



County Technical Assistance 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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Table of Contents

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

Elections - Historical Notes

Districts - Reapportionment

The acts listed below have affected the civil districts in Hamilton 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 162, Section 3, detached the tenth civil district of Bledsoe County and the first and second civil districts of Marion County to be attached to Hamilton County.
2. Private Acts of 1857-58, Chapter 5, designated the former tenth civil district of Bledsoe County, which was attached to Hamilton County by Private Acts of 1856, Chapter 162, above, to be the fifteenth civil district of Hamilton County. Section 2 of this same act designated the former first and second civil districts of Marion County to be the sixteenth and seventeenth civil districts, respectively, of Hamilton County. The justices of the peace and constables for these districts were to continue to act for the areas in Hamilton County.
3. Private Acts of 1857-58, Chapter 122, Section 9, established an additional civil district for Hamilton, known as the fifteenth civil district, giving the exact boundaries of same.
4. Private Acts of 1859-60, Chapter 86, Section 5, gave a metes and bounds description of the new seventeenth civil district and also provided for the district to have two justices of the peace and one constable to be elected at the next general election, which the sheriff was directed to conduct. Until the officials, above, were elected, the justices and constable of the fifth civil district were to preside.
5. Public Acts of 1867-68, Chapter 36, Sections 2 and 3, changed the boundary line between the fifth and seventeenth civil districts of Hamilton County by means of a detailed description set forth therein, and placed that area in and under the jurisdiction of the law and chancery courts of Chattanooga.
6. Acts of 1905, Chapter 3, reorganized the county into six civil districts in lieu of twenty civil districts, but left the twenty school districts as they were at the time. Generally the changes were, (1) the fourteenth civil district became the first civil district; (2) the second, third, sixteenth, and part of the first civil districts, as described, became the second civil district; (3) the eighth, eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth, plus the remainder of the first civil districts became the third civil district; (4) the fourth, seventeenth, nineteenth, and twentieth civil districts became the fourth civil district; (5) the fifth, ninth, and fifteenth civil districts became the fifth civil districts; and (6) the sixth, seventh, tenth, and eighteenth civil districts constituted the new sixth civil district.
7. Acts of 1907, Chapter 248, amended the 1905 act, above, so as to make the City of Chattanooga the first civil district of the county, and assigned the fifth and tenth civil districts, minus those portions of same that were embraced by the limits of the City of Chattanooga, to the fifth and sixth civil districts, respectively.
8. Acts of 1909, Chapter 448, again amended the 1905 act, taking a described portion of the sixth civil district and adding it to the first civil district. This act was repealed entirely by Private Acts of 1911, Chapter 279.
9. Private Acts of 1911, Chapter 235, created the seventh civil district in Hamilton County, which was split off from the third civil district; further, the act provided for the election of two justices of the peace and one constable for the new district, which election was to be held by the election commissioners.
10. Private Acts of 1911, Chapter 279, specifically repealed Private Acts of 1909, Chapter 448, above, restoring to the sixth civil district that area previously taken from it and added to the first civil district.
11. Private Acts of 1917, Chapter 438, divided the county into three civil districts. The City of Chattanooga was to be the first civil district; that area in the county outside of the City of Chattanooga and south and east of the Tennessee River was to be the second civil district; and the area in the county lying north and west of the Tennessee River was to be the third civil district. Each district was to have two justices of the peace and one constable, except Chattanooga, which was to have three justices and two constables.
12. Private Acts of 1929, Chapter 510, amended Private Acts of 1917, Chapter 438, Section 2, by adding some area to both the second and third civil districts in the county, and by designating the area which was formerly James County to be the fourth civil district.

13. Private Acts of 1941, Chapter 253, redistributed the county into two civil districts: the first civil district being in the incorporated limits of the City of Chattanooga, and the second civil district being all the area outside the city limits. Districts two, three, and four were abolished as they were formerly set up, and all conflicting acts were repealed.

Elections

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

1. Public Acts of 1819, Chapter 69, provided that the counties of Rhea, Hamilton and McMinn were to jointly elect one state representative; further, Anderson, Roane, Morgan, Rhea, Bledsoe, Marion, Hamilton and McMinn counties composed one election district for the purpose of electing one senator to the general assembly, and the polls were to be compared at Kingston.
2. Public Acts of 1822, Extra Session, Chapter 1, divided the State of Tennessee into districts for the election of representatives to the congress of the United States. Hamilton County was placed in the third congressional district, along with Campbell, Anderson, Morgan, Roane, Rhea, Bledsoe, Marion, McMinn and Monroe counties.
3. Public Acts of 1823, Chapter 47, divided the state into eleven electoral districts for the purpose of electing electors of a president and vice-president of the United States. The fourth district was composed of Rhea, Bledsoe, Marion, Hamilton, McMinn and Monroe counties, and was to elect one elector. The sheriff or other returning officers of the fourth district counties were to meet at Washington, Rhea County, for comparing the votes and certifying the person elected.
4. Public Acts of 1824, Chapter 1, was and did, in essence, the same as the previous act.
5. Public Acts of 1826, Chapter 3, was an act to apportion the representation in the general assembly of Tennessee. The counties of Roane, Morgan, Rhea, Hamilton, Bledsoe and Marion composed one election district, and were to elect one senator. The counties of Rhea and Hamilton were to elect one representative, jointly. The returning officers of the district were to meet at Washington, in Rhea County.
6. Public Acts of 1827, Chapter 17, also divided the state into eleven electoral districts for electing electors of president and vice-president. The fourth district was composed of the counties of Rhea, Bledsoe, Marion, Hamilton McMinn and Monroe, and was to elect one elector. The sheriff, or other returning officers of the fourth district were to meet at Washington, in Rhea County, for the comparing of the votes.
7. Acts of 1829-30, Chapter 138, Section 2, required sheriffs or returning officers of Rhea and Hamilton counties to meet at the Town of Washington, in the county of Rhea, to compare votes for representative on the Saturday immediately following the election. They were also to notify by certificate the person who was elected.
8. Public Acts of 1832, Chapter 4, divided the State of Tennessee into congressional districts and placed the following counties in the fourth district: Morgan, Roane, McMinn, Rhea, Hamilton, Bledsoe and Marion counties.
9. Public Acts of 1832, Chapter 9, divided the state into fifteen districts for the purpose of choosing electors, one from each district, to vote for the president and vice president of the United States. The counties of McMinn, Rhea, Bledsoe, Marion and Hamilton composed the fifth district.
10. Public Acts of 1833, Chapter 71, divided the state into representative and senatorial districts under the enumeration of 1833. The counties of Roane, Rhea, Marion, Hamilton and Bledsoe composed one election district to elect one senator. The returning officers for the district were to meet at Washington, in Rhea County. The counties of Bledsoe, Marion and Hamilton composed one election district to elect one representative. The returning officers for the representative district were to meet at William Henson's, in Bledsoe County, on the first Saturday after the election.
11. Public Acts of 1833, Chapter 76, was an act to provide for the calling of a convention for the purpose of revising, amending and altering the present or forming a new state constitution. The counties of Rhea and Hamilton composed a district, to elect one delegate. The returning officers for the district were to meet at the Town of Washington.
12. Public Acts of 1835-36, Chapter 39, also prescribed a mode of choosing electors to vote for the president and vice president of the United States, dividing the state into fifteen districts. Hamilton County was still a part of the fifth district. This act also set forth the penalties for failure to hold elections, and the duties of the electors.
13. Acts of 1835-36, Private Chapter 57, Section 2, authorized the justices of the peace in Hamilton

- County to establish three additional precincts for holding elections for governor, members of congress and members of the general assembly and military officers, with said precincts to be designated by the court.
14. Acts of 1842, 2nd Session, Chapter 1, declared Hamilton, Marion, Bledsoe, Rhea and Meigs counties to compose the eighth senatorial district, to elect one state senator, and the polls were to be compared at Harrison; the counties of Marion and Hamilton were to elect one representative to the general assembly, with the polls to be compared at Harrison, also.
 15. Acts of 1842, Extra Session, Chapter 7, divided the State of Tennessee into districts for the election of representatives to the congress of the United States, and grouped Knox, Bledsoe, Roane, Rhea, Meigs, McMinn, Polk, Bradley, Hamilton and Marion counties into the third congressional district.
 16. Acts of 1851-52, Chapter 196, had Hamilton still in the third U. S. Congressional District along with Blount, Monroe, Polk, McMinn, Meigs, Rhea, Bledsoe, Bradley, Marion and Roane counties; Private Acts of 1851-52, Chapter 197, stated Hamilton was to elect one state representative; to jointly elect one floterial representative with Rhea and Bledsoe counties; and, was to be in the eighth state senatorial district with Rhea, Bledsoe, Bradley and Marion counties, with polls to be compared at Harrison.
 17. Acts of 1857-58, Chapter 90, Section 2, changed the place for comparing the polls for Rhea, Bledsoe and Hamilton counties from Washington to Harrison in the election for joint representative, and specifically repealed that portion of the previous act that was in conflict.
 18. Public Acts of 1865, Chapter 34, kept Hamilton County in the third congressional district along with Meigs, Rhea, Marion, Grundy, Bledsoe, Van Buren, Sequatchie, Warren, White, Smith, Cumberland, Putnam, Jackson, Macon, Overton, DeKalb and Fentress counties.
 19. Public Acts of 1871, Chapter 146, permitted Hamilton to elect one representative to the general assembly, and divided the state into 25 senatorial districts with Hamilton County placed in the seventh district along with Rhea, James, Bledsoe, Sequatchie, Marion, Grundy and Van Buren counties.
 20. Acts of 1872, Chapter 7, grouped Hamilton County still within the third U. S. Congressional District, along with Blount, Loudon, Roane, Monroe, McMinn, Meigs, Rhea, Polk, Bradley, James, Marion, Sequatchie, Bledsoe, Grundy, Van Buren and Warren counties.
 21. Public Acts of 1881, First Extra Session, Chapter 6, provided that Hamilton was to elect two representatives to the general assembly and, along with Marion County as the eighth senatorial district, elect one senator.
 22. Public Acts of 1891, Extra Session, Chapter 10, allowed Hamilton County two representatives of its own and shared a third with James and Meigs counties, to comprise the sixth joint representative district. Hamilton County constituted the eighth senatorial district alone.
 23. Public Acts of 1899, Chapter 391, amended Chapter 10, above, by dropping Meigs County from the floterial group and permitting James and Hamilton counties to share the representation.
 24. Private Acts of 1911, Chapter 403, as amended by Private Acts of 1949, Chapter 188, which in turn was amended by Private Acts of 1959, Chapter 14, required of all citizens, when so appointed and notified by the election commission, to serve as officers, judges, clerks, registrars or assistant registrars, unless each appointee who was unable to discharge the duties of such officer, judge, clerk, registrar or assistant registrar filed with the chairman of the election commission an affidavit stating such causes sufficient to excuse the appointee from serving. Failure to serve without excuse was a misdemeanor and subject to fine. Each appointee was to receive \$15 per day for their services.
 25. Private Acts of 1915, Chapter 679, amended Public Acts of 1859-60, Chapter 75, which was the general election law for the state at that time, by changing the times for holding polls open in Hamilton County. The polls were to open at 9:00 a.m., and closing time was changed from 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

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