

Williamson County  
Ordinary, Tavern, and Tippling Licenses, 1800-1888



**Williamson County Archives**  
611 West Main Street  
Franklin, TN 37064

Telephone: 615-790-5462  
Email: [archives@williamsoncounty-tn.gov](mailto:archives@williamsoncounty-tn.gov)  
Mail: P.O. Box 1006, Franklin, TN 37065

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## Collection Overview

**Title:** Ordinary, Tavern, and Tippling Licenses

**Date Range:** 1800-1888

**Creator:** Williamson County Government

**Extent:** 2 document boxes, 47 folders, 566 Records

**Abstract:** The Ordinary, Tavern, and Tippling Licenses collection contains records pertaining to the regulation of the sale of alcohol, food, and lodging as controlled and maintained by the Williamson County Court in the 1800s.

**Language:** English

**Repository:** Williamson County Archives, Franklin, TN

**Collection Number:** WCA 0007

## Scope and Content

This collections contains Williamson County court bonds and licenses issued from 1800-1888. These bonds and licenses were issued in order to regulate and maintain the sale and consumption of alcohol, food, and lodging offered commercially in Williamson County, TN.

## Arrangement

The records are arranged chronologically by the filed date.

## Historical Note

The 19<sup>th</sup> century was a significant time in Tennessee history. After gaining statehood in 1796, settlers continued to spread out and populate the state throughout the 1800s. In small villages and towns, ordinaries were an integral part of the community. Ordinaries served as a hub for community meetings, news, drinking, and socializing. Today, the terms “Tavern”, “Ordinary”, and “Inn” are often used interchangeably, and describe the same general establishment. Historically, an ordinary was an establishment where members of a community and travelers could find amenities such as lodging, a bed, food, and drink. The services provided by inns, ordinaries, and taverns were regulated by law. Even the price of a complete meal served at a tavern could be controlled. The right to serve alcohol was also regulated. “Tippling” bonds and licenses were issued to establishments allowed to serve alcohol. “Tippling” means to drink alcohol excessively or habitually. In colonial America, liquor serving establishments were sometimes referred to as “Tippling houses”.

As the 1800s progressed, so did the Temperance Movement, which was a social movement to limit or eradicate the consumption of alcohol. The “Poison Bond and Affidavit” contained in the later part of this record group is a reflection of the Temperance Movement’s impact. As taxes on alcohol increased, people that made and sold alcohol began to try to create more product for less money. Many times, this meant diluting alcohol with water and then having to recreate the color, flavor, and even the effects of the alcohol with other substances. Therefore, sugar, molasses, sawdust, other nonconventional items, and even some poisons were used to recreate the expected drink- hence the Liquor Inspection and the Poison Bond and Affidavit you will see in this record group. On March 15, 1860, The Tennessee General Assembly passed an act entitled “An act to prevent the adulteration of spirituous and vinous liquors in this State.”

## Access and Use

**Access to the Collection:** This collection is open to the public for research during normal business hours.

**Use of Materials:** Unrestricted

**Preferred Citation:** Ordinary, Tavern, and Tippling Licenses, Williamson County Archives, Franklin, TN

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Tel: 615-790-5462  
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## Administrative Information

### About the collection

**Acquisition:** Created by Williamson County Government

### About the finding aid

**Author:** Ashleigh Florida

**Date:** September 24, 2020

**Descriptive rules:** Finding aid based on *Describing Archives: a Content Standard* (DACS)

## Search Terms

**Names:** Williamson County  
Williamson County Court

**Subjects:** Bond  
Gaming  
Inn  
Inspection  
License  
Liquor  
Ordinary  
Poison  
Retailer  
Spirits  
Spirituous Liquors  
Tavern  
Tippling  
Whisky  
Inspection

## Container List

Ordinary, Tavern, and Tippling Records			
Box Number	Folder Number	Contents	Year
1	1	6 Documents	1800
1	2	5 Documents	1801
1	3	6 Documents	1802
1	4	8 Documents	1803
1	5	11 Documents	1804
1	6	11 Documents	1805
1	7	12 Documents	1806
1	8	10 Documents	1807
1	9	15 Documents	1808
1	10	6 Documents	1809
1	11	8 Documents	1810
1	12	6 Documents	1811
1	13	12 Documents	1812
1	14	7 Documents	1813
1	15	10 Documents	1814
1	16	14 Documents	1821
1	17	18 Documents	1822

1	18	18 Documents	1823
1	19	8 Documents	1824
1	20	14 Documents	1825
1	21	12 Documents	1826
1	22	18 Documents	1827
1	23	16 Documents	1828
1	24	20 Documents	1829
1	25	15 Documents	1830
2	26	16 Documents	1831
2	27	5 Documents	1832
2	28	5 Documents	1833
2	29	4 Documents	1834
2	30	4 Documents	1835
2	31	19 Documents	1836
2	32	54 Documents	1837
2	33	7 Documents	1838
2	34	1 Documents	1858
2	35	2 Documents	1859
2	36	12 Documents	1860
2	37	1 Documents	1865
2	38	2 Documents	1867
2	39	1 Documents	1868
2	40	14 Documents	1869
2	41	52 Documents	1870
2	42	4 Documents	1884
2	43	30 Documents	1885
2	44	18 Documents	1886
2	45	16 Documents	1887
2	46	10 Documents	1888
2	47	3 Documents	