

Sheriffs of Wood County

1850 to 1880

From the time it was demarked and organized in 1850 to the present time, Wood County has had 36 men and one woman who have served as the county sheriff over the past one hundred and 60 years.

After a search for information on a number of the early sheriffs, little could be found. However, one thing that emerged is that some would serve several consecutive terms and some would serve only one or two terms, but after a period of a few years, they would run again and be elected for a second time.

The period that followed the Civil War, known as Reconstruction, was chaotic and filled with turmoil and confusion. That may explain why three men listed won their election but failed to qualify. No written source has been found to explain why they did not qualify or even what the basis was to qualify to serve.

We intend to keep searching and if and when we do, we will share the information with you. We are also trying to find some further personal information on a number of the past sheriffs.

One: HENRY STOUT was the first sheriff of the county and he was also on the commission that organized the county. Stout was born in Tennessee in 1799. He came to Texas in 1819 at the age of twenty. He was a Texas Ranger from 1839 to 1845. Stout was also a member of the 6th Texas legislature and he served as an officer in the Confederate Army. Stout was elected sheriff at a meeting held east of Mineola on the Greer property in 1850. He resigned as sheriff on August 4th, 1851.

Two: PETER ROZEL (Some sources show his last name as Rozelle.) He served as the second sheriff of Wood County from August 4th, 1851 to December 15th, 1851 when he resigned.

Three: HENRY STOUT was appointed on December 27th, 1851 after Rozel resigned. He was elected to a full second term on August 2nd, 1852 and served until August 7th, 1854.

Four: THOMAS H. NORTON was elected on August 7th, 1854 and served until March 1857 when he resigned.

Five: JOHN M. BOYDE was appointed on March 3rd, 1857, after the resignation of Thomas Norton. Boyde was elected on August 2nd, 1858 and he served until August 6th, 1860.

Six: W.M. McCORD was elected on August 6th, 1860 and served until August 4th, 1862.

Seven: JOHN M. BOYDE was elected to a second term on August 4th, 1862. He was re-elected on August 1st, 1864 and served until August 24th, 1865.

Eight: ELI BIBB was appointed on August 24th, 1865 by Governor A.J. Hamilton and he served until June 25th, 1866.

Nine: JOHN P. WILLIAMS was appointed on June 25th, 1866 and served until November, 1871. Another record found that he was re-elected on December 3rd, 1869, and yet another indicates that he was removed from office in 1871. This may be a part of the confusion that came with the Reconstruction era.

Ten: B.J. HARRIS was appointed on May 11th, 1869 by General J.J. Reynolds' special order #111 and served until November of 1871.

Eleven: JOHN H. NEWSOM was appointed on November 3rd, 1871 but failed to qualify. Mr. Newsom kept an interesting and amusing diary during his life, but he made no mention of this.

Twelve: A.H. JONES was appointed on January 1st, but he also failed to qualify.

Thirteen: J.T. HOLBERT was appointed on March 12th, 1872 and he also failed to qualify. It would be interesting to discover the reason for these disqualifications.

Fourteen: J.P. WILLIAMS was appointed on November 8th, 1872, then re-elected for a second

term on December 2nd, 1873. He was then re-elected for three more terms and served until November 2nd, 1880.

Fifteen: F.P. DOWELL was elected November 2nd, 1880 and served until November 7th, 1882. During this period, the term of office for sheriffs and other country officials was two years. This was changed in the mid 1950s to four years.