



# Jefferson County, Washington

## Historic Time Line

**1774** Juan Perez commands the first Spanish expedition to explore the Northwest Coast and sights the Olympic Mountains.

**1775** Bruno de Hezeta lands on the Washington coast and claims the area for Spain.

**1778** James Cook (British) explores and charts the Northwest Coast.

**1790** Manuel Quimper (Spanish) takes formal possession of Neah Bay for Spain on August 1, 1790.

**1792** Robert Gray (American) names the Columbia River after his ship. George Vancouver (British) explores and names Puget Sound. Spain establishes the first non-Indian settlement in Washington at Neah Bay.

**1808** The Russian sailing ship "St. Nicholas", with 21 on board, is wrecked near Destruction Island in what is present day Jefferson County on November 1, 1808. The survivors were taken as slaves by the Quileute Indians and held for nearly 3 years. 13 were eventually ransomed by Capt. Brown of the U.S.S. "Lydia" in May 1811.

**1841** United States naval expedition, headed by Charles Wilkes, explores Port Townsend Bay and other points in Washington.

**1843-1845** First large pioneer immigration to area of modern day Oregon and Washington occurs and temporary government established.

**1846** Treaty between United States and Great Britain sets U.S. boundary at 49th parallel in 1846.

**1848** Oregon Territory created in 1848.

**1851-1852** Port Townsend's first white settlers arrived on April 24, 1851, a year before those in Seattle. By May of 1852, the total population of Port Townsend consisted of three families and fifteen bachelors. Jefferson County, Oregon Territory was created from the original Lewis County, Oregon Territory on December 22, 1852. The first sawmill in the county was established at Port Ludlow in 1852. Port Townsend Post Office established in 1852.

**1853 Henry C. Wilson** - The first Sheriff of Jefferson County was appointed by the Oregon Territorial Legislature. Washington Territory was created on March 2, 1853 from the northern portion of the Oregon Territory. Isaac Ingalls Stevens was the first appointed Washington Territorial governor.

**1854 W.F. Sayward** - Appointed Jefferson County Sheriff by the Washington Territorial Legislature. He was the owner of the Port Ludlow saw mill. In 1854, the U.S. government moved the location of the Customs headquarters from Olympia to Port Townsend to help combat the smuggling of liquor, opium, and illegal aliens. This brought the remote outpost of Port Townsend into immediate prominence. Because every vessel entering or departing Puget Sound had to stop and clear at the Port of Entry, Port Townsend became the leading shipping port north of San Francisco.

**1854 H.H. McNeal** - Appointed Jefferson County Sheriff by the Washington Territorial Legislature. He was a mill operator by trade. Clallam County was formed from the northern half of Jefferson County by the Washington Territorial Legislature.



**1855-1856 E.S. Fowler** - The first elected Sheriff of Jefferson County. The first fort constructed here, named Fort Wilson, was built in 1855 to protect the new settlement of Port Townsend from attack. This fort was abandoned in 1856 when hostilities ended and was replaced by Fort Townsend the same year.

**1857 Loren Brown Hastings** - Election held September 15, 1856. He resigned while in office on October 26, 1857 and George W. Eby was appointed to replace him.

**1857 George W. Eby** - Elected November 9, 1857 by a vote of 48 to 7. Port Ludlow Post Office established in 1857.

**1859-1860 Sam McCurdy** - He was also Port Townsend's first doctor, arriving here in 1855. The 1860 Census listed 531 for the county, including 258 in Port Townsend. The city incorporated on January 16, 1860.



**1861 John A. Tucker** - Resigned from office and left county. J.G. Clinger appointed to replace him. U.S. Civil War begins in 1861. Port Discovery (Discovery Bay) Post Office established in 1861. Customs Port of Entry moved from Port Townsend to Port Angeles.



**1862 J.G. Clinger** - Appointed May 6, 1862.

**1862 Henry L. Tibbals** - Elected July 12, 1862, but resigned from office on February 2, 1863. William W. Armstrong appointed to replace him.

**1863-1864 William W. Armstrong** - Sheriff William W. Armstrong was sworn into office on February 13, 1863 after he was appointed to the office. He was later elected to the office. He lead a search party for a little lost girl during a bitter snowstorm shortly before Christmas. He stayed out for many hours over several days during which he contracted a cold that turned into pneumonia from which he died at the age of about 35 years.



**1865-1866 John H. Woodley** - Appointed on January 9, 1865. Elected in his own right on June 5, 1865. Sued by County Commissioners on September 6, 1865 for "Neglect of Duty".

Customs Port of Entry moved back to Port Townsend from Port Angeles.

**1867-1870 David M. Littlefield** - Elected June 7, 1867. City of Port Townsend petitions to use County Jail for their prisoners. The Census listed 690 for the county, including 537 in Port Townsend.



**1871-1876 J.J.H. Van Bokkelen** - Elected on June 4, 1870. He was also elected Representative to the Washington Territorial Assembly. First Courthouse built in 1874.

**1877-1883 Benjamin S. Miller** - Elected on November 7, 1876. After retiring, he moved to Seattle and was later killed by a train in downtown Seattle. Chimacum Post Office established in 1878. Point Wilson lighthouse built in 1879. Irondale, Leland, Quileute, and Quilcene Post Offices established in 1881. The Census listed 1,268 for the county, including 917 in Port Townsend.



**1884-1888 John F. Sheehan** - Elected in November of 1884. "Alexander's Castle" built in 1888 on what was to become Fort Worden. County census shows 2,683 people. Port Hadlock Post Office established in 1886. Land purchased for new courthouse on November 11, 1887. Brinnon Post Office established in 1888.

**1889-1894 Richard Delanty** - Elected November 6, 1888 for term to begin on January 1, 1889. Washington becomes the 42nd state on November 11, 1889 with Elisha Peyre Ferry serving as the first elected governor. Port Townsend Bell Tower constructed in 1890. The new Jefferson County Courthouse and Jail were opened in 1892. There were 27 saloons operating in Port Townsend during this period. Center Post Office established in 1890. Junction (Uncas), Duckabush and Pleasant Harbor Post Offices established in 1891. Bogachiel and Queets Post Offices established in 1892. Nationwide economic depression of 1893. The Census listed 8,368 for the county, including 4,558 in Port Townsend.

[Click here](#) for an interesting experience from this time period.

**1895-1897 M.F. Hamilton** - Elected January 11, 1897. Resigned on December 6, 1898. C. L. Intermela appointed to replace him. Clearwater and Evergreen Post Offices established in 1895. Tarboo and Pins Post Offices established in 1897. Work begun on Fort Worden in 1897.



**1898 C.L. Intermela** - Appointed, later elected in 1903. Craven Peninsula (Indian & Marrowstone Islands at Nordland) Post Office established in 1898.

**1899-1902 W.C. Hammund** - Elected January 3, 1899. Fort Worden commissioned in 1902. Fort Flagler Post Office established in 1900. Tula and Elkpark Post Offices established in 1902. The Census listed 5,712 for the county, including 3,443 in Port Townsend.



**1903-1904 C.L. Intermela** - Term begins January 12, 1903. Castile Post Office established in 1903. Hoh and Spruce Post Offices established in 1904.

**1905-1908 Julius Macomber** - Elected Sheriff, term begins November 9, 1904. Squamish Post Office established in 1907. Coyle and Triton Post Offices established in 1908.

**1909-1911 John McInnes** - Elected Sheriff with term to begin January 5, 1909. Sheriff McInnes drowned on a fishing trip near Port Hudson on November 5, 1911 and a \$50 reward posted for recovery of his body. J.A. McGuire was appointed to fill unexpired term. Mount Olympus National Monument established in 1909. Women gain the right to vote in Washington in 1910. Shine Post Office established in 1909. Dabob Post Office established in 1911. Customs Port of Entry makes final move from Port Townsend to Seattle. The Census listed 8,337 for the county, including 4,181 in Port Townsend.

**1912-1916 J.A. McGuire** - Elected Sheriff. Fairmount Post Office established in 1912. Gardiner Post Office established in 1915. Portage Canal completed, severing the land link to Indian Island in 1915.

**1917-1920 Martin Herstrom** - U.S. enters World War I in 1917. Cedarholm Post Office established in 1917. The Census listed 6,557 for the county, including 2,847 in Port Townsend.



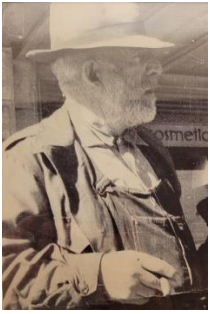
**1921-1926 S. Phillip Chase** - He shot and mortally wounded Frank Grants in a gun battle at the Big Quilcene Bridge. Grants and 2 others had robbed the Sequim Bank. Mastic Post Office established in 1923. Matheny Post Office designated in 1925 but never opened.

**1927-1934 John M. Carroll** - Camp Talbot Post Office established in 1927. Kalaloch Post Office established in 1928.



**1935-1942 Fred Polk** - The U.S. enters World War II in 1941. Fort Worden Post Office established in 1941.

**1943-1946 Miles E. Brown** - County population was 6,000 in 1945.



**1947-1954 Peter J. Naughton** - County population was 11,000 in 1950. Indian Island Bridge completed in 1952. Fort Worden closed in 1953.



**1955-1958 Miles E. Brown** - Fort Worden purchased by State of Washington in 1955 for \$127,533 for use as a diagnostic and treatment center. The Sheriff had 2 full time deputies and a jail matron.



**1959-1978 Robert L. Hansen** - Only Sheriff to have served 20 years. Fort Worden changes from Diagnostic to Treatment Center in 1963. Official closure of Fort Worden as a Treatment Center for youth in 1971. By 1969 the Sheriff had 8 deputies and a cook/matron and the County population had dropped to 9,680. The west end (Clearwater) annex was opened with living quarters for the resident deputy and his family, an office, holding cells, a courtroom and an auditor's office.

He established the first twenty-four hour dispatch center and moved the Sheriff's Office from the main floor of the courthouse to the basement.

Sheriff Hansen was the last Jefferson County Sheriff to have living quarters in the Courthouse. He lived there with his wife and three children. His wife cooked for the prisoners.



**1979-1986 Leland B. Smith** - Filming of "An Officer and a Gentleman" in Jefferson County in 1981. JCSO moved from the basement of the old county courthouse in Port Townsend to the "new" Hadlock office in 1986. Historical material to be added soon.



**1987-1994 Melvin Mefford** Sheriff Mefford served 27 years as a Deputy Sheriff and was elected as Sheriff in 1987. He served two terms and retired in 1994 after a thirty-five year career in law enforcement.

As a Deputy he designed the uniform shoulder patch. There is no known earlier version and a variation of the patch continues to be worn today.

As Sheriff he established a motorcycle program using two motorcycles operated by reserve deputies. He set up a resident deputy program in Port Ludlow that was funded by the Port Ludlow Home Owners Association and the Port Ludlow Development Association, established a Marine Patrol, and implemented the Enhanced 911 and Computer Aided Dispatch system.

Sheriff Mefford was confronted with significant jail problems upon taking office. The contractor, architect and bonding company were sued for over \$300,000 for construction faults. The Jail experienced its first successful jail break on May 18, 1988 when three inmates discovered the contractor had forgotten to put hard grout around all of the jail windows and were able to pick out the caulk and push out the window.



Sheriff Mefford credits the success of his tenure to his 29 employees, 10 Reserve Deputies and the cooperation of the citizens of Jefferson County.

Mel Mefford made a significant contribution to the development of this historical section of the JCSO web site. His earlier research and husbanding of historical materials has proven invaluable.



Dispatch became JeffCom.

**1995-2002 Peter G. Piccini** - Established the position of Under Sheriff. Featured on "America's Most Wanted" with the Allison Tornensis homicide which was solved in 2001. The traditional Deputy Uniform changed to its present look as part of budget reductions. 45 Cal Semi-Autos replaced 357 Magnum revolvers as department Issued side arm. Established the Quilcene Annex. Security fencing and Lighting erected around the Jail/Sheriff's facility. Added a 12-Bed Addition to the Jail using a modular unit to combat over-crowding. Administration and Jail Records became automated. K-9 Drug Unit established to combat drugs. Sheriff's



**2003-2009 Michael D. Brasfield** - The 31st person to be elected to the office of Jefferson County Sheriff and the 34th individual to hold the office full time. He entered office after a 34 year law enforcement career in Mercer Island, Seattle and Fort Lauderdale. Sheriff Brasfield was elected to a second term in 2006 but left office after six years of service for this third try at retirement.



**2009 - 2014 Tony Hernandez** - Serving as Undersheriff to Sheriff Brasfield, Sheriff Hernandez was appointed to fill the Office in March, 2009. Sheriff Hernandez was elected in November, 2009. Hernandez entered law enforcement in 1994.

He was promoted to Undersheriff in 2007. Prior to that he was the chief criminal deputy in 2006 and was director of community policing and code enforcement coordinator in 2005 and 2006. He served as a sheriff's deputy from 2001 to 2005.



**2014 - 2018 David Stanko** - David was elected in November 2014 and immediately assumed the position of Sheriff that had been vacated by the retirement of Sheriff Hernandez.



**2018 – Present Joe Nole** – Hired as a deputy under Sheriff Mel Mefford, Sheriff Nole worked his way through the ranks of JCSO having served as a deputy, detective, chief criminal deputy, undersheriff, and as the appointed sheriff in 2014. Sheriff Nole was elected in 2018, becoming the county's 34<sup>th</sup> elected sheriff. In 2022, Sheriff Nole successfully ran for re-election.

