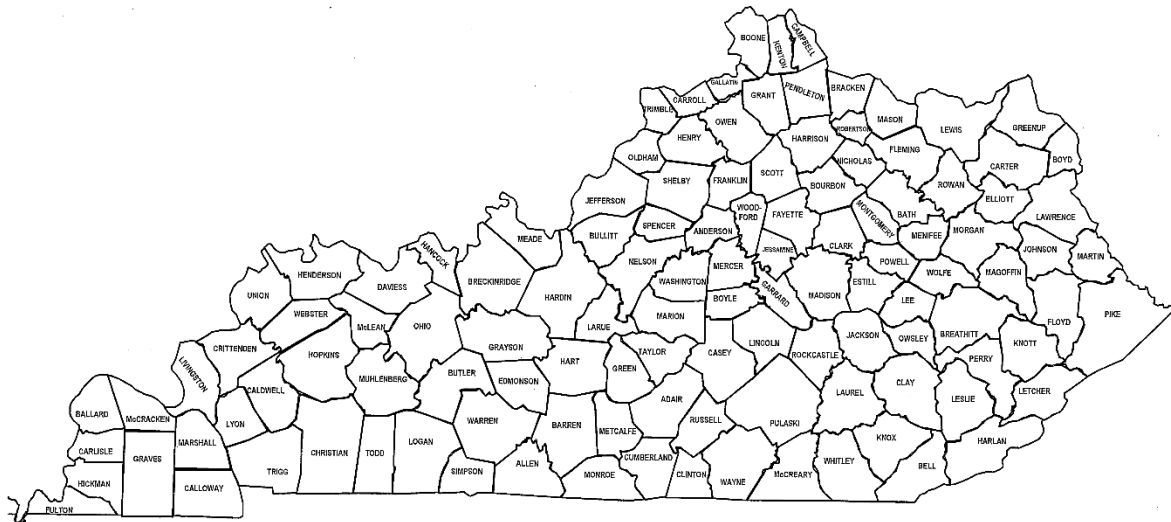


County (Local) Records



Background

Originally a part of Virginia, the region that would later become Kentucky was established as Fincastle County in 1772. The county was renamed Kentucky in 1776 and divided in 1780 into Fayette, Jefferson, and Lincoln. These three counties would serve as the foundation of the state which was admitted into the union in 1792. The number of counties in the state would quickly increase to include over 60 by 1820, 100 in 1850 and 119 in 1900. The final county, McCreary, was added in 1912.

The county is theoretically an agency of state government, serving to provide constituents access to government services and representing the interests of government in the region. In practice, counties in Kentucky became local sovereigns, notably referred to as “Little Kingdoms” by one author. Originally created to facilitate access to county seats and the economic and political role they played, motivation for county formation soon gave way to other interests. These often included local prejudices, political ambitions, economic interests, and many other excuses.

Regardless of the reason for their formation, each county served to generate and save the records governing the lives of the residents. These local records are a primary resource for genealogical research today.

Access

Local records may include any or all of the following types. They are available either in the county where they were created or at KDLA. Not all of these records exist or have survived for

each county. The copies kept at KDLA are primarily on microfilm and available for use in the Research Room. For remote access, or to place an order for records from this collection refer to our website at kdla.ky.gov.

- **Marriage Records:** Marriage Books, Registers, Bonds, Certificates, Licenses
- **Probate Records:** Inventory, Appraisement, and Sale Bill Books; Settlement Books; Administrators, Executors, Guardians, and Committees Books,
- **Tax Records:** Tax Assessment Books or lists, Commissioner's Tax Book
- **Voter Registration Records:** Poll Books, Voter Registration Books, Voter Registration Cards
- **Legal Instruments – Real Property:** Wills, Deeds, Sherriff's Deed Book, Sheriff's Land Sold for Taxes Books, Power of Attorney Books, Mineral Lease Books, Mortgage Books
- **Legal Instruments – Corporation Records:** Articles of Incorporation Books, Register of Partnerships
- **Other:** County Court Order Books, Medical Register, Veteran's Discharge Books, Returns of Births and Deaths, Soldier's Application for Pension, School Census and Enumeration, Indenture of Apprenticeship Books, Naturalizations, Record of Manumission

Other Sources

Consider any of the following institutions for more information when researching County history of Local Records in Kentucky.

- **County Clerk Office:** Creator of these records, the county clerk's office also remains the holder in many cases. For originals, or records not otherwise represented in the collections of KDLA refer to the county specific clerks office.
- **Kentucky Historical Society:** resources include printed biographies and family histories, access to unique genealogical materials including Bible records, surname collections, and cemetery and church records. *Contact: (502) 564-1792*
- **Regional Historical and Genealogical Groups:** valuable organizations for their familiarity with local history. Can find collections or records of local families, churches, or other institutions that can facilitate discovery of genealogical information.
- **Local Library:** often include a reference or special collection of local history or interest. Knowledgeable staff can direct research inquiries or lead to discoveries in local newspapers or records preserved as part of their collections.
- **Office of Vital Statistics:** Founded in 1911, the Office of Vital Statistics maintains many records that had been kept locally up to 1911, from 1911 to present. *Contact: (502) 564-4212*