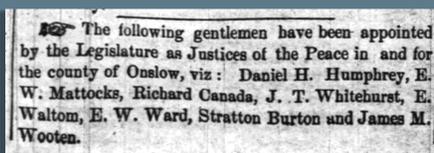


# COURT OFFICIALS

Currently the Onslow County Court system employs eighty eight people. The judicial system in North Carolina comprises several distinct offices with personnel that oversee all aspects of the court’s responsibilities. The most often thought of are the Judges that are elected in non-partisan elections. However, many other court personnel are integral to the daily functions of the court including clerks, magistrates, and attorneys.

## Justices and Judges

Justices and Judges are elected by the residents of their district, in which they must reside. District court judges serve four year terms while superior court judges serve terms of eight years. During a vacancy the governor appoints a judge to fill the spot until the next election. Often vacancies arise through retirement, which is mandatory at age seventy-two. The role of the judge or justice is to preside over their session of court; however, they have additional responsibilities. In each superior court district the most senior judge is the senior resident superior court judge tasked with appointing magistrates among other court officials. They also manage the schedule for civil cases. Similarly, the district court district has a chief district court judge, who is appointed by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court rather than by seniority. Among their duties the chief district court judge creates the schedule for district court sessions and supervises the magistrates for each county in the district.



Wilmington Journal, February, 1861.

When the Judicial system in North Carolina was reformed in the 1960s, the office of Justice of the Peace was removed and the office of Magistrate was created. This helped remove redundancies in jurisdictional overlap and streamline the court system.



Jacksonville Daily News, December 1978.

Six of eight magistrates sworn in by Everitte Barbee in 1978. Barbee served as Clerk of Court for Onslow County from 1966—1990.

## Clerk of Court

The Clerk of Superior Court is responsible for all clerical and record keeping functions of the superior and district court. However, the Clerk also has several judicial duties as the judge of probate, including probating wills and administering estates. The Clerk also oversees proceedings for adoptions, guardianship, partition of land, and the administration of trusts. Similarly the Clerk also handles some minor criminal proceedings such as taking pleas of guilty to traffic, wildlife, boating, and alcoholic beverage offenses, among others.

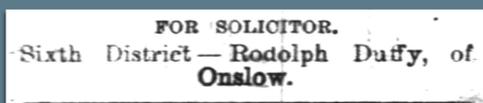
**Official Vote of Onslow County for Clerks of County and Superior Court.**

DISTRICTS:	For C. C. Cl'k.				S. C. C.	
	Jasper Blairidge	J. B. Frazar	A. J. Johnson	B. B. Barry	O. B. Sanders	J. A. Eyrin
Stump Sound	7	5	52	11	61	11
Lower South West	23	5	33	2	46	16
Upper do.	12	14	48	5	15	54
Lower Rich Lands	28	29	11	8	31	48
Upper do. do.	15	25	3	39	12	71
Half Moon	4	20	28	1	33	15
North East	57	2	12	2	41	24
White Oake	37	11	4	1	32	18
Swansboro	21	45	8	1	5	23
Wolfpitt	35	10	8	1	50	10
Duffy's Co. (Garysburg)	4	57	6	2	25	28
Redd's do. (Virginia)	4	4	49	1	42	9
Rhodes' Co., (Garysburg)	6	14	4	19	16	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>249</b>	<b>235</b>	<b>266</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>460</b>	<b>347</b>

Wilmington Journal, August, 1861.

## District Attorney

The district attorney represents the state in all criminal matters. When someone is arrested by the police the DA’s office brings charges against them for prosecution. The district attorney is an elected official who serves a four year term. The number of assistant district attorneys is chosen based on the number of criminal cases in the district.

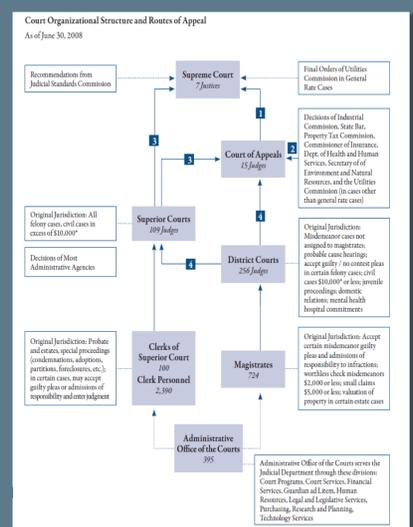


Wilmington Morning Star, September 1898.

The race for district attorney, or solicitor as the office was titled historically, could be contentious. During the 1898 race for the nomination Democrat Rodolph Duffy ran against Populist Dr. Cyrus Thompson. During that racially charged period newspaper accounts of their rallies and debates showed a hotly divided populace.

## Public Defender

People appearing before the court under criminal charges that cannot or choose not to hire a defense attorney are assigned one by the Judge hearing the case. The public defender is often a private attorney that is paid by the state to represent defendants. The lawyer is appointed by the senior resident superior court judge from a list of candidates nominated by other attorneys in the district and generally serves a four year term.



North Carolina Administrative Office of the Courts



To learn more about court officials use your smart phone to scan this QR code, which will take you to the website of the NC Court System.

