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*On the cover: Postcard image of the Chase County Courthouse from the photograph collection of the Kansas State Historical Society (Call number FK2/C1/.1/*9-11)*

INTRODUCTION

Local government records are among the most useful and most overlooked resources for genealogical and historical research. Records produced by local courts, counties, and municipalities document the actions of government and to some extent the lives of their citizens.

This guide serves as a brief introduction to some local government offices in Kansas and describes information which may be found in certain records that have research value. Please note that due to the ever-changing duties of government some records listed herein are now obsolete. Likewise, new records will be created by local governments which are not listed in this guide, but that will be of research interest. For a more complete listing of the records currently created by local government offices in Kansas please contact Records Management staff for copies of current records retention and disposition schedules.

The Kansas State Historical Society is a strong proponent of local history and promotes the preservation of local records by the offices that created them and by local or regional repositories such as county historical societies and public libraries. Nevertheless, in the interests of preservation several thousand cubic feet of records created by counties, cities, district courts, townships, and other entities have been transferred to the state archives. Efforts are made by the Historical Society to produce or acquire microfilm copies of other particularly valuable local records. Cooperation with the Genealogical Society of Utah in filming local records useful in family history research has been an important part of these endeavors.

Finding aids that list local government records on microfilm are available in the research room. Most reels of microfilm are also available to libraries throughout the United States via inter-library loan. Original records may be accessed through the local records card catalog or archives database located at the reference desk. Staff members will conduct database searches and assist you in filling out call slips.

After consulting the holdings of the state archives, researchers are encouraged to contact local historical societies and libraries in the geographic area they are researching. Local government records have often been transferred to these repositories for preservation and access considerations. In other cases records produced by a specific office may have remained in its custody. **Please note that the availability of records depends upon the date the county was organized. Not all records are available in every county or city office.** Some records have been lost due to fire, flood, deterioration, and other circumstances. Under Kansas law some records may be closed to public inspections. Please consult the *Kansas Open Records Act* (KSA 45-215 through KSA 45-223) for further information.

Researchers are advised to contact the repositories or offices for information on record holdings, hours of operation, research policies, and associated charges prior to visiting or sending requests for information.

Staff is happy to answer questions about our collections and services. Please telephone **785-272-8681**, ext. 116 or 117 from 9:00 A.M. to 4:30 P.M., Monday through Saturday. TTY users please contact the reference desk at 785-272-8683.

Written requests for information may be sent to: Reference, Kansas State Historical Society, 6425 SW Sixth Avenue, Topeka, KS 66615-1099 or to our e-mail address, referenc@kshs.org.

To learn more about the Kansas State Historical Society and our collections, please visit our World Wide Web site at:

WWW.KSHS.ORG

COURT RECORDS

The records created by county, municipal, and district courts can be extremely valuable for genealogists, social historians, and other researchers. Prior to 1977 the court system in Kansas included a probate court and a district court. The probate court had jurisdiction over marriages, town incorporations, estates, wills, adoptions, insanities, delinquent and dependent children, and similar matters within the county. The district court handled major civil and criminal cases, naturalizations, divorces, monetary claims within a particular boundary (usually one or more counties), and similar matters.

Generally, most cases involving serious criminal offenses or large monetary amounts were heard by the district court. Misdemeanor, small claims, and traffic offenses were tried at the municipal or township levels. There were also a number of other short-lived or related courts with specific responsibilities including criminal courts, circuit courts, traffic courts, juvenile courts, and appeal courts. In 1977 the state of Kansas simplified the court system so that most court divisions fell under the umbrella title of District Court. For a more recent listing of the records series currently created see Kansas Supreme Court Rule 108 which governs retention and disposition of local court records. Records Management Section staff will be happy to direct patrons to a copy of this rule.

In addition to county courts, communities had city or municipal courts that handled cases such as traffic violations, monetary claims to a specific dollar amount, and misdemeanor criminal cases. Sometimes these courts had jurisdiction over the entire township, which encompassed a city or town. In a township where no major community existed, a justice of the peace usually enforced the law, handling cases of a limited nature. The following record titles pertain to court records that can be found at either the county or municipal levels:

DISTRICT COURT (PRIOR TO 1977)

ALIMONY DOCKET

Record of alimony granted in divorce cases, showing case number, names of plaintiff/defendant, date of decree, amount granted, volume and page numbers of appearance docket where recorded, amounts and dates of payments to clerk, dates paid to plaintiff.

APPEARANCE DOCKETS

Record of court appearances, showing case number, title and cause, attorneys, dates and nature of pleadings filed and writs issued, sheriff's return, court orders, record of fees and costs, and disposition of case. Arranged chronologically, indexed by plaintiff/defendant.

APPOINTMENT RECORDS

Copies of appointments, bonds and oaths of deputy clerks, court bailiffs, official court reporters, and other district court officials, showing name, title of office, date of appointment, amount of condition of bond, and affidavits. Arranged by filing dates, usually no index.

BAR DOCKETS

Record of cases set for trial, showing term of court, title and cause, amount of bond, attorneys, and date scheduled for trial. Indexed by plaintiff/defendant. Can be used as an index to the case files.

BOND RECORDS

Record of bonds executed to guarantee payment of costs in civil cases, showing case number, title of cause, date filed, amount of and conditions of bond, and affidavits. Arranged chronologically, indexed by plaintiff/defendant.

CASE FILES-CIVIL AND CRIMINAL

These can include inventories, pleadings, summonses, subpoenas, motions, affidavits, court orders, instructions to juries, jury verdicts, journal entries, and other original instruments. All of these documents were usually filed in a large cardboard enclosure known as a "jacket," which was labeled on the spine or front with the case number and plaintiff/defendant, then filed in sequential order. Case files form the foundation of information that was later entered into dockets and journals.

DIVORCE RECORDS

Shows parties involved, dates, motions files, petition, petition answered, grounds for divorce, testimony of witnesses, legal instruments, date and whether divorce granted. Indexed by plaintiff/defendant.

INDICTMENT RECORDS

Record of criminal indictments returned by grand juries, showing date of session, name of accused, offense charged, nature of indictment, date returned, names of complainant, witnesses, and amount of bond. Arranged chronologically, indexed by plaintiff/defendant.

JOURNALS-CIVIL AND CRIMINAL

Record of proceedings for a particular court, showing term of court, case number, title and cause, names of attorneys, date of trial, dates and nature of pleadings filed, court orders and decrees, and disposition of case. Arranged chronologically, indexed by surname. An important resource for all studies of courts and individual cases.

JUDGMENT DOCKETS

Record of judgments rendered in court, showing case number, names of judgment creditor and debtor, amount of judgment, date entered, date of interest, and where recorded. Arranged chronologically, indexed by plaintiff/defendant.

JURY RECORD

List of persons who served on a jury. Arranged chronologically, indexed by plaintiff/defendant.

MINUTE DOCKETS

Original minutes of proceedings in civil and criminal cases, showing term of court, case number, title and cause, attorneys, dates of hearings and continuances, decisions, and orders. Usually arranged chronologically. **Can be used as an index for a particular case.**

NATURALIZATION RECORDS

DECLARATIONS OF INTENTION -- Also called First Papers. Declaration by aliens of intention to become U.S. citizens, showing declaration number; date; name; address; age; race; sex; physical description; occupation; date and place of birth; date and place of arrival in U.S. Arranged by declaration number, indexed by surname.

PETITION AND RECORD -- Also called Second or Final Papers. Shows name; address; age; race; sex; physical description; occupation; date and place of origin; date and place of arrival in U.S.; country renounced; names, ages and residence of children; date of declaration of intention; and orders in court granting or denying citizenship. May include photographs. Arranged chronologically, indexed by surname.

OATH OF ALLEGIANCE

Renunciation of allegiance to any foreign government, showing date; name; name of monarch or government; and place of residence.

CERTIFICATE OF NATURALIZATION

Certification of naturalization, including name; address; birthplace or nationality; former country; birth date or age; physical description; marital status; name, age or birth date and address of spouse; names, ages, and addresses of children; and date of naturalization.

PATENTS AND AFFIDAVITS

Affidavit of patents executed by patentee, showing date of affidavit; nature and description of invention; letter patent number; date certificate of patent was issued; date filed by U.S. Patent Office; name, address, age, occupation, oath, and signature of patentee. Arranged chronologically, usually not indexed.

TRANSCRIPTS

Transcriptions of testimonies of witnesses in hearings and trials before the court. May contain information about a plaintiff, a defendant, and any witnesses in a particular case. Everyone before the court is usually asked basic biographical information before issues concerning the case are discussed.

PROBATE COURT (PRIOR TO 1977)

ADMINISTRATION AND BONDS, LETTERS OF

Copies of petitions for and record of wills, letters of administration, and bonds of executors and administrators of estates, showing name of administrator, date of appointment, name of estate, affidavit of death, amount and condition of bond, affidavit of sureties. Arranged chronologically, indexed by subject's surname.

ADMINISTRATORS AND GUARDIANS APPOINTMENTS

Orders appointing administrators and guardians of estates, showing names of deceased, minors, incompetents; value of real estate and personal property; name of petitioner; date of petition; and orders of court. Arranged chronologically, indexed by subject's surname.

ADMINISTRATORS, GUARDIANS AND EXECUTORS DOCKET OF

Docket listing the above for particular estates, showing names of estate, minor, administrator, executor, guardian; date, and remarks. Arranged chronologically, indexed by subject's surname.

CASE FILES-PROBATE

These can include inventories and appraisements, letters of guardians, administrators and executors, bonds, affidavits, court orders, journal entries, wills, and other original instruments. All of these documents were usually filed in a large cardboard enclosure known as a "jacket," which was labeled on the spine or front with the case number and plaintiff/defendant, then filed in sequential order. Case files form the foundation of information that was later entered into dockets and journals.

FINAL SETTLEMENTS OF ESTATES

Petition for final settlement of estates, showing name of deceased; names, relationship, and address of heirs; oath of executor; date subscribed. Arranged chronologically, indexed by estate name.

GUARDIANSHIP AND BONDS, LETTERS OF

Copies of petitions for and record of letters of guardianship and bonds of guardians of minors, incompetents, and insane persons, showing name, date of appointment, names of estate and ward, affidavit of sureties. Arranged chronologically, indexed by subject's surname.

INVENTORY AND APPRAISEMENT RECORDS

Record of inventory and appraisal of estates, showing names of estate, administrator, executor, guardian; description of value of real estate; items and value of personal property, bonds, mortgages and other securities. Arranged chronologically, indexed by subject's surname.

JOURNALS-PROBATE

Record of proceedings for probate court, showing term of court, case number, title and cause, names of attorneys and parties involved, date of motions, dates and nature of pleadings filed, court orders and decrees, and disposition of case. Arranged chronologically, indexed by surname. An important resource for all studies of courts and individual cases.

MARRIAGE RECORDS

Records of marriages and marriage licenses, showing license number; names, addresses, and ages of contracting parties; date of license; names of parents or guardians consenting; endorsement of party performing ceremony. Arranged numerically by license number. Affidavit records show oath that no legal impediment to marriage exists, date, signatures of contracting parties. Arranged numerically by license number or chronologically, both indexed by surname. Of related Interest: *Vital Records* and *County Clerk - Birth, Death, Marriage and Contagious Diseases Register*.

SALES OF REAL ESTATE, RECORDS OF

Record of sales of real estate by administrators and executors, showing name of estate, petitions for authority to sell, court's order for notice, administrator's appraisal, report of sale, confirmation of sale. Arranged chronologically, indexed by subject's surname.

TOWN/BUSINESS INCORPORATIONS AND NAME CHANGES

Depending upon state laws, some town petitions for incorporation and business name changes were filed with the probate court. Lists the original incorporators or members of a town company. These records could also be located with a city clerk, county clerk, or register of deeds. Inquire with local officials.

WILL RECORDS

Copies of last wills and testaments filed for probate, showing names of testator, beneficiaries, executor, witnesses; date and place of signing; conditions of will; appointment of executor; and testimony of subscribing witnesses. Arranged chronologically, indexed by testators.



COUNTY RECORDS

APPRAISER

The role of the county appraiser is primarily to determine the taxable value of public, corporate, and private property.

ABSTRACT OF AGRICULTURE, POPULATION, AND OTHER STATISTICS

Abstracts of agriculture, population, and other information, showing census of inhabitants by townships and cities, total number and value of farms, amount and value of agricultural, livestock, and poultry production; number of acres cultivated and uncultivated, number of acres in orchards, small fruit, vineyards, and nurseries; number of creameries, ice cream and cheese factories; statistics of livestock and livestock mortality, farm and dairy machinery, and statistics pertaining to blind, deaf, and insane persons, pauperism, and crime. Arranged alphabetically by names or townships and cities, no index.

ABSTRACT OF REAL ESTATE ASSESSMENT

Abstracts of real estate assessment rolls prepared for the State Tax Commission, showing year, name and number of taxing unit, number of acres cultivated, value of land and/or improvements, and total taxable value. Arranged chronologically, usually no index.

CORPORATIONS, BANKS, INSURANCE COMPANIES ASSESSMENT ROLLS

Assessment rolls of the above, sometimes separately recorded from the general assessment rolls, showing name, rate, and amount of dividends in past five years; number of shares of stock sold; salaries paid officers and employees; detailed statement of resources and liabilities; value of all shares; description and value of real estate owned; list of moneys and credits. Arranged chronologically, usually no index.

FIELD BOOKS

Field books for real estate assessments, showing name of township

or city, name and address of owner, legal description of property, number of acres improved or unimproved, total acreage, assessed value of acreage, value of improvements, total assessed value per acre, and remarks. Arranged alphabetically by names of townships, cities, and/or additions, and by section and lot and block numbers, usually no index.

PERSONAL PROPERTY STATEMENTS

Statements of personal property assessed for taxation, showing name of city or township, school district, name and address of taxpayer, itemized statement of property and value. Includes merchants and manufacturers statements. Arrangement varies, usually no index.

REAL ESTATE/PERSONAL PROPERTY ASSESSMENT ROLLS

Record of real estate/personal property assessed for taxation, showing name and address of owner, school district number, legal description of tract or listings of property, itemized values of information in question, and comparison with previous years taxes. Arrangement can vary, index not always available. These records, known as the "work sheets" for the county treasurer's tax rolls, can be more valuable to researchers and genealogists than the actual tax rolls themselves. This record series may also be found in the county clerk's or county treasurer's offices.

VALUE OF REAL ESTATE SOLD/TRANSFERRED, RECORD OF

Record of market and assessed value of parcels of real estate sold or transferred, showing name of township, date of acknowledgment, date recorded, legal description of property, number of acres, assessed value, percentage of assessed to market value, and remarks. Arranged chronologically, usually no index.

CLERK

The responsibility of the county clerk's office is to be the

official records manager for most daily activities conducted among the various offices. The county clerk is also most closely aligned with the board of county commissioners, and often serves on the board in one capacity or another. In most counties, the clerk also serves in the capacity of County Elections Officer.

BIRTH, DEATH, MARRIAGE, AND CONTAGIOUS DISEASE REGISTERS

In some states, counties maintained their own registers of births and deaths for a specified period of time, and sometimes joined them with marriage registers and contagious disease records. Usually contained only basic information such as names, dates of events, and ages. Arranged chronologically, usually no index or an incomplete one. Of related interest: *Vital Records*; *Court Records - Marriage Records*.

BUDGETS AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Budgets and financial statements of counties, townships, cities, school districts, and drainage districts, showing date; name and number of taxing unit; receipts and disbursements; floating and bonded indebtedness; estimates of receipts; and valuation of property. Arranged chronologically by tax years, usually no index.

CEMETERY REGISTERS

In some counties, cemetery internment registers were maintained by the county clerk's office. Check with city clerk's offices and the register of deeds office for similar records.

DELINQUENT TAX SALES, RECORD OF

Record of sales of real estate for delinquent taxes, showing date; legal description of property; to whom assessed; name of purchaser; amount of taxes, fees, penalties; period of delinquency; and amount of redemption. Arranged chronologically, usually no index.

ELECTION RECORDS

NOMINATION PAPERS

Petitions for nomination of candidates for township and county offices in primary elections, showing name and address of candidates and petitioners; office; political party affiliation; and date of primary. Arrangement varies, no index.

POLITICAL PARTY AFFILIATIONS, RECORD OF

Register of political party affiliations of electors, showing location (ward, precinct level), name of elector, political party affiliation, and year of registration. Arranged numerically by location, then alphabetically by surname, usually no index.

POLL BOOKS AND TALLY SHEETS

Record of primary and general elections, all levels, showing name of city or township; name/number of ward and precinct; date of election; names and addresses of voters; names and addresses of candidates; general information regarding the candidates; number of votes received; names and addresses of nonresident voters; and the return of the absentee vote. Poll books arranged alphabetically by names of voters; tally sheets arranged by names of offices and alphabetically by names of candidates. Usually no index. These are the official resources for examining election returns.

REGISTRATION BOOKS

Record of primary and general elections, showing name of city or township; name/number of ward and precinct; date of election; names and addresses of voters and nonresident voters.

ENUMERATIONS, RECORD OF

Local census taken usually with regard to city affairs or upcoming elections, showing location, ward, precinct, and names. Arrangement varies, usually no index.

FARM NAMES REGISTER

Register of farm names, showing date of registration, application number, name of farm, name and address of owner, legal description of property. Arranged numerically by application numbers, or alphabetically by surname.

GENERAL LEDGER

Clerk's record of accounts with state, county, township, city, school district, drainage district, and other funds, showing date; name of fund; amounts of credits and debits; and balance. Arranged chronologically, usually no index.

LIVESTOCK MARKS AND BRANDS

Register of marks and brands for livestock, showing address of owner, description or diagram of mark or brand, amount of fees paid, and date registered. Arranged chronologically, indexed alphabetically by rancher surname.

REGISTERS OF PHYSICIANS, OSTEOPATHS, NURSES, OPTOMETRISTS, AND EMBALMERS

Some occupations had to be registered to do business in the county; these are just a few, showing certificates numbers, dates of issuance, names and addresses of individuals, place of birth, schools attended, dates graduated. Arranged chronologically, indexed alphabetically by surname.

SCHOOL LAND SALES, RECORD OF

Record of sales of school land in the county, showing date of sale, location, appraised value, name and address of purchaser, purchase price, and remarks. Arranged chronologically, indexed by purchaser.

TRANSFER RECORD

Record of transfer of title to farmlands and city lots, showing nature of instrument, date of transfer, names of grantor/grantee, location and legal description, consideration, and remarks. Arranged numerically and chronologically, indexed by grantor/grantee.

COMMISSIONERS

The records created by the board of county commissioners can be very useful to researchers interested in local history. Major events impacting counties were recorded in the proceedings of this governing body.

ANNUAL REPORTS, COUNTY OFFICES, TOWNSHIP TRUSTEES, AND INSPECTIONS OF COUNTY INSTITUTIONS

Annual summaries of the above as well as inspections of county institutions and their findings. These records are generally located with the board of county commissioners or the county clerk.

COMMISSIONERS DOCKETS

Agenda of business to be considered at regular and special sessions, showing nature of business, names of interested persons, date of hearing, date of continuances, and final disposition. Arranged chronologically, indexed by topic or subject.

COMMISSIONERS JOURNALS

Journal of proceedings of all regular and special sessions of the board of county commissioners, showing date; commissioners present; applications, bids, protests, petitions, bills, reports, resignations received; contracts awarded; claims allowed and disallowed; property acquired and disposed of; condemnation proceedings; boundaries changed; bonds issued; taxes levied; votes canvassed; township election contests decided; appointments made; resolutions adopted; orders issued; and all other transactions. Arranged chronologically, indexed by topic or subject, sometimes separately. Copies or original instruments pertaining to all of the above mentioned functions are usually filed either with the board of county commissioners or the county clerk.

MONTHLY/QUARTERLY REPORTS

Reports to the county commissioner by other county officials, including the poor commissioner, county health officer, county physician, orphans homes, county engineer, superintendent of county fair, superintendent of county quarry, etc. Arrangement varies, index usually not available.

ROAD JOURNAL

Journal of proceedings of county commissioners pertaining to the opening, closing, establishment, repair and maintenance of county roads, showing date of meeting; nature of petition; name of petitioner; name, number, and location of road. Arranged chronologically, index by topic or subject, if available. Many times this information is combined with other items in the county commissioners journal, and the journal index can usually be used.

CORONER

The office of the county coroner is responsible for investigating and determining causes of death. Records of the county coroner may also be found in the district court office and the county clerk's office.

CORONER'S RECORD

Record of inquests and findings in violent and sudden deaths, showing name of deceased; cause and date of death; date of inquest; names of jurors and witnesses; findings of coroner or jury; and amount of fees. Arranged chronologically, usually no index.

CORONER'S INQUESTS

Coroner's return of inquests held, showing date; name of deceased; conditions surrounding death; names of jurors and witnesses; transcript of evidence; and findings of jury. Arranged chronologically, usually no index.

ENGINEER/SURVEYOR

Detailed maps and construction records of roads, bridges, or other projects can be found in the county engineer and/or county surveyor's office. Some of the more common record series include:

FIELD NOTES

Field notes of land surveys for roads, bridges, drainage districts, flood control construction, and landmarks, showing date of survey, instrument readings, elevation, rod readings, and stakes. Arrangement varies, no index. These notes are usually accompanied by detailed maps which were created at the time of the survey, some dating back to the organization of the county. Field notes and surveys produced by the U.S. Surveyor General are especially desirable because they tend to be the first ones in an area. These records are available in the state archives collections.

SURVEYORS RECORDS AND PLATS

Record of surveys made by county surveyor, showing plats of townships and sections, locations of markers, and all data pertaining to the survey. Arranged chronologically, index alphabetical by names of surveys.



HEALTH, BOARD OF/HEALTH DEPARTMENT

The county board of health was created to oversee health conditions within the county, educate individuals regarding health matters, and report infractions and health hazards. Some important functions have been to maintain records on contagious and infectious diseases.

COUNTY PHYSICIAN AND HEALTH OFFICERS RECORD

Record of contagious diseases reported in the county, showing name, address, age, and sex of patient; number in family; number affected; nature of disease; date of onset; date of isolation or quarantine; name and address of reporting physician. Arranged chronologically, no index.

HEALTH AND SANITATION SURVEYS

Survey of health and sanitation of cities and townships made by county health officer, showing date; names, addresses and birth dates of parents and children; condition of sanitation on premises; and record of immunizations and illnesses. Arranged alphabetically by names of families, usually no index.

INFANT MORTALITY, RECORDS AND GRAPHS

Record of infant mortality, showing date of death; names of child and parents; address; causes contributing to infant death rate; and graphs depicting highest and lowest causes of infant mortalities. Arranged chronologically, no index.

JOURNAL

Record of proceedings of the County Board of Health, showing date of meeting, officers present, complaints, reports, resignations, bills, claims received, appointments made, resolutions adopted, and orders issued. Arranged chronologically, no index.

VITAL STATISTICS

Registers of vital statistics compiled from returns made to the board

of health by physicians and persons performing marriage ceremonies. Includes registers of births, deaths, marriages and contagious diseases, showing name, age, sex, race, date and place of death/birth: name and address of parents: place and cause of death; where buried; attending physicians; occupation; place of marriage; names of witnesses; and license number. Arrangement varies, usually no index.

REGISTER OF DEEDS

The primary function of the register of deeds office has been to record all instruments pertaining to land ownership.

Contrary to popular belief, retracing land ownership is not as hard as one might imagine. Certainly it is helpful to have a legal description of the land, but grantor/grantee indexes are also available in most offices if the only clue you have is a name rather than a legal description.

CEMETERY DEED RECORDS

Record of instruments filed pertaining to county cemeteries. Arranged chronologically, usually no index or indexed separately. Of related interest: *County Clerk - Cemetery Registers*

CHATTEL MORTGAGE RECORDS

Record of chattel mortgages and conditional sales contracts, showing time of reception; names of mortgagor and mortgagee; date of instrument; amount secured; when due or schedule of payments; rate of interest; property mortgaged; and date of satisfaction and release. Arranged chronologically, usually no index.

CORPORATION RECORD

Copies of articles of incorporation, showing date; name of corporation and address of registered office; nature of business; classes of stock to be issued; number and par value of each; minimum capital; names and addresses of incorporators; period of corporate existence; number of directors; and special provisions for management of business. Arranged chronologically, index by corporation.

DEED RECORDS

Copies of deeds filed for record, showing nature of instrument; date of indenture; names of grantee and grantor; description of property; consideration; and date of filing. Arranged chronologically, indexed by grantee, grantor, and/or numerically, in separate volumes.

LAND OWNERSHIP INDEXES

Indexes to land ownership records usually fall under two categories: a numerical index, which lists transactions or changes by legal description of the land; and a general or grantor/grantee index, which lists transactions by the owner/purchaser. The grantor is the seller of the land, and the grantee is the buyer.

MISCELLANEOUS RECORDS

Copies of affidavits, agreements, bonds for deeds, contracts, letters of attorney, letters patent, leases, agreements, and other miscellaneous instruments filed for record, showing nature of instrument, date of execution, names of grantee and grantor, terms and conditions, consideration, and date of filing. Arranged chronologically. Separate index by grantor/grantee.

MORTGAGE RECORDS

Copies of real estate mortgages filed for record, showing date of execution; nature of instrument; names of mortgagor and mortgagee; description of property; consideration; rate of interest; amount secured; date of maturity. Arranged chronologically, indexed by mortgagor, mortgagee, and/or numerically.

PLAT BOOKS

Although most county plat books fall under the category of

publications rather than records, they are useful land ownership maps which can help in locating parcels of land. Most register of deeds offices have a complete set of county plat books, and occasionally they also have cemetery plat books as well.

RECEPTION RECORD

Record of all instruments filed with the register of deeds, showing date and time of reception; names of grantor and grantee; kind of instrument; to whom and how delivered. Arranged chronologically, index varies.

SOLDIERS DISCHARGE RECORDS

Copies of soldiers discharges from military service, showing name of soldier; rank; company; regiment; volunteer; date of service; date discharged; length of service; if disabled, name, place and date of battle; if entitled to pension, amount; place of birth; occupation; physical description; honorary mention. Arranged chronologically, index by surname. This record generally covers veterans from World War I to the present.

TRANSCRIPTS OF REAL ESTATE AND CHATTEL MORTGAGES

Transcripts of the above recorded in the register of deeds office, showing dates of execution and maturity; names and addresses of mortgagor, mortgagee, and assignee; amount secured; rate of interest; description of property; conditions; and reference to volume and page numbers where recorded. Arranged alphabetically by names of mortgages, usually no index.



SHERIFF

Records created by county sheriffs are related and similar in function to records created by court systems. Many of these records contain information on county jail internments and county criminal investigations. Some of the more common record series include:

COMMITMENTS TO STATE REFORMATORY/ PRISON

Court orders to sheriff for commitment of prisoners to state reformatory or state prison, showing date, case number, term of court, name of judge, sentence imposed, fines, nature of offense, and court costs. Arranged chronologically, indexed by prisoner.

IDENTIFICATION RECORDS

Identification record of county jail inmates, showing name; physical description and photograph; and whether charged with federal, state or local offense. Arranged alphabetically.

INTERNMENT REGISTER

Record of time served by prisoners committed to county jail, showing name, description, age, and nationality of prisoner; residence; date of sentence; date of commitment; nature of charge; date of release total time served; and amount of board. Arranged chronologically, indexed by prisoner.

JAIL RECORD (AND JAIL CALENDAR)

Calendar of persons committed to county jail showing name, address, and description of prisoner; cause of commitment; dates committed and discharged; and by whose authority. Arranged chronologically, indexed by prisoner.

PAROLE APPLICATIONS, PAROLES GRANTED/ REVOKED

Applications for parole made by prisoners who were sent to state penitentiaries or reformatories, showing date of hearing, name, offense, sentence, conditions of parole if granted, and reason for revocation if revoked. Arranged by date, indexed by prisoner.

SOCIAL WELFARE, BOARD OF

The county social welfare board no longer exists, but was responsible for distributing aid to the county's poor and the managing the county poor farm or almshouse. Many of the records created pertain to old age assistance, aid to dependent children, aid to the blind, and those needing financial assistance from the county. The most commonly found record series is:

JOURNAL

Record of proceedings of officers of the county social welfare board, showing date of meeting, officers present, bills, claims, complaints, reports, resignations accepted, appointments made, budgets fixed, resolutions adopted, and orders issued. Arranged chronologically, no index.



SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

In Kansas, this office was a separate office until state law

eliminated it in the mid 1960's and transferred the records to the Register of Deeds office.

ANNUAL REPORTS OF THE DISTRICT CLERK AND SUPERINTENDENT/SCHOOL CENSUS RECORDS

Annual reports of district clerk to county superintendent and county superintendent to state superintendent, showing date; school district number; school census; enrollment by grades and sex; length of term; names and salaries of superintendents, principals, and teachers; names and terms of district board members elected; number of school buildings and rooms; volumes in libraries; value of school property and assessed valuation of district; financial statement; rate and amount of school levy; budget adopted at school meetings; number of pupils promoted and graduated; number of organized districts; number of physically handicapped children; report on school transportation; summary of health supervision; report of truant officer. Arranged chronologically, no index. *Also referred to as "Scholastic Census Records."*

COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT'S RECORD OF OFFICIAL ACTS

Record of official acts, showing school district officers appointed to fill vacancies, number of teachers meetings held, number of records examined, number of lectures given by superintendent, and other events. Arranged chronologically, usually no index.

MINUTES OF MEETINGS, COUNTY TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

Record of proceedings of County Teachers Association Meetings, showing date and place of meeting; names of officers and teachers present; proposals; recommendations; motions; business transacted; and committees appointed. Arranged chronologically, no index.

PRINCIPALS TERM REPORTS

Reports of principals of schools to district clerks and superintendent, showing date; district number; name of school; length of term; principal's name and sex; enrollment by grades and sex; average

daily attendance; teachers; average enrollment per teacher; number of buildings and rooms; number of volumes in library; names and salaries of principals and teachers; total operating expenses and cost per pupil; number of pupils transported by district; number of weeks each subject taught. Arranged chronologically, no index.

PUPILS ATTENDANCE AND GRADE RECORDS

Pupils attendance and grade records kept by teachers of individual schools, showing school district number; pupil's name, address, age, subjects, grades, date of birth; names of parents or guardians; names of brothers and sisters; visitors to the school district; and attendance record. Arranged chronologically, no index, each volume pertaining to a school year. These can be found in either the schools (if they are still operating) or in the school district administrative office (if the schools have closed). Many have been lost through time as well.

SCORE CARDS

Cards grading the quality of elementary schools, showing date, name of school, district number, classification, organization, and scores given for building site and equipment.

SCHOOL DISTRICT BOUNDARIES, ORGANIZATION OF

Record of organization of school districts and establishment and alteration of school district boundaries, showing name and number of district; date and place of first meeting; description and population of proposed district; time limit of appeal; results of first meeting; officers elected; date organization perfected; plats and drawings of district; and description of final boundaries. Arranged by school district number, no index.

TEACHERS EMPLOYED, REGISTER OF

Record of teachers employed in county schools, showing school district number, name of teacher, school address, salary, date of contract, date of commencement, and length of term. By date.

TEACHERS MONTHLY REPORTS

Monthly reports to the county superintendent, showing district number; date; name and address of teacher; number of days taught; names, ages, sex and grade of pupils; attendance record; visits by school officers; equipment added or needed; and remarks.

Arranged chronologically, no index.

TEACHERS REGISTER

Register of teachers state certificates, showing name and address of teacher; grade and number of certificate; and dates of issuance. Arranged chronologically, no index.

TEACHERS TERM REPORTS

Term reports of school district teachers to district clerks and county superintendent, showing date; district number; name of school; teacher's name and address; enrollment of pupils by grades and sex; average attendance; length of term; number of pupils residing outside of district; number of volumes in library; names of pupils and report of attendance, scholarship and classification; daily program; work done in special projects. Arranged chronologically, no index.



TREASURER

The county treasurer maintains the financial affairs of the county. The following record series are commonly found in the

county treasurer's office:

DELINQUENT TAX SALES, RECORD OF

Record of sales of real estate for delinquent taxes, showing location and legal description of property; name and address of owner and purchaser; period of delinquency; amount of taxes; date of sale; tax sale certificate number. Arranged chronologically, no index.

REDEMPTION RECORD

Record of redemption of real estate sold for delinquent taxes, showing location and description of property; period and amount of delinquency; fees and penalties; date of sale; to whom sold; redemption certificate number. Arranged chronologically, no index.

TAX COLLECTION REGISTER

Record of tax collections, showing receipt number; name of townships; school district number; name of taxpayer; description of property; taxable valuation; amount of tax for each purpose; period and amount of delinquency; fees, penalties, and refunds. Arranged chronologically, no index.

TAX ROLLS, CORPORATION, BANK, ROAD

Roll of taxes for specific entities, showing name of corporation; where incorporated; location and description of real estate and personal property; taxable valuation; total amount of taxes, rebates and penalties. Arranged alphabetically by names of corporations or, for roads, names of townships, usually no index.

TAX ROLLS/REAL ESTATE AND PERSONAL PROPERTY

Roll of taxes charged against real estate and personal property, showing to whom assessed, legal description of property, taxable valuation, school district number, amount of tax, fees, penalties, and

costs. Arranged by townships or cities, usually no index. These records can be divided differently in each office; some offices may have record series that separate city from township tax rolls; counties with large cities have tax rolls which divide the city geographically; there are also road tax rolls, corporation tax rolls, utility tax rolls, etc. The more broken up this series tends to be, the easier it is to locate a subject. This series is created from the information compiled in tax assessment rolls.

SCHOOL LAND SALES

Record of sales of school land in county, showing location and description of land; number of acres; appraised value; date of sale; name and address of purchaser; sale price; and remarks. Arranged chronologically, no index.



The following list, by office, illustrates some of the records found in various municipal offices. Some are closely related to their county office equivalents; others are especially unique.

CITY CLERK

The function of the city clerk's office resembles that of a county clerk in the courthouse. This would be an important point to begin one's research because of the wide variety of records available. Some of these are:

ANNUAL REPORTS

Annual reports of all governmental units are generally filed with the city clerk.

ASSESSMENT RECORD

Record of assessments against each lot affected showing project number, name, name of lot owner, lot number, block number, division, city, total amount assessed against it. Arranged chronologically, index by project title.

BOND REGISTER

Register of payments made by cities on bond issues, showing number of bond, date, purpose, amount of issue, date last bond due, rate of interest, to whom bonds sold, to whom interest and principal payable, ordinance number. Arranged chronologically, no index.

BUDGET REPORTS

Records pertaining to the annual budget of the city. Useful in documenting financial affairs of municipalities. There are several record series retained with regard to the finances of a city; monthly and quarterly.

BUILDING PERMITS AND PERMIT REGISTERS

Original instruments and register of building permits, showing permit number, date, applicant, address, type of structure, and value. Arranged chronologically, index alphabetical by address.

CEMETERY BOARD JOURNALS

Proceedings of meetings of cemetery boards. Arranged chronologically, usually no index.

CEMETERY/BURIAL RECORDS

Record of ownership and burials in city cemeteries, showing lot owner's name, grave number, name of deceased, date of death, cause of death, age at death, date of burial. Arrangement varies, index by surname.

CITY COMMISSION JOURNAL/MINUTES

Record of proceedings of meetings of the city commission, showing date, time, and location of meeting; names of members present; statement of motions, hearings, discussions, votes, and other information. Arranged chronologically, indexed by subject. Although created by the city commission, it is generally retained by the city clerk.

ELECTION RECORDS

Most documents pertaining to city elections are retained by the city clerk, including nomination petitions, candidates election expense reports, poll books, tally sheets, and registration of electors.

LAND INVENTORY REPORTS

Register of land owned by the city or individuals, showing department name; inventory number; section number; name of city addition; lot and block numbers; date land acquired; and amount of purchase price. Arrangement varies, index varies.

ORDINANCE RECORDS

Copies of ordinances passed by the city commission, showing ordinance number, title, statement of provisions, date ordinance passed and approved. Arranged chronologically, indexed by ordinance number.

RECORD OF LICENSES

Liquor, taxi-cab, trolley car, vendor, dairy licenses requested by individuals, showing name, date, license number, address, purpose of license, date of expiration.

RESOLUTIONS

Copies of resolutions passed and approved by the city commission, showing resolution number, title of resolution, statement, date resolution adopted. Arranged chronologically, no index.

VITAL STATISTICS RECORDS

These records include birth, death, marriage, and contagious diseases. Of related Interest: *Vital Records; County Clerk - Birth, Marriage, Death and Contagious Disease Records; District Court - Marriage Records.*

WHARFMASTER REPORTS

Record of steamboats and other water craft, their cargo, date of arrival, date of departure. Arrangement chronologically, no index.



CITY ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT
SEE ALSO COUNTY ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT

BUILDING INSPECTIONS DEPARTMENT

Some building inspection permits may be filed in this municipal office if the office is not combined with the city clerk's office.

Building inspections may be used by researchers to document the city's response to fire and/or health hazards. Many cities, however, combine this office with the city clerk.

CITY PROPERTY PLANS

Various plans, blueprints, and drawings related to buildings, properties, and facilities owned by the city. Arrangement varies, index not usually available.

FIELD BOOKS

Various information related to engineering surveys of streets, curbs, sidewalks, water lines, sewer lateral, structures and other items. Arrangement varies, index by project number or subject.

WEEKLY REPORTS/ANNUAL REPORTS

Records of weekly or annual summaries of inspections and public contracts made by the building inspection department, showing date of report, time of inspections, number of contacts, type and address of inspection.



VITAL RECORDS

Vital Records are important sources of genealogical information because they record the pivotal events in a person's life: **birth, marriage, and death**. Unfortunately, most states did not begin keeping official copies of this

information until the twentieth century. The state of Kansas began recording birth and death records on July 1, 1911. Marriage records were recorded beginning on May 1, 1913. Copies of these records are available through the office of Vital Statistics, Landon State Office Building, Room 151, 900 SW Jackson Street, Topeka, KS 66612-1221; 785-296-1400.

Before 1911 births, marriages and deaths *may* have been recorded in the town or county clerk's office where the event occurred. Most vital records that have survived are in the counties in which they were created. They may be found in the office in which they were recorded or in the local historical or genealogical society. The information contained in these early records varies from place to place. **Birth and death records do not exist for Kansas prior to 1885.**

The Kansas State Historical Society has a few original vital records, primarily on microfilm. Please consult the local records and vital records card catalogs and microfilm guides in the research room for a list of our holdings. The local records catalog is arranged by county and office. The vital records catalog is arranged by county and creator. Due to changes in county boundaries or mergers, patrons may need to consult more than one county listing. Staff is happy to help patrons with vital records research.

