October 1959

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https://doi.org/10.15779/Z38R19Q

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The Branch Court

Arthur K. Marshall*

This article will discuss the branch court, a court which serves a particular locality but which is a “branch” of a central, downtown court.

There are few judicial subjects which elicit as much spirited debate as does the branch court. The controversy rages over the need for it as well as its efficiency. The adherents of the branch court point to its convenience as its basic justification, something so convenient must be needed. Others reply that necessity and convenience are not synonymous and that while the branch may be a convenience, it is not a necessity. Whatever one may think of the counter-argument, convenience is in fact considered necessity by Los Angeles County branch court adherents. Within the 4,041 square miles of that burgeoning county are now six million persons, making it the most populous county in the United States. In addition, 250,000 more people pour in every year. As a result, the branch system of that county is the one which has been developed more extensively than that of any other California county.

Convenient it is indeed. Parties to an action who live in Santa Monica, Los Angeles County, would be inconvenienced by an 18-mile trip through heavy traffic to the county courthouse at the civic center of the county. A Long Beach resident can use the six-judge court located in the midst of his own community instead of journeying 20 miles to the county courthouse. Of course, witnesses are no less happy to forego the trip downtown. Attorneys make their offices near the branch court of that section of the county in which most of their clients are located, try their cases in that branch court and thereby omit time-consuming attendance at the downtown court. Finally, few jurors object to the performance of their civic duty in the local courts although they do ask that the period of their service be limited in the branch court as it is downtown, that is, to 1 month. (As juries are not as frequent in the branches as they are downtown, their achievement of the total days they must serve takes more time in the local courts.)

In counties such as Los Angeles the branch court, if justice is not to be denied through geographical inaccessibility, is the solution to the problems of the modern, traffic-jammed county. In any area where suburbia has come into its own, the problem of convenient access to courts can be solved by the branch court. As such solution is of great importance, we should examine this system closely and seek means of improving it.

* Commissioner, Superior Court of Los Angeles County. The author gratefully acknowledges the assistance so kindly extended by Sally Fontaine, executive secretary to the Presiding Judge, Superior Court of Los Angeles County; Tom Carrick, chief deputy clerk of the Santa Monica branch, Superior Court of Los Angeles County; and Mary Weatherwax, Office of the County Clerk, Los Angeles.
In 1931, an amendment to the California Government Code permitted branch courts to be established at any point eight or more miles from the county courthouse.¹ The branches were restrained from elbowing each other by a 1953 amendment to section 69749 which provided that any future branch courts must be eight or more miles from the nearest city hall of the city which contains the nearest branch court.² In 1957 the section was again amended. The permissible distance between branch courts was increased to 14 miles.³ This amendment prevented the establishment of additional courts at West Covina, Redondo Beach and Whittier. The disposition of these courts which has been proposed by the Presiding Judge of the Superior Court of Los Angeles County, Honorable Louis H. Burke, will be discussed later in this article.⁴

Further legislative action has been sought. The City of Beverly Hills desires either the adoption of a formula which would base the location of branches upon the number of attorneys who practice in a city, or the division of the western section of the county into two parts because the population expected in each part by 1980 would keep two sets of courts busy.

II

DESCRIPTION OF THE SYSTEM

A branch court can be autonomous and independent of the "downtown" county courthouse. It can—given a commissioner, referees for juvenile work, secretaries and a properly staffed county clerk’s office—handle any kind of legal problem. However, branches operating in Santa Clara, Contra Costa, San Bernardino, Orange, Riverside and Santa Barbara counties are not complete judicial units. Many types of cases, criminal, juvenile, etc., are only handled at the county seat. Los Angeles County has, in its multi-judge district courts, virtually achieved such independence of the county courthouse.

At present, 11 branch courts are functioning in Los Angeles County. Four of these branches each are regularly manned by one judge: Compton, Glendale, Burbank and Antelope Valley. Six judges serve the Long Beach branch; four (three regularly assigned) work in Santa Monica; three in Pasadena (two regularly assigned); and two each in the Southwest District (this district is one of the new multi-judge courts which includes Inglewood

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⁴ See text at note 38, infra.
and contiguous cities), Pomona, San Fernando (one regularly assigned) and South Gate.

Every branch court hears civil cases, including domestic relations and probate matters. Five branches handle criminal as well as civil matters. The Long Beach and Santa Monica branch courts also hear the ever-lengthening calendars dealing with juvenile problems.

III

MATTERS PROPERLY HEARD IN BRANCHES

In Los Angeles County, civil actions and proceedings originally filed at the county seat may be transferred to a branch, and civil actions and proceedings may be originally filed in and assigned to the branch court, except as may be otherwise provided in the court rules, in the following cases:

Actions to recover, to partition or to foreclose upon real property, as well as summary proceedings to obtain possession of real property, and actions in eminent domain may be commenced in the branch court district in which the real property is located. If the following causes of action arose in a branch court district, suit thereon can be brought there: recovery of statutory penalties or forfeitures, actions against public officers, torts, conversion of or injury to personal property, recovery of or foreclosures on personal property. Proceedings in probate can be brought in the district where the decedent resided. Also, actions for divorce, annulment, and separate maintenance can be commenced where the plaintiff resides. Petitioners for change of name or for adoption can file such matters where they reside. Mandamus, certiorari and prohibition proceedings may be commenced in any branch court against courts or officers who have their offices or who operate wholly in the district of the branch court, except as to actions against municipal or inferior courts and their officers. Applications for writs of habeas corpus relating to alleged misdemeanors or the validity of a decision of municipal or inferior courts and applications for restraining orders or preliminary injunctions against statutes or ordinances.

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6 Long Beach, Santa Monica, Pasadena, Pomona and the Southwest District branches.

6 Compare the situation in Santa Clara County where one judge sits in the branch court at Palo Alto, but where all criminal matters, adoption, naturalization and juvenile court proceedings, pre-trial conferences, and jury trials continue to be heard only at the county seat. Cal. Super. Ct. (Santa Clara) R. 2, §§ (n)-(t).


8 Id., R. 18(c).

9 Id., R. 18(g).

10 Id., R. 18(h).

11 Ibid.

12 Id., R. 18(c).

13 Id., R. 18(d).

14 Ibid.

15 Id., R. 18(f).

16 Id., R. 18(i).

17 Id., R. 18(h).
the violation of which are misdemeanors form another exception to the above rule.\textsuperscript{18} Appeals to the superior court are heard in the branch where the inferior court is located, except for cases which by statute must go to the appellate department, located at the county seat.\textsuperscript{19}

If the defendant or a majority of the defendants live in a branch court district, the action may be there commenced.\textsuperscript{20}

Lastly, the presiding judge has the discretion to direct the filing in a branch court if it is convenient for the witnesses or "the ends of justice" are served.\textsuperscript{21}

As for criminal proceedings, the branches can try cases where the offense is alleged to have been committed within such districts.\textsuperscript{22} However, the presiding judge can transfer such case elsewhere if to so do would serve the "greatest convenience of witnesses" or otherwise promote the ends of justice.\textsuperscript{23}

Juvenile cases are customarily heard in the Santa Monica and Long Beach branches if the minor lives in either of such districts.\textsuperscript{24}

\section*{IV}

\textbf{TRANSFERS OF CASES TO AND FROM BRANCHES}

Cases already filed at the county seat which can be tried in branches may be transferred upon application to the presiding judge, after notice.\textsuperscript{25}

When the case is transferred to a branch, a duplicate file is made for the county seat.\textsuperscript{26} Written notice of such transfer must be given to all parties.\textsuperscript{27} Thereafter, all incidental matters, demurrers, motions and interim orders are heard in the branch to which the case has been transferred.\textsuperscript{28}

When a proceeding is filed in the branch court originally, a "Certificate of Assignment" is filed together with the summons and complaint.\textsuperscript{29}

Actions may be transferred from a branch court to the county seat or another branch in the following cases:\textsuperscript{30}

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{18} \textit{Id.}, R. 18(i). These excepted matters are heard at the county seat by a judge sitting in a Writs and Receivers Department. \textit{Id.}, R. 4, § 3.
  \item \textsuperscript{19} \textit{Id.}, R. 18(k).
  \item \textsuperscript{20} \textit{Id.}, R. 18(j).
  \item \textsuperscript{21} \textit{Id.}, R. 18(m).
  \item \textsuperscript{22} \textit{Id.}, R. 19, §§ 2–3.
  \item \textsuperscript{23} \textit{Id.}, R. 19, § 4.
  \item \textsuperscript{24} This is done pursuant to a court policy to avoid the inconvenience to witnesses of the long trip to the county seat.
  \item \textsuperscript{25} \textit{Id.}, R. 20, §§ 2(a)–(b).
  \item \textsuperscript{26} \textit{Id.}, R. 22, § 2.
  \item \textsuperscript{27} \textit{Id.}, R. 20, § 2(b).
  \item \textsuperscript{28} \textit{Id.}, R. 20, § 2(c).
  \item \textsuperscript{29} \textit{Id.}, R. 20, § 1(a).
  \item \textsuperscript{30} \textit{Id.}, R. 20, § 4.
\end{itemize}
1. When the parties have stipulated to the transfer and specifically state in such stipulation a valid ground for transfer.
2. When it appears that an impartial trial could not be secured in a branch court.
3. When the convenience of witnesses and the ends of justice would be promoted by the change.
4. Where no branch court is qualified to hear the case.

V

COUNTY CLERK'S OFFICE AT BRANCHES

As the branch clerk's office is staffed by and under the jurisdiction of the county clerk, its activities are patterned after those of the central office of the county clerk. The major variances are discussed below.

A. Keeping of records

The clerk at the branch court maintains in his office a separate file for each civil action or proceeding pending in the branch court, in which he keeps the originals of all pleadings and other papers on file in the action or proceeding, except "as otherwise provided in the court rules." The party applying for an order of transfer will within 15 days after the making of such order, prepare and file with the clerk at the county seat complete copies of all pleadings and other papers, except documentary evidence, contained in the official file of such action or proceeding at the time of its transfer, including the order of transfer, which shall be arranged in the same form and sequence as the original file and shall be certified by the clerk as a complete copy of the original file at the time such order was made. An original file will not be transferred to the branch court before compliance with this requirement. Any order for transfer based on stipulation must provide for the preparation of the necessary copies.

From and after the making of an order of transfer of an action or proceeding to the branch court and at and after the original filing of an action or proceeding in the branch court, the party filing each pleading or other paper except documentary evidence, in the action or proceeding so transferred or filed prepares and files a complete and clearly legible copy thereof together with the original paper. The clerk of the branch court will refuse to accept any such original pleading or other paper unless a copy is also tendered for filing. Whenever any party is required to or does submit to the court in the branch a proposed form of judgment, he will also submit with the original two complete and clearly legible copies.

Any original pleading or other paper on file with the clerk at the branch

31 Id., R. 22, § 1.
32 Id., R. 20, § 1.
court may be transmitted to the county seat whenever its presence there is necessary in connection with the entry of any judgment, order or default or the discharge of any other official duty, or for inspection by any person having good reason for desiring to inspect it there; but in any such case the original pleading or other paper is not kept at the county seat longer than is reasonably necessary for the purpose for which it was taken there, and upon the expiration of such time it is returned to the office of the clerk at the branch court from which it was transmitted.

After the trial, exhibits admitted or offered in evidence in the branch court and left in the custody of the clerk, are always taken to and kept at the county seat, except when such exhibit is wanted by the court for inspection at the branch court.

The branch court clerk keeps in his office at the branch court a register of actions for all civil actions and proceedings pending in such court or courts. A copy of each such register of actions is also found in his office at the county seat.

The minutes of the proceedings of the court in all branch courts are photographed on microfilm at the county seat. The microfilm copy is the official minutes. Copies of such minutes are transmitted to and kept by the clerk at the branch court.

All judgments rendered by the branch court are entered by the clerk in the judgment books kept at the county seat, and no other entry thereof is required of him.

Whenever a judgment or order disposing of a civil action or proceeding pending in the branch court has become final, either by affirmance on appeal, by the lapse of the time for appeal without an appeal taken or otherwise, the county clerk transfers the original file to the county seat, while the copies of pleadings and other papers therein (not including exhibits) are sent to the branch court in question and kept there.

B. Calendar Methods

1. Memorandum for Setting

Upon the filing of a Memorandum for Setting, the action is entered on the Register of Actions. The county clerk or the courtroom clerk, depending upon the branch, checks the memorandum to ascertain if the parties seek a preference. Actions for unlawful detainers, injunctions, declaratory relief and others that are entitled to legal preference are set for pre-trial and at the pre-trial conference are given a trial date. The pre-trial is usually arranged within 2 to 3 months from the date of the filing of the memorandum, and the trial occurs within 5 to 6 weeks after pre-trial. Notices of

33 See id., R. 21.

34 Cases resulting from successful motions for new trial, hung juries, declared mistrials and cases reversed on appeal are set for trial within three months from the date of filing of the memorandum.
such pre-trial and trial are mailed to all counsel as soon as possible after
the setting.

The regular memoranda for setting are then placed on a “Civil Active
List” similar to that maintained in the civic center, according to their date
of filing. In some branches they then are numerically arranged in three
groups: Jury, non-jury and domestic relations. In others, they are not sep-
arated, but are all kept together.

Under the present rules for pre-trial, cases which attorneys estimate
will take one-half day or less to try are not made a part of the “Civil Ac-
tive List” but are set separately, usually on a specific weekly or monthly
calendar day. Such cases are set for trial from 4 to 8 weeks from the date
of the filing of the “Memo” and can ordinarily be completed on the calen-
dared day.

Cases in which pre-trial hearing is necessary are “pulled” from the Civil
Active List according to the dates on which they were filed, keeping in mind
the number desired for each calendar. At the present time, cases are set for
pre-trial 3 months ahead. The trial dates are set about 5 to 7 weeks after
pre-trial. Jury trials in branch courts are heard about 9½ months after
filing of the “Memo.” Non-jury cases go to trial in about 8½ months from
the date of filing in branch courts.

Actually only about one-third of the daily calendar is usually trans-
ferred to a department for trial and the others are either continued by re-
quest of counsel or go off calendar for lack of prosecution.

As to domestic relations matters, the branch court clerk sets default
divorce cases about 1 month before hearing.35

2. Probate, Domestic, Law and Motion Calendars

All branches run their probate cases, orders to show cause in domestic
relations and law and motion matters through calendars and customarily
set aside one day on which the matters on such calendars can be heard.

3. Other Calendars

In the four single-judge courts all matters, civil and criminal, as well
as probate, orders to show cause, and law and motion, are of necessity
placed on the calendars of the single-judge and specific days are allocated
to different kinds of cases. In the seven multi-judge courts a master calen-
dar is used and all civil cases appear on that calendar. The presiding judge
of the branch assigns cases from the calendar to the other judges as their
departments open. One of the judges in each of the branches at Pasadena
and Long Beach handles the criminal matters, but if his calendar permits,
he will take a civil case from the presiding judge. In Santa Monica criminal

35 The Los Angeles branch courts handle about as many (10,240 to 11,087) default divorces
as does the court sitting at the county seat.
trials are called in the department of the presiding judge and are assigned out in the same manner as a civil trial to one of the other departments for hearing. Another department hears all preliminary matters, probation and sentences where pleas of "guilty" are entered in that department and also violations of probation.

4. Types of Calendars

The titles of all cases and their file numbers are recorded on a calendar in every branch. However, several types of calendars are used. Calendar "books" are frequently employed, sometimes with separate books for probate, criminal and civil matters. One court uses calendar sheet. Another court uses such sheets for everything but probate cases, which are recorded in a "book."

Where only three or four judges serve a branch, it has been suggested that no formal calendar call be made each morning. The time so consumed might be better employed in trying cases. The clerk can inform attorneys by telephone instead of requiring their attendance on the call of the calendar.

If, of the scheduled cases, none is left on a trial day for disposition, the branch court communicates with the presiding judge at the civic center and a case may be sent out from the master calendar. By this means an average of 10 cases per month were taken off the Civic Center Master Calendar in 1958. On the other hand, if the branch court has no judge available to hear a case needing an immediate trial, it may be transferred to the master calendar in the civic center for such trial.

In the three branches with the heaviest probate calendars, Long Beach, Pasadena and Santa Monica, a commissioner assists the probate judge. In domestic relations matters, commissioners sit as judge pro tempore on "OSC day" in each branch, and assists the judge handling that calendar.

VI

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

In the 10-year period from 1948 to 1958 the number of cases which are filed in the branch courts has doubled. The 1958 filings in the branches now comprise 30 percent of all civil, domestic relations, criminal, adoptions and probate cases begun in Los Angeles County. The judges in the branches now total 24 (assigned as well as regular), which is 25 percent of the total superior court judicial personnel (96).

The statistical information in the accompanying chart illustrates the allocation of cases in 1958 between branches and the civic center trial pool and the downtown specialized departments broken down into the various

86 See App.
types of judicial business, the number awaiting trial and the time interval between setting memoranda and trial.

The branch courts can be proud of the output revealed in these statistics. Their time to trial is less than the downtown interval. The 1958 percentage of the total case load handled in branches in some categories came close to the ratio of branch judges to all judges. In some categories such percentage was far in excess of the ratio. For example, the 25 percent of the judges who were in branches in 1958 heard 22.7 percent of all civil jury cases. Of all civil non-jury actions, 42.6 percent were tried in branches. The criminal statistics are not instructive, as only a few branches heard criminal cases in 1958. The percentage of probate dispositions in the branches, 29.1 percent, exceeded the branch judge ratio. As for adoptions, the branch court disposition percentage far exceeded the branch judge ratio. In the field of domestic relations, the percentage heard in branches was more than twice the ratio of branch judges to all judges. However, in all fairness it should be observed that complex and lengthy trials are not regularly heard in branches. Condemnation cases, receiverships, the lengthier personal injury cases such as those resulting from the airplane collision over the Grand Canyon, complex domestic relations matters and malpractice suits are filed downtown, where the likelihood of an earlier and uninterrupted trial is greater than in a branch court burdened with calendars and special matters which interrupt the court and reduce trial time. Furthermore, any illness which causes a vacancy in a branch court results in the assignment of a civic center judge to fill such vacancy. Lastly, the judges in branch court departments have the right to transfer the longer cases—those which will take more than a week to try—to the civic center trial pool for disposition. (However, such transfers do not occur frequently.) Hence, comparisons between the number of cases tried in branch courts and the civic center can be misleading if not carefully weighted to compensate for the hearing of cases of greater length and complexity in the downtown courts, and for the numerous interruptions inflicted on the judges in the branches. An exact factor to compensate for the variations in the circumstances of branch and civic center has not as yet been invented. The branch court advocate might comment at this point that the branch court judge must discharge duties which the specialized departments remove from the shoulders of the downtown judges, and that therefore the amount of judge-time available for trials in the branches is a good deal less than 8 hours per day for each of 24 judges assigned to the branches. The argument can be endless and is fruitless. Suffice to say that at least so far as quantity of cases was concerned, the branch courts turned out their fair share. Such a statistical record is a tribute to the quality and vigor of the judges assigned to branches, and presages an even more impressive record under a wholly multi-judge branch court system.
VII

THE QUESTION OF IMPROVEMENT

The convenience of a neighborhood court must be balanced against inefficiencies it produces. In a single-judge branch court, the case calendared for a specific day may be completed, continued or settled during the morning. The judge, however, may not hear about such disposition until 2 o'clock or later, at which time he will call the Civic Center Master Calendar for another case. A case then must be selected which can be heard in the balance of the afternoon. The parties, attorneys and witnesses must journey to branches which are 5 to 18 miles away. The selection and travel time may take most of another hour and it will be after 3 o'clock before the case is ready to proceed. Frequently, a case that can be finished in the time available cannot be found and the branch court will be dark for the afternoon.

However, this time loss rarely occurs in the multi-judge branch court. When one judge finishes a case he can quickly secure another from the branch Master Calendar.

Again the single-judge branch court must dispose of a formidable array of calendars—probate, orders to show cause, criminal, as well as civil—before he can hear any case. In addition he must continuously interrupt proceedings to examine and sign orders of publication, orders to show cause, and all the other ex parte matters which are handled for the civic center trial pool by the presiding judge and his two assisting commissioners in department one, and by the probate department and the domestic relations department.

The concentration of a judge or a jury is broken by the arrival of calendar days and by the constant stream of attorneys who need ex parte orders. This is solved by letting the presiding judge of a multi-judge branch court minimize the interruptions by confining all such matters and the disposition of the calendars to one or another of his colleagues, leaving the other judges free to hear a case for at least 4 complete days of the week.

A majority of lawyers in Los Angeles County believe that there are enough branch courts. Most judges hold that there are too many branches. Both groups are united in their conviction that the single-judge branch court is inefficient. An overall solution has now been proposed by the judges of the Superior Court of Los Angeles County, under the leadership of Presiding Judge Louis H. Burke, based on the following principles:

1. Division of the county into a limited number of superior court districts in such manner as to afford the greatest convenience to the public. Factors such as population, present and future, topography, highways, transportation facilities, are to be controlling rather than

37 Holbrook, Survey of Metropolitan Trial Courts, Los Angeles Area 217 (1956).
the boundaries of cities. Each of these districts is to contain not less than 300,000 persons.

2. The districting is to be delegated by statute to the board of supervisors.

3. Present facilities will be employed as fully as possible.

4. The location and adequacy of facilities proposed by the board of supervisors shall be subject to approval by the judges of the superior court.\(^{38}\)

In 1959, the legislature enacted this proposal into law,\(^{39}\) and the board of supervisors has now approved the following nine districts:\(^{40}\)

1. **Central Courthouse**: Servicing the center of the city. Its population presently is 1,096,000.

2. **Southwest District**: Inglewood, Hawthorne, Gardena, El Segundo, Manhattan Beach, Hermosa Beach, Torrance. Present population about 840,000. Population is expected to increase by 1980 to 1,036,000.

3. **West**: Beverly Hills, Santa Monica, Culver City, West Los Angeles, Pacific Palisades, Malibu. Present population 484,000. Population by 1980, 1,019,000.


5. **Southeast**: Montebello, Whittier, Pico-Rivera, Santa Fe Springs, Downey, Vernon, Maywood, Huntington Park, Bell, South Gate, Lynwood, Compton, Paramount, Bellflower, Norwalk, Dairy Valley. Present population 760,000. Expected population by 1980, 1,032,000.


7. **Northeast**: Pasadena, South Pasadena, San Marino, San Gabriel, Alhambra, Arcadia, Monterey Park, Sierra Madre, Monrovia, Bradbury, Duarte. Present population 572,000. Expected 1980 population, 796,000.

8. **North Central**: Glendale, Burbank, and part of Los Angeles City. Present population 380,000. Expected by 1980, 750,000.

9. The ninth district includes the balance of the San Fernando Valley where at present one judge sits regularly at the City of San Fernando. This district may be split into three parts when expected.


\(^{40}\) Los Angeles County, Cal., Ordinance 7626, Oct. 13, 1959.
population in the San Fernando and Antelope Valleys so requires. One district will be the Northwest area when it reaches 750,000. That district contains in the City of San Fernando and the North Valley portion of the City of Los Angeles approximately 222,000 persons. Another district may be designated the West Valley which will include the south portion of the San Fernando Valley. Its present population is 202,000, and in 1980 it is expected to reach 775,000. A third, "North," district may be created. It will include Antelope Valley and the northern San Gabriel Mountains. It now has a population of 66,000. In 1980 it is expected to number 1,056,000 persons.

Each district will be served by no less than two, usually three, and, in a few branches, four or more judges. With multi-judge operation there will no longer be any loss of court time because a case "blows up" or is postponed or settled unexpectedly. There will always be something for the judge of that court to hear by immediate transfer from another department in the district. Also, there will be more trial time available with the elimination of separate sets of calendars for each branch court. For example, the calendars called in Glendale and Burbank tie up two judges. Under the proposed plan only one judge, in either Burbank or Glendale, will call the calendar. Also, in each of these districts the presiding judge can dispose of all ex parte matters without interrupting every judge. The consensus of the superior court judges indicates that a two-judge court can calendar and dispose of three times as many cases as a single judge court.

More judges will be needed as population and filings increase. Further, if the legislature sees fit to increase the number of commissioners, they could assist the multi-judge courts in the many ways they now help in the multi-judge courts of Long Beach, Pasadena and Santa Monica. Among the commissioners can be found technical skills and judicial know-how which can expedite many phases of the judicial processes.

With such regrouping and reinforcement the judicial battalion can return to the fray with every hope that its old enemy, delay, will be reduced to no more than 6 months from date of filing the Memorandum of Setting. All sides agree it takes that long to prepare for a trial and get all the necessary depositions, etc. When (not if) such expedition is achieved we will have in the branch court a judicial instrument easily accessible to the public, as well as to attorney's, witnesses and jurors, and which disposes of cases as rapidly as the granting of a fair hearing to all will permit.
### APPENDIX

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Branch Courts</th>
<th>Civic Center</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Branch Percent</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Civil</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Civil Jury</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pretried</td>
<td>365</td>
<td>1,308</td>
<td>1,673</td>
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<tr>
<td>Non-Pretried</td>
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<td>166</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>1,839</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Civil Non-Jury</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pretried<strong>a</strong></td>
<td>458</td>
<td>928</td>
<td>1,386</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Pretried<strong>b</strong></td>
<td>896 (8)</td>
<td>895 (8)</td>
<td>1,791</td>
<td>42.6</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1,823</td>
<td>3,177</td>
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<td><strong>Total all civil</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Civil Cases</strong></td>
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<td>Jury</td>
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<td>(No breakdown available)</td>
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<td>Non-Jury</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total filings</strong></td>
<td>5,155</td>
<td>21,675</td>
<td>26,839</td>
<td>19.2</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Interval to Trial, In Months</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jury</td>
<td>9½</td>
<td>15½ (15 as of Jan. 1, 1959)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Jury</td>
<td>8½</td>
<td>11½ (9½ as of Jan. 1, 1959)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Criminal</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Guilty pleas</td>
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<td>4,629</td>
<td>6,433</td>
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<tr>
<td>Non-Jury</td>
<td>594</td>
<td>4,703</td>
<td>5,297</td>
<td>11.2</td>
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<td>Jury</td>
<td>222</td>
<td>809</td>
<td>1,031</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Jury and Non-Jury</strong></td>
<td>816</td>
<td>5,512</td>
<td>6,328</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Filings</strong></td>
<td>2,900</td>
<td>9,459</td>
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<td><strong>Untried cases (At end of 1958)</strong></td>
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<td>999</td>
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<td><strong>Probate</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Filings</td>
<td>6,351</td>
<td>12,430</td>
<td>18,781</td>
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<td>Dispositions</td>
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<td>37,373</td>
<td>52,772</td>
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<td><strong>Adoptions</strong></td>
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<td>2,748</td>
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<td>3,245</td>
<td>4,845</td>
<td>33.0</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

---

* a Generally, contested cases fall in this category.
* b Most of the non-pretried cases are matters which can be heard in less than 2 hours; among them are the petition-type actions: to change name, establish fact of death (civilly), civil default, minor's contract, etc. The branch court can handle this kind of case without delay for call of calendars, chamber business, etc.
### Domestic Relations

**OSC's**
- Comm'r as Comm'r: 2,269
- Comm'r as judge pro tempore by stipulation of parties: 1,192
- Judge: 6,030

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>9,491</td>
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<tr>
<td>Default Divorces</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jury trial</td>
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<tr>
<td>Non-Jury trial</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Jury and Non-Jury</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Domestic Relations Filings</td>
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<td>45.1%</td>
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</table>

(No breakdown available)