



July 22, 2024

Chapter V - Court System

Dear Reader:

The following document was created from the CTAS website (ctas.tennessee.edu). This website is maintained by CTAS staff and seeks to represent the most current information regarding issues relative to Tennessee county government.

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,

The University of Tennessee
County Technical Assistance Service
226 Anne Dallas Dudley Boulevard, Suite 400
Nashville, Tennessee 37219
615.532.3555 phone
615.532.3699 fax
www.ctas.tennessee.edu

Chapter V - Court System 3
District Attorney General 3
Criminal Investigator 3
Public Acts of 1977 Chapter 356 3
General Sessions Court 3
Private Acts of 1955 Chapter 17 3
Cash Deposits 7
Private Acts of 1957 Chapter 231 7
Division II 7
Private Acts of 1982 Chapter 299 7
Environmental Court 8
Private Acts of 2006 Chapter 86 8
Court System - Historical Notes 8

Chapter V - Court System

District Attorney General

Criminal Investigator

Public Acts of 1977 Chapter 356

COMPILER'S NOTE: Although this is a public, rather than a private act; it is one of special effect and is not found in Tennessee Code Annotated.

SECTION 1. There is hereby created an additional office of Criminal Investigator for the District Attorney General of the Twenty-fourth Judicial Circuit. The District Attorney General of the Twenty-fourth Judicial Circuit shall appoint a qualified person to such office, to serve at the pleasure of the District Attorney General.

SECTION 2. The above-created Criminal Investigator shall perform such duties as may be assigned to him by the District Attorney General, and shall have the same powers and authority as deputies of the County Sheriffs.

SECTION 3. There is hereby created an additional office of Assistant District Attorney General for the Twenty-fourth Judicial Circuit. The District Attorney General of the Twenty-fourth Judicial Circuit shall appoint a qualified person, licensed to practice law in Tennessee, to such office, to serve at the pleasure of the District Attorney General.

SECTION 4. The above created Assistant District Attorney General shall perform such duties as the District Attorney General may direct, and shall serve as a full-time assistant as provided for by Section 8-708 of the Tennessee Code Annotated.

SECTION 5. The Criminal Investigator and the Assistant District Attorney General provided for in this act shall be compensated according to general law.

SECTION 6. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law, the public welfare requiring it.

Passed: May 16, 1977.

General Sessions Court

Private Acts of 1955 Chapter 17

SECTION 1. That there is hereby created and established in and for Bradley County, Tennessee, a Court which shall be designated "Court of General Sessions of Bradley County, Tennessee."

Court rooms and adequate facilities for said court shall be provided in the Courthouse at Cleveland, and it shall be the duty of the Judge of the County Court of said County or of any other authority responsible to make provision therefor, and to provide necessary dockets, furnishings, supplies and all necessary equipment for the proper maintenance of said Court. The expense of same shall be paid out of the General Funds of the County.

SECTION 2. That the Court of General Sessions of Bradley County, Tennessee, is hereby vested with all the jurisdiction and shall exercise the authority conferred by the Legislature upon Justices of the Peace in civil and criminal cases, suits, and actions; provided, however, that nothing in this act shall be construed to divest the Justices of the Peace of their jurisdiction until the election and qualification of a Judge of said Court as hereinafter provided. The authority of the Justices of the Peace in their capacity as members of the Quarterly County Court or in the performance of the rites of matrimony, and to issue criminal and civil warrants returnable before the General Sessions Judge and to issue commitments to jail before trial in any criminal case, or grant bail to a person charged with a criminal offense for his or her appearance before the General Sessions Court is in no wise affected by this Act and for such services such Justices of the Peace shall receive the fees allowed by law.

SECTION 3(a). That the Judge of the Court of General Sessions of Bradley County, Tennessee, is hereby vested with the exclusive jurisdiction, power, and authority now vested in the Judge of the County Court of Bradley County, Tennessee, to hear and determine any matter or controversy involving Juveniles and

the said County Judge is hereby divested of all such jurisdiction, power, and authority; provided, however, nothing in this Act shall be construed to divest the said County Judge of his jurisdiction and authority as financial agent of said County, as presiding member of the Quarterly County Court of said County, or of any other jurisdiction and authority conferred upon him by law.

(b) There is hereby conferred upon said Court the power and authority concurrent with the Circuit and Chancery Courts to hear and determine all cases of divorce which may be brought in Bradley County, Tennessee, with full power, authority, and jurisdiction to make and enforce by legal process, orders, and decrees, such judgments, decisions, and, orders as may be properly or lawfully made in the premises, including the determination of the care and custody of any child that may be involved, the allowance of alimony, support and maintenance of the wife or children and the enforcement of such orders by writs of ne exeat, attachment, habeas corpus, injunction and order of contempt, or by other provisions authorized by law, provided, that for the purpose of determining matters under the jurisdiction conferred by this sub-section, the rule days, practice, and writs of process shall be the same as in the Chancery Court; and further provided, that any appeal from the final decree of said Court in any matter determined under the jurisdiction conferred under this sub-section (b) shall be to the Court of Appeals at Knoxville, or the Supreme Court at Knoxville, in the same manner as appeals from the Chancery Court, and further provided, that in the event either party shall demand a trial by jury in the determination of any matter under the jurisdiction conferred by the sub-section (b) then the Clerk shall prepare a transcript of the record in such case, which shall be certified by the Judge of such Court, and filed in the Circuit Court of Bradley County for trial by jury as demanded.

(c) There is hereby conferred upon said court the power and authority concurrent with the Circuit and Chancery Courts to hear and determine all cases of partition or sale for partition of land situate, lying and being in Bradley County, provided, that for the purpose of determining matters under the jurisdiction conferred by this sub-section, the rule days, practice, and writs of process shall be the same as in the Chancery Court; and further provided, that any appeal from the final decree of said Court in any matter determined under the jurisdiction conferred under this sub-section (c) shall be to the Courts of Appeals at Knoxville, or the Supreme Court at Knoxville in the same manner as appeals from the Chancery Court.

(d) Appeals from the judgements of said Court in cases formerly cognizable by the County Court of Bradley County shall be as now provided by law for cases originating in the County Court. All other appeals, except as herein otherwise provided, shall be direct to the Circuit Court of Bradley County in the same manner as now provided for appeals from Courts of Justices of the Peace.

(e)

(1) In those matters in which the Court of General Sessions exercises concurrent jurisdiction with the Circuit and Chancery Courts, the Court of General Sessions is hereby vested with full power and authority to transfer cases to the Circuit and Chancery Courts for acceptance by said court of such transfer.

(2) The Court of General Sessions is hereby vested with full power and authority to accept transfers of cases from the dockets of the Circuit and Chancery Courts in such cases as the Court of General Sessions has concurrent jurisdiction with the Circuit and Chancery Courts.

(3) The Court of General Sessions is hereby vested with the power and authority to participate with the Circuit and Chancery Courts in an establishment with a common docket to hear and determine all cases which may be brought in Bradley County, Tennessee and assigned to such docket for hearing by the judges of said courts and such matters as said courts exercise concurrent jurisdiction with full power, authority and jurisdiction to make and enforce by legal process orders and decrees, such judgments, decisions and orders as may be properly or lawfully made in the premises upon all such matters.

As amended by:

Private Acts of 2012, Chapter 51

SECTION 4. That there is hereby conferred upon the Judge of the Court of General Sessions the same power and authority to grant fiats for the issuance of injunctions, attachments, and all other extraordinary process as that conferred upon Circuit Judges and Chancellors in this State.

SECTION 5. That before the issuance of any warrant in a civil case the Plaintiff shall execute a cost bond with good security in the sum of Twenty-five Dollars (\$25.00) or in lieu thereof make a cash deposit with the Clerk of not less than Five Dollars (\$5.00) or more than Twenty-five Dollars (\$25.00), as required by the Court, to secure the costs, or take the oath prescribed for poor persons; and the Court may increase the security in appropriate cases, but not exceeding the amount of Two Hundred Fifty Dollars (\$250.00).

SECTION 6. That said court shall be in session at the Courthouse in Cleveland daily except Sundays and legal holidays, at such hours as may be designated by the Court, provided, however, the Judge shall have power and authority to hear and determine cases at any other place in Bradley County that he may determine to be more feasible and convenient for the parties.

All cases shall be set for an hour certain, and the practice heretofore prevailing of allowing an hour for the parties to appear in Courts of the Justice of the Peace shall not apply to the Court of General Sessions.

SECTION 7. That the costs and fees and the rules of pleading and practice, forms of writs and process, stay or appeals from judgments in civil cases of said Court now within the jurisdiction of Justices of the Peace shall be the same as Justices of the Peace in cases in which the jurisdiction of said Justices have been divested by this Act; and the costs and fees, rules of pleading and practice, forms of writs and process, and dockets and records in all matters in which the Judge of the County Court of said County has been divested of authority and jurisdiction shall be the same as required by law, except where specifically changed by this Act.

Pleadings, practice, forms of writs, process, etc., in cases in which the Court of General Sessions is given concurrent jurisdiction with the Circuit and Chancery Courts shall be the same as prevails in said Courts in all cases in which the jurisdiction exceeds that of Justices of the Peace, and the Court shall keep civil and equity dockets in all cases exceeding the present jurisdiction of Justices of the Peace.

The Judge of said court may adopt such rules as may be necessary to expedite the trial disposal of cases.

SECTION 8. That the criminal and civil dockets shall be kept in substantially the same form as those now required of Justices of the Peace, except as otherwise provided herein.

SECTION 9. That there shall be a Judge for said Court, who shall have the same qualifications, term of office, and oath as prescribed by law for Circuit Judges and Chancellors. The compensation of said Judge shall be ten thousand dollars (\$10,000.00) per annum payable in equal monthly installments, the same to be paid out of the General Funds of the County. He shall be subject to the same restrictions regarding the practice of law as are imposed upon Circuit Judge and Chancellors, and provided, further, that the said Judge during his incumbency shall not hold any other official office or position either with the State of Tennessee or any other governmental agency.

As amended by: Private Acts of 1965, Chapter 142

SECTION 10. That the Honorable Earle G. Murphy of Cleveland, is hereby appointed and designated the first Judge of said Court; and he shall take office upon the effective date of this Act and serve until September 1, 1956, and until his successor is elected and qualified.

His successor shall be elected by the qualified voters of the County at he election for civil officers in August, 1956, and shall hold said office until the next regular judicial election as provided by law for Circuit Judges and Chancellors.

SECTION 11. That if the Judge of said Court fails to attend, cannot attend or preside in a pending cause, the majority of such attorneys present in such Court may elect one of their number who has qualifications of such a Judge, who, when elected shall have the same authority as a regular Judge to hold court for the occasion.

In the event of a vacancy resulting from the death or disability of such Judge, the Governor shall have the power to appoint some qualified person to fill the vacancy until the next regular general election held in Bradley County.

The regular Judge of said Court shall be allowed a vacation of not to exceed two (2) weeks in any calendar year.

SECTION 12. That the Clerk of the Circuit Court of Bradley County is hereby authorized and directed to act as Clerk of said Court and to perform the duties thereof in all civil and criminal cases; and he shall have concurrent authority with the Judge to issue warrants and other processes and writs, other than those which the law requires shall be issued only by fiat of a judicial officer. All bail bonds, recognizance bonds, and appearance bonds of persons charged with misdemeanors for their appearance for arraignment or trial in said Court may be taken by the Clerk. He shall receive the same costs, fees, and emoluments as are now allowed by law for such services.

SECTION 13. That all fines and forfeitures adjudged by said Court shall be payable to and collected by the Clerk, and be reported on, and accounted for and paid over as required by law.

SECTION 14. That the Sheriff of said County, or any Deputy Sheriff or Constable thereof, shall serve legal process, writs and papers issued by said Court with the same authority as provided by law in the other inferior Courts, and shall receive the same fees therefor provided by law.

SECTION 15. That the Court of General Sessions of Bradley County, Tennessee, is hereby vested with

jurisdiction to try and determine and render final judgments in all misdemeanor cases brought before said Court by warrant or information wherein the person charged with such misdemeanor enters a plea of guilty or requests a trial upon the merits, and expressly waives an indictment, presentment and a Grand Jury Investigation, and a jury trial. In such cases the trial shall proceed before the Judge and without a jury. The final judgment of such Court may be appealed to the Criminal Court of Bradley County, or to the Circuit Court where provided by special statute, where such appeal shall be tried by a Judge of such Court de novo and without indictment or presentment.

SECTION 16. That it shall be the mandatory duty of the Judge of said Court when a defendant is brought before the Court upon arraignment or trial to advise the defendant of his constitutional right to the aid of counsel, the right to be tried only upon presentment or indictment by a Grand Jury, the right to make a statement in reference to the accusation of the right to waive such statement and the right to a trial by a jury.

Upon the defendants agreeing in writing to waive the right to be put to trial only by presentment or indictment by a Grand Jury and the right to be tried by a jury of his peers, the Court may proceed to hear and determine the case.

The waiver shall be in writing, signed by the defendant, written on or attached to the warrant, and in the form and of contents substantially as follows:

"The defendant, pleads guilty of the offense of and expressly waives his or her right to be tried only by or upon presentment or indictment preferred by a Grand Jury, and likewise expressly waives the right to a trial by a jury of his or her peers.

Signed

Attest: "

SECTION 17. That said Court shall have authority to hear and determine all undisposed of cases arising in the Courts of Justices of the Peace of Bradley County, as if said cases had originated in said Court of General Sessions, and said Court shall have power and authority to issue executions and other final process on judgments rendered by Justices of the Peace.

SECTION 18. That this Act shall in no wise impair the right, title, or interest of any Justices of the Peace of Bradley County of any unpaid fees, or fund in which he had a right or interest in any proceedings, judgement or suit, whether said cause is disposed of or pending when this Act becomes effective.

That the official dockets, records, and papers in possession of Justices of the Peace of said County shall be turned over to the Clerk of the Sessions Court of Bradley County on the date this Act becomes effective.

SECTION 19. That the Judge of the Sessions Court shall have authority to name a Deputy Sheriff or Constable of Bradley County to wait on his Court, and such Officer shall receive an

annual compensation of Six Thousand Dollars, (\$6,000), payable in equal monthly installments.

As amended by:

Private Acts of 1967, Chapter 429

Private Acts of 1971, Chapter 178

Private Acts of 1973, Chapter 63

Private Acts of 1976, Chapter 268

SECTION 20. That the Legislature expressly declares that each section, subsection, paragraph, and provision of this Act is severable, and that should any portion of this Act be held unconstitutional or invalid, the same shall not affect the remainder of this Act, but such unconstitutional or invalid portion shall be elided, and the Legislature declares that it would have enacted this Act with such unconstitutional or invalid portions elided therefrom.

SECTION 21. That all laws or parts of laws in conflict with the provisions of this Act be, and they are hereby repealed as of the date this Act becomes effective.

SECTION 22. That the Commissioners of Election of Bradley County, Tennessee, shall, within sixty (60) days from and after the passage of this Act, call a special election, the expenses of which will be paid from the General Funds of said County, for the purpose of submitting this Act to the qualified voters of said County for their approval. The ballot to be used in said election shall read as follows:

"For the General Sessions Court ()

Against the General Sessions Court ()"

The said Commissioners of Election of said County shall, within the time required by law after said election, meet, canvass the votes cast in said election, and certify the results of same to the proper officials and in the event this Act is approved by a majority of the voters voting in said election, then, and in that event, this Act shall become effective on the 1st day of the next month immediately following said

election, the public welfare requiring it.

Passed: January 26, 1955.

Cash Deposits

Private Acts of 1957 Chapter 231

SECTION 1. That the Judge of the Court of General Sessions for Bradley County, Tennessee, is hereby authorized and empowered to establish a schedule of cash deposits, which may be deposited with the committing official in lieu of bail, in any cases wherein the said Court has the jurisdiction to render final judgments, said deposits to be delivered to the Clerk of the Court of General Sessions and held by him pending a disposition of the case.

SECTION 2. That in any case wherein said deposit has been forfeited, the Clerk of said Court shall first pay out of said deposit all the costs which have accrued in the case and then pay the remainder of said deposit to the State of Tennessee or Bradley County in the same manner as now provided for the payment over the fines, said funds to be paid to the State of Tennessee or Bradley County according to the offense charged as if said deposits were fines.

SECTION 3. That this Act shall not become effective unless and until it has been ratified and approved by the Quarterly County Court of Bradley County, Tennessee, by a two-thirds majority of the Justices at any meeting at which this Act may be submitted for ratification and approval.

SECTION 4. That this Act insofar as the General Assembly of Tennessee is concerned, take effect from and after its passage the public welfare requiring it.

Passed: March 15, 1957.

Division II

Private Acts of 1982 Chapter 299

SECTION 1. Effective September 1, 1982, there is created a Division II to the General Sessions Court of Bradley County created by Chapter 17 of the Private Acts of 1955. Such division shall have concurrent jurisdiction with the present General Sessions Court in Bradley County. Effective September 1, 1982, the present General Sessions Court in such county shall be designated as Division I.

SECTION 2. At the August 1982 General Election, and every eight (8) years; thereafter, the qualified voters of Bradley County shall elect a person to the office of judge of Division II of General Sessions Court for an eight (8) year term. Such judge of Division II shall possess all of the qualifications presently required for General Sessions Judges in Bradley County.

For the August 1982 election only, persons seeking election to the office of judge of Division II of the General Sessions Court of Bradley County shall have until 12:00 noon prevailing time on May 4, 1982, to qualify as a candidate for such office.

SECTION 3. The judge of Division II of the Bradley County General Sessions Court shall have the same jurisdiction, authority, powers and duties, and shall receive the same compensation in the same manner as is presently provided for the judge of the General Sessions Court of Bradley County.

SECTION 4. Upon the judge of Division II taking office on September 1, 1982, he shall meet with the judge of Division I for the purpose of making an equitable division of the cases then pending in the Bradley County General Sessions Court. At such meeting, the judges shall also determine the method by which future cases filed in General Sessions Court will be assigned between the two (2) divisions.

SECTION 5. The compensation of all court officers employed for Division II of the General Sessions Court created by this Act and the compensation of all court officers presently employed by the General Sessions Court of Bradley County shall be established by the Bradley County Commission. Provided, however, the level of compensation for any such court officer shall not exceed fifty percent (50%) of the compensation paid to the Bradley County Sheriff.

SECTION 6. This Act shall have no effect unless it is approved by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the county legislative body of Bradley County. Its approval or nonapproval shall be proclaimed by the presiding officer of the Bradley County legislative body and certified by him to the Secretary of State.

SECTION 7. For the purpose of approving or rejecting the provisions of this Act, it shall be effective upon becoming a law, the public welfare requiring it. For all other purposes, it shall take effect upon being approved as provided in Section 6 unless another date is specified by this Act.

Passed: March 25, 1982.

Environmental Court

Private Acts of 2006 Chapter 86

SECTION 1. This act is local in effect and requires the approval of a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the county legislative body, and, upon approval, shall take effect as provided in Section 7.

SECTION 2. The legislative body of Bradley County is authorized to designate a division of the county's general sessions court as the Environmental Court.

SECTION 3. In making such designation, the judge of the Environmental Court is granted the additional power to issue injunctions, both mandatory and prohibitory, as provided in Rule 65 of the Tennessee Rules of Civil Procedure. The judge may order any defendant found guilty of violating any court ordinance relating to health, housing, fire, land subdivision, building or zoning, to correct such violation at the defendant's own expense. In a case involving the alleged violation of any ordinance relating to health, housing, fire, land subdivision, building or zoning, the judge may appoint a master to aid the court. Rule 53 of the Tennessee Rules of Civil Procedure shall govern the appointment, power, and duty of the master.

SECTION 4. The judge of the Environmental Court shall also have the jurisdiction to try and dispose of violations of ordinances enacted by municipalities within Bradley County relating to health, housing, fire, land subdivision, building or zoning.

SECTION 5. The judge may also punish any person for contempt who, having been ordered to correct a violation of any county or municipal ordinance relating to health, housing, fire, land subdivision, building or zoning, willfully fails to obey such order within the designated day and at the designated time as given by such court order. The punishment for contempt in each such case is limited to a monetary penalty not to exceed fifty dollars (\$50.00) and imprisonment not exceeding ten (10) days for each such violation.

SECTION 6. If any provision of this act or the application thereof to any person or circumstance is held invalid, such invalidity shall not affect other provisions or applications of the act which can be given effect without the invalid provision or application, and to that end the provisions of this act are declared to be severable.

SECTION 7. Upon approval by the county legislative body of Bradley County, this act shall take effect September 1, 2006, the public welfare requiring it.

Passed: March 30, 2006.

Court System - Historical Notes

Board of Jury Commissioners - Jurors

The following acts once affected jurors or boards of jury commissioners in Bradley County, but are no longer operative. Also referenced below are acts which repeal prior law without providing new substantive provisions.

1. Private Acts of 1925, Chapter 521, created three member Boards of Jury Commissioners for Blount, McMinn, Roane, Monroe, Bradley, Polk, and Loudon Counties, who would be appointed for single four year terms by the Criminal Court Judge, or the Circuit Judge, having criminal jurisdiction, or both, where necessary. The members must be freeholders, not attorneys, or state, county, or city officials, must not have a suit pending, or more than two belong to the same political party. The members were required to take the oath prescribed in the Act, and would meet in the office of the Circuit Court Clerk, who would serve as Clerk, on the first Monday in May, and every two years thereafter, to select no less than 400 nor more than 800 names from the tax rolls of the county, or from other public sources, who would be the jury list for the next two years. These names would be entered alphabetically in the book provided by the Clerk for that

purpose and the entire list must be confirmed by all the Board Members. The names were also to be placed on cards and the cards put into a box in the presence of the Board, which box would be sealed and locked and could not be opened except in the presence of the Board, or the Judge, and then only to refill the box. Two weeks prior to the opening of the court term, the box would be brought forth, shaken well, and a child under the age of ten years, would draw out the number of names ordered by the Judge who were needed as jurors for that term of court. These names were to be placed in an envelope, certified, and sent to the Judge of the Court. The Clerk would keep the names and return them to the box at the next meeting of the Board. The Sheriff would summon both venires, and provisions were made for exhausted panels and to produce special juries by bringing the box into court and drawing names until the needs were filled. Only the Judge could excuse one from duty and he was further obligated to investigate any irregularities noticed. Commissioners, who would be paid \$4.00 per day, could be removed when proper, and all who failed to conform were subject to penalties as prescribed in the Act.

2. Private Acts of 1927, Chapter 285, amended the above act by removing Loudon County from being subject to its terms and provisions.
3. Private Acts of 1931, Chapter 556, also created a three member Board of Jury Commissioners in several counties, including Bradley, designated by population figures, who would be jointly appointed by the criminal and circuit court judges. This Act seems to be applicable to the same counties as the 1925 Act in Item One, above, except for Loudon County and contains only a general repealer. Most of the terms of this Act were the same as the 1925 Act except that a Commissioner could serve more than one four year term and some administrative requirements and certifications of names were added, and the date of the first meeting of the Board was left blank. The form of the letter of transmittal of the names of prospective jurors selected was included in this Act. Some conditions relating to those counties which had both civil and criminal jurisdiction in the Circuit Court were changed. Penalties were increased for some instances of non-conformity with the terms herein.
4. Private Acts of 1955, Chapter 334, stated that the Jury Commissioners in Bradley County (identified by the 1950 Federal Census) would be paid at the rate of \$10.00 per day instead of the \$4.00 heretofore provided in the 1931 Act, which would be paid to them out of the County Treasury on the certificate of the Clerk. All conflicts were repealed and this Act was properly ratified by the Quarterly Court of Bradley County.

Chancery Court

The following acts form an outline of the development of equity jurisdiction in Bradley County, although they no longer have the force of law since they have either been superseded by general law, repealed, or failed to receive local ratification.

1. Acts of 1835-36, Chapter 4, enacted in the same year in which Bradley County was established, divided Tennessee into three Chancery Divisions, each to be presided over by a chancellor of the State, and to have two regular terms annually. Each division was further fragmented into districts.
2. Acts of 1835-36, Chapter 49, assigned newly formed Bradley County to the Ninth Chancery District of the Eastern Chancery Division which met at Madisonville in Monroe County.
3. Acts of 1837-38, Chapter 116, seemed to be a complete rearrangement of the schedule of Chancery Court terms in every county. However, Bradley County is not mentioned in this Act.
4. Acts of 1839-40, Chapter 21, assigned Bradley County and Polk County as one Chancery District whose court would meet at Cleveland in Bradley County under the supervision of the Chancellor of the Eastern Division on the second Monday in March and September.
5. Acts of 1843-44, Chapter 169, provided that the chancery cases now pending at Cleveland, or at Pikeville, which originated in Hamilton County, could be transferred at the request of either

- complainant or defendant to the Chancery Court at Harrison, in Hamilton County.
6. Acts of 1847-48, Chapter 171, reset the schedule of the terms of the Chancery Court which met at Cleveland to the fourth Monday in February and August.
 7. Acts of 1853-54, Chapter 54, formed a new Fifth Chancery Division in Tennessee composed of the courts then being held at Maryville, Kingston, Madisonville, Athens, Benton, Cleveland, Washington, Harrison, Pikeville, Jasper, Sparta, and Livingston, for which an additional chancellor would be elected who must reside within the confines of the new District at some place.
 8. Acts of 1857-58, Chapter 88, organized the entire State of Tennessee into the Eastern, Middle, Western, Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Chancery Divisions. Bradley County was included in the Fifth Division and the Chancery Court terms would begin in Cleveland on the fourth Monday in February and August. Other counties assigned to the Fifth Division were Polk, McMinn, Hamilton, Marion, Cumberland, Bledsoe, White, Overton, Fentress, Scott, Morgan, Roane, Meigs, Rhea, Blount, and Monroe.
 9. Acts of 1870, Chapter 32, formed twelve Chancery Divisions in the State. The Third Division contained the counties of Polk, McMinn, Meigs, Rhea, Cumberland, Bledsoe, Sequatchie, Marion, Hamilton, Bradley, and the Special Chancery Court at Chattanooga, in Hamilton County.
 10. Acts of 1870, Chapter 47, scheduled the regular court terms for every Chancery Court in the State. The Chancery Court of Bradley County would begin its terms on the fourth Monday of February and August.
 11. Acts of 1883, Chapter 34, rearranged the Chancery Court terms for the counties included in the Third Chancery Division which now contained the counties of James, Meigs, Polk, Marion, Rhea, Bledsoe, Sequatchie, Hamilton, McMinn, Monroe, and Bradley whose Chancery Court would meet at Cleveland on the third Monday of March and September.
 12. Acts of 1885 (Ex. Sess.), Chapter 20, reorganized the entire lower judicial structure in the State creating a total of eleven Chancery Divisions. This realignment of divisions assigned the counties of Bradley, Polk, Rhea, Marion, McMinn, Hamilton, James, Monroe, Meigs, Bledsoe, Sequatchie, Van Buren, Coffee, and Grundy to the Third Chancery Division. The Chancery Court of Bradley County would continue to meet at Cleveland on the third Monday in March and September. This Act, and several others was considered by the Supreme Court in the case of Flynn v. State, 203 Tenn. 341, 313 S.W.2d 249 (1958).
 13. Acts of 1887, Chapter 13, rescheduled the opening dates of the Chancery Court terms of the counties in the Third Chancery Division. Bradley County would open the regular terms of the Chancery Court on the third Monday in January and June.
 14. Acts of 1889, Chapter 13, regrouped the Third Chancery Division so as to include within it the counties of Polk, Rhea, Marion, McMinn, Hamilton, James, Monroe, Meigs, Bledsoe, Sequatchie, Van Buren, Grundy, and Bradley where the court would meet in Cleveland on the third Monday in March and September.
 15. Acts of 1895, Chapter 207, changed the opening dates of the Chancery Court terms for most of the counties in the Third Chancery Division. Bradley County would start the regular terms in Cleveland on the third Monday in February and August. All process and bonds were required to conform to these two dates.
 16. Acts of 1899, Chapter 427, was the next major revision of the lower court system of the State. Chancery Divisions were reduced to ten of which the Third Division contained the counties of Franklin, Rhea, Bradley, James, Marion, Coffee, Bledsoe, Sequatchie, Grundy, McMinn, Moore, Warren, Monroe, Polk, Meigs, and Hamilton. The terms of court would begin in Bradley County on the second Monday in February and August.
 17. Private Acts of 1911, Chapter 435, divided the Third Chancery Division of Tennessee, creating the

Twelfth Chancery Division out of the counties in the Third Division by removing every county except Hamilton County from the Third Division and placing them in the 12th Chancery Division. The Governor would appoint a Chancellor for the 12th Division who would hold the courts thereof at the times and places now constituted by law. The Chancellor would in turn appoint a Clerk and Master where there were vacancies, otherwise the current Clerks and Masters would continue in office.

18. Private Acts of 1917, Chapter 1, changed the times for holding the Chancery Court in Bradley County to the second Monday in April and October.
19. Public Acts of 1931 (2nd Ex. Sess.), Chapter 38, was a complete reorganization of the lower court system of the State and was the last act of this nature appearing in the volumes of private acts, all future changes take the form of Code amendments through public acts. Fourteen Chancery Divisions were formed in the process of which the counties of Rhea, McMinn, Warren, Bledsoe, Sequatchie, Marion, Van Buren, Meigs, Polk, Grundy, Coffee, Monroe, Franklin, and Bradley were all assigned to the 12th Chancery Division. Court terms in Bradley would begin on the second Monday in April and October which dates are still retained.

Chancery Court - Clerk and Master

The reference list below contains acts which once applied to the clerk and master in Bradley County.

1. Private Acts of 1915, Chapter 254, made unmarried females over the age of 21 years and residents of the county, eligible to be appointed and to serve as Deputy Clerks in any of the courts of Bradley County with all the rights, powers, and obligations as other Deputy Clerks. The marriage of the female would work an immediate forfeiture of the office and she would thereafter be disqualified to perform any official duties as a Deputy. Acceptance of employment would constitute an estoppel against her from pleading any defense of coverture and from denying any of the responsibilities assumed under the employment.
2. Private Acts of 1923, Chapter 700, provided that the Clerk and Master of Bradley County would be paid \$1,800 a year out of the county treasury provided the Clerk and Master filed an annual report with the County Judge, or Chairman, by January 1 of each year including a sworn, itemized statement showing all the fees collected by the office during the year. If the fees were less than the salary, the county would pay the difference. If the fees exceeded the salary, the county allowed the Clerk and Master to keep the difference.
3. Private Acts of 1931, Chapter 706, amended Public Acts of 1921, Chapter 101, which regulated the salaries of the Clerks and Masters, and the Clerks of the various courts, by exempting Bradley County from all its provisions.

Circuit Court

The following acts were once applicable to the circuit court of Bradley County but now have no effect, having been repealed, superseded, or having failed to win local approval.

1. Acts of 1835-36, Chapter 49, assigned Bradley County, then newly formed, to the Third Judicial Circuit of the State with the Court starting its regular terms on the second Monday in January, May, and September.
2. Acts of 1837-38, Chapter 116, scheduled the terms for the Circuit Courts in the Third Judicial Circuit which included the Counties of Hamilton, McMinn, Meigs, and Bradley in which the Circuit Court would convene its regular terms on the fourth Monday in April, August, and December.
3. Acts of 1841-42, Chapter 50, provided that all the civil cases which were pending in the Circuit Court of Bradley County at the time Polk County was established wherein the parties to the suit lived within or fell within that area of Bradley County which became a part of Polk County could be transferred to the Circuit Court of Polk County for trial upon the application of either the Plaintiff or the Defendant.

4. Acts of 1843-44, Chapter 161, rearranged the terms of the Circuit Courts in the Counties of Cannon, Meigs, and Bradley where the Circuit Courts would meet at Cleveland on the first Monday in January, May, and September.
5. Acts of 1857-58, Chapter 98, established a total of 16 Judicial Circuits throughout the State and scheduled their court terms. The Fourth Judicial Circuit was composed of the Counties of Polk, Rhea, Hamilton, McMinn, Meigs, the Common Law Court at Chattanooga, and Bradley where the regular terms would continue to start on the first Monday in January, May, and September.
6. Acts of 1870, Chapter 31, organized all the Circuit Courts in Tennessee into fifteen regular, and one special, judicial circuits. The Fourth Judicial Circuit was made up of the Counties of McMinn, Polk, Meigs, Bradley, Rhea, Hamilton, Marion, Sequatchie, Bledsoe, and the Special Court at Chattanooga.
7. Acts of 1870, Chapter 46, established a schedule of court terms for the circuit courts of the counties having Circuit Courts throughout the State. The Circuit Court in Bradley County would keep on meeting for regular terms on the first Monday in January, May, and September.
8. Acts of 1870 (Ex. Sess.), Chapter 106, recited the membership of the Fourth Judicial Circuit of Tennessee as the Counties of James, Hamilton, Meigs, Rhea, Bledsoe, Sequatchie, Marion, McMinn, and Polk. Court terms were changed for some of the counties but Bradley remained as it was.
9. Acts of 1883, Chapter 34, rescheduled some of the court terms for the circuit courts of the counties in the Fourth Judicial Circuit. Bradley County, however, would continue to convene the regular terms of court on the first Monday in January, May, and September.
10. Acts of 1885 (Ex. Sess.), Chapter 20, was the next major revision of the lower court system in the State which divided Tennessee into sixteen regular, and one special, judicial circuits. The Fourth Judicial Circuit was made up of the counties of Bradley, Polk, Meigs, Rhea, Bledsoe, Sequatchie, Marion, Hamilton, McMinn, and James. Bradley County would take up the regular circuit court docket on the first Monday in January, May and September.
11. Acts of 1887, Chapter 13, rescheduled the opening dates of the terms of the Circuit Courts in the Fourth Judicial Circuit but left Bradley County's terms to begin on the first Monday in January, May, and September.
12. Acts of 1889, Chapter 13, again changed the opening dates for the Circuit Court terms for some of the counties in the Fourth Judicial Circuit but Bradley County's terms remained as they were.
13. Acts of 1889, Chapter 35, created a new 17th Judicial Circuit out of counties taken from the Third and Fourth Judicial Circuits. The Circuit contained the counties of Bradley, James, McMinn, Meigs, Monroe, and Polk, and Bradley County's term would begin in Cleveland on the first Monday in January, May, and September. The Governor was required to appoint a Judge and an Attorney-General for the circuit who would serve until their successors could be elected by popular vote. The clerks of these respective courts would govern themselves accordingly in issuing process and taking bonds.
14. Acts of 1899, Chapter 427, reorganized the lower judicial system of the State into fourteen Judicial Circuits, among other things. The Fourth Judicial Circuit contained the Counties of Bradley, Polk, Meigs, McMinn, James, Loudon, Roane, Blount, and Monroe. The Court terms in Bradley would continue to start on the first Monday in January, May, and September.
15. Acts of 1901, Chapter 413, rearranged the opening dates of the Circuit Court terms for several of the Counties in the Fourth Judicial Circuit but did not change Bradley's dates.
16. Acts of 1903, Chapter 354, amended Chapter 413, Acts of 1901, so that the Court terms of some of the Circuit Courts were changed but Bradley County would continue to convene on the first

Monday in January, May, and September.

17. Public Acts of 1929, Chapter 142, changed the opening dates of the Circuit Court of Bradley County to the second Monday in January, May, and September.
18. Public Acts of 1931 (2nd Ex. Sess.), Chapter 38, was a complete reordering of the Chancery, Circuit, and Criminal Courts in the State, and was the last Act appearing in the volumes of private acts. Twenty Judicial Circuits were formed of which the Fourth Judicial Circuit was made up of the Counties of Roane, Blount, Loudon, McMinn, Polk, Monroe, and Bradley where the courts would still meet on the first Monday in January, May, and September.
19. Public Acts of 1965, Chapter 188, created a new 24th Judicial Circuit and assigned to it the counties of Bradley, McMinn, Polk, and Monroe, all Circuit Court terms were to be held on the first Mondays in January, May and September and the fourth Mondays in February and October.
20. Public Acts of 1971, Chapter 347, changed the Circuit Court terms in Bradley County to the first Monday in January and August and the third Monday in April and October by amending Section 16-236, Tennessee Code Annotated.

Circuit Court Clerk

The following acts have no current effect, but once applied to the Bradley County Circuit Court Clerk. They were repealed, superseded, or never received local approval. Also referenced below are acts which repeal prior law without providing new substantive provisions.

1. Acts of 1859-60, Chapter 84, was the legal authority for the Comptroller of the Treasury of the State to issue his warrant in favor of John H. Payne, the Circuit Court Clerk of Bradley County, for \$125.00.
2. Acts of 1903, Chapter 255, was an Act regulating only the Clerks of the Circuit Courts of the State but setting their salaries according to the population of the counties in which they served. This Act paid the Clerks in the population class of Bradley County \$1,000 per annum. The Clerks were required to file an annual, itemized, sworn statement with the County Judge, or Chairman, showing the total amount of fees collected in the office during the preceding year. If the fees were less than the salary, the County would make up the difference, but, if the fees exceeded the salary, the Clerk was allowed to retain the excess.
3. Private Acts of 1913, Chapter 167, set the annual salary of the Circuit Court Clerk of Bradley County (identified by the 1910 Federal Census) at \$1,500, under the same terms and conditions as were contained in the 1903 Act reported above.
4. Private Acts of 1915, Chapter 254, allowed any unmarried female over the age of 21 and a resident of Bradley County to serve as the Deputy to any Clerk of a Court in the County provided the other terms and conditions prescribed in the Act were met. This Act has a fuller explanation under Clerk and Master to which office it likewise applied.
5. Private Acts of 1923, Chapter 248, amended Chapter 167, Private Acts of 1913, Item 3, above, by increasing the annual salary of the Circuit Court Clerk from \$1,500 to \$1,800.
6. Private Acts of 1931, Chapter 705, made it the duty of the Quarterly Court of Bradley County to fix and to allow the Circuit Court Clerk and the Criminal Court Clerk as compensation for their services, and in addition to all other fees allowed them by law, and as expenses for their office, a sum no less than \$1,000 and no more than \$1,800 per year, payable in equal monthly installments on the first day of each month. The payments would be drawn on the regular funds of the County. The Clerks were required to make an annual report to the County Judge, or Chairman, showing the total amount of fees collected, and the total amount expended for Deputy and stenographic assistance. The Court was instructed to provide the Clerks with a reasonable amount of funds in order that the Clerk could have competent help and assistance in the operation of the office.

7. Private Acts of 1933, Chapter 660, amended Section One, Chapter 705, Private Acts of 1931, by reducing the minimum expense money allowed to the Circuit Court Clerk from \$1,000 to \$480 a year, and the maximum amount from \$1,800 to \$600 per year, all other terms to stay.
8. Private Acts of 1947, Chapter 92, allowed the Circuit Court Clerk to appoint a Deputy Clerk to serve during the Clerk's term of office, who must possess all the qualifications of the Clerk and be competent to perform all the duties of the office. The salary was set at \$150 a month for the Clerk payable out of general funds.
9. Public Acts of 1974, Chapter 686, created the Twenty-Ninth Judicial Circuit which consisted of Bradley County. Circuit Court was to be held on the first Mondays in January, May and September.

Criminal Court

The following acts once pertained to the Bradley County Criminal Court, but are no longer current law.

1. Private Acts of 1925, Chapter 58, created the Criminal Court division of the Fourth Judicial Circuit.
2. Private Acts of 1925, Chapter 105, scheduled the terms of court for the Criminal Courts in Roane County, Loudon County, at Ducktown in Polk County, and in Bradley County where the court would be held commencing on the fourth Monday in January, May, and September instead of those times cited by the act creating the Court.
3. Private Acts of 1927, Chapter 730, provided that all workhouse bonds would be received, approved, and collected, by the Criminal Court Clerks of the counties of Blount, Bradley, Loudon, McMinn, Monroe, Polk, and Roane. The Clerk had and could exercise all the powers necessary in this regard to the same extent and capacity as others charged with similar responsibilities. This Clerks were accountable for all funds so collected coming into their hands. All bonds to be acceptable must have two good and solvent sureties. The Clerks were allowed a commission of 10% on all sums collected and reported under the terms of this Act which amount they could deduct before filing their report.
4. Public Acts of 1929, Chapter 142, changed the opening dates of the terms of the Circuit Court in Cleveland in Bradley County to the third and fourth Mondays in February, June, and October.
5. Private Acts of 1929, Chapter 720, amended Private Acts of 1927, Chapter 730, above, by requiring the bonds provided for in the 1927 Act to contain language which would pay an attorney 15% for his services in the event it became necessary to place the bonds out for collection, this percentage to be in addition to all other principal, interests, and collection charges.
6. Public Acts of 1931 (2nd Ex. Sess.), Chapter 38, the complete turnover of the lower court system in Tennessee, assigned the counties of Roane, Loudon, Blount, McMinn, Polk, Monroe, and Bradley to the Criminal Division of the fourth judicial circuit and set the opening dates of the Court in Cleveland in Bradley County on the third Monday in February, June, and October.
7. Public Acts of 1965, Chapter 188, created the Twenty-Fourth Judicial Circuit, consisting of the counties of Bradley, McMinn, Monroe, and Polk. Criminal Court for the Twenty-Fourth Judicial Circuit was held on the first Mondays in March, July and November for Bradley County.

District Attorney General - Assistants and Criminal Investigators

The following acts once affecting Bradley County are no longer in effect but are listed here for historical purposes. Also referenced below are acts which repeal prior law without providing new substantive provisions.

1. Public Acts of 1939, Chapter 228, created the position of Criminal Investigator for the Fourth Judicial Circuit who must be a resident of the circuit, an attorney, and over 21 years of age. The Governor would appoint the first Investigator and the Criminal Court Judge would appoint one every two years thereafter. The salary was fixed at \$1,200 per year. This Act was repealed by Chapter 189, Public Acts of 1965.

2. Public Acts of 1955, Chapter 241, provided a criminal investigator for the fourth judicial circuit. This Act was repealed by Chapter 189, Public Acts of 1965.
3. Public Acts of 1965, Chapter 188, allowed the District Attorney General to appoint two persons as Assistant Attorneys General or one Assistant District Attorney General and one Criminal Investigator. Furthermore, the circuit judge and the criminal judge of the 24th judicial circuit were authorized to employ a secretary at a salary not to exceed Three Thousand Dollars per annum.
4. Public Acts of 1967, Chapter 385, created the office of an additional Assistant District Attorney General for the twenty-fourth Judicial Circuit.
5. Public Acts of 1977, Chapter 356, created an additional office of Criminal Investigator for the District Attorney General of the Twenty-fourth Judicial Circuit.

General Sessions Court

The following act once affected the general sessions court of Bradley County, but is no longer in effect and is included herein for reference purposes.

1. Private Acts of 1959, Chapter 275, amended Chapter 17, Private Acts of 1955, the creative act for General Sessions Court above, by giving authority to the Court to issue search warrants in Section 2, in addition to other powers, and in Section 9 by adding a provision that the Judge of the Court was prohibited from practicing law in any matter wherein the Court of General Sessions had original, concurrent, or exclusive jurisdiction, or, if the Judge was associated with another Attorney in a like suit, and the prohibition extended to him and to all associated with him in a firm. This Act was rejected and never became an effective law under the Home Rule Amendment to the State Constitution.

Secretarial Assistance

The following act is no longer in effect but is listed here for historical purposes.

1. Public Acts of 1963, Chapter 231 created the office of Secretary to the Judge of the Fourth Judicial Circuit of which Bradley County was then part of. The Secretary was to receive \$2,400 per year as compensation.

Source URL: <https://www.ctas.tennessee.edu/private-acts/chapter-v-court-system-4>