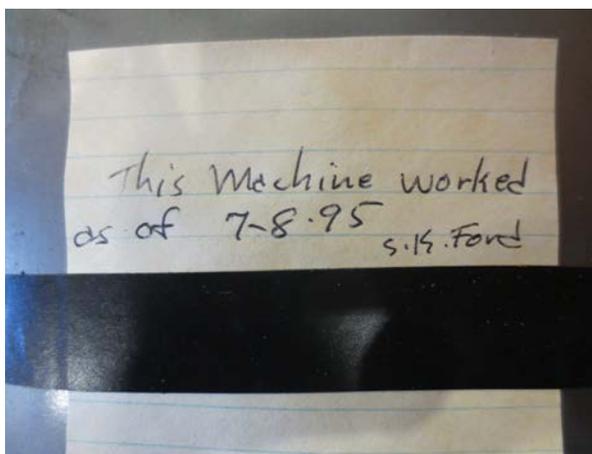


A NEWS MEMO FROM THE COURT HISTORICAL SOCIETY EASTERN DISTRICT OF TENNESSEE

THE RECORDER WORKED!--The old recording machine shown in the lower left corner of the photograph below is among the items in the archives of the Court Historical Society, stored there since 1995, when longtime U.S. District Court reporter **Stanley K. Ford** donated it to the Society three years before he died. It was brought out of storage a few weeks ago when Knoxville News Sentinel columnist **Sam Venable** turned to the Society for assistance, hoping we had a machine that would play the disc from the official record of a 1968 state court criminal trial he was researching. It worked, but we weren't sure it would, even though Ford had left a note taped to it that read: "This machine worked as of 7-8-95. S.K. Ford." With Venable are two of Ford's daughters who were invited to the experiment, Knoxville lawyer **Kaye Ford**, center, a member of the Court Historical Society, and Knoxville court reporter **Peggy Ford McCrory**.



The Gray Audograph machine pictured above was popular from the 1940s through the 1970s, but few, if any, are in regular use today, according to a longtime Gray Audograph dealer in New Castle, Delaware. He said production of the machine was discontinued in about 1960. It recorded sound by pressing grooves into a soft vinyl disc. Court reporter Ford, who used the machine during much of his 24-year career, held on to it after his retirement in 1979 and donated it and another one to the Society in 1995. He died in 1998 at the age of 74.

Excerpts from *Justice in the Valley*:

Below are stories from *Justice in the Valley*, a history of the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Tennessee, by **Dr. Patricia Brake**, published in 1998 with funding and sponsorship by the Court Historical Society:

Seventy-six years ago this May--in 1938--a second Article III judgeship for the Eastern District of Tennessee was created by Congress. One year later, in June 1939, state judge **Leslie Darr** of Marion County was appointed to fill the judgeship, which was based in Chattanooga. Until then, the entire district had been served by one judge. At

(over)

the time of Judge Darr's appointment, the other judge was **U.S. District Judge George C. Taylor**, a native of Greene County, who was domiciled in Knoxville. [Today, five Article III judgeships are authorized for this district; in addition, the district has two senior judges.]

In the 1940s, the Eastern District of Tennessee saw relatively few infractions of the Selective Service Act (registration for the military draft) or war-related litigation, but it did have one sensational espionage case in 1950 involving the sale of secrets to the Russians by **Alfred Dean Slack**, 44, an employee of Holston Ordnance Works. He was indicted in Greeneville. He pleaded guilty and faced a maximum of 30 years in prison. Had he been convicted by a jury, he could have faced the death penalty. Slack had also served as a courier for a Russian spy ring. The Justice Department recommended a 10-year sentence. **U.S. District Judge Robert L. Taylor** imposed a sentence of 15 years. In a memorandum filed in the case, the judge wrote: "Fifteen years in prison is a long time in any life and in any period of history. For this defendant it is not too much, but I believe, in consideration of all the circumstances, that it is enough."

In 1972, an obscenity case involving the Broadway musical *Hair* was tried in federal court in Chattanooga by **U.S. District Judge Frank W. Wilson**. A New York promotions company applied to Chattanooga's Tivoli Theater to stage the production but was denied permission by the auditorium directors, who said that a showing of it would not be in the best interests of the community. The promotions company challenged the decision in court. An advisory jury returned a verdict that the musical was obscene because it showed group nudity and simulated sex. Judge Wilson concurred. The decision was upheld by the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals in a divided vote. The U.S. Supreme Court reversed the lower court ruling, stating that the denial of the use of the facility constituted prior restraint and, as such, abridged the constitutional protections against censorship.

[EDITOR'S NOTE--Copies of *Justice in the Valley* are available from the Court Historical Society for \$25. If ordered by mail, there is an additional cost of \$4 for postage. See the Society's address below. *Justice* covers the 200-year history of the Eastern District, from the creation of the court through 1997. In a review of it in 1998, the Knoxville News Sentinel said the book was not written for legal scholars but for anybody. "You can't help but be a little awed at the weight and variety of cases that have passed through federal court here--matters profound, occasionally comical, at times downright bizarre."]

We are choosing to send occasional email memos to our members to stay in touch. The regular newsletter will continue to be published from time to time throughout the year.

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