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Elections - Historical Notes

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We hope this information will be useful to you; reference to it will assist you with many of the questions that will arise in your tenure with county government. However, the *Tennessee Code Annotated* and other relevant laws or regulations should always be consulted before any action is taken based upon the contents of this document.

Please feel free to contact us if you have questions or comments regarding this information or any other CTAS website material.

Sincerely,

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Districts - Reapportionment

The acts listed below have affected the civil districts in Jefferson County, but are no longer operative regarding elections. Also referenced below are acts which repeal prior law without providing new substantive provisions.

1. Acts of 1835-36, Chapter 1, required the Tennessee General Assembly by Resolution to appoint suitable people to lay out the civil districts in each county according to the population of 1833. Each County having 3,000, or more, qualified voters would have 25 civil districts, between 2500 and 3,000 voters, 20 civil districts, dropping off in equal segments down to five civil districts. Two Justices of the Peace and one Constable would be elected in each District except the one containing the county seat which would have three Justices of the Peace and two Constables. The Commissioners were instructed to take advantage of all natural barriers and boundaries in laying out the Districts. John Rosser, Jonathan Woods, Joseph B. M. Reese, Daniel Meek, and Robert McFarland, Jr. were named as the Commissioners in Jefferson County.
2. Private Acts of 1903, Chapter 431, abolished the First, Third, Fourth, Seventh, Ninth, Eleventh, Thirteenth, Fourteenth, Fifteenth, Sixteenth, and Nineteenth Civil Districts in Jefferson County and created seven new Civil Districts composed of the old whole civil districts and stipulated that none but the General Assembly could change them in the future.
3. Private Acts of 1905, Chapter 236, amended Private Acts of 1903, Chapter 431, above, to make the Third Civil District coincide with the old Twelfth Civil District, to make the Eighth Civil District contain the old Third, Seventeenth, and Nineteenth Civil District. The old Thirteenth Civil District was divided by adding the area described in the Act to the Fourth Civil District and leaving the remainder as it was then designated

Elections

The following is a listing of acts for Jefferson County which affected the elective process, but which have been superseded or repealed. They are listed here for historical and reference purposes. Also referenced below are acts which repeal prior law without providing new substantive provisions.

1. Acts of 1796, Chapter 1, provided for three U. S. Congressmen from Tennessee, one from each of the districts of Washington, Hamilton, and Mero. The votes in the Hamilton District to which Jefferson County was assigned would be counted in Knoxville.
2. Acts of 1796, Chapter 4, named the Presidential Electors in each county for the upcoming election of the President and Vice President of the United States. In Jefferson County ANDREW HENDERSON and JOSIAN JACKSON would act as Presidential Electors.
3. Acts of 1796, Chapter 10, set the number of Tennessee Representatives in the United States Congress at two, one from the Halston District of the Washington and Hamilton Districts and one from the Cumberland District of Mero. The election would be on the first Thursday in August and the succeeding day. The Sheriff in each county would count and certify the votes in that county.
4. Acts of 1798, Chapter 16, fixed the number of Senators in the Tennessee General Assembly at twelve and the number of Representatives at twenty-four. Four Senators and eight Representatives were allotted to each of the Washington, Hamilton and Mero Districts. Jefferson County and Cocke County would elect one Senator between them and Jefferson County would elect one Representative alone.
5. Acts of 1799, Chapter 46, named the people in each county in Tennessee who would meet to elect the three Presidential Electors to which the state was entitled. In Jefferson County in the Hamilton District those named were CHRISTOPHER HAYNES, ANDREW HENDERSON, and THOMAS SNODDY.
6. Acts of 1801, Chapter 43, provided for the election of three U. S. Congressional Representatives, one each from the Districts of Washington, Hamilton, and Mero. The votes in the Hamilton District, which included Jefferson County, would be corrected and confirmed at Knoxville.
7. Acts of 1801, Chapter 83, amended an act which authorized the musters of the militia to be held at Major Robert McFarland's house in Jefferson County so that the elections for U. S. Congressman, Governor, and all other elections under the general election laws would take place at the same location.
8. Acts of 1803, Chapter 24, established five Presidential Electoral Districts in Tennessee of which the Second District contained the counties of Hawkins, Claiborne, Grainger, Jefferson, and Cocke. The votes cast in Jefferson County would be canvassed and certified in Dandridge.

9. Acts of 1805, Chapter 64, apportioned the General Assembly for representatives from the counties. Jefferson County and Cocke County would jointly elect one of the thirteen Senators while Jefferson would have one of the 26 Representatives alone.
10. Acts of 1807, Chapter 74, divided Tennessee into five Presidential Electoral Districts for the 1808 Presidential Election. The second district consisted of the counties of Grainger, Jefferson, Claiborne, Cocke, Sevier and that part of Campbell County voting in Claiborne County. The votes in Jefferson County would be compared at the Mossy Creek Iron Works.
11. Acts of 1809, Chapter 1, set up the election of three U. S. Congressional Representatives in the state, one from the Washington District, one from the Hamilton District, and one from the convened districts of Robertson, Winchester, and Mero, all of whom would serve two year terms. The returning officers for the Hamilton District which contained Jefferson County would meet at Knoxville again.
12. Acts of 1812, Chapter 5, established eight Presidential Electoral Districts in Tennessee for the Presidential election to be held on the first Thursday and Friday in November, 1812. The counties of Cocke, Jefferson, Sevier, Grainger, and Claiborne made up the Second Electoral District.
13. Acts of 1812, Chapter 27, divided the state into six U. S. Congressional Districts. The Second U. S. Congressional District contained the counties of Jefferson, Grainger, Claiborne, Knox, Sevier, Blount and Cocke.
14. Acts of 1812, Chapter 57, increased the representation in the General Assembly of Tennessee for the first time to twenty Senators and forty Representatives. Jefferson County and Cocke County would unite to elect one Senator and the votes were to be counted at JOHN SEABORNE'S house in Jefferson County. Jefferson County would choose one representative for its own.
15. Acts of 1813, Chapter 11, provided for separate elections in Jefferson County whenever field officers were to be elected in the county at those places used for other elections. The Sheriff was obligated to hold them and the votes were to be counted at Dandridge.
16. Acts of 1815, Chapter 31, set up eight Presidential Electoral Districts in the state with the same counties assigned to each District which were enumerated in the previous act. This arrangement was for the Presidential election of the first Thursday and Friday in November, 1816.
17. Acts of 1819, Chapter 69, provided that Greene County and Jefferson County would combine to elect one of the 20 State Senators, the polls being counted at Warrensburg, and Jefferson County alone would elect one Representative out of the 40.
18. Acts of 1820, Chapter 52, expressly repealed an election law of 1813 (probably Chapter 11, above) which authorized separate elections regarding the militia in certain counties.
19. Acts of 1820, Chapter 93, declared that the Sheriff, or his Deputy, on the regular election days would hold a separate election at New Market north of Bay's Mountain and between Panther Creek and the Knox County line. It would be lawful for everyone living in that area to vote here, and the returns were to be sent to Dandridge to be counted and certified.
20. Acts of 1822, Chapter 1, established nine U. S. Congressional Districts in Tennessee. The Second Congressional District included the counties of Grainger, Claiborne, Cocke, Jefferson, Knox, Sevier, and Blount.
21. Acts of 1823, Chapter 47, organized Tennessee into eleven Presidential Electoral Districts, assigning the county of Cocke, Sevier, Jefferson, Grainger, Claiborne, and Campbell to the Second District. The election would take place on the first Thursday in October, 1824, and the returning officers were to meet at Rutledge.
22. Acts of 1824, Chapter 1, was identical with Acts of 1823, Chapter 47, above, except that the dates mentioned for the Presidential election were the first Thursday and Friday in November, 1824, and obvious correction of an error in the 1823 law.
23. Acts of 1826, Chapter 3, assigned the counties of Jefferson, Grainger, Claiborne, and Campbell as one of the 20 State Senatorial Districts whose election returns would be processed at Rutledge, and Jefferson County would select one of the 40 Representatives alone.
24. Acts of 1827, Chapter 17, delineated the State into eleven Presidential Electoral Districts placing the counties of Cocke, Jefferson, Sevier, Grainger, Campbell, and Claiborne in the Second Electoral District. The Election would occur on the second Thursday and Friday in November, 1828, and the votes would be canvassed and certified at Rutledge.
25. Acts of 1832, Chapter 4, established 13 U. S. Congressional Districts in the State of Tennessee of which the first Congressional District was composed of the counties of Carter, Greene, Washington, Cocke, and Jefferson.

26. Acts of 1832, Chapter 9, set up fifteen Presidential Electoral Districts in the state for the Presidential Election to be held on the first Monday and Tuesday in November, 1832 the first Electoral District was made up of the counties of Carter, Washington, Greene, and Jefferson.
27. Acts of 1833, Chapter 41, created a separate election precinct at the house of WILLIAM HILL, Esq., in Jefferson County, for all the elections to be held under the general law of the state.
28. Acts of 1833, Chapter 71, reapportioned the representation of 20 Senators and 40 Representatives in the General Assembly of the state. The counties of Cocke, Jefferson, Grainger, and Claiborne would jointly elect one State Senator and count the votes at the house of ODADIAH BOAZ, in Grainger County. Jefferson County and Cocke County would share one Representative and the polls in this election would be compared at the house of HENRY JONES at the forks of the road in Jefferson County.
29. Acts of 1833, Chapter 76, called for a constitutional convention of 60 delegates who would be elected on the first Thursday and Friday in March and would meet in Nashville on the third Monday in May, next, to revise amend, or alter the former constitution, or enact a new one for the state. The counties of Campbell, Claiborne, Grainger, and Jefferson would compose one District and elect three delegates to the convention. Polls were to be returned and certified at Rutledge.
30. Acts of 1835-36, Chapter 39, enacted pursuant to the adoption of the new state constitution, divided Tennessee in to 15 Presidential Electoral Districts. The first Electoral District was comprised of the counties of Carter, Washington, Greene, and Jefferson.
31. Acts of 1839-40, Chapter 79, stated that hereafter in Tennessee each Congressional District would likewise be a Presidential Electoral District.
32. Acts of 1842, Chapter 1, raised the number of Senators in the Tennessee General Assembly to 25, and the number of Representatives to 50. Grainger County, Jefferson County, and Claiborne County would share one State Senator, and Jefferson County would elect one Representative alone.
33. Acts of 1842, Chapter 7, organized the state into eleven U. S. Congressional District. The second Congressional District included the counties of Jefferson, Grainger, Claiborne, Campbell, Anderson, Morgan, Sevier, Blount, and Monroe.
34. Acts of 1847-48, Chapter 101, provided that each Congressional district in the state would likewise be a Presidential Electoral District in the upcoming Presidential Election to select a President and Vice-President of the Country.
35. Acts of 1851-52, Chapter 196, created ten U. S. Congressional Districts in the state designating the counties of Johnson, Carter, Sullivan, Washington, Hawkins, Greene, Cocke, Jefferson, Hancock, and Sevier as the first Congressional District.
36. Acts of 1851-52, Chapter 197, in this apportionment of the representation in the General Assembly assigned Hawkins County, Hancock County, and Jefferson County to one State Senatorial District whose votes would be counted and processed at Rogersville. Jefferson County would elect one Representative alone and share another with Hawkins County and Hancock County.
37. Acts of 1865, Chapter 34, divided Tennessee into only eight U. S. Congressional Districts in this post Civil War Act. The first Congressional District contained the counties of Johnson, Carter, Sullivan, Washington, Hawkins, Hancock, Greene, Cocke, Jefferson, Grainger and Sevier.
38. Acts of 1869-70, Chapter 105, was the enabling legislation for a referendum to be held on whether or not a constitutional Convention should be called which would consist of 75 delegates elected from the Representative and Senatorial Districts of the state. The said Convention, if authorized, would convene in Nashville on the second Monday in January, 1870, to alter, amend, change, or rewrite the 1834 Constitution.
39. Acts of 1871, Chapter 146, reapportioned the General Assembly pursuant to the new 1870 Constitution and the 1870 Federal Census. Jefferson County would elect one Representative alone and be a part of the third Senatorial District with Cocke County, Sevier County, and Blount County.
40. Acts of 1872, Chapter 7, formed nine U. S. Congressional Districts in Tennessee designating the counties of Sevier, Knox, Jefferson, Anderson, Campbell, Scott, Morgan, Fentress, Cumberland, White, Putnam, Overton, Jackson, Smith, Macon, and Clay as the second U. S. Congressional District.
41. Acts of 1873, Chapter 27, divided Tennessee into ten U. S. Congressional Districts. The second district included the counties of Jefferson, Sevier, Blount, Monroe, Loudon, Roane, Knox,

- Anderson, Campbell, Scott, Morgan, and Union.
42. Acts of 1881 (Ex .Sess.), Chapter 5, set the number of Senators at 33, and the number of Representatives at 99, on a permanent basis.
 43. Acts of 1881 (Ex. Sess.), Chapter 6, reapportioned the General Assembly based upon the above Act which increased the members and upon the 1880 Federal Census figures. Jefferson County would choose one Representative alone and share a State Senator with the counties of Sevier, Cocke, and Hamblen.
 44. Acts of 1882, Chapter 27, formed the state into nine U. S. Congressional Districts. The second Congressional District was composed of the counties of Jefferson, Union, Sevier, Blount, Knox, Loudon, Roane, Anderson, Morgan, Campbell, and Scott.
 45. Acts of 1891, Chapter 131, provided for ten U. S. Congressional seats in Tennessee based upon the 1890 census. The second Congressional District consisted of the counties of Jefferson, Union, Sevier, Blount, Knox, Loudon, Roane, Anderson, Morgan, Campbell, and Scott.
 46. Acts of 1891 (Ex. Sess.), Chapter 10, allotted Jefferson County one Representative in the General Assembly above, and assigned the county to the fifth Senatorial District with Knox County, Cocke County, and Sevier County.
 47. Acts of 1901, Chapter 109, divided the state into ten U. S. Congressional Districts of which the counties of Hamblen, Jefferson, Knox, Blount, Loudon, Roane, Scott, Anderson, Campbell, and Union composed the second Congressional District.
 48. Acts of 1901, Chapter 122, was the last apportionment of the Tennessee General Assembly for the next sixty years, or more. The fourth State Senatorial District contained the counties of Cocke, Hamblen, Jefferson, Sevier, and Blount, and the counties of Jefferson and Hamblen would share a State Representative.
 49. Private Acts of 1911, Chapter 581, amended Acts of 1890, Chapter 24, so as to make its provisions applicable to Jefferson County by inserting the appropriate population figures in the proper places of the amended Act. No registration of voters however, would be a prerequisite to voting in Jefferson County. The Election Commissioners were obliged to appoint two Registrars for each precinct who would possess the same qualifications specified in the 1890 Act.
 50. Private Acts of 1917, Chapter 496, amended Private Acts of 1911, Chapter 581, above, by adding at the end of Section 4 a provision that any voter who could not mark his ballot would notify the officer holding the election to that effect and the officer could proceed to mark the ballot in the presence of the Judges of the election precinct and a person selected by the voter, and the officer would sign his name as having marked the ballot. Any violation of this Act could produce fines from a \$10 minimum to a \$50 maximum.
 51. Private Acts of 1929, Chapter 35, stated that in Jefferson County (identified by the use of the 1920 population figures) each officer, Judge, Clerk, Registrar, and marker who assists in the holding of any election, regular or special in any district, or precinct, would be paid \$2.00 per day for each election so participated in, in the manner now prescribed by law.
 52. Private Acts of 1929, Chapter 593, declared that in any election in Jefferson County any voter, who declared to the officer and Judges holding the election that by reason of blindness, or other physical impairment, he was unable to mark the ballot, would be given assistance by the election officer who would mark the ballot as directed by the voter in the presence of the Judges and certify on the outside of the ballot that the same was so marked with his assistance. Neither the Judges nor the officer, would be required to reveal how the ballot was marked to anyone.
 53. Private Acts of 1953, Chapter 274, recited in the preamble of the Act that numbers of people in the sixth Civil District of Jefferson County work in Knoxville and Mascot and cannot return to their homes in time to vote during normal election hours, therefore, this act fixed the hours of the polling precincts in the sixth Civil District at a 9:00 a.m. opening and a 7:00 p.m. closing instead of closing at 4:00 p.m.

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