



County Technical Assistance Service  
INSTITUTE *for* PUBLIC SERVICE

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# Elections - Historical Notes

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

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

Sincerely,

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# Elections - Historical Notes

## **Districts - Reapportionment**

The acts listed below have affected the civil districts in Decatur 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 137, amended an 1835 general law which would permit counties to delineate the Civil Districts so as to allow Decatur County to lay off one additional District in the county, whenever the best interests and convenience of the county required it but three-fourths of the Justices must be present and concur therein before the decision could become effective.
2. Public Acts of 1869-70, Chapter 73, provided that Cub Creek is hereby designated and constituted to be the boundary line between the 5th and the 7th Civil District of Decatur County.

## **Elections**

The following is a listing of acts for Davidson County which affected the elective process, but which have been superseded or repealed.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 1847-48, Chapter 101, made each Congressional District the same as the Electoral District for the election of the President and the Vice-President of the United States plus two Electors who would be elected from the State at large. Details for counting the votes and for the organization of the various polling precincts are included in the act.
2. Acts of 1851-52, Chapter 196, divided the State into ten U. S. Congressional Districts. The Seventh District was composed of the Counties of Giles, Lawrence, Wayne, Hardin, McNairy, Perry, Decatur, Benton, Humphreys, Hickman, and Lewis.
3. Acts of 1851-52, Chapter 197, apportioned the representation in the General Assembly of the State. Perry and Decatur County would elect one Representative jointly and the votes would be counted in Linden in Perry County. Benton, Humphreys, Perry, Decatur, and Henderson Counties composed one Senatorial District and the polls in this District would be compared at the mouth of Morgan's Creek.
4. Acts of 1865, Chapter 34, organized Tennessee into eight U.S. Congressional Districts. The Sixth Congressional District had in it the Counties of Lawrence, Wayne, Hardin, Decatur, Perry, Lewis, Maury, Hickman, Humphreys, Dickson, Montgomery, and Stewart.
5. Acts of 1871, Chapter 154, apportioned the representation in the General Assembly of the State on the basis of the 1870 Federal Census. Hardin and Decatur Counties were given one Representative together, and the 18th State Senatorial District was made up of the Counties of Hardin, Decatur, Benton, McNairy, and Henderson.
6. Acts of 1872, Chapter 7, created nine U.S. Congressional Districts in the State of Tennessee of which the Seventh District contained the Counties of Montgomery, Houston, Stewart, Humphreys, Benton, Henry, Carroll, Henderson, Decatur, Perry, Hardin, and McNairy.
7. Acts of 1873, Chapter 27, reorganized the Congressional Districts in Tennessee into ten Districts. The 8th Congressional District was composed of the Counties of Henry, Benton, Carroll, Perry, Decatur, Hardin, McNairy, Henderson, and Madison.
8. Acts of 1881 (Ex. Sess.), Chapter 5, made the composition of the General Assembly of the State to be made up permanently of 33 Senators and 99 Representatives.
9. Acts of 1881 (Ex. Sess.), Chapter 6, changed the organization of the General Assembly to conform to the preceding Act and to the figures of the 1880 national census. One Representative would be shared by Lewis, Perry, and Decatur Counties while Carroll, Benton, and Decatur Counties constituted the 26th State Senatorial District.
10. Acts of 1882 (Ex. Sess.), Chapter 27, separated Tennessee into ten U.S. Congressional Districts. The 8th District consisted of the Counties of Henry, Benton, Perry, Decatur, Hardin, McNairy, Henderson, Madison, and Carroll.
11. Acts of 1891 (Ex. Sess.), Chapter 10, reapportioned the State for representation in the General Assembly, assigning Benton, Humphreys, Decatur, and Hardin Counties to the 24th Senatorial District. Henry, Benton, and Decatur Counties would share one Representative in the Legislature.
12. Acts of 1901, Chapter 109, divided the State into ten Congressional Districts and placed the Counties of Henry, Benton, Perry, Carroll, Decatur, Henderson, Chester, Madison, McNairy, and Hardin in the 8th Congressional District.

13. Acts of 1901, Chapter 122, did the same in reference to the General Assembly. These 1901 Acts would be the last apportionment laws for more than fifty years. The 26th State Senatorial District included the Counties of Hardeman, McNairy, Hardin, Decatur, and Benton. Benton and Decatur Counties made up the 21st Representative District.
14. Private Acts of 1961, Chapter 149, is listed as being applicable to Decatur County but the law applies only to the city of Decatur in Meigs County.
15. Private Acts of 1970, Chapter 232, would have amended Private Acts of 1957, Chapter 335, which is published herein, by inserting a new provision at the end of Section One which provided for three Democratic Executive Committeemen from each Civil District in Decatur County but this Act was not acted on by the Quarterly County Court of the County, which if true, would nullify the provisions of it.
16. Private Acts of 1957, Chapter 335, was repealed by Private Acts of 2018, Chapter 37, abolishing the Decatur County Democratic Party executive committee.

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