



County Technical Assistance Service  
INSTITUTE *for* PUBLIC SERVICE

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# Law Enforcement - Historical Notes

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Dear Reader:

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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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# Law Enforcement - Historical Notes

## **Militia**

Those acts once affecting Bledsoe County, which related to the militia and to other law enforcement agencies other than the sheriff, are mentioned below in chronological order. Also referenced below are acts which repeal prior law without providing new substantive provisions.

1. Acts of 1808, Chapter 9, directed the sheriff of Bledsoe County to open and hold an election on the third Friday and Saturday in February next to elect the field officers for the militia in Bledsoe County which would constitute the thirty-first regiment of the state.
2. Acts of 1809, First Session, Chapter 19, Section 4, stated that, after the passing of this act, the regiment of infantry composing the county of Bledsoe shall hold their regimental musters at the place for holding court in the said county on the second Thursday in November of each year, any law to the contrary notwithstanding.
3. Acts of 1809, First Session, Chapter 89, assigned Bledsoe County's militia to the eighth brigade along with the forces in Anderson, Roane, and Rhea counties. Bledsoe County's militia composed the thirty-first regiment.
4. Acts of 1811, Chapter 102, declared that the general musters of the militia in Bledsoe County shall hereafter be held at the house of Phillip Thirman at the respective times stated by law.
5. Acts of 1815, Chapter 119, assigned every unit of the Tennessee Militia to regiments and brigades, and reenacted the entire militia law of the state, setting internal organizational units down to the squad level and establishing disciplinary standards for all. Bledsoe was designated at the thirty-first regiment, of the seventh brigade, which was part of the first division.
6. Private Acts of 1821, Chapter 136, exempted Captain Thomas Miller's Company, that part of the county militia which lived in the Grassy Cove, now being a district company, from attending battalion and regimental musters but the unit shall hold company musters and drills as do the other companies of the state and shall be subject to be called on by the Colonel of Bledsoe County to furnish their quota of active men to suppress invasion, or insurrection.
7. Public Acts of 1825, Chapter 69, revised the militia laws of the state. Bledsoe County's unit was still the thirty-first regiment but was assigned to the twelfth brigade under this act.
8. Private Acts of 1829-30, Chapter 147, established the third battalion out of the Cumberland Mountain Company and the Grassy Cove Company of Bledsoe County to be known as the Lafayette Centinels. The act also called for the election of a field officer and for holding a battalion muster on the third Saturday in April of each year.
9. Private Acts of 1831, Chapter 271, Section 3, set the times for holding court martials for the third battalion of Bledsoe County to the third Saturday in June annually and their regimental court martial on the first Saturday after the fourth Thursday in November annually.
10. Private Acts of 1833, Chapter 6, made it the duty of all the officers in the Grassy Cove and Cumberland Mountain Companies of the state militia in Bledsoe County to return delinquents, and the judge advocate of the units was authorized to issue executions against them as in all other cases.
11. Private Acts of 1833, Chapter 142, Section 2, authorized the majority of the commissioned officers in Bledsoe County to exempt the company on Cumberland Mountain from attending musters.
12. Acts of 1837-38, Chapter 157, Section 3, rescheduled drill and muster times for all the militia units in the state, and then amended in great length the militia law. The seventh brigade was composed of Meigs, Rhea, Marion, Hamilton, and Bledsoe counties. Bledsoe's units would convene and drill on the second Thursday and Friday in September of each year.

## **Sheriff**

The following acts have no current effect but are included here for reference purposes since they once applied to the Bledsoe County Sheriff's Office. Also referenced below are acts which repeal prior law without providing new substantive provisions.

1. Private Acts of 1820, Chapter 117, provided that the sheriff's of Warren, Jackson, Bledsoe, and Marion counties at their discretion may advertise in the Sparta Gazette on execution sales of land and other properties. Further, the rangers of those counties were also given the discretionary authority to advertise in like manner in the Sparta Gazette concerning estrays which were

- captured and others which would be sold under execution.
2. Private Acts of 1821, Chapter 180, Section 3, stated that the sheriff's of Warren, Jackson, Bledsoe, and Marion counties may in their discretion advertise all lands and properties to be sold under execution in some paper printed in Sparta, and the rangers of those counties might do likewise for the strays they wanted to dispose of under execution.
  3. Private Acts of 1821, Chapter 191, recited that it had appeared that Peter Looney, sheriff and collector of Bledsoe County for the years 1808 and 1810 had been compelled to pay \$53.85 as tax money to the state treasurer of East Tennessee on insolvencies which occurred in the county during that time. This act allowed the state treasurer to return that amount of money to Looney in the interests of fairness and lists the properties upon which Looney had paid the taxes.
  4. Acts of 1845-46, Chapter 178, Section 2, allowed the sheriff of Bledsoe County to appoint one additional deputy sheriff to the number now authorized by law, any other law to the contrary notwithstanding.
  5. Private Acts of 1931, Chapter 660, stated that the compensation of the sheriffs of Bledsoe and Perry counties shall be fixed at \$2,000 per year in addition to any amounts the sheriffs might receive for boarding prisoners and turnkeys, the said \$2,000 being made payable out of the general funds of the county on the warrant of the county judge, or chairman.
  6. Private Acts of 1939, Chapter 551, set the compensation for the sheriff of Bledsoe County to \$1,000 per annum, which was paid quarterly on the first day of January, April, July and October out of the county funds by the county trustee.
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