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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 acts listed below have affected the civil districts in Dyer 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 1835-36, Chapter 1, required that a Joint Resolution of both Houses of the General Assembly appoint five suitable persons in each County as Commissioners to lay off their respective counties into civil districts according to population and size. Each county with 3,000 or more qualified voters would be divided into 25 civil districts, ranging downward in graduated scales to 700 qualified voters and eight Civil Districts. Resolution #3 named Edwin A. McCorkle, John P. Bryne, Alexander McCullough, Sr., Daniel E. Parker, and James Miller as the commissioners for laying out the civil districts in Dyer County.
2. Acts of 1859-60, Chapter 47, set up Civil Districts One and Fourteen in Dyer county as they established and organized, and they are entitled to all rights, privileges, and benefits which belong to any other Civil District. All the acts of the Magistrates and other officials were declared valid, legal, and binding.
3. Acts of 1859-60, Chapter 138, established the 13th Civil District in Dyer County composed of all that portion of the county south of the south fork of the Forked Deer River. Citizens would meet at a time and place designated by the Sheriff and select the officials of the District who would be furnished with the proper books and implements of office as were others in like places. The Sheriff was directed to give at least ten days notice of any election to be held hereunder.

Elections

The following is a listing of acts for Dyer County which affected the elective process, but which have been superseded or repealed.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 1823, Chapter 47, divided Tennessee into eleven Presidential Electoral Districts of which the Eleventh District was made up of the Counties of Wayne, Perry, Hardin, and all the Counties west of the Tennessee River. It was the duty of the Sheriff of each respective county to open and hold an election in each County on the first Thursday in October, 1824. The polls in the Eleventh District would be counted and canvassed at Jackson in Madison County.
2. Acts of 1824, Chapter 1, also established 11 Presidential Electoral Districts assigning the same counties to the 11th District as before and setting the date of the election on the first Thursday and Friday in November, 1824, instead of the date specified in the Act above.
3. Acts of 1826, Chapter 3, set up 20 Senate seats and 40 Representative seats in the General Assembly of Tennessee delegating the counties of Henry, Weakley, Obion, Carroll, Gibson, and Dyer to one Senatorial District whose ballots would be counted and certified at Trenton in Gibson County. The Representative District was composed of the counties of Carroll, Gibson, Dyer, and Obion, whose votes would be compared at the same location.
4. Acts of 1826, Chapter 52, recited in the preamble that certain elections were held in Dyer County on the fourth Monday in January, 1826, and a certain law had been passed without the knowledge of the Justices of the County changing the opening dates of the terms of the Dyer County Court. This Act validated and made legal all the proceedings and actions of the Court held at the session which began on the fourth Monday in January in Dyer County, and the officers who were elected by the Court at the meeting are declared to be bona fide and legitimate officers of Dyer County, any law to the contrary notwithstanding.
5. Acts of 1827, Chapter 17, formed eleven Presidential Electoral Districts in Tennessee, for the election to be held on the second Thursday and Friday in November, 1828. The Eleventh Electoral District included the Counties of Henry, Weakley, Obion, Carroll, Gibson, Dyer, Henderson, Madison, Haywood, Tipton, McNairy, Hardeman, Fayette, and Shelby.
6. Acts of 1832, Chapter 4, divided the State into 13 U.S. Congressional Districts. The 12th U.S. Congressional District contained within it the counties of Haywood, Madison, Dyer, Obion, Gibson, Weakley, Henry, and Carroll.
7. Acts of 1832, Chapter 9, formed 15 Presidential Electoral Districts in Tennessee assigning to the 15th District the Counties of Henry, Weakley, Obion, Dyer, Gibson, Carroll, Tipton, and Haywood.

8. Acts of 1833, Chapter 71, reapportioned the State for representation in the General Assembly. The Counties of Madison, Haywood, Gibson, and Dyer would jointly elect one of the 20 State Senators comparing the votes at Cherryville. Haywood, Tipton, and Dyer Counties would join together to elect one of the 40 State Representatives. These votes would be counted at Brownsville.
9. Acts of 1833, Chapter 76, provided that an election would be held for a 60 member Constitutional Convention on the first Thursday and Friday in March, next, whose elected delegates would meet in Nashville on the third Monday in May, Next, to revise, amend, alter, the present, or form a new State Constitution. Gibson County and Dyer County would jointly elect one delegate to this Convention. The votes for this District would be counted and compared at Eaton in Gibson County.
10. Acts of 1835-36, Chapter 39, enacted subsequent to the adoption of the new Constitution for the State provided for 15 Electoral Districts for the President and Vice-President to be elected on the first Tuesday in November, 1836. The 15th Electoral District was composed of the Counties of Henry, Weakley, Obion, Dyer, Gibson, Carroll, Tipton, and Haywood.
11. Acts of 1839-40, Chapter 79, contained specific directions for those who were to be Electors in the election for President and Vice-President on the first Tuesday in November, 1840. The organization of Electoral Districts remained as it was.
12. Acts of 1842 (Ex. Sess.), Chapter 1, revised the number of State Senatorial Districts to 25, and the Representative Districts to 50. The 22nd State Senatorial District included the counties of Gibson, Carroll, and Dyer, while the Counties of Obion and Dyer made up one Representative District whose polls would be compared at Johnsonville, in Dyer County.
13. Acts of 1842 (Ex. Sess.), Chapter 7, organized Tennessee into eleven U. S. Congressional Districts of which the Tenth U.S. Congressional District contained the counties of McNairy, Hardeman, Fayette, Shelby, Tipton, Haywood, Lauderdale, and Dyer.
14. Acts of 1865, Chapter 34, enacted shortly after the cessation of the Civil War, divided Tennessee into eight U.S. Congressional Districts. The 7th District was made up of the Counties of Benton, Henry, Weakley, Obion, Dyer, Gibson, Lauderdale, Henderson, and Carroll.
15. Acts of 1869-70, Chapter 105, authorized the holding of a referendum on the question of calling a Constitutional Convention. The Ballot would consist of simply "For" or "Against" the call. If approved by the people, seventy-five delegates would be elected in the counties according to their number of Senators and Representatives in the General Assembly.
16. Acts of 1871, Chapter 146, apportioned Tennessee after the adoption of the 1870 Constitution and according to the 1870 Federal Census Count. Dyer County would elect one Representative alone and was part of the 22nd State Senatorial District with Haywood County and Lauderdale County.
17. Acts of 1872, Chapter 7, formed 9 U.S. Congressional Districts in the State assigning the Counties of Madison, Crockett, Haywood, Lauderdale, Dyer, Gibson, Weakley, Obion, and Lake to the 8th U.S. Congressional District.
18. Acts of 1873, Chapter 27, increased the members of U.S. Congressional Districts in the State to ten. The 9th District included the counties of Weakley, Obion, Lake, Dyer, Gibson, Crockett, Haywood, Tipton, and Lauderdale.
19. Acts of 1881 (Ex. Sess.), Chapter 5, permanently fixed the number of Senators in the State Senate at 33 and the number of Representatives at 99.
20. Acts of 1881 (Ex. Sess.), Chapter 6, apportioned the representation in the General Assembly of the State according to the statute above. Dyer County would elect one Representative alone and share another with Obion and Lake Counties. The 28th State Senatorial District was made up of the Counties of Obion, Lake, and Dyer.
21. Acts of 1882, Chapter 27, organized Tennessee into ten U.S. Congressional Districts according to the 1880 Federal Census. The 9th District included the Counties of Weakley, Gibson, Crockett, Haywood, Dyer, Lauderdale, Obion, and Lake.
22. Acts of 1891, Chapter 131, divided the State into ten U.S. Congressional Districts based on the 1890 Federal Census. The 9th U.S. Congressional District consisted of the counties of Weakley, Gibson, Crockett, Haywood, Lauderdale, Dyer, Obion, and Lake.
23. Acts of 1891 (Ex. Sess.), Chapter 10, apportioned the State according to the 1890 Census. Dyer County would elect one State Representative for itself and share another one with Lake and Obion Counties. The 30th State Senatorial District was composed of the counties of Dyer, Haywood, and

Lauderdale.

24. Acts of 1901, Chapter 109, established a total of ten U.S. Congressional Districts in the State based upon the Census of 1900. The Ninth U.S. Congressional District contained the counties of Gibson, Weakley, Obion, Lake, Dyer, Lauderdale, Haywood, and Crockett.
25. Acts of 1901, Chapter 122, represented the last apportionment of the General Assembly to occur for some sixty years in Tennessee. The 29th Senatorial District included the counties of Dyer, Lauderdale, and Crockett. Dyer County would elect one Representative alone and share another with Obion and Lake Counties.
26. Private Acts of 1917, Chapter 581, stated that no person would be allowed to vote in primary elections in Dyer County who would not be qualified to vote in the following general election, and who had not paid their poll tax. A list of those who had paid the poll tax would be supplied to the officers of the election. All officers holding elections in the county were obligated to carry out the provisions of this Act.
27. Private Acts of 1935, Chapter 744, provided that, in Dyer County, in addition to all other regulations on the subject, each voter must be registered as a voter before being allowed to vote in any election held in any voting precinct or civil district. Such registration of voters must be in the manner prescribed by the Code of Tennessee in Section 1997, and following. This Act repealed by Private Acts of 1937, Chapter 458.
28. Private Acts of 1937, Chapter 458, expressly repealed Private Acts of 1935, Chapter 744, Item 27, above, in its entirety.
29. Private Acts of 1945, Chapter 174, fixed the pay of the Judges, officials, and Clerks of all elections, both primary and general, held in Dyer County (identified by the 1940 Federal Census Count) at \$2.50 per day for their services in that capacity but they would be paid for only one day per election.
30. Private Acts of 1947, Chapter 229, required all citizens living in civil districts which were over 2,500 in population in Dyer County to be registered permanently as a pre-requisite to voting in elections. Registration would be conducted throughout the county beginning on the second Monday in March, 1947, and continuing for a period of ten days thereafter, excluding Sundays. All who register would be given certificates of permanent registration. Ample notice of the time and place of registration must be given in the newspapers. Anyone moving out of the precinct in which they were registered must re-register in the latter precinct before being permitted to vote. All provisions of the general law will also apply to the above registration of voters.
31. Private Acts of 1949, Chapter 648, stated that, in Dyer County (identified by the 1940 Federal Census figures), the Registrars of Election would be paid at the rate of \$6.00 per day for every day served in the performance of their duties. Other election officials would be paid \$4.00 a day for one day only in a single election.

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