

**Claribel Henning Phillips  
(1932-1997)  
& the Hancock County, KY Archives**

By Jerry Long



**Hancock Clarion, Hawesville, KY, 14 August 1997, p.8:**



Claribel H. Phillips, 65, of Lewisport died Wednesday, Aug. 6, 1997, at Heartland Villa in Lewisport. She was born in Hancock County, retired as founder of the Hancock County Archives and was a member of New Chapel Methodist Church.

She was a Kentucky Colonel and was honored by the Hancock County Historical Society as Hancock County Historian of the Year in 1991. She was a coordinator for the Literacy Council and served on the Southwire Community Advisory Board. Her husband, James R. Phillips, died in 1987.

Survivors include two daughters, Vicki Brooks of Lewisport and Enola Vaught of Evanston, Ind.; four grandchildren, Dustin Wilkerson, John Brooks, Jr., Lisa Crask, and Jeff Brooks; and four great-grandchildren.

Services were Saturday at Taylor-Raymond-Spear Funeral Home with Rev. J. Alton Lawhorn officiating. Burial was in Lewisport Cemetery.

The family requests that expressions of sympathy take the form of donations to either Hancock County Historical Society or Hancock Genealogy Society.



**Hancock Clarion, Hawesville, KY, 14 August 1997, p.8:**

A tribute to Claribel Phillips

Dear Editor:

Hancock County has lost another great citizen, Claribel Phillips. Our community has truly been blessed because of her life.

Her life began in her beloved Troy Bend. She grew up during the Great Depression, lost her mother when she was a small child but somehow she kept her smile and positive attitude throughout her life. A

Although I had known her since I was a child, we became more acquainted during the years while I served as County Judge-Executive. Claribel lobbied to save the old county records that had been moved to the new County Administration Building during the renovation of the courthouse. Her concern for the priceless records moved the Fiscal Court to action. The Hancock County Archives were created to preserve the county records from the formation of Hancock County until 1900. The County Clerk remains responsible for all current records. Many counties lost their records during the Civil War or to fires. Hancock County, because of Claribel, has all of its records.

Claribel has helped many families trace their roots. She was the founder of the Hancock County Genealogical Society. She also helped many people to learn to read by serving as coordinator of the Literacy Council.

Claribel lost her beloved husband, Jim Phillips, in 1987 and fought cancer for over nine years. She was a dedicated mother and grandmother.

The Hancock County Historical Society honored her by naming her Historian of the Year in 1991. Most recently the Hancock Fiscal Court named the Archives in honor of Claribel.

I would be remiss if I did not say thank you to Claribel for everything she did for the people of Hancock County. Our county is better because of her.

Very truly yours,  
Jim Fallin



**Hancock Clarion, Hawesville, KY, 14 August 1997, p.6:**

**Claribel Phillips leaves a legacy of historical records preservation**

By Lydia Carrico

Without the spirited efforts of Claribel H. Phillips to preserve Hancock County's oldest legal documents, researching the area's history would be a tangled web of crisscrossed referencing of family bibles and personal documents. Phillips, 65, died from cancer on Wednesday, Aug. 6, at Heartland Villa in Lewisport, leaving behind a legacy of historical preservation.

Founder of the Hancock County Archives, she was instrumental in preserving the county's earliest history, from its beginnings in 1829 to 1900. And she assisted the research of records and coordinated the effort to transfer county records to microfiche.

"Claribel was dedicated to helping Hancock County citizens understand their roots and its importance in its formation. She spent many, many hours in helping families do research and help preserve county records," said Jim Fallin, former Hancock County Judge/Executive.

Phillips describes the shape of county records in one of her memoirs: "Our county records were scattered in card-board boxes in many places in the county. These records; were stored in the

jail, the attic of the old court house, county road department garage and other buildings that were used by the county."

She wrote that the records at the road department were in the worse shape. They had been stored on a dirt floor and moisture from the ground and a subsequent fire had nearly destroyed them.

The records were later stored in 400 acid free storage boxes and moved to the third floor of the old court house where researchers could access them, according to Phillips' memoirs.

The birth of the Hancock County Archives came after Phillips petitioned the court for a permanent location.

Phillips wrote of her first year as curator: "My first year (1982-83) as Curator, saw me knee deep in sorting box after box of records. Due to the 2 and 1/2 years of un-supervised access to the records, they were so mixed up that it was like starting over again."

To honor her accomplishments, Hancock County Fiscal Court presented Phillips with a plaque one month before she died, dedicating the archives in her name.

"Her eyes just lit up and she kept saying, 'very nice, very nice,'" said her daughter Vicki Brooks.

In the early 1980s, Phillips approached fiscal court with her concern over the county's oldest records. Many counties lost their oldest pre-Civil War records in fires. Phillips recognized the uniqueness of Hancock County's records and strove to maintain their existence.

To achieve her goal, she founded the Hancock County Archives in the early 1980s. Her perseverance was evident in the fact that Hancock County was the only county, at that time, to employ a full-time archivist.

It didn't take long before the state recognized her zeal. Through her efforts, the Kentucky Historic Confederation held its annual meeting at the court house at which time the archives were recognized for its contributions.

Her efforts were also recognized by the Hancock County Historical Society which named her Historian of the Year in 1991.

Her interest in history wasn't limited to only the county's. She was also founder of the local genealogical society and wrote a regular periodical for its members.

She was also coordinator for the Literacy Council and served on the Southwire Community Advisory Board.

Phillips was first diagnosed with cancer 13 ½ years ago, her daughter said. She went into remission and, up until 2 ½ years ago, was cancer free.

She was diagnosed again in April.

"Claribel was a very gentle, loving and caring person. She was the most dedicated person I have ever known," said George Lee Gibbs who now works at the archives.



**Hancock Clarion, Hawesville, KY, 25 December 1997:**

Claribel Phillips recognized for her  
dedication in preserving county's records

By Lydia Carrico

Claribel Phillips may have started the literacy program in Hancock County, but one word that wasn't in her vocabulary was "quitter." She not only led the crusade to teach adults to read, she also is remembered as being the county's first and founding archivist.

Phillips, who died last August, was recognized for her work during a dedication ceremony Friday morning in the archives office at the county court house.

A plaque commemorating her commitment was presented to her two daughters, Vicky Brooks and Enola Vaught, and now hangs in the archives located on the top floor of the court house.

"If you had an interest in family history or county records, she would stop what she was doing and she would help," said Jim Fallin, executive director of the Hancock County Industrial Foundation and who was also instrumental in establishing the county's archives.

Mary Gibbs, who is the current curator along with her husband George, organized the dedication ceremony. Mary Gibbs earned her GED through the literacy program that Phillips began. That's how she became interested in the county archives, she said.

She collected over \$900 from area businesses and industries to finance the ceremony and purchase the plaque which bears Phillips' picture.

During the Civil War, many court houses across the state burned, Fallin said. But Hancock County was fortunate enough to have its court house in tact, along with many of its records.

Phillips recognized the value of those records and in the early 1980s petitioned fiscal court for help in preserving the records.

Because of Phillips' determination, the county's oldest marriages, wills and deeds records have been preserved.

From 1982 until a stroke in 1995, she acted as curator of the archives, the first in the state with its own full-time archivist, Fallin said.

"All of that is because of her vision, her dedication and her dogged determination and tenacity," Fallin said. "Everyone in this community owes a great debt to Claribel Phillips."



Mary Gibbs, present archivist for Hancock County, presents a plaque in commemoration of Claribel Phillips, founder and first archivist, to Phillips' two daughters, Vicky Brooks (in middle) and Enola Vaught.



**Hancock Clarion, Hawesville, KY, 6 April 1995:**

**Claribel Phillips credited with preserving Hancock's history**

By Sonya L. Dixon

Historian extraordinaire. Archivist. Genealogist. If you mention Claribel Phillips in Hancock County, those are the descriptions you will hear.

Mrs. Phillips has worked diligently to preserve the history of her home county, despite diminishing funding for the county's archives and a battle with her health. Most recently her preservation work has had to fall into the hands of local volunteers. A stroke in early January has placed Claribel under continued nursing care. However, according to her family, she is fighting back and wants to be back on the third floor of the Hancock Courthouse.

Claribel was named county archivist when the fiscal court, under the direction of then Judge/Executive Jim Fallin, began the renovation of the courthouse. The court became aware of the fact that the county had managed to maintain records since its birth in 1829. "Hancock County is fortunate that since our county was created in 1929, it has not experienced a major fire that destroyed records," Fallin said.

When the restoration began, the Kentucky Department of Archives made the county aware of the treasure it held in its records. Those dated prior to 1900 were transferred to microfiche, but the others had to be maintained.

Fallin approached the fiscal court with this prospect: that Claribel be named as the county's first archivist. Who else would organize and maintain the records with as much diligence and care? With her help, Hancock County would be the first in the state to establish an archive and staff it with a record keeper. She jumped in with determination, organizing those that were in disarray and salvaging others to create one of the most thorough archives in the state of Kentucky.

Since that time, Claribel, in her dedication to Hancock County and its roots, has aided numerous people with research and worked diligently to maintain the records.

Funding for the archives was eventually reduced, and Claribel's duties were split between the newly created Literacy Council and the archives.

She had been instrumental in the creation of the Literacy Council, a group dedicated to educating local citizens unable to read.

She was to serve part time in each capacity, but managed somehow to give each her full attention, 100 percent of the time.

She organized tutoring programs, planned fundraisers and worked with students individually to decrease illiteracy in the area and provide everyone the opportunity to learn to read.

Mary Gibbs began as a Literacy Council student and became a pupil of the archives as well.

After completing the reading program, Mary and her husband, George, continued to work with Claribel and volunteered in the archives. The two have picked up the duties, but miss her advice, assistance and immense knowledge of the records. "Many call and ask for her," Mary said. "Two or three times a day."

Dorothy Watkins, a local historian, has worked with Claribel on a number of projects. She and other volunteers are working to assure the archives are maintained and research conducted in the archivist's absence. "She is the archives," Watkins said. "I couldn't say enough. I can't say enough. There aren't enough words to describe Claribel."

"She is a true friend of history and historical preservation," Fallin said. "Anyone interested in Hancock County history has worked with Claribel and knows that she cares for those records and nurtures them. The archives are of real quality for Hancock County, and that has been because of one person: Claribel Phillips."

Claribel was honored for her efforts when she was named Historian of the Year by the Hancock County Historical Society. As her love of family history grew, she became a founder of the county's first genealogical society.

The group still flourishes today, aiding others in tracing family lines and publishing numerous booklets and information to assist them in their search.

Claribel fought cancer and won, but most recently has been stifled by a serious stroke, Fallin said. Claribel's daughter, Enola Vaught explained that her mother had undergone surgery to unblock her carotid artery at Owensboro-Daviess County Hospital on Jan. 10.

She survived the initial surgery, but small mini-strokes followed until during the second surgery she suffered a major one.

Mrs. Phillips was transferred to Mercy Hospital where she underwent some rehabilitation, Enola said. On Feb. 17, she was moved to Heartland Villa.

"She's making some progress," Enola said. The stroke halted her memory and paralyzed her right side. However, her memory and spirit are returning, Vaught said. "We hope she will return home in several months." Claribel is receiving continued care at Heartland Villa in Lewisport. Her two daughters, Vicky Brooks and Enola, visit with her regularly. Enola anticipates that her mother will be under the supervised care of a nurse when she finally returns home.

"It's good she's in Lewisport because of the number of friends she has there. So many visit," Claribel Phill

She noted her admiration for her mother and the role she has played in preserving local history. "She likes to help people and loves family research. She eats and breathes it," Vaught said.

Watkins and Claribel have worked together on a number of projects. They have compiled the 1880 Census and other publications.



### **Hancock Clarion, Hawesville, KY, 18 April 1991, p.1:**

#### **Claribel honored – Historian of the Year**

Claribel Phillips, Hancock County's Archivist, was added to a growing list of county residents recognized for their interest in preserving Hancock County history. She was named 1991 Historian of the Year at the annual Hancock County Historical Society banquet at the high school Monday, April 15. Former county judge/executive Jim Fallin was master of ceremonies for the occasion.

The crowd of 202 persons heard Jeanne Suchanek, of the Kentucky Historical Society in Frankfort, pay tribute to Mrs. Phillips for her service to the community in history-related matters and the cause of literacy. Mrs. Phillips is not only the first county archivist in the state but is coordinator of the local literacy program. She spoke with The Clarion about her involvement with old county court documents, an interest that is shared by few persons.



Historic occasion – Hancock County Archivist Claribel Phillips beams, after being named Historian of the Year at the Historical Society's annual banquet Monday night. From left, are: Master of Ceremonies Jim Fallin, who presented the plaque, guest speaker Jeanne Suchanek, Mrs. Phillips and her grandson, Dusty, and daughters, Enola and Vicki.

"I won't say that I was the only person in the county interested in preserving those records," she said. "Dorothy Watkins got me interested in genealogical research, starting in 1978 or 1979. We went to the treasurer's office in the administration building to look through the old records and couldn't find anything. I asked Judge Fallin if there was anything that could be done to sort out the records and index them to make them easier to use. I went before fiscal court in February with a proposal to do the job. Judge Fallin gave me his support, as well as Mrs. Watkins and some members of the court. The position was created in July, at the beginning of the fiscal year. The job has always been 40 hours, 5 days a week, but the first year or two I had to scrounge for the most basic materials to work with. Then the court budgeted operating funds. The archives got air conditioning and heating in 1982-83. The average number of visitors has been 1,500 to 1,900 a year, including the archives and the literacy program, which shares the space."

The archivist explained how she started working with the Hancock County Literacy program. The literacy council was formed in 1983 and the program was staffed by volunteers. Only the coordinator received compensation for maintaining records and training tutors.

"When my husband, Jim, died in 1987, I had time to work and needed additional income," she said. "The literacy program had been in existence for about 5 years and was going nowhere. It had served 15 persons since 1983, had 2 people in the program, few records were kept and there were 2 tutors. Judge Danny Boling knew that a county coordinator was to be hired. The literacy council had disbanded and was getting ready to refund state money to the Kentucky Literacy Commission, but decided to re-organize and try one more time. The court hired me in May, 1988, to start with the beginning of the fiscal year July 1, to turn the program around. We have 27 students this year. We have helped an average of 18 to 20 students every year since 1988. The program has 27 trained, active tutors, but we've trained more than that."

The Historian of the Year became active in the Hancock County Genealogy Society in 1984, and edits its quarterly newsletter, *Forgotten Pathways*. "The newsletter catalogs documents for researchers and excerpts from the first minutes book of the county court. The purpose is the

preservation of county history . . . we stay away from family histories," Mrs. Phillips explained. "We research such things as murder cases and coroner's inquests; sometimes that's the only information about a person. Lots of ai people from all 50 states write to request information. Sometimes it takes months to respond to some letters. . . it depends on how much information they ask for."

"During one of the first state meetings I attended, the officials said that in 10 years every county in Kentucky would have a computer connection to every area in the country for the exchange of court records and family history information. I said that was a pipe-dream, and still say it won't happen. There are still fewer than 10 county archives in the state."

The most recent responsibility Mrs. Phillips has accepted is membership on the Hancock County Tourism Committee, about 2 years ago. The committee has prepared a special brochure to stimulate tourist interest in visiting Hancock County.

Mrs. Phillips, a resident of Lewisport, is the 10th recipient of the annual award.



**Hancock Clarion, Hawesville, KY, 23 August 1990, p.13:**

**War or literacy, Claribel Phillips will be found in the front ranks**

By Leo Basham

"Bombs were going off all over the city. There were shootings in the street every day. They warned us to stay away from windows and open doorways because of the danger of getting hit by stray bullets." Claribel Phillips told her story in a calm, matter-of-fact tone of voice.

Somehow that part of her story didn't seem to fit the warm, grandmother-figure as she sat in the Hancock County Archives room surrounded by shelves and piles of book and records, recounting events that she experienced years ago. But those events were, nonetheless, part of Claribel's life story.

Her expression displayed sadness as she described in greater detail some horrors she witnessed during her stay in Cuba during the revolution years of 1957 and 1958-- details that might have permanently traumatized another person - - one not as spirited, one not as strong as Claribel.

Claribel Phillips is the daughter of the late Charles William and Flora Bell (Husk) Henning. She is the mother of two daughters, Vicki Brooks and Enola Gay Wilkerson. Claribel has four grandchildren who range in age from 9 to 22.

Her late husband, Jim Phillips, was a re-dry specialist for a U.S owned tobacco corporation in Havana Cuba during the early days of the Cuban revolution. Upon returning to Hancock County from Cuba, Jim worked at American Olean Tile Company until he was disabled by respiratory illness and crippling arthritis.

Claribel agreed to share some elements of her life story only on the grounds that her adventures be told against a background of her present day existence. That condition indicated - - almost demanded - - her presence in the Hancock County Archives room.

We rode the elevator as high as it could go in the old Hancock County Courthouse; then climbed the steep steps to the Archives Room - - which she fondly referred to as the "Registered Historic Nuthouse". If she hadn't told me I could have guessed that Claribel had a grandson in grade school. His drawings hung here and there throughout the room - - testimony to the closeness between "Dusty" and his grandmother Claribel.



"I'm the County Archivist," she announced. Then she began a "story of creation" of what is now known as the Hancock County Archives.

It all started when Claribel became interested in genealogy. "I was working in Owensboro," she began. "I was bitten by the genealogy bug. I'd spend my lunch periods at the library. I photocopied everything I could find with the surnames I was looking for. I got a lot of good information, and became more and more interested in the craft."

Soon, Claribel was searching records in Hancock County in what was then known as the Historical Society room. She and Jim Fallin, who was at the time Hancock County Judge-Executive, shared sentiments that the records were in sad shape. Jim told her of his hopes that someday the old records could be "... straightened up and put in usable condition." Claribel recognized the comment as a challenge. "What do we need to do to accomplish that?" was her reply.

"It took about two years before the fiscal court reached agreement on a proposal to establish the archives and budget money for that purpose. The archives was established and I went to work July 1, 1982," Claribel announced, a note of triumph in her voice and a big smile on her face. "But," she modestly stressed, "I couldn't have done it without Jim Fallin's guidance through the project. I've been here since that time as the County Archivist."

"Claribel is the Archives," said her friend Dorothy Watkins. "We called ourselves the 'bats in the belfry' when we worked together in the attic of the old Courthouse," Dorothy confided. "I worked with her about 5 or 6 months; but 'C.B.' made the Archives."

Another friend and sometimes Claribel's co-worker, Shirley Potter, reported: "Claribel is very devoted to her work in genealogy and the Literacy Council. There probably wouldn't be an Archives or Genealogical Society if it hadn't been for the early work Claribel did to get things started."

Claribel will testify that county budget allocations are not "forever and ever." Funds for the County Archives dwindled to the extent that she is presently devoting less time to that task. However, Claribel has a knack of being where she is needed; and equally adept at meeting the demands of that need. That's about what happened when Hancock County Literacy Council needed someone to harmonize the efforts of those involved with the literacy program.

Claribel's enthusiasm for her activities with the Literacy Council ranked right along with her love for the archives. Her work for the Literacy Council involves coordinating the needs of students with the availability of tutors, as well as a myriad of lesser responsibilities. The words "urgency" and "essential" leap into her expression when she discusses the need for stamping out illiteracy in Kentucky.

Claribel noted that at the time she started with the Literacy Council there were two active certified tutors and one student enrolled in the program. She continued: "The Council was reorganized and expanded. We now have 28 trained tutors. Over a period of one year, from July 1, 1988 to July 1, 1989, we had a total of 31 students enrolled in the program. Of these, we helped five to get their GED certification. More recently, since July '89 to present, we have added another 27 students."

Claribel noted that guiding the students on to receive the GED certificate was ". . . going beyond the scope of the Literacy program; but the tutors are dedicated. They will go that extra mile. They spend hours studying manuals in order to learn how best to help the students."

At a State conference in Louisville in September, 1989, Claribel accepted a plaque in behalf of the Hancock County Literacy Council for "Outstanding Program Performance". Claribel revealed, "I'm as proud of this award as if it were my own." At this point, as she had done many

times during the narration of her story - - Claribel began naming names of many persons with whom she shared the honor of serving the Hancock County Literacy program.

Claribel makes time for other scholarly activities. Among the books she has already published are: "1860 Hancock County Census" and "Lewisport Sesquicentennial Celebration". Book ready to print are; "History of New Chapel Methodist Church" and "Hancock County 1820/1840 Census."



Claribel Phillips in the Hancock County Archives



**Hancock Clarion, Hawesville, KY, 16 November 1989:**



Family's Guests – Dusty Wilkerson and Claribel Phillips meet Governor Wallace Wilkinson and his First wife, Martha, at the Kentucky Literacy Day reception in Frankfort recently.



**The Bulletin of the Kentucky Historical Society, February 1987, Vol. 13, No. 1, Kentucky Historical Society, Frankfort, KY, p.2:**



Among those taking part in last November's KHS sesquicentennial celebration were the board members of the Historical Confederation of Kentucky. In attendance were (l. to r.) James Powers, Joe Nickell, Kay Harbison, Barbara May, Claribel Phillips, Thomas Riley, Gwynette Sullivan, Brian Harney, George Ann Carpenter, Frank Levstik, and William B. Chescheir.



**Hancock Clarion, Hawesville, KY, 10 July 1986:**

Archives cut back... not closed, judge Danny Boling says

"We have no intention of closing the county archives," Hancock Judge/Executive Danny Boling declared this week, as rumors to the contrary circulated. "The court's position was not to close the archives, but to cut back on the hours because the county needs to save money. We hope we can get a sufficient number of volunteers to come in and help keep it open. We certainly invite interested persons to volunteer their services to make the records there accessible to visitors."

Judge Boling recalled that Mrs. Claribel Phillips accepted the position of archivist with the understanding it would not be a full-time position; at least the court was under that impression.

Some time after she started working, the court approved some extra time to index documents and file them in an orderly manner. Mrs. Phillips initially estimated the work could take from 6 weeks to 3 months. She later secured permission to apply for heritage council grants to buy archival materials and equipment. By the time the 1985-86 fiscal year budget was formulated, the job had evolved into a full-time position.

"The court decided to cut the hours as a purely cost-cutting measure," Judge Boling declared. "We are aware there are a great many people who would like to see the archives hours remain as they have been. We would like the people to understand that the time has come when the county can't provide everything that everybody would like."



HANCOCK COUNTY ARCHIVES  
Old Court House  
Hawesville, Kentucky 42348  
1986

Hancock County was formed from the counties of Breckinridge, Daviess, and Ohio in 1829. We are one of the thirteen counties out of one hundred and twenty that have not had the records or courthouse destroyed at some time in the history of the county.

We are proud to be the first county in the state to establish a County Archives for the preservation of old records, and to do so with county money. Early in 1982 the Fiscal Court elected to establish the Archives. One person was to be employed as curator of records, and work with people who need help with their research.

Hancock County is most fortunate to have nearly all of our county records dating from 1829. These include bits and pieces of original old papers used to later record in the county records books.

For years these valuable records were scattered in many places here in town, such as the Jail, County Warehouse, the Attic of the Courthouse and etc. Until the court established the Archives, employed a full time Archivist to work with the old records, only a few local people had the time to spend looking through box after box of papers trying to locate much needed information. Nothing had been sorted, most were not indexed, and finding anything was nearly impossible. The various offices of the county had neither the personal or the time to look in several buildings for the information often requested by researchers.

Now with the establishment of the Archives, all such request are forward here. As time permits I will try to locate the information needed, and if we know of someone who is researching the same family, we send names and addresses with the hopes that they will be able to help each other.

Old papers are being sorted and filed. Cross indexing is being done. But one must remember this is a slow and tedious undertaking.

The sad thing is since this is a county funded position, the court did not establish the Archives permanently. They were not sure if this would be something that would be a public service that would be used, needed, or wanted, and because of the economy it is set up on a yearly basis and renewed each year.

Since that time, through letters from researchers like yourself, the court was made aware of the need of a County Archives. Now we have a new administration. They are not aware of this

need. With less money in the county budget to work with, and their not knowing of the need, it is important to make them aware of the growing interest in family research. Also, they should know that their efforts to preserve these valuable old records is appreciated.

If you have an interest in the early settlers or the history of our county, would you please help by writing letters to Judge Boling and Members of the Fiscal Court applauding the action taken by our county in establishing the Hancock County Archives, and the preservation of the rich heritage of our 157 year old county.

Many of these valuable old records are in very bad shape and will soon be lost and gone forever if they are not properly cared for now.

If you feel the Archives is a Public Service that should be continued, and a worth while project, please do what you can to help keep it open.

Now with a new administration and with a decrease in the monies received to run our county, we cannot help but worry that the Archives may have to be closed permanently. Without your support this could happen. Won't you please take the time today to write to one or more of the following in support of the Archives:

Judge Executive Danny Boling, Administration Building, Hawesville, Kentucky 42348

Members of the Fiscal Court, Administration Building, Hawesville, Kentucky 42348

Hancock Clarion, Hawesville, Kentucky 42348, ATTN: Don Wimmer, Editor

Hancock County Archives, Old Court House, Hawesville, Kentucky 42348

Members of the Fiscal Court names are: Robert Kelly Ogle; Wally Harris; Jack McCaslin; and Delbert Leo Basham.

Thank you for your support. Sincerely,  
Claribel Phillips, Archivist  
Hancock County Archives



**Hancock Clarion, Hawesville, KY, 26 June 1986, p.2:**

LETTERS

HAVE YOU HEARD THE LATEST?

The Archives has been cut to 20 hours a week! To some of us taxpayers, when we saw he old records being protected for the first time and the old Courthouse standing tall (thanks to Judge Fallin), we figured we could go along with just about anything. But this.

We were all very proud because our Archives was the first to be established in the State of Kentucky and received an award to attest to this fact. All the other counties looked to us, Hancock County, for inspiration, help and guidance.

Because of the Archives, we now had somewhere to leave our old Bibles and records to be kept safe for future generations. Frankfort has kept a close eye on the progress and achievements of the Archives and shown their gratitude with a grant of \$3,000 three years ago, and \$2,777 for this year. Also this year, there has been over \$355 in books and microfilm donated, besides numerous private collections, Bibles and family records. There have been over 1,930 people to use this room from the month of July '85 thru April '86. About 250 since April. Over 6,838 have been to visit and/or do research since our opening four years ago. Over 32 states (Washington, D.C.

included) and four foreign countries have been represented by these numerous visitors. There has been more than six school tours, grade school and high school, alike, with about 250 students in attendance.

When Claribel Phillips, (the Archivist) was off October, 1984 thru March, 1985, due to illness, Alice Tindle and I personally kept the Archives open. I worked 5 hours a day, all day on Friday and ½ day on Saturdays. Alice was right along there with me, although we had homes, and full-time jobs, we worked to see that the Archives was not closed, with NO COST (on our part) to the county.

I approached some of the politicians before the elections and asked them their stand on the Archives, and was assured by each that the Archives and all it stood for was safe. Now, a few men, that we the trusting voters put into office are taking away what means so much to so many.

Dorothy Watkins



**Hancock Clarion, Hawesville, KY, 10 July 1986, p.2:**

LETTERS

7July, 1986  
Donn Wimmer  
Hancock Clarion  
Hawesville, Ky.

Dear Editor:

I would like to express my disappointment in the fiscal court's recent decision to cut in half the hours of the county archivist. I believe this not only greatly lessens services provided but also jeopardizes the work and accomplishments already achieved and threatens to destroy a novel and pioneer program in records management and preservation that has brought recognition as well as new funding to the county.

I am not a tax paying citizen of Hancock County but I feel like the county is my second home. My grandmother's family, the Youngs, came from here and since 1980 I have spent countless hours in the county, researching its records and visiting cousins. I have visited over 100 residents of the county and in talking to them all had nothing but praise for the efforts and purposes of the archives. When I first visited the Hancock County Courthouse about the only records available for research were the marriage, deed and wills. Some of the records were in Frankfort, others were stored in various areas in Hawesville, in one storage room books and loose documents were in total disarray on the floor, and other records simply had disappeared or were thrown out. Since the creation of the archives all of the available records of the county have been sought out and stored in the archives. There they have been sorted, organized, and steps taken to preserve them.

Thousands have been assisted by the archivist both in person and by mail. In addition to the county records stored there many other records and sources relating to the history of the county and its people are also available there through the efforts of the archivist. Papers, books and microfilm of records such as census, newspapers, cemetery, bibles, diaries, family histories, etc.,

have all been obtained at no cost to the county; they have either been contributed or purchased through funds donated or from the Genealogical Society of Hancock County. The published books and microfilm alone would cost a county library several thousand dollars. Repairs to the room, lighting, heating and cooling, shelving, storage boxes, microfilm reader, copying machine have all been added to the archives since it began.

I have done research in thirty-two courthouses and if I were asked six years ago to rank them in terms of record management and preservation I would have placed Hancock County near the bottom, now I would without question place it at the top of the list. Today the archives is something the county can truly be proud of, the first of its kind, a repository, a learning center, a stimulus for the continued preservation of our history and much more.

I believe the need and support for the archives is there. The Genealogical Society of Hancock County, a non profit organization created in association with the archives to facilitate the preservation of records and family and county history, now has a membership of over 360 about half of whom are tax paying citizens of the county. Also the interest is reflected in the sizeable audience and response generated by the columns of Mr. Jack Foster and Dorothy Watkins published in your newspaper. I will end by asking: Is it not necessary for any growing community to spend some of its revenue on certain non profit oriented services that are motivated by and aimed at achieving the long range goals of improving the community and building civic pride, which in turn facilitate continuing growth and economic development.

Sincerely,  
Jerry Long  
Owensboro, Ky.

[Note by Jerry Long: I began researching my family history in 1979. This journey took me to Hancock County, where one of my grandmothers was from. I became a frequent visitor to the Hancock County Courthouse. At that time the only older records open to the researcher were the marriage, deed, mortgage and will records. Other records were scattered at several locations in Hawesville. Some were in the new administration building in a room that was kept locked. The room was considered the Historical Society's room and admittance could only be accessed in the presence of a Historical Society member. I became a member of the society in hopes of gaining permanent access to the room.

About the same time I began my exploration into the history of Hancock County Claribel Phillips also became an enthusiastic genealogist. Her interest had been sparked when her friend, Dorothy Watkins, gave her information on her Husk ancestry. I first met Claribel at meetings of the West-Central Kentucky Family Research Association in Owensboro, KY on 14 March 1980 and of the Hancock County Historical Society on 17 March 1980. In the following months our paths crossed frequently at the Hancock County Courthouse. When the county decided to establish an archives and Claribel was appointed archivist many records were moved to the third floor of the Old Courthouse. I was one of the volunteers that helped to sort and organize records at their new home. On 1 July 1982 Claribel officially began her duties as archivist. On Monday, 12 July 1982 at 8 a.m. the Hancock County Archives was opened to serve the public. The Archives kept a sign in register and I was the first to sign in. For the next several years I spent a multitude of hours researching and visiting with Claribel at the Archives. She was always jovial and gave warm assistance to every visitor.

In January 1986 Judge Jim Fallin, who had been instrumental in the establishment of the Hancock County Archives, was succeeded as the new Judge/Executive of Hancock County by

Judge Danny Boling. The county's fiscal court under Boling's leadership cut the hours of the archivist in half from 40 to 20 hours. After the publication of the preceding letter I received a phone call from Mrs. Judge Danny Boling questioning my letter writing due to the fact I was not a resident of the county. In June, July and August 1986 there were numerous other letters to the editor in support of the Archives that were published in the Hancock Clarion. Other letters were written by Kathy Adkins, Mrs. Delmon (Lucille) Arbra, Hazel Basham, Laura Bickett, Gladys Gillians Coon, Charles P. Culp, Rose Pell Henderson, Stacy Holt, Oswald Jett, Dollie Keeling, Aaron Lambert, L. T. Newton, Ron & Rose Newton, Michelle Powers, Freddie L. Richards, Shelly Ridge, Steve Smith, Lana Steiner, Becky Vaught and Arbra Del Watkins.]



**Hancock Clarion, Hawesville, KY, 14 November 1985:**

Archivist Claribel Phillips  
accepts plaque for county



A FIRST FOR HANCOCK—The Kentucky Historic Confederation recently honored Hancock County with its special award for being the first county to establish an archives room. Archivist Claribel Phillips (holding plaque) accepted the award at Danville. With her, from left, are: magistrates Wallly Harris and Delbert Leo Basham, Judge/Executive Jim Fallin, County Clerk Anita Robertson, and magistrates Pete Colbert and Bob Ogle.

Claribel Phillips, Hancock County Archivist, representing the Fiscal Court, attended a two day meeting held in Danville, Ky., on November 1 and 2.

The Historic Confederation of Kentucky notified Judge Fallin and members of the Fiscal Court that they were to receive a "special public service award" for their efforts to preserve the history of this county by establishing the first county funded archives in the state.

Dr. Thomas L. Riley, of Hopkinsville Community College, President of the Confederation, told a crowd of approximately 200, that all of the state is looking to Hancock County for leadership in this field.

This is the first time that the Historic Confederation has given the special service award. We think that it is very appropriate that our county be the first recipient of this award.





**Hancock Clarion, Hawesville, KY, 2 May 1985, p.2:**

LETTERS

Editor  
Hancock Clarion  
Hawesville, KY 42348

Dear Sir:

The people of Hancock County can certainly be proud of the efforts made over the past years to preserve the county's records. Your County Archives serves as a model for the entire state. Preservation of the official documents - the land transactions, the wills and state settlements, the records and order books of the County Fiscal Courts, etc., constitute the real story of the people of a county. Our county and city officials and our attorneys need, of course, to make use of these official records but of importance, too, are the generations of people to come who want to learn about the generations who have gone before them.

We would commend Judge Fallin and the magistrates who have recognized this important need in Hancock County and have established a County Archives for preservation and use of your county records. Certainly the many hours devoted to this project by Ms. Clara Bell Phillips deserves special recognition by all of us. We are grateful to her for showing all of us over the state what can be done when people work together on a much needed program.

Sincerely,  
Dr. Thomas L. Riley, President  
Kentucky Historical Confederation



**Forgotten Pathways of Hancock County, Kentucky, Vol. II, No.2, Winter 1985-1986,  
Genealogical Society of Hancock County, Hawesville, KY, p.42:**

HANCOCK COUNTY ARCHIVES  
Old Court House  
Hawesville, Kentucky 42348  
December 27, 1985

Dear Fellow Genealogical Society Members:

The Hancock County Archives was established by an order of the Hancock Fiscal Court to protect and preserve the rich heritage of Hancock County through its records, has a project that we would like to suggest your participation.

As you know, Kentucky was divided during the Civil War, brother against brother, father against son. Many Hancock Countians participated in the war between the states. Through the National Historical Society we are now able to obtain a limited edition of the "Official Records of

the Civil War of the Rebellion," "Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies," and more commonly called the "Official Records," are the most valuable, most quoted and most-sought-after source of the Civil War history.

It is our goal to obtain the 128 book edition of this historic work. The books cost the following:

|              |         |
|--------------|---------|
| one book-    | \$14.00 |
| two books-   | \$28.00 |
| three books- | \$42.00 |
| four books-  | \$56.00 |
| five books-  | \$65.00 |

Already 22 books have been paid for and an additional 20 books have been promised by individuals. This leaves eighty-six books yet to be acquired.

We are now approaching you, who are interested in research to help assure that these books will be made available to all. Our Archives is an asset, because it is accessible and available to all those interested in preserving history. You may not be aware that as of today, already over six-thousand visitors have come to the Archives since its creation in 1982. The Courthouse complex, along with the new museum will create an even larger number of tourists to come to our community. These books would be a tremendous asset to the researchers.

Won't you please take time to say yes to the purchase of one or more books. As a donation you may have either your name or the name of someone you would like to have the book purchased in memory of, placed in the inside cover of the book. This will be a perpetual reminder to all of your interest in our heritage.

Sincerely,  
Claribel Phillips  
Hancock County Archivist



**Forgotten Pathways of Hancock County, Kentucky, Vol. I, No.1, Summer 1984,**  
**Genealogical Society of Hancock County, Hawesville, KY, p.3:**

A LETTER FROM YOUR PRESIDENT

Dear Member,

Our Society is dedicated to the preservation of cemeteries, family histories, county records and to the building of an efficient research area.

Hancock County was established in 1829 from counties of Breckinridge (est. 1800), Daviess (est. 1815) and Ohio (est. 1799). The county is actively engaged in preserving all old county records since it was formed by establishing a county Archives which is a county funded research area.

The Genealogical Society of Hancock County will be publishing a journal, *Forgotten Pathways*, on a quarterly basis which will feature the areas of Hancock, Breckinridge, Daviess and Ohio counties in Kentucky and Perry and Spencer counties in Indiana.

In order that the Society will prosper and grow, it is imperative that we reach and interest new members in becoming active in this endeavor.

We cordially invite you to become a participating member by joining the Society and submitting any family history, cemeteries, bible records, etc., which you would like to share with others.

The information which you submit will be placed on file in the Depository of the Hancock County Archives for researchers to utilize.

We request permission to possibly print your material in the quarterly journal, *Forgotten Pathways*, at anytime space permits.

Please include your name and address on any material submitted as we wish to acknowledge all work by YOU, the researcher.

Good luck with your research and if at any time we can be of service, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Happy researching,  
Claribel Phillips  
President  
Genealogical Society of Hancock County



**Hancock Clarion, Hawesville, KY, 28 June 1984, p.8:**



**FAST FRIENDS**—Linda Puckett of Salt Lake City, Utah, foreground, and Claribel Phillips were acquainted and have become fast friends in the past year. Last week Mrs. Puckett drove all the way from Utah to help Mrs. Phillips copy documents in the Hancock County Archives room in the courthouse.



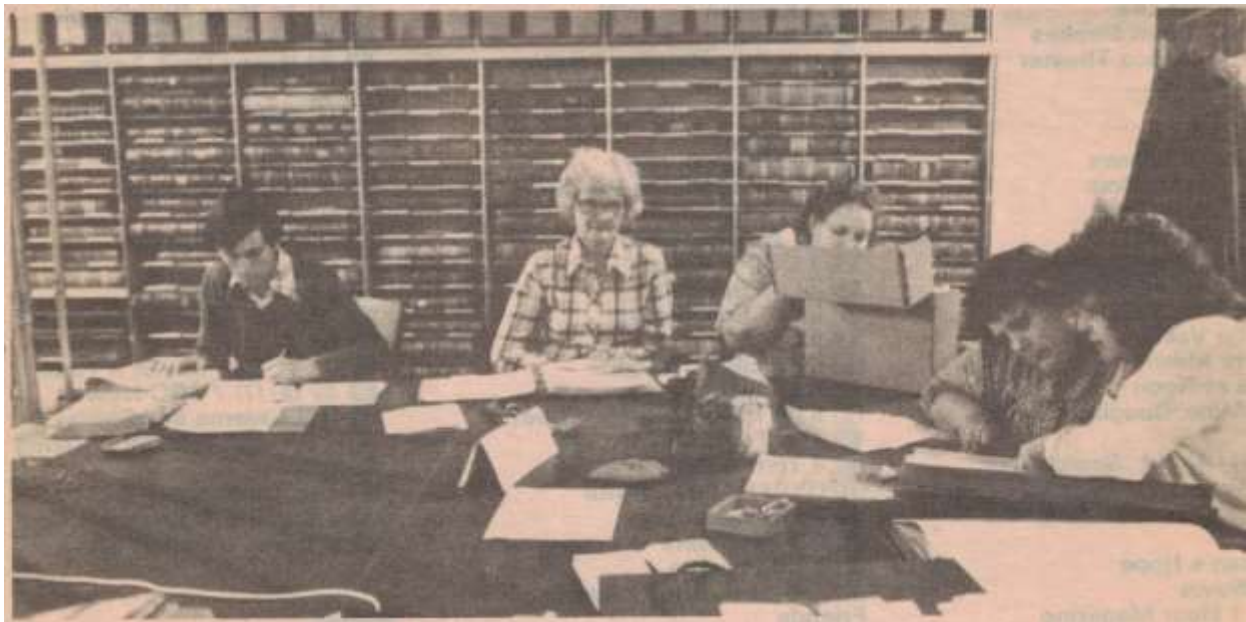
**Hancock Clarion, Hawesville, KY, 22 December 1983:**



A BOOST FOR THE ARCHIVES—Judge/Executive Jim Fallin and Mrs. Claribell Phillips are the happy recipients of a \$3,000 check presented by Margaret Merrick, Special Assistant to the Commissioner of the Kentucky Department of Libraries and Archives. The federal grant will be used to further the preservation of county records in the archives, ably compiled and maintained by Mrs. Phillips at the county courthouse.



**Hancock Clarion, Hawesville, KY, 11 November 1982, pp. 1 & 8:**



DIGGING IN OLD RECORDS—Researchers from the area delve for information in the archives room at the Hancock County Courthouse. From left, are: Jerry Long of Owensboro, Cheryl Wilson, Carol Vogt, and Brenda Simpson all of Cannelton, and Alice J. Tindle of Hawesville. The State Archives recently removed a number of county record books for micro-filming returned 149 of them this week. There are five more books to be filmed. Filming will make records accessible for research without any wear and tear on the old documents.



BEGINNING OF HANCOCK HISTORY—Horace "Sonny" Temple of Lewisport, left, Vice President of Hancock County Historical Society, and Claribel Phillips, right, curator of the County Archives, holds the first minute book, recording Hancock County records in 1829. Before that time, Hancock was a part of other counties. Jerry Long of Owensboro, kneels by a stack of old books, where he searches for specific information about events long past.



**Hancock Clarion, Hawesville, KY, 2 September 1982:**

**Old court records help searchers probe mysteries of past**

"It makes you feel good to help people find records they searched for but never found before," Claribel Phillips said in her third-floor headquarters in the courthouse last week. She reported that since she became curator of old county records on July 1, approximately 150 people have come there to search old documents for information which is valuable to them. Many of those

history-minded individuals have found Hancock County court records contain a wealth of information ... if they are lucky enough to find it. Mrs. Phillips says Hancock County is only one of 12 that has not had its records destroyed by fire out of 120 counties in Kentucky. Hancock was the 83rd county to be formed, in 1829, mostly from Breckinridge County, although small portions were taken from Daviess and Ohio counties. Before it was established, Hancock County was a part of Kentucky County, Virginia, then Jefferson County, Nelson, Hardin, and the three counties from which it was formed in succession. Records prior to 1829 can be found in courthouses of the parent counties.

The Hancock records curator became interested in local government documents about 5 years ago, when she was given a history of an ancestor who settled in Daviess County in 1796. The information about Valentine (Felty) Husk was compiled by Mrs. Phillips' friend, Mrs. Dorothy Watkins, author of the genealogy column "Climb Your Family Tree," which appears in the Clarion.

Having the critical importance of court records revealed to her in such a graphic manner, Mrs. Phillips set about lobbying fiscal court to give the old documents proper consideration. About four years ago, she was steadily employed, but started a campaign to induce the court to hire somebody to get the old records in shape so they may be preserved for future generations. She became really visible, and vocal, in the presence of the magistrates in April-May, 1981, after CETA workers brought the old records to the courthouse attic from the historical society's headquarters across the street. The CETA worker had filed documents in original boxes with the titles as they found them, had tied some into bundles and piled all of them on the floor. People who wanted to research the records went to the room, looked through the records and left them lying on the floor.

Mrs. Phillips finally swayed the court in the direction of preserving the records. She told the magistrates they needed to be sorted into the proper places and indexed so they may be located quickly. She was hired by the court to do the job and has been hard at it ever since. She has made progress, but doesn't know how long it will take to finish the job. The indexing and cross-indexing will eliminate handling the old documents unnecessarily. They are quite fragile, so run the risk of damage due to handling. They are put into protective envelopes as they are filed away.

Mrs. Phillips will be in the county archives room at least until all documents are indexed and filed away. Until then, she is available to assist the public six days a week. Hours on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday are 8:00-12:00 and 1:00-4:00. On Thursdays and Saturdays the archives are open for public use from 8:00 to 12:00.

"A person is coming from the state archives this week to help evaluate our system and check our performance," she said. "We just want to inform the general public that the room is open and the records are there for you." People have been hearing that the records are accessible for research now. Only last Wednesday, Mrs. Phillips assisted 10 people in their quest for information from the past. All were doing genealogy research. The oldest was 88 years old... Mr. Virdie Starks of Cloverport and Salt Lake City, Utah. The youngest was 10-year-old Rebekah Wolff of Evansville, Ind. In the past two months, visitors have come from Louisville and Irvington, Ky., Columbus, Tobinsport, and New Albany, Ind., Grafton and Brook Park, Ohio, Richardson, Tex., Ft. Lauderdale, Fla., Manila, Ark., Yorba Linda, Calif., and Edmunds, Wash.

The curator was disturbed to learn that several years ago about six truckloads of old records were removed from the courthouse and dumped. She believes a great many of those old documents may have been retrieved from the trash heap by private citizens and are retained in some homes around the county. She would like to see any such records returned to the archives so they may again be of benefit to the citizens.

Mrs. Phillips reported that the first marriage recorded in Hancock County has been found. Matthew E. Whogan wed Mary Lyons on September 29, 1829. It is probable the name Whogan later became Hogan. The marriage records are indexed in the names of both the brides and grooms.

In her spare time, Mrs. Phillips has been collaborating on a history of Hancock County with her friend, Mrs. Dorothy Watkins. It is to be published some time after January 1, 1983 by McDowell Publishing Company.

Claribel is working on the records which deal with black or white or Mulatto slaves, in the slave schedules of 1850 and 1860. The records tell the numbers, ages, and owners of the slaves, and whether they were married. They are not listed in the marriage books, just mixed among the old loose records... and they are not indexed in any way.

Mrs. Watkins is researching miscellaneous records... naturalized citizens, the book of strays, tavern keepers and coffee house owners. Some naturalization papers are in deed book one; most are in the archives... in other books, in minute books, or loose records among the other records. In the book of strays, farmers recorded the mark or brand of their livestock. If an animal strayed, it was returned to the courthouse. There the owner had to pay a cost to redeem it, plus settle for any damage it had done. Taverns and coffee houses were licensed. The coffee houses, also sold spiritous liquors. Mrs. Watkins is also assembling grand jury lists from term to term. The scope of this project covers jury lists from the 1780s to date. She also mentioned an amusing document which showed payments of \$2 to a county resident for killing a wildcat. The county paid a bounty on wildcats and wolves in the early days of its existence.



History In Her Hands – Curator of Hancock County’s old records, Claribel Phillips, standing, shares Dorothy Watkins’ amusement as they read an old court document. Mrs. Phillips is present at the courthouse daily to continue arranging the records in an orderly manner and to assist people who come in to research county records for information from the past.



**Hancock Clarion, Hawesville, KY, 13 August 1982:**

LETTERS

To The Editor:

The attic of the old courthouse where all the old county records are kept, now known as the Hancock County Archives is open to the public daily. Same hours as the courthouse, closed half a day on Thursday and Saturday. Claribel Phillips is now employed as "Keeper of the Records". She is sorting and filing each bit and piece of paper, The Marriage Bonds, consents, etc., are on scraps of paper, hand written documents, each is being carefully filed, recorded and indexed. Mrs. Phillips is doing a wonderful job.

It's about time we had someone care for the records. There are 153 years of our heritage in that room and I along with scores of other people can see our tax money used in this way instead of something going for something used by only a few. This will effect generations to come. Visit this room and see the change. It is a lot different than when they were scattered in many different places, The Jail, the Co. Warehouse and other places and some in very bad condition. Only a few of us saw this and worked like beavers to correct this and I couldn't even brag on us in my column. We may have gotten some static, so from all of these different places and by whatever means it took these records have finally come home to the care and respect they deserve. Hats off to the fiscal court and most of all to Judge Jim Fallin who first of all saved the old courthouse and made all of this possible.

My column Climb Your Family Tree is used only as a fill in when space permits. It has appeared 14 years in this paper. To everyone who writes me asking it appear every week or when possible, please write the Editor your feelings. I have a column at the office each week for them to print.

Sincerely,  
Dorothy Watkins  
Route 1 Box 950  
Hawesville, Ky. 42348



**Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, 5 May 1980. P.1C:**

Boxes moved to old courthouse:  
Hancock tries to put old records in order

By MASON SMITH, Messenger-Inquirer

HAWESVILLE Work has begun on putting Hancock County's old records in order once again.

To help with the job, Jeff Duff, an assistant archivist with the state Department of Libraries, was in Hawesville recently, working with the jumble of order books and file boxes that have been in disorder since a renovation project moved them from the old courthouse several years ago.

"We have circuit court records dating back all the way to 1826, I guess," Duff said. Boxes of records were stacked against the wall of a third-floor room in the courthouse.

This makes the fourth time the records have been moved in as many years, said Rick Cox, special assistant to Hancock Judge-executive Jim Fallin.

"We've had them farmed out to offices all over town."



Each office in the old courthouse stored its own records until renovation work began there in late 1976, Cox said.

Since then, "we've had some of them stored in the new building in the clerk's office, some in a storage room in the jail and some in the county warehouse," he said.

Now all the records are being located back in the old courthouse next to the law library.

County officials say the restoration of order has been postponed until proper shelving can be provided.

In October, the fiscal court ordered worth of shelves for the record books. These have been recently delivered and installed.

Sheriff's settlements, marriage licenses, road orders and old claims are mixed with the circuit court records, Duff said.

The job of arranging the court's order books was largely accomplished last week. But the job of sorting and refileing many of the records will take "a couple of weeks," Duff said.

The records will be stored in acid-free document boxes.

"The chemicals used to make paper also contain acid, and that causes the documents to yellow and deteriorate faster," he said.

The new boxes should help preserve old records better than the old cardboard files did, he said.

Before renovation, the law library served as the jury room and the records archive was simply an old attic storage area, Cox said.



Claribel Henning was born 7 January 1932 in Hancock County, KY. She was the daughter of Charles William Henning (1892-1969) and Flora Bell Husk (1896-1938). Her third great-grandfather, Valentine 'Felty' Husk was one of the first settlers in the territory that became Davuess County, KY. Claribel graduated in 1950 from the Lewisport high school in Lewisport, KY. She married twice. She and John William Poole (1930-1993) on 10 April 1950 were married in Lewisport, KY (their marriage license was recorded in Davess County, KY. During 1952-1956 she and John W. Poole divorced. She married second James Roy Phillips (1933-1987) on 25 October 1956. Claribel Phillips died on 6 August 1997 in Lewisport, Hancock County, KY, where she was buried in the Lewisport Cemetery. She had two children – Vicki D. Poole (1950) and Enola Gay Poole (1953).

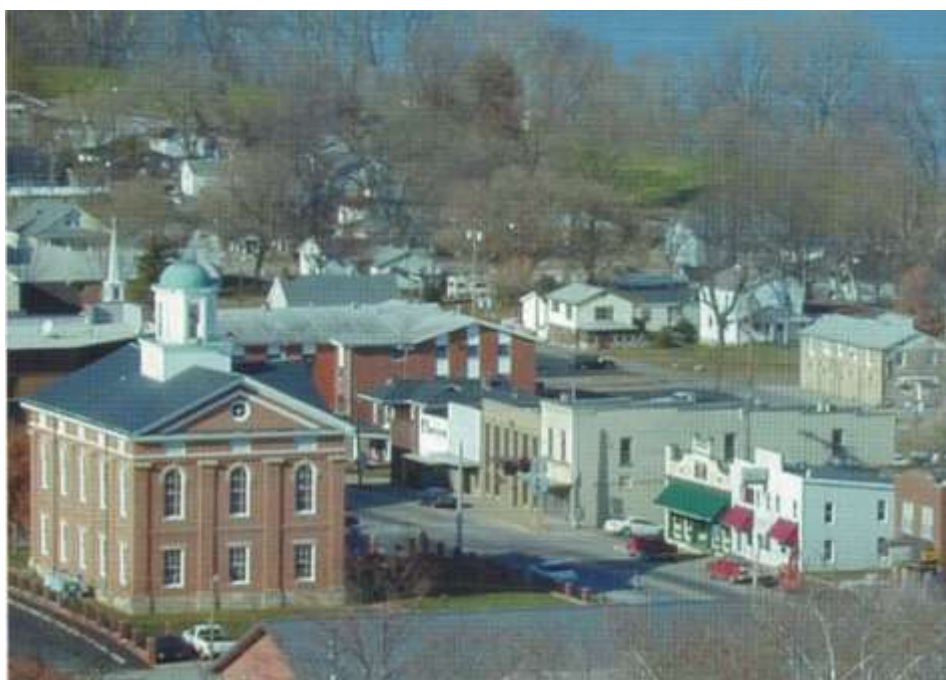


Lewisport Cemetery, Lewisport, Hancock County, KY

Claribel Phillips was the founder of the Hancock County Archives (1982) and the Genealogical Society of Hancock County (1984). She served as the first president of the latter. In 1991 she was honored as the Historian of the Year by the Hancock County Historical Society. In addition to assisting the public for 13 years in the Archives she also worked on several research aids – in 1982 she published the Hancock County, Kentucky 1860 Census, in 1983 Hancock County, Kentucky Marriage Book 1B (1829-1857) and with Dorothy Watkins & Ellen Banks in 1991 co-authored Hancock County Kentucky 1880 Federal Census.



**Hancock County, Kentucky 2004 Resource Directory,  
Clarion Publishing Co., Hawesville, KY, p.53:**



Hancock County Archives is located on the third floor (attic) of the Old Courthouse (building on lower left) in Hawesville, KY.

### Archives

Hancock County Archives P.O. Box 667 Hawesville, Kentucky, 42348

The Hancock County Archives is located on the third floor of the Old Courthouse in Hawesville, Kentucky. The Archives possess a wealth of information.

Mary Emma Gibbs is the Archivist.

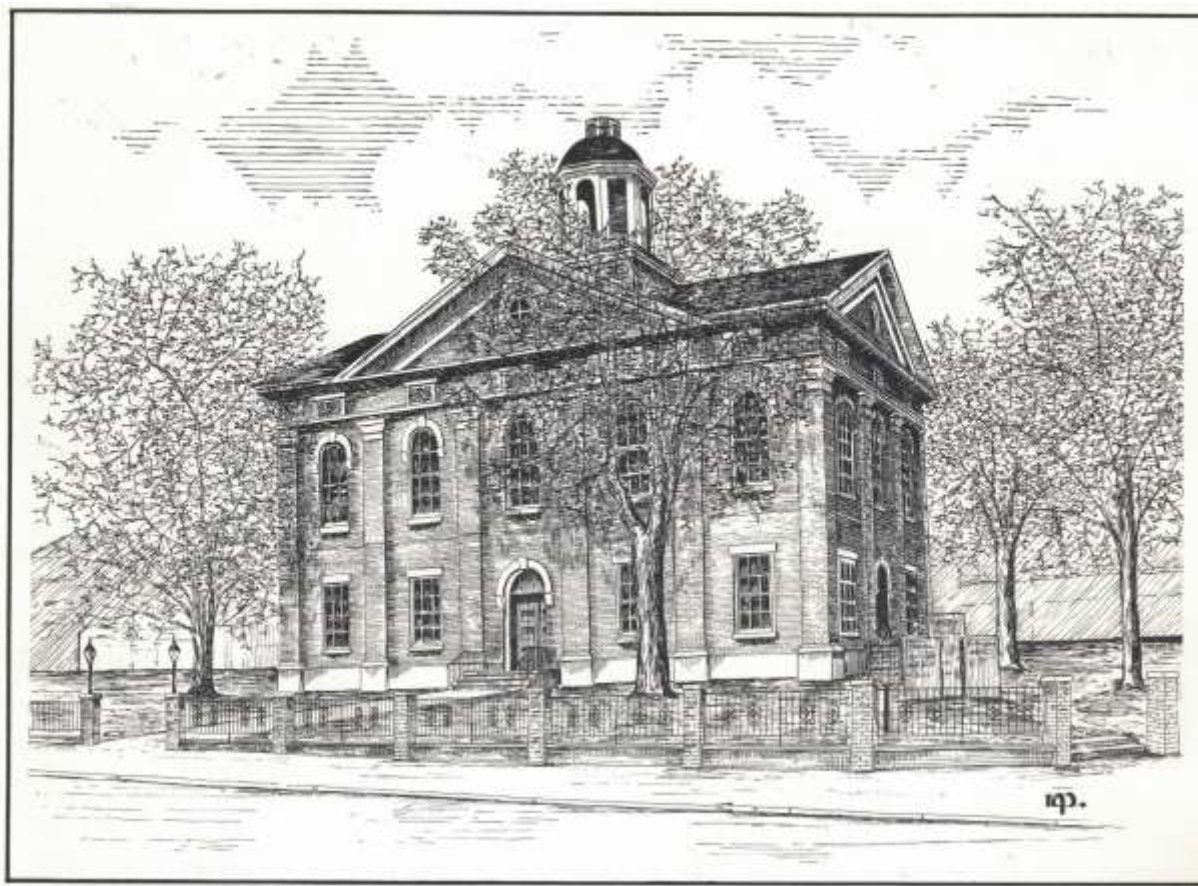
A complete index is available for the records listed and this helps lead you to the information you are searching for. The archives has the records of marriages, wills, commonwealth, chancery & equity, estate, naturalization and divorce. A complete set of Civil War books with index is available. Also available are census records in book form from 1850 to 1920. School census records in book form 1894, 1895, 1896 and cemetery records. State birth and death Index records from 1911. Circuit Court Order Books, Minute Books. Coroner Inquest and

Obituaries. A birth and death book from 1852 to 1925 is a new addition to the collection. Family files that may aid you in research are available also. The Hancock County Archives is the number one place for genealogical records. Many other County records are available to you in our collection. Mailing address: Hancock County Archives, P.O. Box 667, Hawesville, Kentucky, 42348, ATTN: Mary or George Gibbs

E-mail: hcarchives @ tds.net or megibbsl @ tds.net Hours: 8- 4: Monday through Friday.  
Phone (270) 927-8095



[Note: In 1995 when Claribel Phillips suffered a stroke George Lee & Mary Gibbs became faithful attendants of the Hancock County Archives and in 2023 they are still serving as archivists and assisting the public. In 2013 the Archives was moved from the third floor to the first floor of the Old Hancock County Courthouse.]



Old Hancock County Courthouse, Hawesville, KY. Constructed during 1865-1867. Drawing by Kentucky Artist Robert A. Powell.