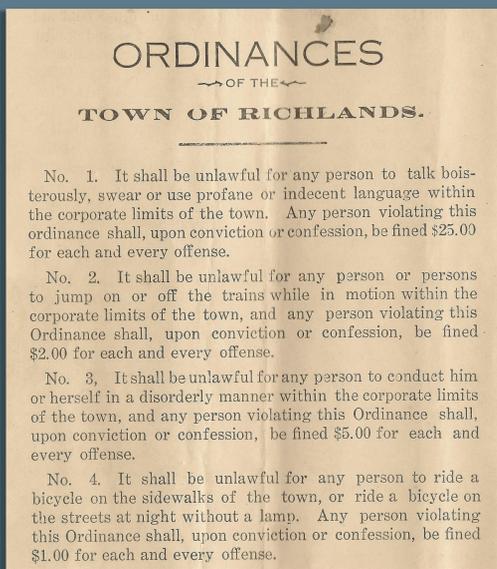
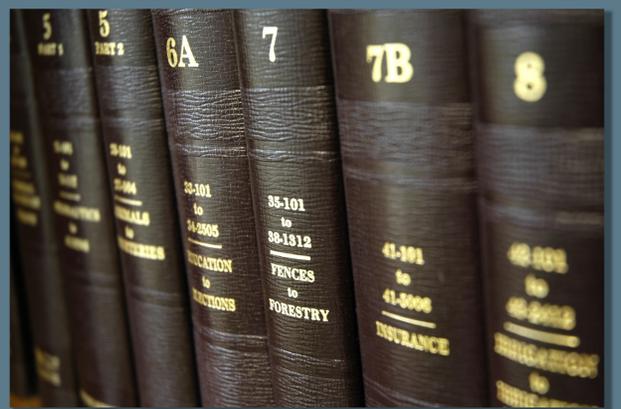


THE LEGAL CODE

Federal, state, and local ordinances govern Onslow County. At the local level ordinances formed by the county's governing body are passed by the General Assembly during a given session and known as session laws. Prior to 1945, private laws, those governing fewer than fifteen counties or placed specifically on individuals or groups, were held separately from public session laws. While not all of these laws are still part of the state's legal code, they can give us insight into how the state and Onslow County evolved. For instance, the incorporation of each town and city, including the formation of their police forces, the role of their aldermen or mayors, and the authority given them, can be found in the Session Laws of North Carolina. Current statutes and ordinances can be found either through the general statutes of the state or through the code of local ordinances for the county or each township.

Dating back nearly 4,000 years, the modern legal code has its basis in the Sumerian and Babylonian codes of Ur-Nammu and Hammurabi. With a more modern basis in English Common law, the laws in the United States are often built on precedent, or earlier decisions made by a court of law. These decisions and the ordinances that result from them are compiled into what we term the Code of Laws of the United States. Officially the collected laws of the US were not codified until 1874, although earlier compilations were created by private publishers. Today you can find all federal, state, and local codes both digitally and in hard copy.



Counties and their municipalities create ordinances that dictate how people residing within their boundaries should behave. These sometimes include taxes or fines for certain activities and also punishments for not abiding by the laws. These ordinances for the town of Richlands, written in 1912, included a clause deputizing all male citizens if needed by the mayor or constable. They also dictate the fines and punishments for allowing your livestock to roam around town.

As the country evolved so too did the legal code. In 1920, after more than half a century of protesting, lobbying, and organizing women in the United States gained the right to vote. Although this right was at first restricted in some southern states to white women, the Civil Rights Act of 1964 ensured finally that all women had equal access to the polls under the law. The Civil Rights Act also served to eliminate Jim Crow Laws that forced segregation in public places throughout southern states. Evolutions in the legal code such as these affected the population in Onslow County as it allowed greater participation by the citizenry in government and in the legal system.



State and Local Ordinances

Use your smart phone to scan this QR code to read the North Carolina General Statutes on the website of the North Carolina General Assembly.



Use your smart phone to scan this QR code to read the Code of Ordinances for Onslow County via the Municode Library.



From the 1880s to the 1960s statutes that came to be known as Jim Crow laws appeared in North Carolina to enforce the segregation of white and black citizens. Most often these involved cohabitation and intermarriage, but extended to education, drinking fountains, fishing, and boating, among others. While the laws themselves led to inequality, due process under the law also had unequal enforcement. Lynching, an extra legal execution without a trial conviction,



blighted the early part of the twentieth century, and Onslow County like much of the southern United States did not escape untouched. In 1919 John Daniels, having been accused, along with Daniel Pettaway, of killing Roper Lumber Company manager George Dickey, was shot in his jail cell as he awaited trial, by a mob of masked men who forced their way past the jailer. The mob then hung Daniels from the bridge leading into Jacksonville. The men

released Pettaway after he convinced them of his innocence. In 1922 another alleged lynching occurred. In Swansboro, Bayner Blackwell, believed to have been involved with the murder of the local postal carrier, Cyrus Long, was forced from his home and driven from the county, or according to other accounts, shot and buried in the swamp. His wife and children fled to New Bern soon after. Three other men had been arrested for the shooting of Cyrus Long. Neither Blackwell or Daniels stood trial for their crimes.

Rumors Persist That Onslow County Negro Was Lynched By Mob

New Bern Paper Claims It Verified Report; Alleges Sheriff Trying to Squelch Facts.

Wilmington Morning Star, August 10, 1922

