



Benton County was founded in 1905 and was formerly part of Yakima and Klickitat counties. It was named after Senator Thomas Hart Benton of Missouri. It is located in the southeastern part of the state and is bordered on the south and east by the Columbia River. In the past many famous explorers of the Northwest passed through the county, among them Lewis and Clark and Captain Bonneville. Early wagon roads from Walla Walla to Puget Sound also traversed the county. In the 1880s the coming of railroads brought settlers to the region and the irrigation projects of the 1890s created a rich agricultural economy. The establishment of the Hanford Atomic Energy Center has made the county the nation's major atomic research center. Today the county enjoys a diversified economy based on agriculture, wood products, food production and government installations.

Bounded by: Grant (N), Franklin and Walla Walla counties (E), Morrow and Umatilla counties, Oregon (S), and Klickitat and Yakima counties (W).

County Seat: Prosser

Chambers of Commerce:

Benton City Chamber of Commerce, PO Box 401, Benton City, WA 99320. Phone 509-588-5848. Fax 509-588-3216.

Prosser Chamber of Commerce, 1230 Bennett Ave, Prosser, WA 99350. Phone 509-786-3177. Fax 509-786-2399

Richland Chamber of Commerce, 515 Lee Blvd, PO Box 637, Richland, WA 99352. Phone 509-946-1651. Fax 509-943-6187.

Tri-Cities Convention and Visitors Bureau, 6951 W Grandridge Blvd, Kennewick, WA 99336-2241. Phone 509-735-8486. Fax 509-783-9005.

Tri-City Area Chamber of Commerce, 3180 W Clearwater #F, PO Box 6986, Kennewick, WA 99336. Phone 509-736-0510. Fax 509-783-1733.

Courthouse: 620 Market St, Prosser, WA 99350. Courthouse hours: Monday through Friday, 8:00am to 5:00pm.

Assessor: PO Box 902. Phone 509-786-2046. Fax 509-786-5657.

Auditor: PO Box 470. Phone 509-786-5620. Fax 509-786-5528. *Name(s) and a range of years are needed to search our records.*

Clerk: Room 101, Benton County Justice Center, 7320 W Quinault, Kennewick, WA 99336. Phone 509-786-5624 or 509-735-8388. Fax 509-783-1058. *Bring as much information as possible, e.g. names of parties, type of action, approximate time frame. Most records are on microfilm. Copy charge is \$1 per page. There is a search fee if the office does the searching. Requests for research must be in written form with check payable to Benton County Clerk. Policy is to collect fees in advance.*

Treasurer: PO Box 630. Phone 509-786-2255. Fax 509-783-8505.

Genealogical Society: Tri-City Genealogical Society, PO Box 1410, Richland, WA 99352-1410. *Membership available. Tri-City Genealogical Society's holdings are located at the Richland Family History Center.*

Health Department: Benton-Franklin Health District, 506 McKenzie, Richland, WA 99352. Phone 509-943-2614. Fax 509-546-2916. Satellite offices: 1020 Prosser Ave, Prosser, WA 99350. Phone 509-786-1633; 1218 N 4th, Pasco, WA 99301. Phone 509-547-9737; 800 W Canal Dr, Kennewick, WA 99336. Phone 509-586-0207.

Historical Society:

Benton County Historical Society, Inc., PO Box 591, Prosser, WA 99350. Phone 509-786-3842.

East Benton County Historical Society, 205 Keewaydin Drive, PO Box 6964, Kennewick, WA 99336. Phone 509-582-7704. *Membership available. Operates the East Benton County Historical Museum.*

Libraries - Academic:

Washington State University Tri-Cities Library, Max E. Benitz Library, 100 Sprout Rd, Richland, WA 99352-1643. Phone 509-372-7430. Fax 509-372-7281.

Libraries - Public:

Mid-Columbia Library [Service center - not open to the public], 4101 E Lattin Rd, West Richland, WA 99353. Phone 509-627-0285. Fax 509-545-2054. *The following are branches of this library system:*

Benton City Branch, 708 Ninth St, Box 369, Benton City, WA 99320. Phone 509-588-6471. Fax 509-588-6471.

Kennewick Branch, 405 S Dayton, Kennewick, WA 99336-5690. Phone 509-586-3156. Fax 509-586-8887.

West Benton Branch, 614 Sixth St, Prosser, WA 99350. Phone 509-786-3777. Fax 509-786-3777.

West Richland Branch, 3803 W Van Giesen, West Richland, WA 99353. Phone 509-967-3191. Fax 509-967-1224.

Prosser Public Library, 902 7th St, Prosser, WA 99350-1454. Phone 509-786-2533. Fax 509-786-7341. *Collection includes northwest history materials and microfilm of local newspapers back to 1903.*

Richland Public Library, 955 Northgate, Richland, WA 99352-3539. Phone 509-942-7450. Fax 509-942-7447.

Libraries - Special:

Benton/Franklin County Law Library, Columbia Basin College Library, 2600 N 20th Ave, Pasco, WA 99301. Phone 509-547-0511 ext. 2290. Fax 509-547-5293.

Kennewick Family History Center, 895 W Gage Blvd, Kennewick, WA. Phone 509-628-8332.

Prosser Family History Center, 1835 Highland Drive, Prosser, WA. Phone 509-786-3860.

Richland Family History Center, 1314 Goethals, Richland, WA 99352. Phone 509-946-6637.
Tri-City Herald Library, PO Box 2608, Tri Cities, WA 99302. *Not generally open to the public.*

Museums and Historical Sites:

Benton County Historical Museum, PO Box 591, 7th & Patterson, Prosser City Park, Prosser, WA 99350. Phone 509-786-3842.

Columbia River Exhibition of History, Science & Technology, 95 Lee Blvd., Richland, WA 99352. Phone 509-943-9000. Fax 509-943-1770.

East Benton County Historical Museum, 205 Keewaydin Dr, PO Box 6964, Kennewick, WA 99336. Phone 509-582-7704. *Membership available. Museum's displays portray the many facets of Benton County history. Collections include historical artifacts, a photographic collection, the Jay Perry collection of Columbia River gem points, an alphabetically arranged obituary file, oral history collection, school records, and homestead papers.*

State Archives Branch:

Central Region (Benton, Chelan, Douglas, Franklin, Grant, Kittitas, Klickitat, Okanogan and Yakima counties.) Bledsoe-Washington Archives Building, Central Washington University MS 7547, Ellensburg, WA 98926-7547. Phone: 509-963-2136. Fax 509-963-1753. E-mail: archives@cwu.edu. Research Hours: 8:30 a.m. - 12:00 noon and 1:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.

SELECTIVE BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Central Washington University Library

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Criminal case files, 1906-present

Family Court index, 1967-1970

Central Branch Archives

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Superior Court civil case files, 1906-1973 (includes some Mothers' Pension Cases (1925), delayed birth certificates, and claims of assistance)

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School director appointments, 1912-1932
School District formation and boundary file, 1905-1939

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Official election returns, 1906-1988

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Benton County Assessor's office

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Willamette Height, some land patents, 1940's-?

Benton County Auditor's office

Real property records, 1874- present

Central Branch Archives

Bill of sale record, 1905-1962

Chattel liens index, 1906-1946

Chattel mortgage index, 1905-1978

Chattel mortgages, 1906-1936

Conditional sales index, 1905-1978

Horticulture liens, 1925-1934

Mining claims, 1906-1960

Patent record, 1905-1962

Torrens certificate of title record, 1909-1943

LAND / PROPERTY - Published sources

LICENSURE AND PROFESSIONAL RECORDS

Benton County Clerk's office

Medical record, 1911-1953

Register of attorney, 1918-1927

Central Branch Archives

Dental certificates record (name of dentist, date, and place of license), 1905-1983

MARRIAGES - Personal, governmental, or organizational records

Benton County Auditor's office

Divorces, 1905-present (filed with Civil Cases until 1979)

Marriage records, 1905-present

Central Branch Archives

Index to marriage applications, 1939-1991

Marriage license application, 1939-1990

Marriage license index, 1905-1947

Marriage record, 1905-1927

Marriage statistics record, 1905-1939 (includes separate index volume)

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Benton County Clerk's office

Citizenship petitions granted, 1920-1955

Declarations, 1919-1954

Naturalization proceedings, 1909-1929

Naturalization record, 1905

Petition and record of naturalization, 1907-1929

Petitions, 1922-1954

Record of declarations of intention, 1906-1929

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Power of attorney, dates unknown

Benton County Clerk's office

Claims for assistance, 1947-present

Central Branch Archives

Brand record (type of animal described, drawing of brand, and date filed), 1905-1935

Clippings and photographs file, Kennewick City Clerk, 1959-1968

Courthouse construction files, 1906-1919

Drainage District record, 1907-1911

Miscellaneous relief and welfare documents, 1914-1939

Irrigation certificates of sale, 1916-1921

Mothers' pension record, 1913-1937

Mothers' pensions, 1925, 1935-1937

Official bond record, 1905-1963
Physicians' liens, 1949-1985
Power of attorney file, 1947-1985
Water rights record, 1883-1964

OTHER - Published sources

PROBATE - Personal, governmental, or organizational records

Benton County Clerk's office
Last will and testament, 1909-1955
Probate case files, 1906-present

Central Branch Archives
Probate case files, 1906-1949

PROBATE - Published sources

Records of Yakima County, Washington, 1869-1907, and Benton County, Washington, 1905-1907. [vol.1 Births, vol. 2 Deaths, vol. 3 Marriages, vol.4 Probate and naturalization, vol. 5 newspaper abstracts 1884-1907].
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TAXES - Personal, governmental, or organizational records

Benton County Clerk's office
Tax cases, 1906-present

Benton County Treasurer's office
Excise tax records, 3 current years
Personal property tax rolls, 1986-present
Real property tax rolls, 1986-present

Central Branch Archives
Federal tax lien record, 1947-1964
Tax case files, 1906-1927

TAXES - Published sources