



County Technical Assistance Service
INSTITUTE *for* PUBLIC SERVICE

December 22, 2024

Elections - Historical Notes

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

Table of Contents

Elections - Historical Notes	3
---	----------

Elections - Historical Notes

Districts - Reapportionment

The acts listed below have affected the civil districts in Dickson County, but are no longer operative regarding elections.

1. Acts of 1835-36, Chapter 1, was the first Act passed subsequent to the adoption of the 1835 State Constitution and required the General Assembly to appoint suitable people as Commissioners to lay out the Civil District in each County according to the population count of 1833. Each County having as many as 3,000 qualified voters would have 25 Civil Districts. Those with less than 3,000 but more than 2,500 would have 20 Civil districts, the scale being graduated into increments of 500 voters and the number of civil districts dropping off by five each time. Each district would elect two Justices of the Peace and one Constable except the district with the county town which would elect three Justices of the Peace and two Constables. The Commissioners were urged to take advantage of the natural lay of the land as much as possible.
2. Resolution #3, Acts of 1835-36, appointed the Commissioners for every county who were to lay out the Civil Districts as required above. In Dickson County those named were William Hightower, Joseph Kimble, William Hogins, James W. Christian, and Menon Bible. Resolution #21, same years, appointed Thomas Jarnigan and James Pullin to serve as Commissioners in the place of Joseph Kimble and Menon Bible, who were originally named but refused to serve.
3. Acts of 1857-58, Chapter 37, Section 10, authorized and directed the County Court of Dickson County to lay off a civil district in the said county out of the fractions of the Fourth, Sixth, and Seventh Districts, either by appointing Commissioners, or by whatever method seemed best to the Court, and when established, that civil district would be on the same footing with all the others.

Elections

The following is a listing of acts for Dickson 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 1803, Chapter 24, divided Tennessee into five Sections for the election of the members of the Electoral College for President and Vice-President of the United States. The Fifth District was made up of the Counties of Davidson, Williamson, Robertson, Montgomery, Stewart, Rutherford and Dickson. The election would be held on the first Thursday and Friday in November, 1804, and the returns would be certified in Nashville on the following Monday.
2. Acts of 1803, Chapter 79, provided for the election of three U. S. Congressional Representatives in the State, one from the Hamilton District, one from the Washington District, and one from the combined Districts of Mero, Winchester, and Robertson. Regulations under which the election would be held were mentioned in the Act.
3. Acts of 1805, Chapter 64, apportioned the representation of the State General Assembly which included 13 State Senators and 26 State Representatives. The counties of Robertson, Dickson, Montgomery and Stewart comprised one State Senatorial District whose votes would be counted at Clarksville. Dickson County and Robertson County would elect one of the 26 Representatives jointly.
4. Acts of 1807, Chapter 74, directed the Sheriff of each county to open and hold an election according to law for the Electors of the President and Vice-President. The Fifth District of the five Electoral Districts in the State, consisted of the Counties of Davidson, Robertson, Montgomery, Stewart, Dickson, Williamson, Maury, Rutherford, Bedford, and Hickman. All the votes would be certified at Nashville for the election occurring on the second Thursday in November, 1808.
5. Acts of 1809, Chapter 1, authorized an election to be held across the State to choose three U. S. Congressmen from the Districts in the State as they were previously specified. The votes would be counted and certified for the Robertson District at Clarksville in Montgomery County.
6. Acts of 1809, Chapter 43, made it the duty of the Sheriff, or Deputy, of Dickson County, on the constitutional days for holding elections, to hold one at the house of Jane Norris on Yellow Creek in the said County. Anyone who was qualified to vote in Dickson County would vote at the new precinct whose polls would be returned to Clarksville for certification.
7. Acts of 1812, Chapter 5, established eight Presidential Electoral Districts in Tennessee. The 8th Electoral District included the counties of Robertson, Montgomery, Stewart, Dickson, Hickman and Humphreys. The election would take place on the first Thursday and Friday in November, 1812,

- and the polls counted at Charlotte in Dickson County. The Electors would be paid \$2.50 per day and ten center per mile while in the process of doing their duties.
8. Acts of 1812, Chapter 27, divided Tennessee into six U. S. Congressional Districts. The Sixth Congressional District contained the Counties of Robertson, Montgomery, Dickson, Humphreys, Hickman, Stewart, Maury and Giles.
 9. Acts of 1812, Chapter 57, set the apportionment of the representation in the Tennessee Legislature at 20 Senators and 40 Representatives. One of the Senatorial Districts was composed of the counties of Robertson, Dickson and Hickman whose combined votes were to be counted at Charlotte while Dickson County and Hickman County would share a Representative. These votes would also be certified at Charlotte.
 10. Acts of 1813, Chapter 57, imposed the legal liability upon the Sheriff, or a Deputy, of Dickson County, on the days appointed by law to hold a separate election at the house of Minor Bibb, on the waters of the Turnbill, under the same requirements as applied to all other public electors in the State, and those set up for the election at the house of Jane Norris, mentioned above.
 11. Acts of 1815, Chapter 31, set up eight Presidential Electoral Districts in Tennessee which were to include the same counties as were specified in the prior legislation on this subject, and the Electors would also be compensated at the rates provided in that Act.
 12. Acts of 1819, Chapter 69, allocated the representation in the State General Assembly to the counties. One of the 20 State Senatorial Districts would include the counties of Davidson, Williamson, and Dickson whose votes would be canvassed at Nashville, and Dickson County was given one Representative alone.
 13. Acts of 1820, Chapter 113, provided that the election precinct heretofore authorized to be held at the home of the widow Jane Norris would hereafter be held at the residence of John Adams, on Yellow Creek.
 14. Acts of 1822, Chapter 1, separated the State into nine U. S. Congressional Districts. The Eighth Congressional District included the counties of Robertson, Montgomery, Dickson, Stewart, Humphreys and Hickman.
 15. Acts of 1823, Chapter 47, formed the State into eleven Presidential Electoral Districts. The Tenth District was made up of the counties of Montgomery, Robertson, Stewart, Dickson, Humphreys and Hickman. The election would be held on the first Thursday in November, 1824. The polls in the above District would be counted at Charlotte.
 16. Acts of 1824, Chapter 1, was a duplicate of Acts of 1823, Chapter 47, above, except that the election would be on two days, the first Thursday and Friday in November, 1824.
 17. Acts of 1826, Chapter 3, reapportioned the General Assembly of the State. Robertson County, Montgomery County, and Dickson County would elected one State Senator jointly and count the votes at the house of Thomas Williams in Montgomery County. Dickson County and Hickman County would share one State Representative, counting the polls at Charlotte in Dickson County.
 18. Acts of 1827, Chapter 17, separated the State into eleven Presidential Electoral Districts. The counties of Robertson, Montgomery, Dickson, Stewart, Humphreys, and Perry were designated the 10th Electoral District whose polls would be counted at Charlotte. The presidential election would occur on the second Thursday and Friday in November, 1828.
 19. Acts of 1832, Chapter 4, set up thirteen U. S. Congressional Districts in Tennessee assigning the Counties of Robertson, Montgomery, Stewart, Humphreys, Hickman, and Dickson to the Eleventh Congressional District.
 20. Acts of 1832, Chapter 9, divided Tennessee into fifteen Presidential Electoral Districts. The 13th District comprised the Counties of Robertson, Montgomery, Stewart, Dickson, and Humphreys. The Electors would meet on the first Monday and Tuesday after the election in November and cast their votes for the Presidency.
 21. Acts of 1833, Chapter 71, distributed the representation in the Tennessee Legislature. One of the 20 Senatorial Districts included the Counties of Robertson, Montgomery, and Dickson whose votes would be canvassed and certified at Thomas Williams in Montgomery County. Dickson County and Hickman County would combine to elect one Representative of the forty in the House. These votes would be gathered and certified at the house of Thomas Petty, on Piney Creek in Dickson County.
 22. Acts of 1833, Chapter 76, provided for a constitutional convention of 60 delegates who were to be elected on the first Thursday and Friday in March, next, and convene in Nashville on the third Monday in May, next. The Counties of Dickson, Stewart, and Humphreys constituted one District

- which would elect two delegates.
23. Acts of 1833, Chapter 95, Section 2, instructed the Sheriff of Dickson County to hold hereafter an election at the house of Mrs. Patsey Jones in Dickson County under the same rules and regulations at applied to all other precincts.
 24. Acts of 1835-36, Chapter 39, set up 15 Presidential Electoral Districts in Tennessee with the Counties of Robertson, Montgomery, Stewart, Dickson and Humphreys making up the 13th District. The presidential electors would be chosen on the first Tuesday in November, 1936, and would meet in Nashville at the proper time.
 25. Acts of 1839-40, Chapter 79, provided that hereafter each Congressional District would likewise be a presidential electoral district.
 26. Acts of 1842, Chapter 1, increased the representation in the General Assembly to 25 Senators and 50 Representatives. One Senatorial District included the Counties of Dickson, Stewart, Humphreys, and Benton and the votes would be canvassed and certified at Simmons Old Store in Dickson County. Dickson County would elect one of the 50 Representatives in the House alone.
 27. Acts of 1842, Chapter 7, set up eleven U. S. Congressional Districts in the State placing the Counties of Robertson, Montgomery, Stewart, Dickson, Humphreys, Benton, and Henry all in the 11th Congressional District.
 28. Acts of 1847-48, Chapter 101, provided that one Presidential Elector be chosen from each of the Congressional Districts in Tennessee under the same general rules governing public elections.
 29. Acts of 1851-52, Chapter 196, fashioned ten U. S. Congressional Districts in the State presumably based upon the population count occurring in 1850. The Eighth Congressional District contained the counties of Davidson, Robertson, Montgomery, Stewart, and Dickson.
 30. Acts of 1851-52, Chapter 197, made Maury County, Lewis County, Hickman County, and Dickson County one of the 25 State Senatorial Districts whose votes would be counted and certified at Centerville and Dickson County would have one Representative of the fifty for herself.
 31. Acts of 1865, Chapter 34, created eight U. S. Congressional Districts in Tennessee reflecting the decimation of the people in the Civil War. The Act placed the Counties of Lawrence, Wayne, Hardin, Decatur, Perry, Lewis, Maury, Hickman, Humphreys, Dickson, Montgomery, and Stewart in the 6th U. S. Congressional District.
 32. Acts of 1869, Chapter 105, was the legal authority to hold a referendum across the State on the question of whether or not a Constitutional Convention should be called to consist of 75 delegates elected from the Senatorial and Representative Districts of Tennessee. The said Convention, if authorized, would convene in Nashville on the second Monday in January, 1870, to alter, amend, change or rewrite the 1835 Constitution of Tennessee.
 33. Acts of 1871, Chapter 146, was passed subsequent to the taking of the 1870 Census and to the adoption of the 1870 State Constitution. The Counties of Dickson, Houston and Cheatham would share one Representative jointly, and the 16th of the 25 Senatorial Districts was composed of the Counties of Hickman, Perry, Humphreys, Dickson, Cheatham and Houston.
 34. Acts of 1872, Chapter 7, assigned the Counties of Williamson, Maury, Giles, Lawrence, Wayne, Lewis, Hickman and Dickson to the Sixth District of the nine U. S. Congressional Districts in Tennessee.
 35. Acts of 1873, Chapter 27, formed ten U. S. Congressional Districts in the State of which the Sixth Congressional District contained the Counties of Davidson, Cheatham, Dickson, Humphreys, Stewart, Houston and Montgomery.
 36. Acts of 1881 (Ex. Sess.), Chapter 5, placed the number of Senators at 33 and the number of Representatives at 99 in the General Assembly on a permanent basis.
 37. Acts of 1881 (Ex. Sess.), Chapter 6, provided that Dickson County would elect one of the 99 Representatives alone, and the counties of Hickman, Humphreys, Dickson, and Houston constituted one of the 33 Senatorial Districts. The distribution was also based on the 1880 census count.
 38. Acts of 1882, Chapter 27, set up ten U. S. Congressional Districts in the State. The Seventh Congressional District was composed of the Counties of Williamson, Maury, Giles, Lawrence, Wayne, Lewis, Hickman and Dickson.
 39. Acts of 1891, Chapter 131, enacted subsequent to the 1890 Federal Census, established the U. S. Congressional Districts. The counties of Williamson, Maury, Giles, Lawrence, Wayne, Lewis, Hickman and Dickson still constituted the Seventh Congressional District.

40. Acts of 1891 (Ex. Sess.), Chapter 10, reapportioned the General Assembly of Tennessee according to the 1890 Census. Dickson County would elect one Representative alone, and join the counties of Cheatham, Houston and Stewart to form the 23rd Senatorial District.
41. Acts of 1901, Chapter 109, delineated ten U. S. Congressional Districts in Tennessee based on the 1900 Federal Census. The Seventh Congressional District included the Counties of Houston, Humphreys, Dickson, Hickman, Williamson, Lewis, Maury, Giles, Lawrence and Wayne.
42. Acts of 1901, Chapter 122, apportioned the Tennessee General Assembly for the last time until over sixty years had passed. Dickson County would elect one Representative alone and continue as a part of the 23rd Senatorial District with Humphreys, Houston, and Stewart.
43. Private Acts of 1915, Chapter 480, amended Section 2 of the Public Acts of 1890, which was the general election law of the State so that Dickson County would be exempted from its provisions contained in Section 2 thereof.
44. Private Acts of 1915, Chapter 516, provided that no registration of voters would be required in Dickson County as a prerequisite to the right to vote in any election hereafter to be held in the said designated County.
45. Private Acts of 1917, Chapter 285, recited in its preamble that W. J. Lewis, of Dickson County, has fenced and enclosed his grounds which were usually used by the people of the 10th Civil District to vote, thereby forcing those counties to use a rough, unsuitable, and inconvenient place in its stead, this Act designated a voting place for the District at a point near the Beech Hill Church.

Source URL: <https://www.ctas.tennessee.edu/private-acts/elections-historical-notes-23>