



County Technical Assistance Service
INSTITUTE *for* PUBLIC SERVICE

December 22, 2024

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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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The following is a listing of acts for Bledsoe County which affected the elective process, but which have been superseded or repealed.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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