



County Technical Assistance Service
INSTITUTE *for* PUBLIC SERVICE

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Elections - Historical Notes

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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Districts - Reapportionment

The act listed below once affected the civil districts in Williamson County, but is no longer operative regarding elections.

1. Acts of 1835-36, Chapter 1, required that the General Assembly appoint by Joint Resolution five suitable Commissioners in each County to lay off their respective counties into Civil District in accordance with the land area and the population. Each county with 3,000 qualified voters would be divided into 25 Civil Districts, from 2,500 - 3,000, into 20 Civil Districts, from 2,000 to 2,500, into 17 Civil Districts, from 1,500 - 2,000, into 15 Civil Districts, and correspondingly on down the population groupings. In Williamson County those appointed by Resolution #3, to lay off the County were Richard J. Hill, James W. Carson, Isaac Ivey, Michael Kinnard, and John L. McEwing. The duties and responsibilities of the commissioners were enumerated in the Act.

Elections

The following is a listing of acts for Williamson County which affected the elective process, but which have been superseded or repealed. They are listed here for historical and reference purposes.

1. Acts of 1799, Chapter 46, appointed citizens from the counties in the Mero District who would meet in Nashville to elect some person from the Mero District who would join others from the Washington and Hamilton Districts as Electors for the President and Vice-President of the United States. In Williamson County Henry Rutherford, Abraham Maury, and John Walthall, were appointed to attend the meeting in Nashville.
2. Acts of 1801, Chapter 43, stated that the people of Tennessee shall elect one Representative to the United States Congress from each of the Washington, Hamilton, and Mero Districts. The returning officers of the Mero District would meet in Nashville on the fourth day after the election to canvass and compare the vote.
3. Acts of 1803, Chapter 24, divided Tennessee into five Presidential Electoral Districts of which the Fifth District was composed of the counties of Davidson, Williamson, Robertson, Montgomery, Stewart, Rutherford, and Dickson. Votes would be compared at Nashville after the election on the first Thursday and Friday of November, 1804. This Act became void by its own terms on January 5, 1805.
4. Acts of 1803, Chapter 79, laid off the State into three Congressional Districts commensurate with the Washington District in the East, the Hamilton District in the Middle, and the Mero District in the Western portions of the State.
5. Acts of 1805, Chapter 64, established 13 Senatorial and 26 Representative Districts in Tennessee for the General Assembly. Williamson and Rutherford Counties made up one of the Senatorial Districts. Williamson County would elect one of the 26 Representatives alone.
6. Acts of 1807, Chapter 74, required the Sheriffs of the various counties to hold elections on the second Thursday and Friday in November, 1808, for Electors of President and Vice- President of the United States. Tennessee had five Electoral Districts and the counties of Davidson, Robertson, Montgomery, Sumner, Dickson, Williamson, Maury, Rutherford, Bedford, and Hickman were allocated to the Fifth Presidential Electoral District.
7. Acts of 1809, Chapter 1, provided for the election of three U.S. Congressional Representatives, one from the Washington District, one from the Hamilton District, and one from the combined Districts of Winchester, Robertson, and Mero.
8. Acts of 1809, Chapter 57, stated that a separate election site would be held by the Sheriff, or a Deputy Sheriff, at the muster ground of the Second Battalion in Williamson County at all regular elections for governor, members of Congress, members of the General Assembly, or field officers in the county militia. Some election regulations are prescribed including a \$50 fine for all persons found voting in more than one place.
9. Acts of 1812, Chapter 5, created eight Presidential Electoral Districts in the State. The Seventh Electoral District contained the counties of Williamson, Maury, Giles, and Lincoln and the votes would be counted and compared at Columbia in Maury County.
10. Acts of 1812, Chapter 27, created six U.S. Congressional Districts in Tennessee. The Fifth District was composed of the Counties of Williamson, Bedford, Lincoln, Davidson, and Rutherford.
11. Acts of 1812, Chapter 57, apportioned the State for representation in the General Assembly into 20 Senatorial and 40 Representative Districts. Williamson County would elect one of the Senators

- and one Representative.
12. Acts of 1812, Chapter 65, provided that the separate election precinct heretofore authorized by Acts of 1809, Chapter 57, would hereafter be held at the place where Franklin and Gallatin McClaron now reside on the road leading from Nashville to the Fishing Ford on Duck River, nearly opposite the place formerly designated for holding the elections.
 13. Acts of 1819, Chapter 5, established several election precincts in several different counties, including Williamson County where elections would hereafter be held at Captain J. Fly's muster ground.
 14. Acts of 1819, Chapter 69, provided that the Counties of Davidson, Williamson, and Dickson would jointly elect one of the 20 Senators in the General Assembly, and that the Counties of Davidson, Williamson, and Bedford would each elect two of the 40 Representatives in the General Assembly.
 15. Acts of 1820, Chapter 123, set up a separate election precinct at the home of William Nolen in Nolensville in Williamson County.
 16. Acts of 1822, Chapter 1, established nine U.S. Congressional Districts in the State assigning the Counties of Davidson, Williamson, and Rutherford to the Seventh Congressional District.
 17. Acts of 1823, Chapter 47, reorganized Tennessee into eleven U.S. Presidential Electoral Districts with the Seventh District containing the Counties of Davidson, Williamson, and Rutherford, who would elect one Presidential Elector, counting the votes at Franklin in Williamson County.
 18. Acts of 1824, Chapter 1, was virtually a duplicate of Acts of 1823, Chapter 47, setting up eleven U.S. Presidential Electoral Districts and allocating Davidson County, Williamson County, and Rutherford County to the 7th U.S. Congressional District.
 19. Acts of 1826, Chapter 3, reorganized the 20 Senatorial and 40 Representative Districts for the Tennessee General Assembly. Williamson County and Rutherford County would combine to elect one Senator. Williamson County would elect one Representative on this occasion and two at the next election.
 20. Acts of 1827, Chapter 17, stated that Davidson, Williamson, and Rutherford Counties would make up the Seventh U.S. Congressional District out of the eleven authorized by the Act, and the votes would be counted at the home of Bailey Hardeman in Williamson County.
 21. Acts of 1827, Chapter 207, declared that it would hereafter be the duty of the Sheriff, or his Deputy, of Williamson County, on the days of holding elections, to hold a separate election at the store of Browning and Hitower, and also at the home of Jesse Evans in Williamson County.
 22. Acts of 1831, Chapter 57, in the process of establishing several new election precincts in the various counties of the State, also included a new one to be held at Versaille in Williamson County.
 23. Acts of 1832, Chapter 4, provided that Rutherford and Williamson Counties would together constitute the Eighth out of 13 U.S. Congressional Districts.
 24. Acts of 1832, Chapter 9, established 15 Presidential Electoral Districts in Tennessee designating the counties of Rutherford and Williamson as the Ninth District.
 25. Acts of 1833, Chapter 4, set up a separate election precinct for elections at the dwelling house of Ephraim Brown, upon the plantation upon which he now lives, and the Sheriff of Williamson County would hold the said election under all existing rules and regulations.
 26. Acts of 1833, Chapter 41, further established separate election precincts in Williamson County for all regular and lawful elections at the home of Robert Sayres, at the house of _____ Holland in Hillsborough, and at the store house of Brockenburgh Andrews in Snatchett, at which places the Sheriff shall make proper arrangements to carry out the intents of this Act.
 27. Acts of 1833, Chapter 71, reapportioned Tennessee into 20 Senatorial and 40 Representative Districts, designating Williamson County and Rutherford County together as one Senatorial District. Williamson and Rutherford Counties would further compose a Representative District electing three Representatives. At the 1835 election, Davidson and Williamson Counties would each elect one representative. At the 1837 election, Davidson and Williamson Counties would each elect two representatives. At the 1839 election, Davidson and Williamson Counties would each elect one representative. At the election of 1841, Davidson and Williamson Counties would each elect two representatives.
 28. Acts of 1833, Chapter 76, was the enabling legislation for a Constitutional Convention to be called composed of sixty members who would be elected on the first Thursday and Friday in March next and who would convene in Nashville on the third Monday in May next to revise, amend, alter the

- present, or form a new Constitution for Tennessee. Williamson, Rutherford, Bedford, Maury, Davidson, and Wilson Counties composed a district to elect two delegates to the Convention.
29. Acts of 1835-36, Chapter 39, formed Tennessee into fifteen Presidential Electoral Districts of which Rutherford County and Williamson County made up the Ninth District.
 30. Acts of 1842 (Ex. Sess.), Chapter 1, reapportioned Tennessee into 25 Senatorial and 50 Representative Districts. Rutherford County and Williamson County would jointly elect one State Senator counting the votes at Hardeman's Crossroads in Williamson County. Williamson County would elect two of the 50 Representatives alone.
 31. Acts of 1842 (Ex. Sess.), Chapter 7, organized the State into eleven U.S. Congressional Districts placing the counties of Wilson, Rutherford, Cannon, and Williamson into the Seventh Congressional District.
 32. Acts of 1851-52, Chapter 196, created ten U.S. Congressional Districts in the State, allocating the counties of Sumner, Wilson, Rutherford, Cannon, and Williamson to the Fifth U.S. Congressional Districts.
 33. Acts of 1851-52, Chapter 197, apportioned the representation in the General Assembly. Williamson County would elect one Representative alone, and share another with Maury County and Lewis County, counting the polls at Columbia, in Maury County. The Counties of Rutherford and Williamson constituted one Senatorial District whose votes would be tallied at Triune in Williamson County.
 34. Acts of 1865, Chapter 34, formed eight U.S. Congressional Districts in the State. The Fifth District contained the counties of Williamson, Davidson, Wilson, Sumner, Robertson, and Cheatham. This Act specifically retained Sections Two, Three, and Four of the Acts of 1851-52, Chapter 196, concerning new counties and duties and responsibilities of the sheriff.
 35. Acts of 1869-70, Chapter 105, authorized a referendum election to be held across the State on the question of calling a Constitutional Convention to amend, revise, or form and make a new Constitution for the State. An election for delegates to the convention would be held at the same time. The Convention would be made up of 75 delegates, each county given the same number of delegates as provided in Acts of 1851-52, Chapter 197. The delegates elected would meet in Nashville on the second Monday in January, 1870.
 36. Acts of 1871, Chapter 146, divided Tennessee into 25 Senatorial and 50 Representative Districts. Williamson County was given one Representative alone and would share a floater with Maury County. Williamson County and Maury County together made up the 14th State Senatorial District.
 37. Acts of 1872 (Ex. Sess.), Chapter 7, divided the State into nine U.S. Congressional Districts. The Sixth U.S. Congressional District comprised the counties of Williamson, Maury, Giles, Lawrence, Wayne, Lewis, Hickman, and Dickson. A provision was included for a Representative-at-Large should the Congress allow the state to an additional representative.
 38. Acts of 1873, Chapter 27, realigned the U.S. Congressional Districts in Tennessee into ten districts. The Seventh District contained the Counties of Wayne, Lawrence, Giles, Lewis, Maury, Hickman, and Williamson.
 39. Acts of 1881 (Ex. Sess.), Chapter 5, permanently established the number of Senators in the General Assembly of the State at 33, and the number of Representatives at 99.
 40. Acts of 1881 (Ex. Sess.), Chapter 6, apportioned the State to conform to Acts of 1881 (Ex. Sess.), Chapter 3. Williamson County and Marshall County made up the 16th State Senatorial District. The people of Williamson County could elect one Representative alone and share another with Maury County.
 41. Acts of 1882 (Ex. Sess.), Chapter 27, formed ten U.S. Congressional Districts in the State, assigning the Counties of Williamson, Maury, Giles, Lawrence, Wayne, Lewis, Hickman, and Dickson to the Seventh U.S. Congressional District.
 42. Acts of 1891, Chapter 131, divided Tennessee into ten U.S. Congressional Districts based upon the changes reflected in the 1890 Census figures. The Seventh U.S. Congressional District contained the Counties of Williamson, Maury, Giles, Lawrence, Wayne, Lewis, Hickman, and Dickson.
 43. Acts of 1891 (Ex. Sess.), Chapter 10, reapportioned the State for representation in the General Assembly. Williamson County would elect one Representative alone, and join with the Counties of Giles, Maury, and Lewis to elect another in the 12th District. Hickman County and Williamson County made up the 18th State Senatorial District.

44. Acts of 1901, Chapter 109, divided Tennessee into ten U.S. Congressional Districts of which the Seventh was made up of the Counties of Houston, Humphreys, Dickson, Hickman, Williamson, Lewis, Maury, Giles, Lawrence, and Wayne.
45. Acts of 1901, Chapter 122, established the representation in the General Assembly which would remain unchanged for nearly 60 years. The 21st Senatorial District contained the counties of Hickman, Williamson, and Cheatham. Williamson County was allotted one Representative alone and would be part of the Eighteenth District with Cheatham and Robertson Counties for another.
46. Private Acts of 1915, Chapter 578, amended Section One of Acts of 1890, Chapter 25, Page 59, which was a law governing the registration of voters as a prerequisite of voting in Counties over 70,000 in population, and in cities over 2,500 by extending its provisions to cover Williamson County and then to certain specified Civil District within that County.
47. Private Acts of 1915, Chapter 579, amended Acts of 1890, Chapter 24, which contained regulations for conducting election in Counties over 70,000 in population, and in cities over 9,000 in population, so as to make the Act apply to Williamson County and then to certain Civil Districts in that County.
48. Private Acts of 1915, Chapter 580, also amended Acts of 1890, Chapter 24, by adding the population figures to the caption which would make it apply to Williamson County, and then specifying the particular Civil Districts in the County which would be affected.
49. Private Acts of 1915, Chapter 582, Acts of 1890, Chapter 25, in the same manner and to the same extent as Private Acts of 1915, Chapter 580, did to Acts of 1890, Chapter 24, above.
50. Private Acts of 1949, Chapter 84, stated that in Williamson County the officers, judges, and the clerks and registrars holding elections in the said county would be compensated at the rate of \$4 for one day only for services rendered during the election. Registrars holding supplemental registration would also be compensated at the same rate for time actually spent in holding such registration.
51. Private Acts of 1953, Chapter 257, provided that the polls would open in Williamson County at all general and primary elections at 9:00 A.M. and close at 6:00 P.M.

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