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# Education/Schools - Historical Notes

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Sincerely,

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## Education/Schools - Historical Notes

### **Board of Education**

The following acts once affected the board of education in Hardin County but are no longer operative.

1. Acts of 1907, Chapter 236, created a Board of Education and an Advisory Board for every county in the State, abolishing all District Directors of Education. Each county court would divide the county into a minimum of five school districts, to be composed of whole civil districts. One member of the Board of Education would be elected, from each district. The duties of the Chairman of the Board, the Secretary, and the members of the Board are defined. The compensation of the members of the Board would be set by the county court between \$1.50 and \$3.00 per day, not to exceed thirty days per year. An Advisory Board of three members would be elected from each school district every two years. Its duties were to assist the Board as set forth in the act. This act did not apply to city schools and several counties other than Hardin County were exempted from its application.
2. Acts of 1909, Chapter 302, was an amendment to the general school law concerning Boards of Education and applied to Giles, DeKalb, Rutherford, Hickman, Benton, Decatur, Coffee, Hardin, McNairy, and Bedford Counties. The duties of the Chairman of the Board, the Secretary, and the members of the Board were set forth in the act. For example, each member of the board was required to make an accurate report of the status of the schools in his district to the County Superintendent of Public Instruction before August 1st of each year to be written on the forms furnished by the school system. The members were responsible for determining the scholastic population in July of each year.
3. Private Acts of 1915, Chapter 430, required each member of the Board of Education in Hardin County to appoint in their respective districts a special Advisory whose term of office would be concurrent with that of the Board member. The Advisory would devote special attention to the school building in the district and attend to needed repairs and ascertain the feelings of the people concerning the teachers and other personnel. The Advisory would receive no compensation. A vacancy in the office would be filled by an appointment. Women with five years teaching experience were eligible to serve as Advisors. Nothing in the act was to be construed as diminishing the powers of the Board of Education.
4. Private Acts of 1921, Chapter 738, amended Acts of 1909, Chapter 302, above, by providing that each member of the Board of Education shall take the scholastic population of his respective District on the blank forms furnished by the State Superintendent of Public Instruction. Board members would be paid \$2.50 per day for their attendance at Board meetings and \$1.50 per day while visiting schools.
5. Private Acts of 1923, Chapter 709, created a Board of Education with ten members, one from each of the ten civil districts, and one from any civil district created in the future, who would be elected at the general election on the first Thursday in August, 1924. A Referendum to be held on September 8, 1923, was to determine whether the act would become effective.
6. Private Acts of 1925, Chapter 785, abolished the County Board of Education of Hardin County and created a seven member Board of School Commissioners to be elected from the county at large for four-year terms. The Commissioners were required to be over twenty-one years old, of good moral character, residents and qualified voters of the county, able to read and write, and no more than four Commissioners could belong to the same political party. The Board would have supervision and control of all the schools, both elementary and secondary, and all others which were supported by public taxation. They would perform all the duties of the old Board of Education. The members would elect a chairman from their own number and the Superintendent of Public Instruction would act as ex officio Secretary, keeping all Board records. The Board members would be paid \$3.00 per day for each day in attendance, payable out of the County general funds. The act named A. L. Hughes, A. M. Patterson, W. W. Roberts, Bernice Nance, J. B. Franks, H. C. Smith, and J. E. Oldham as members of the first Board.

### **General Reference**

The following acts constitute part of the administrative and political heritage of the educational structure of Hardin County but are no longer operative since they have either been superseded, repealed, or failed to receive local approval.

1. Public Acts of 1833, Chapter 42, provided that the chairman of any free school trustees, or the clerk of any church in the Counties of Lawrence, Wayne, Hardin, and McNairy, would be entitled to

have surveyed and laid down on the general plan of the particular district any quantity of vacant land, not exceeding four acres, for the erection of a school house, or a meeting house, and the said property so entered would be construed as belonging to the Trustees or to the church with all the privileges of ownership.

2. Private Acts of 1833, Chapter 249, created and incorporated the Savannah Academy in Hardin County. The act named as Trustees for the Academy, Orville Harrison, James LeVive, John Houston, Richard Stephens, Arthur B. Campbell, Joseph N. Baker, and Robert Watt, each of whom would be sworn and bonded. They would select a Secretary and Treasurer from their own number and were entitled to receive the money for the Hardin County Academy from the Bank of the State of Tennessee.
3. Acts of 1837-38, Chapter 161, named James Irwin, David Robinson, Reuben Day, John J. Williams, Christopher H. McGinnis, Michael L. Woods, and Samuel Davis to the Board of Trustees for the Savannah Academy in Hardin County, constituting it as a body corporate.
4. Acts of 1847-48, Chapter 63, required the Trustee of Hardin County to distribute, pro rata, the school monies in his possession to the school districts of the County.
5. Acts of 1847-48, Chapter 154, Section 6, appointed James Scott, W. H. Cherry, James Irwin, and A. M. Hardin as the Trustees for a female branch of the County Academy of Hardin County to be established in or near the town of Savannah as the Trustees were to consider proper. The Trustees would receive one-half of the State funds paid to the County Academy for its support. This academy would be governed by the rules and regulations established by the Board.
6. Acts of 1851-52, Chapter 140, amended Acts of 1847-48, Chapter 154, above, so that there would be five Trustees elected to manage the affairs of the female branch of Savannah Academy, all of whom would be elected in the same manner, for the same length of time, and who would have the right to exercise the same rights and privileges, as all other duly constituted Trustees.
7. Private Acts of 1865-66, Chapter 93, recited that Savannah Female College was located in Savannah in 1861 under the sponsorship of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and a spacious and commodious brick building was started but never completed. The act incorporated the school as the "Savannah Female College" under the patronage of the church and with all incidental corporate powers. The incorporators were A. G. McDougal, G. M. Hamilton, Thomas Maxwell, W. H. Cherry, John S. Irwin, Thomas Davy, L. H. Broyles, Jr., Robert J. Williams, William Russell, A. H. Kendel, Elijah Harbour, John McDougal, D. F. Street, James Williams, N. M. D. Kemp, J. C. Walker, John A. Smith, W. K. Hardin, and Thomas H. Mabry. The institution would be exempt from taxation so long as it was being used for educational purposes.
8. Public Acts of 1875, Chapter 131, allowed the land which had been held for the common schools in Hardin County to be sold with the consent of the County Court. The County Court would authorize a person to survey the land, divide it into the most attractive lots possible, and return a plat to County Court. The Chairman of the Court would cause publication of notice of the sale. The County Court was empowered to convey title, collect the sale proceeds, and adjudicate all the claims and disputes. The net proceeds would be divided among the school districts according to the scholastic population.
9. Acts of 1903, Chapter 483, abolished the sixty-eight and sixty-ninth School Districts of Hardin County and the land formerly belonging to those Districts was attached to the fifteenth School District of the County.
10. Acts of 1905, Chapter 209, created a special school district in the Fourth Civil District of Hardin County which would be known as School District No. 9. The act described the land contained in the new district. The directors of the Fourth Civil District were directed to pay over to the Trustees of the new District its pro-rated share of all school funds. The County Superintendent of Public Instruction was required to appoint three directors for the District who would serve until the next regular election when their successors would be elected by the people. The Directors were to possess the same rights and powers enjoyed by other District Directors of the schools.
11. Acts of 1907, Chapter 363, created an independent school district in the First Civil District of Hardin County. The act described the area included in the district but also stated that the district included the following inhabitants: Jim Coffman, Watt Hardin, Will Symms, Arthur Porter, Ben Beckham, Jeff Walker, Dock King, the Mitchells, Wash Hamilton, Riley Hamilton, Matt Davis, Jim Davis, Lee Hardin, Bill Brasier, Lige Brasier, Elisha Brasier, Lum Clifton, John Simpson, Lum Robertson, Arthur Porter, Lum Bell, Leonard Bell, and Henry Bell.
12. Acts of 1909, Chapter 236, was a compulsory school attendance law for Blount and Hardin Counties. All children between eight and sixteen years of age were required to attend the public

schools for 80 days, or 16 weeks, or as long as the school term lasted. Days would be four hours or longer, and no child could be excused except by the Superintendent. One could attend a private, or parochial school, or be taught by a competent person at home and meet the requirements of the act. Arrangements were included for a child to obtain working papers if he helped support his family. Those who were poverty stricken could obtain aid from the Commissioners of the Poor who could arrange support for the family or the child in school. The Board of Education could furnish free text books. Temporary absences could be excused by a teacher or principal, who were required to keep sufficient records of attendance. Any person or business hiring a child not excused from school could be prosecuted and fined. The Sheriff, the Deputies, and the Constables of the County were charged with the enforcement of the act.

13. Private Acts of 1911, Chapter 671, was a school attendance law for Hardin County, which directed that each child in the County between the ages of 8 and 16 years be sent to school at least 75 days, or for as long as school was in session unless they were excused by the Board of Education. Children legally could be sent to private, parochial, or to other schools having the educational qualifications. Illness of the child or hardship was acceptable as an excuse for failure to attend. The Commissioners of the Poor could provide for a child of extreme poverty to attend school, pay his family, and buy his clothes and books. Teachers or the principal could excuse temporary absences.
14. Public Acts of 1925, Chapter 115, Section 33, was part of the act which is codified as Title 49 of the Tennessee Code Annotated. This section abolished all special school districts which were not taxing districts, and those which were taxing districts were allowed to hold referenda on the question of their abolition. When all the debts of the school district were paid, the district would join the county system, if desired.
15. Private Acts of 1925, Chapter 783, created a special school district in the area of the northeast corner of McNairy County, and the southeast corner of Chester County along the western border of Hardin County because it was not possible for the three counties to maintain separate school districts there. Some 150 children of school age resided in the area. Each county would contribute \$900 toward the cost of erecting a school building to be located as near to the center of the area as possible, and would contribute to the continuing expenses of the school in proportion to the average daily attendance of pupils from each county. The operation and maintenance of the district would be the responsibility of the Boards of Education of each County acting jointly.
16. Private Acts of 1929, Chapter 862, authorized the Commissioners of the Town of Savannah to transfer to Hardin County the building located in Savannah and known as the City Elementary School Building. The transfer would be first submitted to the voters for approval. The building would be used by the County for school purposes.
17. Private Acts of 1933, Chapter 131, amended Public Acts of 1925, Chapter 115, above, by exempting Hardin County from the application of the general act, which required the establishment and maintenance of at least one county high school in every county of the state offering at least one full four year course of study approved by the State Board of Education.

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