829-841, 894-908).	Goodspeed, 1887.	Y		
Harbert, P.M. "Early history of Hardin County. " WTHSP 1 (1947)	WTHSP 1 (1947)	Y		
Hardin Co., TN. 1833 county census	Brown, Albert, 1998			Y
Hardin Co., TN. land entries, 1820-1837	Brown, Albert, 1998			Y
Hardin Co., TN. marriage index 1859-1887	Brown, Albert, 1998			Y
Hardin County (Tennessee) minutes, index 1820 - 1866: Minutes, quarterly-Vol 1-January 1899 - July 1908.	Tennessee State Archives.		Y	
Hardin County (Tennessee) minutes: Vol C - D-June 1834 -	Tennessee State Archives.		Y	
Hardin County (Tennessee) probate records: Wills-Vol D	Tennessee State Archives.		Y	
Hardin County death records, 1820-1900.	Hays, Tony, 1988		Y	
Hardin County historian.	Hardin County Hist. Soc., 1996		Y	
Hardin County historical quarterly. Vol. 1, 1982-.	Hardin County Hist. Soc.	Y		
Hardin County historical quarterly. Savannah, Tennessee: Hardin County Historical Society, 1982-1995.	Hardin County Hist. Soc., 1982-1995		Y	
Hardin County hodgepodge.	Hays, Tony, 1987	Y		
Hardin County, Tennessee 1850 census maps.	Brown, Albert, 1994		Y	

Hardin County Locality Guide (27 October 2023)

Hardin County, Tennessee land entries, 1820-1837.	Brown, Albert, 1995		Y	
Hardin County, TN deeds. Signal Mountain, Tennessee: Mountain Press, 2002.	Hutchings, Vicki L. Morrow, 2022		Y	
Hardin County, TN, pictorial history book.	1995	Y		
Hardin County's people: miscellaneous records from the 19 th century.	Hays, Tony, 1986	Y		
History of Tennessee: from the earliest time to the present; together with an historical and a biographical sketch of Henderson, Chester, McNairy, Decatur, and Hardin counties, besides a valuable fund of notes, original observations, reminiscences, etc.	Goodspeed Publishing Company, 1978		Y	
Illustrated account of the Mt. Vinson-Shiloh cyclone, Oct. 14, 1909.	1909	Y		
Laurels of big ivy. Columbia, TN: P-Vine Press, ©1981, 1984.	Kerr, Margaret Harrison, 1984		Y	
Marriage records of Hardin County, Tennessee.	Brewington, Ronney R. ,1992		Y	
McNairy-Hardin counties: Gen. Marcus J. Wright's reminiscences of the early settlements & early settlers of McNairy County, TN- Early history of Hardin County, TN, taken from the West TN Hist. Soc. papers, vol. 1, no. 1, 1947.	1968	Y		
Moonshine, murder, mercy & more: west TN-north MS, 1889- 1989.	Roberts, Russ., 1989	Y		
Moving forward: Hardin County history from 1870 to 1930.	Hays, Tony, 1987	Y		
Neighbours.	Neal, John Whitman Monroe		Y	
No man's land: the Civil War & reconstruction in Hardin County.	Hays, Tony, 1986	Y		
Pickwick people and TVA: 50 years, 1935-1985	Roberts, Russ, 1985		Y	
Reminiscences of the early settlement and early settlers of McNairy County, Tennessee and early history of Hardin County, Tennessee.	Wright, Marcus J., 1968		Y	
Short life sketches of some prominent Hardin countians.	Hitt, Andrew P., 1988	Y	Y	
Tennessee 1860 U. S. census slave schedule: Fayette, Franklin, Gibson, Giles, Grainger, Greene, Grundy, Hamilton, Hancock, Hardeman, Hardin, Hawkins.	The National Archives, 1967.		Y	
The 1860 Census, Hardin CO., TN.	Brown, Albert, 1998			Y
The 1980 cemetery census of Hardin County, Tennessee.	Hardin County Hist. Soc., 1984.		Y	
The Battle of Shiloh.	Daniel, Larry J., 1998		Y	
The West Tennessee Historical Society papers.	West Tennessee Historical Society.		Y	