



July 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 Obion 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, enacted pursuant to the adoption of the 1834 State Constitution, required a five member Commission to be appointed by Resolution of both houses of the General Assembly to lay off the Civil Districts in each County according to population and territory. A county with 3000 people, or more, would have 25 Districts; from 2,500 to 3000 people, 20 districts, and on down as provided in the Act. In Obion County those named by the Resolution No. III to lay off the county were William U. Watson, William Maxwell, Francis Taylor, Henry J. P. Westbrook, and Norton Oaks.
2. Acts of 1905, Chapter 494, provided that the Quarterly County Court of Obion County would be composed of nine Justices of the Peace, and one each from the nine divisions described in this Act which were composed of old whole Civil Districts. The present Justices were required to assemble at the Court house on the first Monday in July, 1905, and, with the County Judge presiding, they would select a Justice of the Peace from each of the nine divisions. All vacancies would be filled by the remaining Justices. Vacancies in the offices of Coroner, Ranger, Sheriff, Trustee, and Register, would be filled also by the court after giving ten days notice of the meeting. This act was repealed by Acts of 1907, Chapter 99.
3. Private Acts of 1911, Chapter 29, page 85, altered the boundary line between the Eleventh Civil District and the Fifteenth Civil District so as to attach the land described in the Act to the Fifteenth Civil District "beginning in the east line of the right-of-way of the Illinois Central Railroad Company on the north bank of the Obion River, the same being between the towns of Obion and Trimble; thence in a southwestern direction with the meanders of the Obion River to the line between Obion County and Dyer County; thence east with the County Line to the east line of the right-of-way of the said Illinois Central Railway in the town of Trimble; thence north with the east line of the said right-of-way of the said Illinois Central Railroad Company to the beginning."

Elections

The following is a listing of acts for Obion 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 for the Presidential Election taking place on the first Thursday in October, 1824. The Eleventh Electoral District consisted of the Counties of Wayne, Hardin, Perry, and all the other Counties west of the Tennessee River. Polls were to be certified and counted at Jackson in Madison County.
2. Acts of 1824, Chapter 1, was very similar to Acts of 1823, Chapter 47, except that this Act specified that the Presidential Election would occur on the first Thursday and Friday in November, 1824.
3. Acts of 1826, Chapter 3, reapportioned the General Assembly of the State into twenty Senatorial Districts and forty Representative Districts. One Senatorial District was made up of the Counties of Henry, Weakley, Obion, Carroll, Gibson and Dyer, with the Polls to be counted and certified at Trenton in Gibson County, while Obion County would share one Representative with Carroll, Gibson, and Dyer Counties. These polls would also be counted at Trenton.
4. Acts of 1827, Chapter 17, set up eleven Presidential Electoral Districts in the State for the Presidential Election on the second Thursday and Friday in November, 1828. The Counties of Henry, Weakley, Obion, Carroll, Gibson, Dyer, Henderson, Madison, Haywood, Tipton, McNairy, Hardeman, Fayette, and Shelby were all in the Eleventh District, electing one Presidential Elector and counting Polls at Jackson, in Madison County.
5. Acts of 1832, Chapter 4, divided Tennessee into thirteen U. S. Congressional Districts. The Counties of Haywood, Madison, Dyer, Obion, Gibson, Weakley, Henry and Carroll were all located within the 12th Congressional District.
6. Acts of 1832, Chapter 9, provided for fifteen Presidential Electoral Districts in the State for the November, 1832, election. The Counties of Henry, Weakley, Obion, Dyer, Gibson, Carroll, Tipton, and Haywood would elect one Presidential Elector for the 15th District who would cast his vote for President in Nashville on the first Wednesday in December, following.

7. Acts of 1833, Chapter 71, apportioned the State Senators and Representatives in the Tennessee General Assembly. Of the 20 Senators the Counties of Carroll, Henry, Weakley, and Obion, would elect one with the Polls being counted at Dresden. Gibson, Weakley, and Obion Counties would join together to elect one of the 40 State Representatives with Polls being counted at Winton.
8. Acts of 1833, Chapter 76, authorized the calling of a Constitutional Convention of 60 delegates who would alter, revise, change, amend or rewrite, the State Constitution. The Convention was scheduled to meet in Nashville on the third Monday in May, 1834. Weakley and Obion Counties would share one delegate to the Convention and the votes were to be certified and counted at Dresden.
9. Acts of 1833, Chapter 94, established some new voting precincts in different localities across the State. An additional voting precinct was set up for Obion County at the home of Richard T. Meriwether.
10. Acts of 1835-36, Chapter 39, allowed for 15 Presidential Electoral Districts in the State for the Presidential Election on the first Tuesday, after the first Monday in November, 1836. The 15th Presidential Electoral District was composed of the counties of Henry, Weakley, Obion, Dyer, Gibson, Carroll, Tipton, and Haywood.
11. Acts of 1839-40, Chapter 79, provided that after the passage of this Act each Congressional District would be a Presidential Electoral District.
12. Acts of 1842 (Ex. Sess.), Chapter 1, reapportioned the Tennessee Legislature into 25 Senatorial Districts and 50 Representative Districts. The 21st State Senatorial District contained Henry County, Weakley County, and Obion County with polls being compared at Dresden, while Dyer County and Obion County would jointly elect one of the 50 Representatives counting the votes at Johnsville, in Dyer County.
13. Acts of 1842 (Ex. Sess.), Chapter 7, provided for eleven U. S. Congressional Districts in Tennessee designating the Counties of Perry, Henderson, Madison, Carroll, Gibson, Weakley, and Obion as the 11th U. S. Congressional District.
14. Acts of 1843-44, Chapter 48, stated that the Senators in the U. S. Congress from the State of Tennessee would be appointed within 30 days after the convening of the General Assembly by a voice vote of both Houses of the Legislature.
15. Acts of 1851-52, Chapter 196, established ten U. S. Congressional Districts in the State. The Ninth U. S. Congressional District consisted of the counties of Henry, Weakley, Dyer, Obion, Lauderdale, Tipton, Gibson, Carroll, and Henderson.
16. Acts of 1851-52, Chapter 197, separated Tennessee in Senatorial and Representative Districts for the General Assembly. Obion County was allotted on Representative alone and would share a Senator with Henry County and Weakley County whose polls would be compared at Dresden.
17. Acts of 1865, Chapter 34, fashioned eight U. S. Congressional Districts in the State in the aftermath of the Civil War. The Counties of Benton, Henry, Weakley, Obion, Dyer, Gibson, Lauderdale, Henderson, and Carroll constituted the Seventh U. S. Congressional District.
18. Acts of 1869-70, Chapter 105, authorized the holding of a referendum on the question of whether or not a Constitutional Convention should be called which would be composed of 75 delegates elected from the Senatorial and Representative Districts of the State. The Convention, if authorized under the referendum, would meet together in Nashville on the second Monday in January, 1870, to alter, amend, revise, or rewrite the State Constitution.
19. Acts of 1871, Chapter 146, apportioned the Tennessee General Assembly subsequent to the writing and adoption of the 1870 State Constitution. One Representative would be elected jointly by the counties of Obion, Lake, Shelby, and Fayette, and the counties of Henry, Weakley, Lake, and Obion were all located within the 20th State Senatorial District.
20. Acts of 1872 (Ex. Sess.), Chapter 7, formed nine U. S. Congressional Districts in Tennessee. The Eighth Congressional District contained the counties of Madison, Crockett, Haywood, Lauderdale, Dyer, Gibson, Weakley, Obion, and Lake.
21. Acts of 1873, Chapter 37, raised the number of congressional districts in Tennessee to ten. The Counties of Weakley, Obion, Lake, Dyer, Gibson, Crockett, Haywood, Tipton, and Lauderdale made up the Ninth Congressional District.
22. Acts of 1881 (Ex. Sess.), Chapter 5, stated that hereafter the General Assembly of the State of Tennessee would be composed of 33 Senators and 99 Representatives to be apportioned among the qualified voters according to the census enumeration of July, 1881.
23. Acts of 1881 (Ex. Sess.), Chapter 6, divided Tennessee into the 33 Senatorial and 99

Representative Districts authorized by Acts of 1881 (Ex. Sess.), Chapter 5, and according to the 1881 enumeration. Obion County would elect one Representative along and share a floater with Lake County and Dyer County. The 28th State Senatorial District consisted of the Counties of Obion, Lake, and Dyer.

24. Acts of 1882 (Ex. Sess.), Chapter 27, formed ten U. S. Congressional Districts in Tennessee. The Ninth Congressional District included the Counties of Weakley, Gibson, Crockett, Haywood, Lauderdale, Dyer, Obion, and Lake.
25. Acts of 1891, Chapter 131, delineated ten U. S. Congressional Districts in the State. There was no change in the counties which composed the Ninth Congressional District.
26. Acts of 1891 (Ex. Sess.), Chapter 10, reapportioned the General Assembly of the State based on the results of the 1890 Census. Obion would elect one State Representative alone and share a floterial with Lake and Dyer Counties as part of the 18th District. The 28th State Senatorial District contained the Counties of Obion, Weakley, and Lake.
27. Acts of 1901, Chapter 109, fashioned ten Congressional Districts in Tennessee in relation to the 1900 Federal Census. The Ninth Congressional District included the Counties of Gibson, Weakley, Obion, Lake, Dyer, Lauderdale, Haywood, and Crockett.
28. Acts of 1901, Chapter 122, apportioned the Tennessee Legislature. Lake County, Obion County, and Weakley County composed the 28th State Senatorial District. Obion County was given one Representative alone and would share another one with Lake and Dyer Counties as part of the 25th District.
29. Private Acts of 1933, Chapter 228, stated that in Obion County the candidates of a party seeking county office will be chosen in primary elections if their party had as much as 30% of the vote in the last election for governor. This Act did not apply to independent candidates. The elections would be held on the first Saturday in August in the odd numbered years, and the run-off election, if no candidate received a majority of the votes cast, would be held two weeks later between the two candidates getting the highest number of votes in the prior election. All candidates must qualify according to the State law and pay the expenses of the election. This Act was repealed by Private Acts of 1941, Chapter 23.
30. Private acts of 1937, Chapter 835, recited that William A. Smith lives on a farm which lies in both the 16th Civil District of Obion County and the 17th Civil District of Weakley County, and that the county boundary bisects his home. This Act declares him to be a citizen and resident of Obion County.
31. Private Acts of 1941, Chapter 275, declared that hereafter in Obion County the Election Commissioners would be paid and allowed the sum of \$100 annually, payable semiannually, on June 15 and on December 15 by the County Trustee on the warrant of the County Judge, or Chairman.

Source URL: <https://www.ctas.tennessee.edu/private-acts/elections-historical-notes-58>