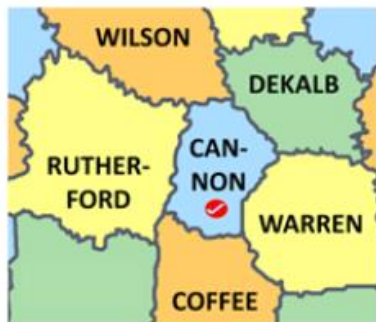


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Geographic Area and County History



Original map copyright 2005 digital-topo-maps.com

Cannon County is named after Tennessee Governor [Newton Cannon](#) (1781–1841). He was an American politician who served as the eighth Governor of Tennessee from 1835 to 1839. He also served several terms in the United States House of Representatives, from 1814 to 1817, and from 1819 to 1823. Cannon was a long-time foe of Andrew Jackson, and spent much of his political career opposing his policies. The county is located in the central area of the state. ([FamilySearch Wiki](#)).

Cannon County was established on January 31, 1836, when the state legislature took portions of Rutherford, Smith, and Warren Counties to create the new county of Cannon, named in honor of Whig Governor Newton Cannon. (Two years later, the legislature added a portion of Wilson County, creating the present county boundaries.) The county's first settlers moved to present-day western Cannon County, around the Readyville and Bradyville areas, during the late 1790s. Hugh P. Brawley operated a grist mill at Brawley Fork as early as 1808.

The first village of any size, however, was Danville, which became the initial county seat. Its name was soon changed to Woodbury to honor Levi Woodbury, the Democratic secretary of the treasury. In 1836 Henry Trott and William Bates laid out new lots for Woodbury, and their plan adapted the earlier linear street plan of Danville into a central courthouse square plan. The present Cannon County Courthouse, built in 1935, features a striking Colonial Revival design by Nashville architect George Waller and is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Other local properties in the National Register are the Houston House, a vernacular Greek Revival-style I-house associated with Democratic Congressman William C. Houston; the Adams House, the last remaining dormitory of the Baptist Female College and the later home of prominent physician Jesse F. Adams; the Wharton House, a vernacular Queen Anne dwelling from the late nineteenth century; and the Readyville Mill, a nineteenth- and twentieth-century grist mill complex.

Woodbury has always served as the county's seat of government and primary town, but it never had a railroad connection and remained largely isolated from major transportation networks until the completion of the original Memphis-to-Bristol Highway (now U.S. Highway 70S) during the late 1920s. The new highway promoted commercial development; many of the historic stores around the town square date to the 1920s and 1930s. As travelers sped through the county on the new highway, they stimulated the already-established market for white oak baskets and wood furniture on sale at stands and shops along the road. Cannon County is now recognized as an important regional center for folk decorative arts. The new road also spurred local leaders, especially Dr. Jesse F. Adams, to create and invest in new businesses like the Good Samaritan Hospital (early 1930s) and the town's first modern factory, the Armour Cheese Plant, in 1935. After World War II, in

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1947, Adams and the Woodbury Lions Club combined forces to convince the Colonial Shirt Corporation to establish a Woodbury factory; a branch factory was later opened in Auburntown. Another key entrepreneur was Selmer Mason Jennings, who used the new highway and his solid business ability to gain a Ford Motor car dealership for the town during the 1920s. Jennings Ford still operates today. Woodbury also is the county's educational center, home to the Laurens Academy and the Baptist Female College during the antebellum era, Woodbury College during the Victorian era, and the public Cannon County High School, which was established in 1920.

Villages in Cannon County include Readyville, Auburntown, Bradyville, and Gassaway. Crisp was a smaller African American village centered around a segregated black school and church.

During the Civil War Cannon County residents raised seven infantry companies for the Confederacy. Union soldiers also came from the county; most served in the Fifth Tennessee Cavalry, which was largely based in Liberty in adjacent DeKalb County. Small skirmishes and reconnaissance movements characterize most of the military activity within the county. Guerrilla warfare also was common. During World War II the maneuvers of the Second Army included parts of Cannon County, and local citizens in Woodbury established a USO center for the soldiers.

Since its creation Cannon County has been Democratic in its political loyalties and has produced two notable party leaders. In the late 1800s and early 1900s William Cannon Houston was the county's most prominent politician. Cannon established the Woodbury newspaper, practiced law, and served in the state legislature as a young man; from 1904 to 1918 he served in the United States Congress and often entertained important southern Democratic leaders at his home on the outskirts of Woodbury. Throughout the mid-1900s Jim Cummings was an influential member of the Tennessee General Assembly. He was first elected to the state legislature in 1929 and stayed there until 1972, except for a four-year stint from 1949 to 1952, when Cummings was secretary of state under Governor Gordon Browning. Cummings was the Speaker of the House during the Eighty-fifth General Assembly. Historian Robert Mason noted that "Mr. Jim" Cummings "evoked the essence of a more gracious, gentler time—of friendly towns and family farms and hills and valleys and country roads." ([Tennessee Encyclopedia](#))

[Cannon County Chamber of Commerce](#)

Record Loss – Cannon County (Family Search)

1934 Courthouse burned and many records were damaged.

- Lack of marriage records: 1836 to 1837

FamilySearch Cannon County [Catalog](#)

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[FamilySearch Digital Books](#) for Cannon County Search Term [Cannon County Tennessee](#)

TnGenWeb Project - [Cannon County](#)

Contact - [Bettye Liberty](#)

Cannon County Historian - Kathryn Bensinger

[Cannon County Tennessee History & Genealogy](#)

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 1838
	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
Land Deeds		County Registrations began 1836
	County Register	County Register of Deeds
	TNGenWeb	Inventories of Estates April 1848- April 1859
List of Microfilmed Cannon County Records	TSLA-PDF	Download PDF
Pension Applications	Tennessee State Archives & Library	County Index to Tennessee Confederate Pension Applications

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Probate Records	Chancery Court	County Registrations began 1836
	TnGenWeb	Wills & Probate
Tennessee Enumeration of Male Voters	Ancestry.com (\$)	Tennessee Enumeration of Male Voters
World War I Veterans	Tennessee State Archives & Library	Research Collection

County Repositories

[Adams Memorial Library - Genealogy](#)
[Cannon County Historical Society](#)
[Auburntown Historical Society](#)

Current Area Information

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

Resources

General

[Tennessee County Database \(TNGS\) - Cannon County](#)
[Cannon County Wiki \(Family Search\)](#)
[Cannon County TN - Genealogy Trails](#)
[Linkpendium - Cannon County](#)
[Tennessee State Library & Archives - Cannon County Facts Sheet](#)
[TSLA-Cannon County Inmates of the Tennessee State Penitentiary 1831-1850](#)
[TSLA-Cannon County Inmates of the Tennessee State Penitentiary 1851-1870](#)
[TSLA Name Index - Cannon County \(Acts of Tennessee 1796-1850\)](#)
[TNGenWeb - Cannon County](#)
[USGenWeb Archives - Cannon County Tennessee](#)
[Tennessee Law, The Early Days](#)
[Cannon Co. TN Genealogy Chat \(FB\)](#)

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Newspapers

Tennessee State Archives & Library

[Check Online Catalog for Cannon County Newspaper Details & Dates Held.](#)

We do not necessarily hold all published issues of the newspapers.

Newspaper.com & Genealogybank.com - None

Chronicling America -

- [1. Tri-county gazette. \[volume\] \(Auburntown, Tenn.\) 1981-19??](#)
- [2. Woodbury news. \(Woodbury, Tenn.\) 1915-191?](#)
- [3. The Woodbury press. \(Woodbury, Tenn.\) 1872-188?](#)
- [4. The Woodbury press. \(Woodbury, Tenn.\) 1899-190?](#)
- [5. The times. \(Woodbury, Tenn.\) 1897-189?](#)
- [6. The Cannon County times. \(Woodbury, Tenn.\) 1932-19??](#)
- [7. Cannon courier. \(Woodbury, Tenn.\) 1905-current](#)
- [8. Cannon courier. \(Woodbury, Tenn.\) 188?-189?](#)

Selected Published County Histories

Tennessee State Archives & Library

Cannon County	Mason, 1982
Cannon County, Tennessee, 1836-1995: History and Families	Cannon County H.S., 1995
Cannon County, Tennessee, A Pictorial History	Cannon County H.S., 1998
Cannon County, 1836-1986: Sesquicentennial, Homecoming '86, Cannon County Good Ole Days	Bank of Commerce, 1986
The Civil War: Cannon County, TN	Murray, 2021
Goodspeed's Cannon County History	1990
History of Cannon County, Tennessee	Mason, 1984
History of Tennessee From the Earliest Time to the Present: Together with a Historical and a Biographical Sketch of Cannon, Coffee, Dekale [sic], Warren	Goodspeed, 1979
History of Woodbury and Cannon County, Tenn.	Brown, 1936
History of Woodbury and Cannon County, Tenn.	Brown, 2012
Life on the Caney Fork	Hayes, 1985

Cannon County Locality Guide (22 February 2024)

Old'uns' Stories Told to Young'uns: Stories of the World War II Era with Stories From the Korean War	Cannon County High School, 2003
Our Boys in The Service: Cannon County Soldiers of World War II	Murray
Prater, Tennessee: The Life and Death of a Community: A History of Reminiscence	Mason, 1996
The War to End All Wars: Cannon County Soldiers in World War I	Murray, 2021

Published Local Records

Tennessee State Archives & Library

1880 Census, Cannon County, Tennessee	Sistler, 1990
Abstract of Cannon County, Tennessee, Will Book A (1836-1895)	Carlson, 1990
Cannon County, Tennessee [1850 census]	Porch, 1974
Cannon County, Tennessee, Bible, Family & Tombstone Records	WPA, 1939
Cannon County, Tennessee, Chancery Court Minutes, 1840-1880	Partlow, 2000
Cannon County, Tennessee, Deed Books [1836-1857]	Partlow, 1998
Cannon County, Tennessee, Marriage Records [1838-1899]	Rogers, 1992
Cannon County, Tennessee, Marriage Records [1850-1866]	WPA, 1937
Cannon County, Tennessee, Marriage Records [1838-1899]	Rogers, 1992
Cannon County, Tennessee, Marriage Records [1899-1950]	Rogers, 199?
Cannon County, Tennessee Minute Book Volume A, 1836-1841	Stacey & Perry, 1994
Cannon County, Tennessee, Will Book [1836-1895]	WPA, 1938
Cannon County, TN Cannon Courier Newspaper Obituaries [vol. 1 2000-2002; vol. 2 2003-2005; vol. 3 2006-2008; vol. 4 2009-2010] (Tate, 2011)	
Cannon County, TN Deaths and Obituaries [vol 1. 1875-1933; vol. 2 1934-1937; vol. 3 1938-1941; vol. 4 1942-1944; vol. 5 1945-1947; vol. 6 1948-1950; vol. 7 1951-1952; vol. 8 1953-1954] (Tate, 20??-)	
Cannon County, TN Marriages, 1838-1873	Sistler, 1985
Name Index to History of Tennessee ... Together with ... Sketch of the Counties of White, Warren, Coffee, DeKalb and Cannon ...	Marsh, 1972
Our Families at Rest in Cherry, Jacksboro, King, Rains Cemeteries	Jones, 1998
Our Loved Ones: A Listing of Tombstones and Unmarked Graves in Cannon County, Tennessee	Lewis, 199?
Private Acts of Cannon County, Tennessee	McIntyre, 1984
Tennessee, Records of Cannon County: General Index to Deeds [1836-1860]	WPA, 1939
Tombstone Records of Cannon County Tennessee	Lewis, 1998

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Selected Manuscripts Material

Tennessee State Archives & Library

First Baptist Church Records. Woodbury, 1844-1971 (Microfilm Manuscript #514, 1 reel)*
Joseph Marion Dixon Cates Papers, 1846-1942*
Margaret Travis Gray Genealogical Materials: Travis and Related Families, 1790-2001 (Microfilmed Manuscript #1779)*
Woodbury Lodge No. 235, Free and Accepted Masons Records. Cannon County, 1859-1873 (Microfilm Manuscript #563, 1 reel)*

Maps

- [TDOT Map of Cannon County](#)
- [Cannon County - 1888](#)
- [Cannon County Highways - 1965](#)
- [TnGenWeb Project - Maps Our Ancestors Followed](#)

Cemeteries

- [Cannon County Cemeteries - Find-a Grave](#)
- [Cannon County Cemeteries - USGenWeb](#)
- [Cannon County Cemeteries - Genealogy Trails](#)
- [Cannon County Cemeteries - TNGenWeb \(Cemetery & Burial Records\)](#)

Bibliography

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

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

Library Titles	Author / Date	TSLA	GRH&GC	MPL
5 County association: Cannon, Dekalb, Van Buren, Warren, White: promoting progress.	1974	Y		
A survey of the legal needs of the poor in Rutherford & Cannon counties, TN.	Houston, Gary B., 1984	Y		
Abstract of Cannon County, Tennessee will book A (1836-1895) / abstracted by Gladys Carlson.	Carlson, Gladys, 1990		Y	Y
Biographical directory, TN General Assembly, 1796-1969 (Cannon County, Preliminary #19). Nashville, TSLA	1970	Y		
Cannon County cousins: Shirleys and Meltons	Bumpus, Anne Shirley, 1986		Y	

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Cannon County folk artists & craftsmen, a directory: an arts project.	Cannon County RAD Com., 1987	Y		
Cannon County general index to deeds.			Y	
Cannon County Historical Society Publications. v.1	1977	Y		
Cannon County index to will books & wills, 1836-1895.			Y	
Cannon County, 1980-1987: an economic analysis.	1988	Y		
Cannon County, Tennessee Chancery court minutes, 1840-1880.	Partlow, Thomas E., 2003		Y	
Cannon County, Tennessee deed books A-L, 1836-1857.	Partlow, Thomas E., 2003		Y	
Cannon County, Tennessee marriage records. Signal Mountain, Tennessee: Mountain Press, [1992?].	Rogers, Helen L., 1992		Y	
Cannon County, Tennessee minute book.	WPA		Y	
Cannon County, Tennessee, deeds [microform]				Y
Cannon County, Tennessee, marriage records [microform]				Y
Cannon County, Tennessee, wills [microform]				Y
Cannon County, TN marriages, 1838-1873	Sistler, Byron & Barbara, 1985			Y
Cannon County.	Mason, Robert L., 1982		Y	
Cannon County. MSU Press, 1982. 134 pp.	Mason, Robert L.	Y		
Cemeteries of Trousdale County, Tennessee: with added genealogical data	Scott, Betty M., 1996			Y
Folk tales of Cannon County.	Mason, Robert L., 1977	Y		
Goodspeed's history of TN (Cannon County, pp. 854-860, 987-992).	Goodspeed, 1887.	Y		
Henry Hoover, Cannon County craftsman.	Holland, Ruth A., 1984	Y		
History of Cannon County schools: a project of the Cannon County Retired		Y		
History of Cannon County, TN. Woodbury, Cannon County Hist. Soc.	Mason, Robert L., 1984	Y		
History of Tennessee: from the earliest time to the present: together with an historical and a biographical sketch of Cannon, Coffee, Dekale [i.e. Dekalb], Warren, White Counties, besides a valuable fund of notes, original observations, reminiscences, etc., etc.	Goodspeed Publishers, 1979		Y	Y
History of the Duggin and related families of Cannon County, Tennessee	Butler, E. Dean, 1979		Y	Y
History of Woodbury & Cannon County, TN.	Brown, Sterling S., 1936	Y		Y

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Hoover-Beeson rockshelter, 40CN4, Cannon County, TN. TN Arch. Soc. Misc. Paper #9	Butler, Brian M., 1971	Y		
Index to Tennessee county court records. [Memphis, TN]: [Tennessee Genealogical Society], 1971.	WPA, 1971		Y	
I've seen everything but money. Woodbury, Cannon County Hist. Soc., 1978.	Bowen, Beecher., 1978	Y		
Jesse & Laura: a story of the lives of Dr. & Mrs. J.F. Adams of Woodbury, TN.	Holland, Ruth A., 1986	Y		
Land grant genealogy: North Carolina warrants, surveys & surveyor plats, 1779-1804.	Masters, Jack, 2011		Y	
Manufacturing milk producers in Cannon County, TN. UT thesis, 1968. 134 pp.	Glenn, Clayton F., 1968	Y		
Mrs. The country doctor & his people, 1910-1923.	Helsley, Wilford V., 1983	Y		
Teachers' Association.	Woodbury, Cannon County Hist. Soc., 1990	Y		
The Goodspeed histories of Cannon, Coffee, DeKalb, Warren and White counties. With biographical sketches and an aboriginal map of Tennessee.	Goodspeed Publishers, 1972		Y	Y
Upper Cumberland researcher. Cookeville, Tennessee	Upper Cumberland Genealogical Association, 1976		Y	