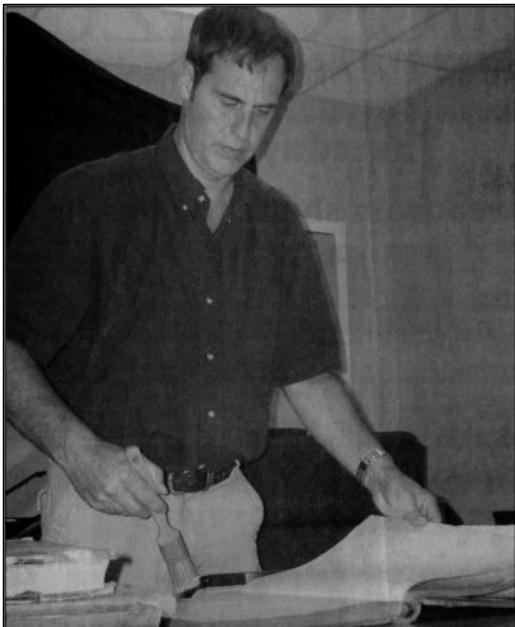


## COUNTY ARCHIVIST AT WORK

[Heather Mullinx](#)

Herald-Citizen Staff



**COOKEVILLE** -- Putnam County's historic records are on their way to preservation.

Glenn Jones was hired as the county's archivist following a March vote by the Putnam County Commission. He is charged with collecting, cleaning, recording and preserving all of the county's records, including old court dockets and deed books dating back to 1854.

"All the county's books are brought one by one," Jones explained. "There's probably 75 that were in the attic of the courthouse."

Putnam County Executive Kim Blaylock said the historic records are scattered around county offices right now.

"They're everywhere," she said.

Many of the books are in poor condition. In that situation, Jones' first move is to stop the book's decay.

"First, you brush away the dirt and vacuum out mold," Jones said. "Then, you have to record what's there."

The county purchased a digital archiving system that will photograph each page of each book. Jones said plans are to index those files and make them available to the public either through the archives office or the Putnam County Library. The original books and files could then be put away and preserved for future use.

"The goal is to make these records accessible to the people," Jones said.

The historic records would serve as a valuable research tool for area historians or those wanting information on their family history.

Jones attended the Tennessee Archives Institute in Nashville, an accreditation program offered through the Tennessee State Library and Archives. He's working out of office space in the Putnam Agricultural Extension building on Walnut Avenue right now. Blaylock is waiting for an opinion from the Tennessee Attorney General on which county offices can charge a \$2 public records fee, enacted by the Putnam County Commission

last year. The Putnam County Clerk's office is already charging the fee and collected about \$50,000 for the 2007-'08 fiscal year.

Once that question has been answered, Blaylock is hopeful there would be enough collected by the fee to make a payment on a permanent office site. Putnam County Historian Maurine Patton has agreed to donate land beside her home on Broad Street for a county archives building and veterans hall.

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