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# Elections - Historical Notes

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## Elections - Historical Notes

### **Districts - Reapportionment**

The acts listed below have affected the civil districts in Robertson County, but are no longer operative regarding elections. Also referenced below is an act which repealed prior law without providing new substantive provisions.

1. Acts of 1835-36, Chapter 1, instructed the General Assembly of Tennessee, subject to the terms of the newly adopted State Constitution, to appoint suitable persons in each county as commissioners to lay out the civil districts of the county according to the population records of 1833. The standards for doing so were expressed in the act, one of them being that each county having 3,000 or more, qualified voters would have 25 civil districts; between 2,500 and 3,000 voters, they would have 20 civil districts, and on down the graduated scale. Each civil district would have two Justices of the Peace and one Constable except the District with the county seat would be entitled to three Justices of the Peace and two Constables. Resolution #3 appointed the Commissioners for the counties. In Robertson County those named were Andrew Stewart, Jesse Ellis, James Woodard, James Sprouse, and Warren S. Payne.
2. Acts of 1859-60, Chapter 211, established a new 15th Civil District in Robertson County which began at Gaines Winfield's blacksmith shop on the pike running due west to the east line of the 10th Civil District, thence with that line, and further, making four miles; thence east to a point on the pike; thence south to the beginning, making the district four miles by seven. The precinct, or voting place, for the District would be at Cross Plains. William Villines, George Fisher, and James M. Eatherly were named as the Commissioners to run and mark the lines of the district.
3. Private Acts of 1905, Chapter 307, changed the boundary lines between the 13th Civil District and the 14th Civil District so that the farm of J. A. Elliott would be wholly within the 13th Civil District.
4. Private Acts of 1909, Chapter 452, redistricted Robertson County by abolishing all the civil districts from the Second through the Eighteenth except the Ninth, and by creating new civil districts in their places. The new First Civil District was made up of the old First and Second; Second District had the old Third and Fourth; the Third District included the Old Fifth, Sixth and Seventeenth; the Fourth District contained the old Seventh and Eighth; the Fifth District had the old Thirteenth and Fourteenth; the Sixth District included the old Twelfth and Sixteenth; the Seventh District comprised the old Eleventh and Fifteenth; and the Eighth District was made up of the old Tenth and Eighteenth. The Ninth District remained as it was then delineated. All the offices in the discontinued districts were abolished. The County Election Commission would hold special elections to choose the new officers for the newly formed civil districts. This Act was repealed by the one following.
5. Private Acts of 1911, Chapter 176, expressly repealed Private Acts of 1909, Chapter 452, and all the civil districts which were abolished by that Act were restored along with their original boundaries. Elections would be held as soon as possible in order to select the officials of the restored Districts who would serve until the next general election when officers would be chosen for a full term of

### **Elections**

The following is a listing of acts for Robertson 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 1796, Chapter 1, required that the candidates to represent the new State of Tennessee in the U. S. Congress must have been residence of the State for at least three years. At the close of the election the election officer would meet at Knoxville, Jonesboro, and Nashville to count and check the ballots.
2. Acts of 1796, Chapter 4, this Act named the delegates from each county in Tennessee who would meet to select the Electors of the President and Vice-President of the United States to represent Tennessee in the Electoral College. (The printed condition of this act was such as to make it impossible to read names of the delegates).
3. Acts of 1797, Chapter 1, was virtually a duplicate of the 1796 Act which set up the procedures to elect one Congressman from the State under the regular election laws in existence. The method for counting and verifying the ballots cast in the election was prescribed in the act.
4. Acts of 1798, Chapter 16, fixed the number of Senators in the General Assembly of Tennessee at twelve, and the Representative at twenty-four. Four Senators and eight Representatives would be

elected by each of the three Districts in the State, Washington, Hamilton, and Mero. Robertson County would have one of the eight Representatives in the Mero District and share a Senator with Montgomery County.

5. Acts of 1799, Chapter 46, provided that Tennessee would furnish three Presidential Electors to the Electoral College, one from each district of Washington, Hamilton and Mero. This Act named the people from each county who would meet to select the Electors. John Baker, John Jones, and Thomas Johnson were appointed from Robertson County. Votes would be checked and counted at Jonesboro, Knoxville and Nashville.
6. Acts of 1801, Chapter 44, required that such Representatives as Tennessee might have in the United States Congress would be elected at large in the State.
7. Acts of 1803, Chapter 24, divided Tennessee into five sections for the election of the Presidential Electors. The Counties of Davidson, Williamson, Robertson, Montgomery, Stewart, Rutherford, and Dickson composed the Fifth Electoral District. The election was to take place on the first Thursday and Friday in November, 1804, with the returns being counted at Nashville following the election as soon as practical.
8. Acts of 1803, Chapter 79, allowed for three Representatives from Tennessee in the U. S. Congress, one from each of Washington and Hamilton Districts, and one from the combined Districts of Mero, Robertson, and Winchester. The regulations for holding the election were enumerated in the Bill.
9. Acts of 1805, Chapter 64, set the number of Senators in the General Assembly at 13 and the Representatives at 26. The counties of Robertson, Dickson, Montgomery, and Stewart made up one Senatorial District whose votes would be tallied at Clarksville. Robertson County and Dickson County would share one of the 26 Representatives.
10. Acts of 1807, Chapter 74, required the Sheriff of each county to open and hold an election according to the rules of law for the Electors of the President and Vice-President of the county. The Fifth District of the five established contained the counties of Davidson, Robertson, Montgomery, Stewart, Dickson, Williamson, Maury, Rutherford, Bedford, and Hickman with the votes being compared at Nashville. The election would occur on the second Thursday in November, 1808.
11. Acts of 1809, Chapter 1, required an election to be held for the three U. S. Congressional Representatives, one from the Washington District, one from the Hamilton District, and one from the combined Mero, Robertson, and Winchester Districts. Polls would be counted and compared at Clarksville.
12. Acts of 1811, Chapter 16, made it the duty of the Sheriff, or his Deputy, of Robertson County, to open and hold an election on the Constitutional days at the home of Henry Hide, who lived on the road leading from Springfield to Weadley's Ferry on the Cumberland River. Anyone qualified to vote in Robertson County could vote at this place. The returns from the precinct would be made at Springfield.
13. Acts of 1812, Chapter 5, set up eight Presidential Electoral Districts in the State. The Eighth District contained the counties of Robertson, Montgomery, Stewart, Dickson, Hickman, and Humphreys. The election would be held on the first Thursday and Friday in November, 1812, and the polls would be compared at Charlotte in Dickson County. Electors were to be paid \$2.50 per day and ten cents per mile for travel.
14. Acts of 1812, Chapter 27, divided Tennessee into six U. S. Congressional Districts. The Sixth District was made up of the counties of Robertson, Montgomery, Dickson, Humphreys, Hickman, Stewart, Maury and Giles.
15. Acts of 1812, Chapter 37, imposed the duty upon the Sheriff, or his Deputy, of Robertson County, on the days appointed by law to hold a separate election at the house of Charles Kilgore on Harrington's Fork of the Red River under the regular election laws. It was also the responsibility of the election officials to count the votes and report the results at Springfield.
16. Acts of 1812, Chapter 57, apportioned the representation in the General Assembly to 20 Senators and 40 Representatives. One Senatorial District included the counties of Robertson, Dickson, and Hickman whose votes would be canvassed at Charlotte. All the counties would have at least one Representative, the more populous being given more than one, except that Dickson and Hickman would share a Representative.
17. Acts of 1813, Chapter 53, seemed to be a duplicate of the Act requiring the Sheriff of Robertson County to hold a separate election at the house of Charles Kilgore, Acts of 1812, Chapter 37, above. The same regulations in effect at Henry Hide's place would be in force here.

18. Acts of 1815, Chapter 5, placed upon the Sheriff of Robertson County, or his Deputy, the responsibility of holding a separate election on those days appointed under the law at the home of Charles Miles in the said county.
19. Acts of 1815, Chapter 31, formed eight Presidential Electoral Districts in Tennessee which would contain the same counties as were specified in the previous Act enacted for this purpose (Acts of 1812, Chapter 5). Electors would receive the same compensation as before.
20. Acts of 1819, Chapter 69, assigned the counties of Robertson and Montgomery to one of the 20 State Senatorial Districts whose votes were to be canvassed at Port Royal, and Robertson county would elect one Representative alone out of the 40.
21. Acts of 1820, Chapter 127, Sections 3 and 4, provided that the separate election heretofore held at the house of Charles Kilgore in Robertson County would hereafter take place at the home of George Randall at Cross Plains, and Section 4 was the authority for two other precincts in the county, one at the house of John Chote and the other at the house of Benjamin Roxney.
22. Acts of 1822, Chapter 1, organized Tennessee into 9 U. S. Congressional Districts. The 8th U. S. Congressional District comprised the counties of Robertson, Montgomery, Dickson, Stewart, Humphreys and Hickman.
23. Acts of 1823, Chapter 47, established eleven Presidential Electoral Districts in the State assigning the counties of Montgomery, Robertson, Stewart, Dickson, Humphreys, and Hickman to the Tenth Electoral District. The election would occur on the first Thursday in November, 1824. Polls would be counted at Charlotte in Dickson County.
24. Acts of 1824, Chapter 1, was an exact duplicate of Acts of 1823, Chapter 47, above, setting up eleven U. S. Presidential Electoral Districts.
25. Acts of 1826, Chapter 3, fixed the representation in the State General Assembly. The counties of Robertson, Montgomery, and Dickson constituted one of the 20 Senatorial Districts, whose votes would be certified at the house of Thomas Williams in Montgomery County, and Robertson County was given one of the 40 Representatives alone.
26. Acts of 1827, Chapter 17, divided Tennessee into eleven Presidential Electoral Districts in which the counties of Robertson, Montgomery, Dickson, Stewart, Humphreys, and Perry made up the Tenth District. The election would be held on the second Thursday and Friday in November, 1828. Polls would be canvassed at Charlotte.
27. Acts of 1832, Chapter 4, formed 13 U. S. Congressional Districts in Tennessee. The Eleventh U. S. Congressional District consisted of the counties of Robertson, Montgomery, Stewart, Humphreys, Hickman and Dickson.
28. Acts of 1832, Chapter 9, created fifteen Presidential Electoral Districts in the State. The 13th Electoral District included the counties of Robertson, Montgomery, Stewart, Dickson and Humphreys. The Electors would meet on the first Monday and Tuesday in November next and cast their votes for the President.
29. Acts of 1833, Chapter 71, apportioned the General Assembly of the State into 20 Senatorial District and 40 Representative Districts. Robertson County, Dickson County, and Montgomery County constituted one Senatorial District with the votes to be counted at Thomas Williams in Montgomery County. Montgomery County and Robertson County would share a joint Representative.
30. Acts of 1833, Chapter 76, was the enabling law to call a convention composed of 60 delegates who were to be elected on the first Thursday and Friday, next, in March, and would convene in Nashville on the third Monday in May, next, to amend, alter, change, or rewrite the State Constitution. One delegate would be elected in Robertson County.
31. Acts of 1835-36, Chapter 39, enacted pursuant to the adoption of the new State Constitution organized Tennessee into 15 Presidential Electoral Districts. The 13th District contained the counties of Robertson, Montgomery, Stewart, Dickson and Humphreys. The election would occur on the first Tuesday in November, 1836, and officers were to meet in Nashville.
32. Acts of 1837-38, Chapter 8, instructed the Sheriffs to hold elections in certain named counties to ascertain whether or not the county of Cumberland should be formed, part of which county would come from Robertson County.
33. Acts of 1839-40, Chapter 79, provided that hereafter each Congressional District in the State would also be an electoral district for the President.
34. Acts of 1842, Chapter 1, fixed the number of Senators in the Tennessee General Assembly at 25, and the number of Representatives at 50. Robertson County and Montgomery County made up

- the 18th Senatorial District counting the polls at Port Royal. Robertson County would elect one Representative alone.
35. Acts of 1842, Chapter 7, established eleven U. S. Congressional Districts in Tennessee of which the 9th Congressional District contained the counties of Robertson, Montgomery, Stewart, Dickson, Humphreys, Benton, and Henry.
  36. Acts of 1845-46, Chapter 30, required the Sheriff of Robertson County on the second Saturday in January, next, and every year thereafter to open and hold an election at the courthouse in Springfield to elect the officers of that corporation and city. A failure to hold the said election would result in a fine and a forfeiture of office.
  37. Acts of 1851-52, Chapter 196, framed the State into ten U. S. Congressional Districts. The Eighth Congressional District was composed of the counties of Davidson, Robertson, Montgomery, Stewart, and Dickson.
  38. Acts of 1851-52, Chapter 197, placed the counties of Robertson, Montgomery, and Stewart into one State Senatorial District, counting polls at Clarksville. Robertson County would elect one of the 50 Representatives alone, and share another with Davidson and Montgomery.
  39. Acts of 1865, Chapter 34, divided Tennessee into eight U. S. Congressional Districts in the aftermath of the civil war. The Fifth Congressional District contained the counties of Williamson, Davidson, Wilson, Sumner, Robertson, and Cheatham.
  40. Acts of 1869-70, Chapter 105, authorized a referendum election to be held on whether or not a constitutional convention should be called which would have 75 delegates elected from the Representative and Senatorial Districts of the State. The said convention, if authorized, would convene in Nashville on the second Monday in January, 1870, to alter, amend, change, revise, or rewrite the State Constitution of 1835.
  41. Acts of 1871, Chapter 146, assigned Robertson County one of the 50 State Representatives and placed Robertson County, Montgomery County, and Stewart County in the 17th State Senatorial District.
  42. Acts of 1872, Chapter 7, formed Tennessee into nine U. S. Congressional Districts. The counties of Robertson, Cheatham, Davidson, Sumner, Wilson, Trousdale, and DeKalb composed the Fifth Congressional District.
  43. Acts of 1873, Chapter 27, added a 10th U. S. Congressional District to the State which forced the reassignment of some counties. The Fourth Congressional District was made up of counties of Fentress, Overton, Putnam, Jackson, Clay, Macon, Smith, Trousdale, Wilson, Sumner, and Robertson.
  44. Acts of 1881 (Ex. Sess.), Chapter 5, made the number of Senators in the General Assembly at 33 and the number of Representatives at 99 on a permanent basis.
  45. Acts of 1881 (Ex. Sess.), Chapter 6, reapportioned Tennessee according to the new allotments of Senators and Representatives. Robertson County was granted one Representative alone and would share a Senator with Sumner County and Trousdale County in the 12th Senatorial District.
  46. Acts of 1882, Chapter 27, reorganized the ten U. S. Congressional Districts in Tennessee. The Sixth District included the counties of Davidson, Robertson, Cheatham, Montgomery, Stewart, Humphreys and Houston.
  47. Acts of 1891, Chapter 131, was the next act regarding the U. S. Congressional Districts but made no change in the Sixth District and very little in the others.
  48. Acts of 1891 (Ex. Sess.), Chapter 10, reapportioned the General Assembly of the State. Robertson County had one Representative alone and shared a floater with Davidson and Cheatham. Robertson County and Montgomery County constituted the 15th State Senatorial District.
  49. Acts of 1901, Chapter 109, reorganized the ten U. S. Congressional Districts in the State. The Sixth District had in it the counties of Davidson, Cheatham, Robertson, Stewart, and Montgomery.
  50. Acts of 1901, Chapter 122, was the last Act to apportion the General Assembly until the passage of over 60 years. Montgomery County and Robertson County would share the 15th State Senatorial District. Robertson County would elect one Representative alone and jointly elect another one with Williamson and Cheatham Counties.
  51. Private Acts of 1929, Chapter 162, provided that in Robertson County (identified by the use of the 1920 Federal Census figures) all officers holding any State, County or municipal election, or any other election authorized by law, would be paid \$2 a day for their services.
  52. Private Acts of 1941, Chapter 201, provided that in the civil districts in Robertson County which

contained more than one incorporated city the polling places in all the elections of every kind and character would open at 9:00 A.M. and close at 7:00 P.M.

53. Private Acts of 1949, Chapter 779, stated that in all the incorporated towns of Robertson County the polls would open at all general and primary elections at 9:00 A.M. and close at 7:00 P.M.
54. Private Acts of 1949, Chapter 780, made it lawful after the passage of this Act for any person to distribute cards, handbills, or placards, on behalf of any candidate, or cause, within 200 feet of any polling place during the hours of any election but nothing herein was intended to prohibit the posting of signs, posters, etc. before the opening of the polls. Violations were subject to fines from \$5 to \$25.
55. Private Acts of 1951, Chapter 607, provided that in Robertson County (identified by the 1940 Federal Census) referendum elections held for the purpose of determining whether or not bonds were to be issued under the provisions of their act authorizing the issuance of the same whether general or special legislation, would be called by the County Board of Election Commissioners who would fix a date for the election earlier than 50 days subsequent to March 1 of the calendar year in which such election was to be held, it being the intention of this law that those persons liable for poll tax could pay the same and vote in the election.

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