

## LAUDERDALE COUNTY TN LOCALITY GUIDE

Date: 31 January 2022

Lauderdale county is in West Tennessee (west border on Mississippi River) and was formed in 1835 and is named for James Lauderdale. A native of Virginia, he moved to Tennessee and was involved with the militia. He fought with General Andrew Jackson in battles against Indians and the War of 1812. Commissioned as volunteer Lieutenant Colonel, he was wounded in Creek War and died fighting battles in New Orleans in 1814. Counties in both Alabama and Mississippi are also named for him.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James\\_Lauderdale](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_Lauderdale)

Creation, Geographical Area, Boundary Changes

Organized 24 November 1835. Parent counties = Tipton, Haywood, Dyer  
Geographical Area

West Tennessee on Mississippi River; neighboring counties include Tipton, Dyer and Haywood in Tennessee and Mississippi county across river in Arkansas

County Seat: Ripley

Other communities: Gates, Halls, Henning (birthplace of Alex Haley; Alex Haley Interpretive Museum)

Source: <https://lauderdalecountyttn.org/our-county/communities/>

For animated maps illustrating Tennessee county boundary changes, "[Rotating Formation Tennessee County Boundary Maps](#)" (1777-1985) may be viewed for free at the [www.MapofUS.org](http://www.MapofUS.org) website.

Key Historical Events

Until 1819 when Shelby county (Memphis) was created in the most southwest corner of the state, the present-day Lauderdale was located in the Western Tennessee District; county development in the west Tennessee area north of Shelby County to the northwest Tennessee began in 1821.

## Records Available

Record	Beginning Date	Place
Birth registration	1881 (see notes)	State-wide
Marriage	1838	County Clerk
Court Court	1836	General Sessions
Land (deeds)	1822 (see notes)	Register of Deeds
Probate	1836	County clerk
Census	(see notes)	

Note 1: State-wide registration for births and deaths required in 1914; however, compliance was not widespread until about 1927.

Note 2: Check land and deed records of adjacent counties (and parent counties) if locating very early records is problematic

Note 3: The first "official" (US Federal) census for Lauderdale County was taken in 1840. Before that time, residents may be found in adjacent and parent counties.

### Missing Records in Lauderdale County

1835-1837 Marriage Records

1869 Courthouse records damaged by fire

### Suggestions for research related to record losses

- [\*Burned Counties\*](#). By Michael John Neill at [24-7 Family History Circle](#).
- [\*When the Records are Gone\*](#). By Arlene Eakle at [Arlene Eakle's Tennessee Blog](#).
- [Burned Counties Research](#) in the [FamilySearch Research Wiki](#).

See notes below about federal census records for Tennessee. Additional information is available via Google searches and on the website of the Tennessee State Library and Archives, <https://sos.tn.gov/tsla/researchers-genealogists>

## Census Records

Both [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org) (free) and [www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com) (\$) have census collections with transcribed information and images for actual census pages.

1840, 1850, 1860, 1870, 1880, 1900, 1910, 1920, 1930, and 1940 federal population censuses of Lauderdale County are available online. For tips on accessing census records online, see [Tennessee Census](#). If you're having trouble finding your ancestors in online indexes, try checking printed indexes. Created by local experts familiar with the area's families, these indexes are often transcribed more accurately than nationwide online indexes.

See [Tennessee Population Schedule Indexes: Fiche, Film, or Book](#) for more information about statewide printed indexes.

See [Lauderdale County, TN census assignments](#), including links to transcribed files.

Source: [The USGenWeb Census Project®](#)

1810-1891

[Tennessee, Compiled Census and Census Substitutes Index, 1810-1891](#) at [Ancestry](#) (\$)1840

1840 pensioners

- [A Census of Pensioners for Revolutionary or Military Services: With their Names, Ages, and Places of Residence, as Returned by the Marshalls of the Several Judicial Districts, Under the Act for Taking the Sixth Census.](#) 1841; reprint, Baltimore, Md.: Genealogical Publishing,

1967. [FHL US/CAN Book 973 X2pc 1840; FHL US/CAN Film 2321](#). 1841 edition digitized by the [U.S. Census Bureau](#) and [Google books](#) *et. al.* See Tennessee, Western District, Lauderdale County on page 159.

## 1840, 1850 Census, 1850 Mortality Schedule

- Davis, Bettie B. *Lauderdale County, Tennessee, 1840 Census, 1850 Census, and 1850 Mortality Schedule*. Memphis, Tenn.: B.B. Davis, 1983. [FHL US/CAN book 976.816 X2](#).

## 1880

- Sistler, Samuel D. *1880 Census Lauderdale County, Tennessee*. Nashville, Tenn.: Byron Sistler and Associates, 2002. [FHL US/CAN book 976.816 X2](#)

## 1891 Male Voters

- 1891 [Tennessee Enumeration of Male Voters 1891](#) at [Ancestry](#)

The following website has a list of searchable Tennessee census databases

<https://raogk.org/census-records/tennessee/>

## Probate Records

The County Court, Chancery Court, and County Clerk have responsibility for the probate records of Lauderdale County.

### *Online Records and Indexes*

- **1779-2008** [Tennessee Wills and Probate Records 1779-2008](#) at [Ancestry](#) (\$)
- **1837-1936** - [Lauderdale County](#) portion of [Tennessee, Probate Court Books, 1795-1927](#) at [FamilySearch](#) - [How to Use this Collection](#); handwritten indexes may be found at the front or back of some volumes.

### *Book Abstracts and Indexes*

- **1837-1861** - Sistler, Byron and Barbara Sistler. *Index to Tennessee Wills & Administrations 1779-1861*. Nashville, Tenn. Byron Sistler & Associates, Inc., 1990. [FHL US/CAN 976.8 P22s](#). Includes an index for probate records.

### *Online Records and Indexes*

- **1779-2008** [Tennessee Wills and Probate Records 1779-2008](#) at [Ancestry](#) (\$)
- **1837-1936** - [Lauderdale County](#) portion of [Tennessee. Probate Court Books, 1795-1927](#) at [FamilySearch](#) - [How to Use this Collection](#); handwritten indexes may be found at the front or back of some volumes.

### *Book Abstracts and Indexes*

- **1837-1861** - Sistler, Byron and Barbara Sistler. *Index to Tennessee Wills & Administrations 1779-1861*. Nashville, Tenn. Byron Sistler & Associates, Inc., 1990. [FHL US/CAN 976.8 P22s](#). Includes an index for probate records.

## Repositories

Lauderdale County Courthouse

100 Court Square

Ripley, TN 38063

Courthouse Phone: 731-635-2561

County Clerk Phone: 731-635-2561

Circuit Court Clerk: 731-635-0101

Register of Deeds: 731-635-2171

Source:

[https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Lauderdale\\_County,\\_Tennessee\\_Genealogy](https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Lauderdale_County,_Tennessee_Genealogy)

## Tennessee State Library and Archives (TSLA)

TSLA has a wealth of information for genealogists. Fact sheets are available for all Tennessee counties.

<https://sos.tn.gov/tsla/pages/genealogical-fact-sheets-about-lauderdale-county>

The fact sheet for Lauderdale counties includes lists of books, microfilm and other materials available. Selected books and microfilm are available via interlibrary loan to Tennessee libraries. Some microfilm reels are available for purchase.

TSLA also has a collection of Tennessee newspapers (see website). Newspapers were published in the towns of Ripley and Halls.

Explore the TSLA website for online materials as well as finding aids, indexes and other resources that may be explored on a visit to the Archives or borrowed via interlibrary loan.

### Tennessee State Library and Archives

1001 Rep John Lewis Way, N

Nashville, TN 37219

615-741-2764 (general); 615-741-7996 (Archives); 615-741-2766 (TSLA Reference Desk or email: [ask@tsla.libanswers.com](mailto:ask@tsla.libanswers.com))

## Other Materials of Interest at TSLA

### Periodicals with Pertinent Information

Genealogical periodicals can contain unique sources and can be local, regional, or statewide. The following periodicals cover this county:

- *Ansearchin' News*: Quarterly magazine of the [Tennessee Genealogical Society](#). For a keyword search, go to the [county index](#). Read previous issues on their [website](#); [FHL Book 976.8 B2a](#).
- *Family Findings*: Quarterly of the [Mid-West Tennessee Genealogical Society](#). For tables of contents and online access to issues, see [TNGenWeb Project](#). Also try this [specialized Google search](#). [FHL US/CAN 976.8 B2f](#).
  - [Volumes 1-10 \(1969-1978\)](#)
  - [Volumes 11-20 \(1979-1988\)](#)

- [Volumes 21-24 \(1989-1992\)](#)
- [Volumes 32-35 \(2000-2003\)](#)
- *West Tennessee Historical Society Papers*: Occasional publication of the [West Tennessee Historical Society](#). [FHL US/CAN Book 976.81 B5w](#). To view Table of Contents and complete articles from 1947 - 2005 see [Shelby County Register of Deeds](#)

## Newspapers

### Historic

Many Tennessee newspapers are filmed and available at the [TSLA](#). Most of these newspapers may be accessed by interlibrary loan to libraries within Tennessee, although there are some newspapers which are not available in or outside of Tennessee. For further information regarding interlibrary loan policies and newspapers not available for interlibrary loan click [here](#). For a list of newspapers available at the archives for Lauderdale County click on the following cities and towns:

- [Halls](#)
- [Ripley](#)
- **1794-1851** - Lucas, Silas Emmett. *Marriages from Early Tennessee Newspapers 1794-1851*. Easley, S.C.: Southern Historical Press, 1978. [FHL 976.8 V2L](#).
- **1847 - 1851** - Smith, Jonathan K.T. *Genealogical Abstracts from Reported Deaths, the Nashville Christian Advocate*. [1847-1914] 10 vols. [Jackson, Tenn.]: J.K.T. Smith, 1997-2003. [FHL US/CAN Books 976.855/N1 V48s 1847-1851](#) ff; digital versions at [David Donahue Memorial: Tennessee Records Repository](#). Website expands upon the publications and includes deaths from the 1830s, 1840s, 1910s and 1920s. (Largely Methodist?)

### Local history:

- Williams, Joseph S. *Old Times in West Tennessee: Reminiscences, Semi-historic, of Pioneer Life and the Early Emigrant Settlers in the Big Hatchie Country*. Memphis, Tenn.: W.G. Cheeney, 1873. [FHL US/CAN Book 976.8 H2wj 1975](#). Digital version available through [FamilySearch Digital Library](#)

Selected Family History Books:

- History of Tennessee From the Earliest Time to the Present: Together With a Historical and a Biographical Sketch of Lauderdale, Tipton, Haywood and Crockett (Goodspeed, 1978)
- Key Corner, the Birthplace of Civilization in West Tennessee (WPA, 1936)
- Lauderdale County (Morris, 2012)
- Lauderdale County From Earliest Times; An Intimate and Informal Account of the Towns and Communities, Its Families and Famous Individuals, Written by Descendants of Its Pioneer Citizens (Peters, 1957) [*name index*]\*
- Lauderdale County's Volunteer 200 Day Project: Celebrate Our Court House, Thursday, June 1, 1995 (1995)
- Old Times in West Tennessee. Reminiscences - Semi-historic - of Pioneer Life and the Early Emigrant Settlers in the Big Hatchie Country. By a Descendent of One of the First Settlers (Williams, 1873)\*
- Pictorial History of Lauderdale County, Tennessee [5 vols.] (Morris, 2009-2014)
- Visions of Lauderdale County, Past and Present (Hellums and McCauley, 1998) [*name index*]

Additional county and community histories can be found at the [Bibliography of Tennessee Local History Sources: Lauderdale County](#). *The items in the bibliography may not all be available at the Tennessee State Library and Archives.* Check local library for holdings or interlibrary loan. Both Google Books and FamilySearch.org have out of copyright books that may be downloadable (or read online)

#### Published Local Records:

- Lauderdale Co., Tenn., Court Minutes, vol. A, 1836-44 (WPA, 1936) [*name index*]
- Lauderdale Co., Tenn., Court Minutes, vol. B, 1844-52 (WPA, 1936)
- Lauderdale Co., Tenn., Wills, Inventories, & Sales, 1837-44, 1844-49 (WPA, 1936)

- Lauderdale County, Tenn., Marriage Register vol. A, 1838-57 & vol. B 1866 (WPA, 1936) [*name index*]
- Lauderdale County, Tennessee, 1840 Census, 1850 Census, and 1850 Mortality Schedule (Davis, 1983) [*surname index*]
- Lauderdale County, Tennessee, Court Minutes, Book D, 1856-1861 (WPA, 1937)
- Lauderdale County, Tennessee, Inventory, Sales Bills, & Wills, 1849-55 (WPA, 1937)
- Lauderdale County, Tennessee Marriages, 1838-1867 (Davis, 1983) [*name index*]\*
- Lauderdale County, Tennessee Marriages, 1867-1886 (Davis, 1983) [*name index*]
- Lauderdale County, Tennessee, Minute Book C, 1852-56 (WPA, 1936)
- Private Acts of Lauderdale County, Tennessee (McIntyre & McCroskey, 1993)

\*available via interlibrary loan from TSLA

#### Published local records

- Lauderdale Co., Tenn., Court Minutes, vol. A, 1836-44 (WPA, 1936) [*name index*]
- Lauderdale Co., Tenn., Court Minutes, vol. B, 1844-52 (WPA, 1936)
- Lauderdale Co., Tenn., Wills, Inventories, & Sales, 1837-44, 1844-49 (WPA, 1936)
- Lauderdale County, Tenn., Marriage Register vol. A, 1838-57 & vol. B 1866 (WPA, 1936) [*name index*]
- Lauderdale County, Tennessee, 1840 Census, 1850 Census, and 1850 Mortality Schedule (Davis, 1983) [*surname index*]
- Lauderdale County, Tennessee, Court Minutes, Book D, 1856-1861 (WPA, 1937)
- Lauderdale County, Tennessee, Inventory, Sales Bills, & Wills, 1849-55 (WPA, 1937)
- Lauderdale County, Tennessee Marriages, 1838-1867 (Davis, 1983) [*name index*]\*

- Lauderdale County, Tennessee Marriages, 1867-1886 (Davis, 1983) [*name index*]
- Lauderdale County, Tennessee, Minute Book C, 1852-56 (WPA, 1936)
- Private Acts of Lauderdale County, Tennessee (McIntyre & McCroskey, 1993)

\*available via interlibrary loan from TSLA

### Other Book Resources

Books searchable by family surname, state or county are available at the My Genealogy Hound website:

<https://www.mygenealogyhound.com/>

### Other Resources of Note:

The GenWeb site project has genealogical information about states and counties. The site(s) is/are manned by volunteers and FREE.

Links for websites:

<https://www.usgenweb.org> (general for USA)

[www.tngenweb.org](http://www.tngenweb.org) (for the state of Tennessee; county selection via this page)

Note: The state GenWeb site is currently undergoing updates. The Lauderdale County page site below is the "old" version. New version is not yet available (as of 31 January 2022).

[www.tngenweb.org/lauderdale-old](http://www.tngenweb.org/lauderdale-old)

The Lauderdale County GenWeb site has information similar to the family search wiki. The site includes information about records and history as well as Bibles, lookups, and churches. You can also post queries and ask for lookups. The list of surnames includes contact persons to help with questions about researching the specific surname in the area. The posted list of Lauderdale County cemeteries has lists of gravestones/burials.

#### Other Resources:

Lauderdale County Public Library  
120 Lafayette Avenue  
Ripley, Tennessee 38063  
Phone: 731-635-1872

List of microfilm and genealogy-related printed copies available at the library. Genealogy room available according to website.

Other libraries in Lauderdale County include the Forked Deer Regional Library and the Halls Public Library. Both have Facebook pages, but no indication of genealogy-related information

Note: The West Tennessee Study Center at the Paul Meek Library located at The University of Tennessee at Martin (in Martin Tennessee, Weakley County) also has genealogy related information. The FamilySearch wiki for Lauderdale County indicates that this Center has information about all counties in west Tennessee; however, the Center's website indicates that the focus is on northwest Tennessee counties.

[https://www.utm.edu/departments/special\\_collections/](https://www.utm.edu/departments/special_collections/)

#### Genealogy/Historical Groups

Genealogy groups in Lauderdale County include the Lauderdale County Historical Society as well as other groups that meet at the Halls Public Library and the Forked Deer Regional Library. All of these groups have

Facebook pages; however, in a review of the pages, the groups are not currently meeting.

#### Current Area Information

County Seat: Ripley

Other populated, incorporated places: Gates, Halls, Henning

Unincorporated places: Arp, Cherry, Durhamville, Fulton, Glimp, Golddust, Orysa

Lauderdale Chamber/Economic Development

123 Jefferson Street

Ripley, TN 38063

Phone: 731-635-9511 or 8463

#### Sources

James Lauderdale

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James\\_Lauderdale](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_Lauderdale)

FamilySearch.org wiki

[https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Lauderdale\\_County,\\_Tennessee\\_Genealogy](https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Lauderdale_County,_Tennessee_Genealogy)

Random Acts of Genealogical Kindness

<https://raogk.org/census-records/tennessee/> [census records]

Tennessee State Library and Archives

<https://sos.tn.gov/tsla/researchers-genealogists>

Fact Pages, Tennessee State Library and Archives

<https://sos.tn.gov/tsla/pages/genealogical-fact-sheets-about-lauderdale-county>

West Tennessee Study Center

[https://www.utm.edu/departments/special\\_collections/](https://www.utm.edu/departments/special_collections/)

