

2. GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION AND RECORDS SYSTEM

The act creating McCreary County, approved by the governor March 12, 1912, provided that a board of three commissioners, residents of the county, be appointed by the governor from the two political parties to hold office until their work be completed. This board was to select a temporary seat of government for McCreary County, designating a place for holding court and a place of record until a permanent government be organized (Order Book, entry 75).

The board met at the town of Pine Knot soon after its appointment and, after being duly sworn, proceeded to divide the county into magisterial districts and voting precincts and fix voting places in each precinct. Two copies of its report were made, one being sent to the secretary of state and the other given to the county court clerk to file.

It was provided also that the governor appoint from eligible citizens of the county all officers provided for by the constitution and statutes at that time. The appointment of magistrates, however, was not to be made until the county was divided into magisterial districts (Const. of 1891, sec. 142). Judicial district 34 was changed at this time to include McCreary, Knox, and Whitley counties, which arrangement is still in effect today (Carroll, sec. 965-34).

The first county officers chosen by the governor were as follows: J. C. Goode, county judge; George W. Stephens, county attorney; Preston R. Bell, sheriff, Joseph Myrick, county court clerk; W. F. Roberts, jailer; W. P. Johnson, assessor; and Wiley S. Gilreath, county school superintendent. Later, eight justices were appointed for the newly-created magisterial districts in the county (Order Book, entry 75).

As established by the constitution of 1891, the fiscal court in McCreary County has jurisdiction over all administrative and fiscal affairs of the county. This court is composed of the county judge, who is elected by the county at large for a four-year term and is presiding officer of the court, and the eight justices of the peace, each of whom is elected in his respective magisterial district (Const. of 1891, sec. 114). Each of the eight justices also preside over a justice's court in his respective district, as provided for by the constitution (ibid., sec. 142).

The circuit court clerk, a constitutional officer, is elected for a six-year term. He serves as recording agent for the circuit court, which is composed of the circuit judge as presiding officer and the commonwealth attorney, both of whom are also provided for by constitution and elected for six-year terms by the electorate of Judicial District 34 (ibid., secs. 97, 129). The circuit court sessions in McCreary County are provided for by statutes (Carroll, sec. 965-34), and the court itself is provided for by constitution (Const. of 1891, secs. 125, 129-131). The master commissioner, a statutory office, is appointed for the county for a four-year term by the circuit judge (Carroll, sec. 392).

There are seven other elective offices in McCreary County provided for by constitution and serving for four-year terms: county attorney, county court