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-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.*


**Historical Society:**
- Benton County Historical Society, Inc., PO Box 591, Prosser, WA 99350. Phone 509-786-3824.
- 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:**

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

**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.


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

ATLASES, GAZETTEERS, MAPS - Personal, governmental, or organizational records
Benton County Assessor's office
Blue Line Mylar Maps, dates unknown
Richland housing area drawings, dates unknown

Central Branch Archives
Plat maps, central Washington, 1854-1950 (microfilm)

Central Washington University Library

University of Washington Library


ATLASES, GAZETTEERS, MAPS - Published sources
Davis, Jean Carol. Benton County place names. East Benton County Historical Society, 1996.


**BIBLES - Personal, governmental, or organizational records**

**BIBLES - Published sources**

**BIBLIOGRAPHIES - Personal, governmental, or organizational records**

**BIBLIOGRAPHIES - Published sources**

*Inventory of the county archives of Washington, no. 3, Benton County (Prosser)*. Prepared by the Historical Records Survey Division of Professional and Service Projects, Works Progress Administration, 1939.

**BIOGRAPHIES / DIARIES - Personal, governmental, or organizational records**

Washington State University, Holland Library, Manuscripts, Archives and Special Collections


Corbaley, A. L. *Diary for January and February, 1885: typescript*


Travis, Helga Anderson, 1898-. *Papers, 1957-1963*.

**BIOGRAPHIES / DIARIES - Published sources**


**BIRTHS - Personal, governmental, or organizational records**

Benton County Clerk's office

Delayed birth certificate, 1942

Central Branch Archives

Birth returns, 1905-1907

Index to birth records, 1905-1907

Register of births 1905-1907

**BIRTHS - Published sources**


**BUSINESSES & COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS - Personal, governmental, or organizational**
records
Central Branch Archives
Articles of incorporation, 1886-1983
Ferry licenses, 1904-1924
Liquor license record, 1934-1946
Partnership agreements, 1941-1977
Railroad records, 1906-1937
Record of franchises, 1905-1947
Water and drainage district record, 1913-1942

BUSINESSES & COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS - Published sources


CEMETERIES - Personal, governmental, or organizational records

CEMETERIES - Published sources


CENSUS - Personal, governmental, or organizational records

CENSUS - Published sources

Indexes of the 1880 Federal Census for Walla Walla, Whitman, and Yakima counties. Tri-City Genealogical Society, n.d. (For sale by Tri-City Genealogical Society)

CHURCHES - Personal, governmental, or organizational records

CHURCHES - Published sources

St. Matthew's Episcopal Church, Prosser, WA. A history. n.p., 1964.


CITY / COUNTY DIRECTORIES

Pasco, Kennewick, Richland (Benton and Franklin counties, Wash.) city directory. R. L. Polk & Co., 1974-.

Pasco, Kennewick, Richland (Benton and Franklin counties, Wash.) Polk directory, including West Richland. R. L. Polk & Co., 1982.


Polk's Pasco-Kennewick (Benton and Franklin Counties, Wash.) directory, including Richland. R. L. Polk & Co., 1953-1960

Polk's Pasco-Kennewick-Richland (Benton and Franklin counties, Wash.) city directory. R.L. Polk & Co., 1955-.


Sunnyside, Grandview, Prosser (Yakima and Benton counties, Wash.) city directory: also a buyers' guide and a complete classified business directory. R.L. Polk, 1961.


CITY / COUNTY HISTORIES - Personal, governmental, or organizational records

Central Branch Archives
   Herd district records, 1911-1945
   Municipal incorporations and annexations, 1906-1946

Washington State University, Holland Library, Manuscripts, Archives and Special Collections
   The Hanford adventure: typescript, (ca. 1959).

CITY / COUNTY HISTORIES - Published sources


Mahoney, Pearl M. Prosser - the hometown. Prosser Print Co., 1950?.

Mercer, Tom. Finley-Hover history and River View High School. n.p., 1992?


Historical backgrounds of Benton and Franklin counties. Columbia High School, 1945.


______. *Dateline - Hanford.* n.p., 1964

______. *Desert boom and bust; the story of irrigation efforts and town building in Benton County, Washington, 1888-1904.* n.p., 1972.


**COURT DOCUMENTS - Personal, governmental, or organizational records**

Benton County Clerk's office
- Civil case files, 1906-present
- Criminal case files, 1906-present
- Family Court index, 1967-1970

Central Branch Archives
- Supreme Court case file briefs, Central Washington, 1907-1913 (principally regarding water rights)
- Superior Court civil case files, 1906-1973 (includes some Mothers' Pension Cases (1925), delayed birth certificates, and claims of assistance)
- Superior Court criminal case files, 1906-1954

**COURT DOCUMENTS - Published Sources**

**DEATHS - Personal, governmental, or organizational records**

Benton County Auditor’s office
- Death records, dates unknown-present

**DEATHS - Published sources**


**EARLY DESCRIPTIVE OR PROMOTIONAL MATERIAL - Personal, governmental, or organizational records**
- East Benton County Historical Society
  - Collection of early promotional brochures

**EARLY DESCRIPTIVE OR PROMOTIONAL MATERIAL - Published sources**


- *50 more veterans wanted to settle 50 more farms on the White Bluffs-Hanford land settlement project in the Priest Rapids valley, Benton County, Washington.* Washington (State). Dept. of Conservation and Development, 192-?


**EDUCATION - Personal, governmental, or organizational records**
- Central Branch Archives
  - Clerk and teacher’s list, 1915-1917
  - School director appointments, 1912-1932
  - School District formation and boundary file, 1905-1939

**EDUCATION - Published sources**


**ELECTION / VOTER RECORDS**
- Benton County Auditor's office
  - Voter registration records, 1936-present

  Central Branch Archives
  - Official election returns, 1906-1988

**GENEALOGICAL / HISTORICAL PERIODICALS**


**LAND / PROPERTY - Personal, governmental, or organizational records**

Benton County Assessor's office
- Ownership cards, dates unknown
- 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)

**MARRIAGES - Published sources**


**MILITARY - Personal, governmental, or organizational records**

**MILITARY - Published sources**

**NATURALIZATION - Personal, governmental, or organizational records**
- 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

**NATURALIZATION - Published sources**

**NEWSPAPER INDEXES / SPECIAL EDITIONS**

**OTHER - Personal, governmental, or organizational records**
- Benton County Auditor's office
  - Military discharges, dates unknown
  - 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

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