

Sevierville has had 25 mayors

By Carroll McMahan

Established in 1795, Sevierville is one of the oldest towns in Tennessee. For over a hundred years, Sevierville was incorporated several times and then repealed as the result of the town being divided over the sale of liquor.

Sevierville was finally, and permanently, incorporated on April 11, 1901 with a population of roughly 600. The first election was held on May 2, 1901 and Judge Ambrose Paine was chosen as the city's first mayor. He held the office for three years.

Paine, a prominent attorney, was appointed by Governor Tom C. Rye to fill the remainder the term of Circuit Judge Henderson who had died. From that day forward he was known simply as Judge Paine.

Twenty five men have held Sevierville's highest office since 1901. The following is a chronological list of those who have served as Mayor of Sevierville:

Ambrose M. Paine- 1901-1904

Amos T. Marshall- 1904-1906

W.A. Catlett 1906-1908

Miles B. "M.B." McMahan- 1908-1909

William S. Murphy- 1909-1913

Hugh C. Blair, Sr. - 1913-1915

John B. "J.B." Waters, Sr. - 1915-1917

John S. Ballard- 1917-1919

J.L. Thornton- 1919-1921

Bart W. Murphy- 1921-1927

J. Edgar Emert- 1927-1931
Sanders L. Atchley- 1931-1933
Roy C. Marshall- 1933-1937
Bert Ketner- 1937-1945
J. Reed Wade- 1945-1946
Robert S. "Bob" Howard- 1946-1951
Robert L. "Bob" Ogle, Jr. - 1951-1952
Ronald J. Ingle- 1952-1959
James A. "Jimmie" Temple- 1959-1963
Roy C. "Rusty" Newman- 1963-1968
Robert S. "Bob" Howard- 1969-1970
Herbert F. Lawson- 1971-1973
J. Clifford "Cliff" Davis- 1973-1977
Gary R. Wade- 1977-1987
Charlie Johnson- 1987-1995
Bryan C. Atchley- 1995-present

Robert S. Howard was the only mayor to serve two non-consecutive terms (1946-1951 and 1969-1970). During part of his first term, he was also the principal of Sevier County High School.

Another interesting thing about Sevierville's former mayors is how some of them were related. For example, Amos T. Marshall was elected in 1904 and was followed, twenty five years later by his son, Roy C. Marshall as mayor. In a much shorter time

frame, William S. Murphy and his brother, Bart W. Murphy, held the office only eight years apart.

Interestingly, Sevierville has elected three sets of Father-in-law and Son-in-laws: Ambrose M. Paine and John B. "J.B." Waters, Sr., Miles B. "M.B." McMahan and J. Edgar Emert and John S. Ballard and J. Clifford "Cliff" Davis.

Gary R. Wade was the grand nephew of two previous mayors, Sanders L. Atchley and J. Reed Wade.

Although he did not seek the office, Sanders L. Atchley was elected by write-in votes while he was out of town. Atchley, who was an alderman and cashier of Sevier County Bank, accepted the will of the people and served for two years.

Robert L. "Bob" Ogle, Jr. was 29 and Gary R. Wade was only 28 at the time they were elected. James A. "Jimmie" Temple was only 30 when he took office.

When Temple was elected in 1959, the population of Sevierville was only 2, 890 and the city limits remained between the East and West Prongs of the Little Pigeon River and Middle Creek.

In 1960, despite initial opposition by affected residents, the Board of Aldermen annexed Marshall Woods, McMahan Addition, Runyan Addition and Love Addition almost doubling the geographical area and population.

Just two weeks apart in 1963, two devastating floods prompted Mayor Roy C. "Rusty" Newman and the Board of Aldermen to seek assistance from the federal government in obtaining an effective flood control system resulting in rerouting the West Prong of the Little Pigeon River and widening of both the East and West Prongs.

Sevierville did not have a city hall until Herbert Lawson's term in the early 1970's when the old McNelly-Whaley Ford Company building, located on the corner of Park Road and Grace Avenue, was converted into a combination City Hall and Police Station.

Previously, Board of Aldermen meetings had been held in numerous locations including the Directors Room of The Bank of Sevierville, Sevier County Court House as well as the Sevierville Volunteer Fire Department.

J. Clifford "Cliff" Davis was instrumental in the development of Sevierville City Park and securing the right-of-way for Forks-of-the-River Parkway.

The Sevierville Community Center was among the tremendous accomplishments the city and its citizens experienced during Gary R. Wade's administration.

City Hall moved to the old Sevierville Water Department while Charlie Johnson was in office and phenomenal development and increased infrastructure continued.

Although most candidates' party affiliations have been known, individuals campaigning for mayor have not run on political tickets. Since the position paid little or nothing, it is evident the twenty-five gentlemen who have served as mayor have done so out of love for their hometown, its history and its heritage.

Current Mayor Bryan C. Atchley has held the office for the past 15 years, which is longer than any of his predecessors. At the moment, Mayor Atchley has one more year left in his current term.

Unparalleled growth continues under Mayor Bryan C. Atchley. Today Sevierville has a Municipal Complex which includes the Community Center, City Hall, Police Station, Civic Center and Chamber of Commerce. These facilities, along with countless others throughout the city, are testaments to Mayor Atchley and the twenty four other individuals who preceded him, all of whom have helped shape Sevierville into what it is today and what it will hopefully be tomorrow.