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# Chapter VII - Elections

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# Chapter VII - Elections

## Districts - Reapportionment

### Private Acts of 1949 Chapter 638

**COMPILER'S NOTE:** Civil districts as described in the act reproduced below are no longer used for election purposes, but are preserved as they existed on March 7, 1978 for record-keeping purposes as required by T.C.A. § 5-1-112.

**SECTION 1.** That the present civil districts of Bledsoe County, Tennessee, numbering from one to three, both inclusive, be and the same are hereby abolished.

**SEC. 2.** That in lieu of the present three civil districts heretofore existing in Bledsoe County, Tennessee, there are hereby created nine civil districts for said County as follows:

First Civil District: The First Civil District of Bledsoe County shall be as follows:

Beginning at a point in the center of the Old Stage Coach road (the Lee's Station Road) on the side of the Cumberland Mountain at the Laurel Branch in the old First District line; thence, westward with the center of the Old Stage Coach road to the Van Buren County line; thence northeasterly, with the Van Buren County line to a point in the center of Highway No. 30; thence east with the center of said highway to the Louis Simmons' road; thence north with the center of the Louis Simmons' road to the Lucius Cove road; thence, with the center of Lucius Cove road in a southeast direction to the beginning of said road at Highway No. 30; thence, with Highway No. 30 to the eastern brow of Cumberland Mountain; thence, with the brow of the said mountain in a southwest direction to the intersection of Laurel Branch and the Old Stage Coach road, the beginning of said line.

Second Civil District: The Second Civil District of Bledsoe County, Tennessee, shall be as follows:

Beginning at a point in the center of the T.V.A. power line where it crosses the brow of the mountain near Lucius Cove; thence, in an eastern direction with said power line to the center of the top of Cox Ridge; thence, in a southern direction down the crest of Cox Ridge to the southwest corner of Thos. J. Hutcheson's property line; thence, eastwardly with the Thos. J. Hutcheson's property line to the center of the Sequatchie River; thence, up the center of said river as it meanders to the southwest corner of the J. M. Pollard property line; thence, eastwardly with the said Pollard property line to the southeast corner of said property or the brow of Walden's Ridge Mountain; thence, northward with the brow of said mountain to the Oxier Gaps Road; thence, in a northwest direction with the center of Oxier Gaps Road (Tom Wood's Lane) to the East Valley Road; thence, southward with the center of the East Valley Road to the Akin Lane; thence, northwestward with the center of the Akin Lane to Highway No. 28; thence, south with the center of the said highway to the Taylor Branch, that meanders through Moon and Roberts' property; thence, down the Taylor Branch meandering to the center of the Sequatchie River; thence, southwardly meandering with the said river to the northeast corner of the S. P. Little property line; thence, westwardly with said property line to the center of Highway 28; thence, southwardly down the center of said highway to intersection of Big Spring Gap Road; thence westwardly with meanders of said road to the cliff or brow of Cumberland Mountain; thence, southwestwardly with the brow of the mountain to the center of the T.V.A. power line, the beginning of the said line."

Third Civil District: The Third Civil District of Bledsoe County, Tennessee, shall be as follows:

Beginning at a point in the center of T.V.A. power line at the brow of the mountain near what is known at Beatty's Cove; thence, southward with the brow and cliffs of the mountain to a point in the southern boundary of Mrs. Arthur Standefer's property; thence, westward with said Standefer's line to the center of the Sequatchie River; thence, down said river as it meanders to Sequatchie County line; thence, with the Sequatchie County line to the intersection of Hamilton County line; thence, with Hamilton County line to the Rhea County line; thence, with the Rhea County line to the center of the T.V.A. power line; thence west with the T.V.A. power line to the point of beginning.

Fourth Civil District: The Fourth Civil District of Bledsoe County, Tennessee, shall be as follows:

Beginning in center of Sequatchie River at Dr. Greer's Ford; thence, westward with the center of the road leading to Lee's Station to a point in the center of York Highway No. 28; thence, northward with the center of said highway to a point opposite the intersection of the North road leading up the Lee's Station Mountain; thence, with said Lee's Station Mountain road to Alton Greer's southwest

corner; thence, northwest with Alton Greer's west boundary line to Tom Keener's southern boundary line; thence, westward with said Tom Keener's southern boundary line to brow or cliff of Cumberland Mountain; thence, northward with brow and cliff of Cumberland Mountain to Highway No. 30; thence with the center of said highway westwardly to a point and intersection of Highway No. 30 and Lucius Cove road; thence, with the center of Cove Road northwestward to the center of T.V.A. power line; thence, eastwardly with power line to center of top of Cox Ridge; thence, southwardly down center top of Cox Ridge to southwest corner to Thos. J. Hutcheson's property line; thence, eastwardly with property line to center of Sequatchie River; thence, northeast with river meanders to the southwest corner of the J. M. Pollard property line; thence, eastwardly with Pollard property line to southeast corner of said line or on the cliff on brow of Walden's Ridge Mountain cliff; thence, with the brow of said mountain as it meanders in a southwest direction to Crystal Creek Falls; thence, with the center of Crystal Creek as it meanders towards the Sequatchie River to a point in the center of the lower east Valley Road; thence, with the center of said road in a northern direction to the Lee's Station crossroad; thence, with the Lee's Station crossroad in a western direction to the center of said river, the point of beginning."

Fifth Civil District: The Fifth Civil District of Bledsoe County, Tennessee, shall be as follows:

Beginning southwest corner of Mrs. Arthur Standefer's line in center of Sequatchie River; thence, northwardly with said river as it meanders to a point in the center of the river at the Dr. Greer Ford; thence eastwardly with Lee's Station crossroad to lower east valley road; thence, southward with lower east valley road to a point in the center of the river at the Dr. Greer Ford; thence, eastwardly with Lee's Station crossroad to lower east valley road; thence, southward with the lower east valley road to a point in the center of Crystal Creek; thence, eastwardly with said creek as it meanders to a point in the brow of Walden's Ridge Mountain known as Crystal Creek Falls; thence, southward with the brow and cliffs of Walden's Ridge to southern boundary of Mrs. Arthur Standefer's property line; thence, westward with said line to the point of beginning."

Sixth Civil District: The Sixth Civil District of Bledsoe County, Tennessee, shall be as follows:

Beginning at a point in the center of the Sequatchie River where it crosses the Sequatchie County line; thence, up the said river as it meanders to the Dr. Greer Ford; thence, westwardly with the center of the Lee's Station crossroad to the center of Highway No. 28; thence, northwardly with the center of said highway to the Lee's Station Mountain Road (the Old Stage Coach Road); thence, westwardly with said road to Alton Greer's southwest corner; thence, in a northern direction with Alton Greer's west boundary line to Tom Keener's southern boundary line; thence, westward with said Tom Keener's boundary line to the brow of Cumberland Mountain; thence, southwestward with the brow of the mountain to the Sequatchie County line; thence, southeastward with the Sequatchie County line to the center of the Sequatchie River, the beginning point."

Seventh Civil District: The Seventh Civil District of Bledsoe County, Tennessee, shall be as follows:

Beginning at a point in the center of the Old Stage Coach road (the Lee's Station road) on the side of the Cumberland Mountain where the Laurel Branch crosses said road; thence, westwardly with the center of the Old Stage Coach road to the Van Buren County line; thence, southwestwardly with the Van Buren County line to the point where it joins the Sequatchie County line; thence, southeastwardly with the Sequatchie County line to the brow or cliff of the Cumberland Mountain; thence, northeastwardly with the brow of the mountain to the point where Laurel Creek crosses the Old Stage Coach road, the beginning of said line."

Eighth Civil District: The Eighth Civil District of Bledsoe County, Tennessee, shall be as follows:

Beginning at a point in the center of Highway No. 28, at the intersection of said highway and the Big Spring Gap road; thence, westward by the meanders of said Big Spring Gap road to the brow of Cumberland Mountain; thence, southwestwardly with the brow of said mountain to the center of the T.V.A. power line; thence, westwardly with said power line to the Lucius Cove road; thence northwestwardly with said road to the Lewis Simmon's road intersection; thence southwardly with said road to Highway No. 30; thence, westwardly with said highway to the Van Buren County line; thence northwardly with the Van Buren County line to where White County corners Bledsoe County; thence, eastwardly with Cumberland County line to the brow of Cumberland Mountain; thence, southwestward with the brow of said mountain to the northwest corner of the Old Charley Taylor line; thence, eastward with the Taylor line to the center of Highway No. 28; thence south with the center of said highway to the Taylor branch that meanders through Moon and Robert's property; thence, down the Taylor branch meandering to the center of the Sequatchie River; thence, southwardly meandering with the said river to the northeast corner of the S. P. Little property line; thence, westwardly with said property line to the center of Highway No. 28; thence, southwardly down the center of said highway to the intersection of the Big Spring Gap road, the point of

beginning.”

Ninth Civil District: The Ninth Civil District of Bledsoe County, Tennessee, shall be as follows:

Starting at a point in the Cumberland County line at the Cliffs; running thence southwestward to the northwest corner of the old Charley Taylor line; thence, eastward with the Taylor line to the center of Highway No. 28; thence, north with center of York Highway to Akin Lane; thence, eastward with the Akin Lane as it meanders to east valley road; thence, northward with center of east valley road to the Leander Lee lane (now known as Tom Wood's lane); thence, eastward with said lane up Oxier Gap road to top brow of Walden's Ridge Mountain; thence, southward with brow of mountain to T.V.A. power line; thence, eastward with power line to Rhea County line; thence, northeastwardly with the Rhea County line to the Cumberland County line; thence, westwardly with said Cumberland County line to the brow of Cumberland Mountain, the beginning of said line.”

**SEC. 3.** That the following Justices of the Peace be and they are hereby appointed to serve until the first day of September, 1950 and until their successors are elected at the August, 1950, general election, and qualified.

For the First Civil District: Carmack Sapp and Norman C. Colvard; for the Second Civil District: Irvin Downey and George Brown; for the Third Civil District; [sic] Wayne Holloway and George Sullivan; for the Fourth Civil District: (which includes the County Town), George Herd, R. S. Evans and W. M. Greer; for the Fifth Civil District: Arthur Standefer and Shelton Greer; for the Sixth Civil District: Richard Cunningham and Edward Brown; for the Seventh Civil District: Henry Myers and John M. Johnson; for the Eighth Civil District: Otis Seals and U. S. Pugh; for the Ninth Civil District: Wendell Ault and Thompson Tollett.

**SEC. 4.** That the County Court of Bledsoe County at its first regular or duly called special meeting after the enactment of this Act, shall elect Constables in each of the said districts to serve until the first day of September, 1950, and until their successors are elected at the August, 1950, General Election, and qualified.

**SEC. 5.** The voting places in said districts be and they are hereby established as follows:

For the First Civil District: New School House and Griffith School House; for the Second Civil District: Cold Springs School House; for the Third Civil District: Sumner City, Brayton, Sunnyside; for the Fourth Civil District: The Courthouse in Pikeville, Blackburn's Store and Lincoln School House; for the Fifth Civil District: The place of holding elections shall be designated by the County Court under the provisions of Code Section 1943; for the Sixth Civil District: Lusk School House; for the Seventh Civil District: Old Cumberland School House; for the Eighth Civil District: Nine Mile and Bellvie School Houses; for the Ninth Civil District: Melvin and Luminary School House.

**SEC. 6.** That the provisions of this Act are hereby declared to be severable. If any section, paragraph, sentence, clause, or words of its provisions be held unconstitutional or void, the remainder of this Act shall continue in full force and effect, it being the legislative intent that this Act would have been adopted even if such unconstitutional matter had not been included therein.

**SEC. 7.** That all laws and parts of laws in conflict with the provisions of this Act, be and the same are hereby repealed.

**SEC. 8.** That this Act shall take effect ten (10) days from and after its passage, the public welfare requiring it.

Passed: April 8, 1949.

## Elections - Historical Notes

### Elections

The following is a listing of acts for Bledsoe 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 1808, Chapter 74, set up the electoral districts in the state for the election of the president and vice-president. Of the five established districts, the counties of Knox, Blount, Anderson, Roane, Rhea, Bledsoe, and part of Campbell which was formerly in Roane County, constituted the third district. The votes would be counted at Knoxville.
2. Acts of 1811, Chapter 102, authorized Bledsoe County to hold a separate election for members of congress, governor, and members of the state legislature at a place called Big Springs under the same laws and regulations as other elections. All those residing north of the house of James Skilleron and the lines from his house to that of Phillip Thurman shall vote at Big Springs.

3. Acts of 1812, Chapter 5, divided Tennessee into eight presidential electoral districts. The fourth district was composed of the counties of Rhea, Bledsoe, Overton, White, Warren, Franklin, and Jackson.
4. Acts of 1812, Chapter 27, separated the state into six U.S. congressional districts. The third U.S. congressional district consisted of the counties of Anderson, Campbell, Roane, Rhea, Bledsoe, Overton, White, Warren and Franklin.
5. Acts of 1812, Chapter 57, apportioned Tennessee for the general assembly. Of the twenty state senators, Roane, Rhea, Anderson and Bledsoe counties would join together to elect one and the votes would be counted at Kingston on the Monday following the election. All counties would elect one representative to the assembly except those which were specified to elect more than one.
6. Acts of 1815, Chapter 31, divided the state into eight presidential electoral districts with the same counties being assigned to the same districts which were establishing in Acts of 1812 Chapter 5, each district electing one elector.
7. Acts of 1817, Chapter 56, provided that all elections to be hereafter held in Bledsoe County for governor, the general assembly and members of congress shall be held at Tolets Mill in the upper part of the county, at the courthouse in Pikeville, at some house in the town of Madison, and at the house of John Shropshire, all to be conducted under the general and regular election laws.
8. Public Acts of 1819, Chapter 69, apportioned Tennessee into twenty senatorial and forty representative districts. Anderson, Roane, Morgan, Rhea, Bledsoe, Marion, Hamilton, and McMinn would jointly elect one senator, counting votes at Kingston. Bledsoe and Marion counties would elect one representative jointly.
9. Public Acts of 1822, Chapter 1, created eight U.S. congressional districts in the state assigning Campbell, Anderson, Morgan, Roane, Rhea, Bledsoe, Marion, Hamilton, McMinn and Monroe counties to the third U.S. congressional district.
10. Public Acts of 1823, Chapter 47, established eleven presidential electoral districts in the state. The fourth district contained the counties of Rhea, Bledsoe, Marion, Hamilton, McMinn and Monroe. The polls would be counted and compared at Washington in Rhea County.
11. Public Acts of 1824, Chapter 1, was a duplicate of Acts of 1823, Chapter 47, above, setting up eleven presidential electoral districts and assigning the same counties to each.
12. Public Acts of 1826, Chapter 3, apportioned Tennessee into twenty senatorial and forty representative districts. One senatorial district had Roane, Morgan, Rhea, Hamilton, Bledsoe, and Marion counties in it and polls would be compared at Washington for this district. Bledsoe and Marion counties would join together to elect one representative.
13. Public Acts of 1827, Chapter 17, divided the state into eleven presidential electoral districts of which the fourth was composed of the counties of Rhea, Bledsoe, Marion, Hamilton, McMinn and Monroe.
14. Public Acts of 1832, Chapter 4, established thirteen U.S. congressional districts in Tennessee. The fourth congressional district at that time included the counties of Morgan, Roane, McMinn, Rhea, Hamilton, Bledsoe and Marion.
15. Public Acts of 1832, Chapter 9, set up fifteen presidential electoral districts in the state, combining McMinn, Rhea, Bledsoe, Marion and Hamilton counties into the fifth district.
16. Public Acts of 1833, Chapter 71, apportioned Tennessee for the general assembly. Roane, Rhea, Marion, Hamilton, and Bledsoe counties composed one senatorial district and elected one senator. Bledsoe, Marion, and Hamilton counties would jointly elect one representative, counting the polls at the house of William Henson in Bledsoe County on the first Saturday after the election.
17. Public Acts of 1833, Chapter 76, provided for the election of sixty delegates at a Constitutional Convention to be held in Nashville on the first Monday in May next. Bledsoe and Marion counties would jointly elect one delegate at the election. The returning officers for the district, composed of Bledsoe and Marion counties, met at the house of James Standifer.
18. Public Acts of 1835-36, Chapter 39, set up fifteen presidential electoral districts in Tennessee. The fifth district contained the counties of McMinn, Rhea, Bledsoe, Marion and Hamilton.
19. Acts of 1842, Second Session, Chapter 1, stated that the free, white male voters in Tennessee would elect 25 state senators and 50 representatives. Hamilton, Marion, Bledsoe, Rhea and Meigs counties composed the eighth senatorial district and joined together to elect one state senator, counting the polls at Harrison in Hamilton County. Bledsoe and Morgan would elect a representative jointly, comparing polls at Crossville in Bledsoe County.

20. Acts of 1842, Second Session, Chapter 7, organized the state into eleven U.S. congressional districts, assigning Knox, Roane, Bledsoe, Rhea, Meigs, McMinn, Polk, Bradley, Hamilton and Marion Counties to the third U.S. congressional district.
21. Acts of 1851-52, Chapter 196, authorized ten U.S. congressional districts in Tennessee. The third district at that time contained the counties of Blount, Monroe, Polk, McMinn, Meigs, Rhea, Bledsoe, Bradley, Hamilton, Marion and Roane.
22. Acts of 1851-52, Chapter 197, reorganized the general assembly of the state. The counties of Rhea, Bledsoe, Bradley, Hamilton and Marion were all in one senatorial district counting polls at Harrison in Hamilton County. Rhea, Bledsoe and Hamilton counties would elect one representative jointly, meeting at Washington in Rhea County to count the polls.
23. Private Acts of 1857-58, Chapter 90, Section 2, stated that hereafter the vote for joint representative from Bledsoe, Rhea and Hamilton counties would be compared at Harrison in Hamilton County.
24. Public Acts of 1865, Chapter 34, began the reconstruction of the state dividing it into eight U.S. congressional districts. In the third district were the counties of Rhea, Hamilton, Marion, Grundy, Bledsoe, Van Buren, Sequatchie, Warren, White, Smith, Cumberland, Putnam, Jackson, Macon, Overton, DeKalb and Fentress.
25. Public Acts of 1871, Chapter 146, reapportioned Tennessee for the general assembly probably based on the 1870 Federal Census. Rhea, James, Hamilton, Bledsoe, Sequatchie, Marion, Grundy and Van Buren composed the seventh senatorial district. Marion, Sequatchie, Bledsoe, Hamilton, Grundy and Van Buren would jointly elect a representative.
26. Acts of 1872, Extra Session, Chapter 7, added a U.S. congressional district to Tennessee, making nine. The third district contained the counties of Blount, Loudon, Roane, Monroe, McMinn, Meigs, Rhea, Polk, Bradley, James, Hamilton, Marion, Sequatchie, Bledsoe, Grundy, Van Buren and Warren.
27. Public Acts of 1873, Chapter 27, added still another U.S. congressional district to the state making ten in all. Polk, McMinn, Meigs, Rhea, Bradley, James, Hamilton, Marion, Grundy, Sequatchie, Bledsoe, Van Buren, White, Warren, DeKalb, Cannon and Cumberland counties were all in the third U.S. congressional district.
28. Public Acts of 1881, Extra Session, Chapter 6, organized the general assembly in accordance with the act above. The ninth senatorial district was composed of Grundy, Sequatchie, Bledsoe, Van Buren, Rhea, Cumberland, Morgan and White counties. Sequatchie, Bledsoe, Van Buren and Cumberland counties would jointly elect one representative.
29. Public Acts of 1882, Chapter 27, apportioned Tennessee for the congress probably based on the 1880 Federal Census. There were ten U.S. congressional districts. The third district contained the counties of Monroe, Polk, Bradley, Hamilton, James, McMinn, Bledsoe, Sequatchie, Marion, Grundy, Van Buren, White and Warren.
30. Acts of 1891, Extra Session, Chapter 10, reapportioned the general assembly of the state. The ninth senatorial district consisted of the counties of Rhea, Bledsoe, White, Cumberland, Sequatchie, Van Buren and Morgan. Grundy, Sequatchie, Bledsoe, Van Buren and Cumberland counties would jointly elect one representative.
31. Public Acts of 1901, Chapter 109, divided the state into ten U.S. congressional districts, placing the counties of Monroe, Polk, McMinn, Meigs, Bradley, James, Hamilton, Marion, Sequatchie, Bledsoe, Van Buren, Grundy, White, Warren and Franklin in the third U.S. congressional district.
32. Public Acts of 1901, Chapter 122, did the same for the general assembly. The ninth state senatorial district comprised the counties of Rhea, Meigs, Bledsoe, Sequatchie, Van Buren, White and Cumberland, while Cumberland, Bledsoe, Sequatchie, Van Buren and Grundy made up the eleventh representative district.
33. Acts of 1907, Chapter 554, amended Public Acts of 1897, Chapter 17, so as to make the provisions of that act apply to Bledsoe County without regard to the number of civil districts in the county or the population of the civil districts. The amended 1897 act also amended Acts of 1890, Extra Session, Chapter 24, which concerned the printing of ballots, the registration of voters, and the imposition of other regulations on the manner of conducting public elections.

### **Districts - Reapportionment**

The acts listed below have affected the civil districts in Bledsoe 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 1855-56, Chapter 162, Section 3, moved the tenth civil district of Bledsoe County, and the first and second civil districts of Marion County into Hamilton County.
2. Private Acts of 1857-58, Chapter 122, Section 8, stated that portion of Bledsoe County which lies on Walden's Ridge, north of the fifth civil district, shall constitute a new tenth civil district for the county. One of the first duties performed at the formation of a new county was for the commissioners, generally appointed for that purpose, to divide the new county into civil districts so that justices of the peace and constables could be elected.
3. Acts of 1903, Chapter 521, created six civil districts in Bledsoe County to take the place of those existing at the time. The new civil districts were composed of whole former civil districts. All but the third civil district shall have two justices of the peace and one constable each, but the third shall have an additional justice and constable for the county seat. Voting precincts would remain as they were. This reduction was for the purpose of conserving resources and funds.
4. Acts of 1909, Chapter 505, reduced the number of civil districts in Bledsoe County from six to three which were also composed of former whole civil districts. The first and third civil districts would have two justices of the peace and one constable but the second civil District, which had the county seat, would have three justices and two constables. Voting precincts would not be changed and all the civil districts and elective positions not provided for under this act were abolished.
5. Private Acts of 1911, Chapter 287, created five civil districts to take the place of the three then existing in Bledsoe County, although no repealing clause is contained in the act nor any express abolition of the three former civil districts. The new districts are described by metes and bounds. Voting precincts were named in the first district to be Bethel, Hembree Mill, and Rainly; in the second district as Pikeville and Billingsley; in the third district to be Nine Mile, Melvine, and Luminary; in the fourth district to be New Harmony, James' Store, and Hendon Chapel, and in the fifth district, the precincts were located at the new schoolhouse and Bellview.
6. Private Acts of 1921, Chapter 934, added a new sixth civil district to Bledsoe County which was taken from the third civil district and embraced the area described in the act. A special election would be held within 20 days to choose two justices of the peace and a constable. The voting precinct would be at "Griffith Schoolhouse."
7. Private Acts of 1927, Chapter 223, reduced the number of civil districts in Bledsoe County from six to five, placing most of the sixth civil district in the fourth under this act. The justices of the peace and the constables were abolished as they existed in the old fourth district and new ones would be elected from the new area of the district. The act abolished the voting precincts at Hendon's Chapel, Center Point, Melvine, and New Harmony, and new precincts were established at Bethel and Summer City.
8. Private Accts of 1933, Chapter 110, established eight civil districts in Bledsoe County instead of the existing five, all being described individually with metes and bounds descriptions. They could not be changed except by the act of the general assembly. This act would not affect the tenure of office of any elected official of the district, and vacancies would be filled by special elections. Any conflicting acts were repealed.
9. Private Acts of 1939, Chapter 110, abolished the eight civil districts of Bledsoe County and created three civil districts in their room and stead describing each with a regular detailed description. The election commission would hold an election within 30 days from passage of this act to elect justices of the peace and constables as required by law. Those magistrates who were elected to represent incorporated cities would serve out their terms and no more would be elected in those towns. The county seat would have a justice and a constable, however.

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