



County Technical Assistance Service
INSTITUTE for PUBLIC SERVICE

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Chapter IV - Boundaries

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,

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Chapter IV - Boundaries

Creation of the County

Acts of 1807 Chapter 90

SECTION 1. By the General Assembly of the State of Tennessee, that from and after the passing of this act, Roane County shall be bounded on the southwest by the following line, viz. Beginning on the north bank of Tennessee, at the end of the ridge that divides the waters of White's creek from those of Piney river; thence along said ridge, to Wallen's ridge; thence north forty five west to Overton county line.

SECTION 2. That all that tract of country lying within the following described bounds, shall be, and is hereby made and constituted a new and distinct county, by the name of RHEA: Beginning at a point on the above described line of Roane County, on the extreme height of the mountain dividing the waters of Sequachy, from those of Tennessee; thence along the top of said mountain, leaving all the waters running through said mountain in the county of Rhea, to the river Tennessee; thence up the meanders of said river to the beginning.

SECTION 3. That all that tract of country lying within the following described bounds shall be, and is hereby made and constituted a new and distinct county, by the name of BLEDSOE, viz. Beginning on the northwest end or corner of Rhea county, where it strikes the road leading to West Tennessee; thence north forty-five west, to Overton county line; thence southwardly with said line, to White county line, and with that line to the southern boundary of this state; thence eastwardly with said line to the corner of Rhea county line; thence with said line to the beginning. **SECTION 4.** That Thomas Moore, Joseph Brooks and John Henry, are hereby appointed commissioners to fix on the most suitable place for holding courts in said county of Rhea, until further provision is made by law.

SECTION 5. That for the due administration of justice, that the court of pleas and quarter sessions, shall be held in and for the county of Rhea, on the fourth Mondays of March, June, September and December; and that the first court shall be holden on the first Monday of December; and the justices for said county shall hold their respective courts at the place that shall be fixed upon by the commissioners, until otherwise provided for by law, and shall have and exercise the same powers and jurisdiction as are or shall be prescribed by and for the courts of the several counties in this state.

SECTION 6. That the said county of Rhea, be, and the same is hereby declared a part of the district of Hamilton, in the same manner and for all purposes, civil, criminal and military, in as full and ample a manner as any county in this state, and shall send two jurors to the superior court of said district.

SECTION 7. That nothing herein contained shall be so construed as to prevent the collector of public taxes of Roane County to collect the taxes for the year of one thousand eight hundred and seven, and all arrearages of taxes.

SECTION 8. That John Tollet, Joseph Hoge and James Standefer, are hereby appointed commissioners to fix on the most suitable place for holding courts for Bledsoe County, until otherwise provided for by law.

SECTION 9. That for the due administration of justice, that the court of pleas and quarter sessions shall be held in and for the county of Bledsoe, on the first Mondays of April, July, October and January; and the justices for said county, shall hold their respective courts at the place that shall be fixed upon by said commissioners, until otherwise provided for by law, and shall have and exercise the power and jurisdiction as are prescribed by and for the courts of the several counties in this state.

SECTION 10. That said county of Bledsoe be, and the same is hereby declared a part of the district of Hamilton, in the same manner and for all purposes, civil, criminal and military, in as full and ample manner as any county in this state, and shall send two jurors to the superior court of said districts.

SECTION 11. That nothing herein contained shall be so construed as to prevent the collector of public taxes of Roane County from collecting the taxes for the year eighteen hundred and seven, and all arrearages of taxes.

SECTION 12. That a majority of the acting justices of the counties of Rhea and Bledsoe, when in session, shall have power, and are hereby authorized and required, to lay a county tax, not exceeding twelve and one half cents on each hundred acres of land liable to taxation; twelve and one half cents on each white poll; twenty five cents on each black poll; fifty cents on each stud horse, kept for covering mares; said tax to be laid from year to year, until otherwise provided for by law.

SECTION 13. That the election for governor, representatives to congress and members to the general assembly, shall be held at their respective places of holding courts, in the counties of Rhea and Bledsoe,

by the sheriffs or their deputies, under the same rules and regulations as are prescribed by law, and on the same days which elections for such purposes, are authorized to be held; and those citizens of Rhea and Bledsoe counties, formerly citizens of Roane County, shall be entitled to vote in their respective counties.

SECTION 14. That it shall be the duty of the returning officers for the counties of Rhea and Bledsoe, to meet the returning officer of Roane county, in Kingston, on the succeeding Monday, with the number of their respective polls, and with him compare the same; and the returning officer of Roane, those duly elected members of the general assembly, and give certificates accordingly; and it shall be the duty of said sheriff to transmit a just statement of the polls of election for governor and representatives to congress, to the speaker of the senate, in the same manner as by law directed.

SECTION 15. That the sheriff of the county of Rhea, shall open and hold an election at the place of holding court in said county, on the second Friday and Saturday in January next, for the purpose of electing field officers of the militia in said county; and the militia of said county shall compose the thirtieth regiment of the militia of this state, and be attached to the third brigade.

SECTION 16. That the sheriff of Bledsoe county shall open and hold an election at the place of holding court in said county, on the third Friday and Saturday in February next, for the purpose of electing field officers of the militia of said county; and the militia of said county shall compose the thirty-first regiment of the militia of this state, and shall be attached to the third brigade.

Passed: November 30th, 1807.

Change of Boundary Lines

Acts of 1817 Chapter 13

SECTION 1. That from and after the passage of this act, the boundaries of Rhea County shall be as follows, (to wit), beginning on the South Bank of Tennessee River, opposite the mouth of White's Creek in Rhea County, thence South thirty degrees East, to the southern boundary line of this State, thence West with said boundary line to a point opposite the mouth of Opossum creek that -empties in on the north side of said river; thence a direct line to the mouth of said creek; thence north thirty degrees West to the extreme height of Waldens Ridge, thence east, with Bledsoe county line, until it intersects Roane County or Whites creek; thence down said creek, as it meanders, to the beginning.

SECTION 2. That the lines and boundaries that are set forth in the first section of this act, shall be known and declared to be the established bounds of said county; hereby repealing all laws heretofore passed on the subject of designating the bounds of said county, any thing to the contrary notwithstanding.--Provided, nothing herein contained shall be so construed as to authorize the making of any entry or survey, within the bounds hereby included in the county of Rhea, to which the Indian title is not at present extinguished, until the same shall hereafter be directed by law.

Passed: October 9, 1817.

Acts of 1819 Chapter 3

SECTION 1. That the boundary lines of the county of Rhea, shall be as follows to wit: beginning at the mouth of the first creek above the Cherokee Agency, that empties into Hiwassee River, on the north bank; thence down the said river to its confluence with the Tennessee River; thence down said river including Jollys Island in said county, to the line of the county of Hamilton; thence with the line of Hamilton county to the Bledsoe county line; thence with said county of Bledsoe to the county of Morgan; thence with said county of Morgan to the county of Roane; thence with the line of the county of Roane to Whites Creek; thence down said creek to the mouth thereof crossing Tennessee River and running south forty five degrees east, eight miles from the mouth of said creek; thence due south to the top of the ridge dividing the waters of Soowee Creek from those of Mouse Creek; thence along the top of said ridge to the head of the creek that runs to the beginning; thence down said creek to the beginning.

SECTION 2. That the boundary lines of the County of Roane shall be as follows, to wit: beginning at a point on the south side of Tennessee river opposite the mouth of Whites Creek, then south forty-five degrees east ten miles; then a direct line, to a chain of ridges four miles south of Browders ferry on the Big Tennessee river; then with said chain of Ridges to the mouth of Holston river.

SECTION 3. That John W. Brazeal is hereby appointed a surveyor, to run and mark the said lines of Roane County in the manner pointed out in this act, and that the county court of Roane County, are directed to make him such allowance for running said line, as they may think proper, to be paid out of any monies in the hands of the trustee of said county of Roane, not otherwise appropriated.

SECTION 4. That the surveyor shall be appointed, by the county court of Rhea county, to run and plainly mark the lines of said county Rhea, where they are not bounded by natural boundaries, or the lines of other counties, and that said court, shall make the surveyor such allowance as they may think proper, to be paid by the trustee of said county of Rhea out of any monies in his hands not otherwise appropriated.

SECTION 5. That all laws and parts of laws, coming within the preview and meaning of this act, be, and the same are hereby repeated, and that this act shall be in force from and after the passing thereof.

Passed: November 19, 1819.

Acts of 1821 Chapter 73

SECTION 1. That the line dividing Bledsoe and Rhea counties shall be as follows, (to wit); beginning in a point on the northern boundary line of Hamilton county, near where the road from Keedy's Gap to Washington crosses the head of Sale Creek; running thence up the general course of Walden's ridge of Cumberland mountain, so as to cross Richland Creek at the bridge on the Kincah turnpike road; thence to cross Loony's turnpike road so as to include the former residence of Richard Walker on said road in the county of Bledsoe; thence a direct line to the old Cumberland turnpike road, to T. Bound's turnpike gate, and that all persons residing near to, and south of Morgan, and west of said line shall belong to the county of Bledsoe.

SECTION 2. That said line shall be run and marked at the mutual expense of Bledsoe and Rhea Counties.

Passed: September 28, 1821

Acts of 1821 Chapter 169

SECTION 1. That the line running between the counties of Rhea and Hamilton, shall commence at a point one half mile below Blythe's ferry, and run across the Valley to the Mountain, so as to run between the lands of Benjamin Jones and John Russell, thence up the foot of the said mountain to the line of said counties as now run and marked.

SECTION 2. That the dividing line between the counties of Hamilton and Marion shall be as follows, (to wit:) Beginning on the South east corner of Bledsoe county, thence along the extreme height of the mountain to the head to Suck Creek, thence down said creek to the mouth thereof, thence due south to the southern boundary of the state.

Passed: November 19, 1821.

Acts of 1833 Chapter 214

That the line dividing the counties of Rhea and M'Minn, shall continue from the south bank of Hiwassee river, crossing said river opposite to the foot of the first large ridge, above the mouth of Prive's creek, thence along the extreme height or top of said ridge, as it meanders until it strikes the south line of the top of said ridge, which runs from the eight mile tree or stake from the mouth of White's creek, as established by the act of 1819, fixing the lines between the counties of Rhea and Roane, leaving John Igon's plantation, William Moore's plantation, Matlock's Mills, and the whole of the back valley so called and its meanders on the north side in Rhea county: Provided, however, nothing herein contained shall prevent the county court of Rhea from levying a county tax on the persons and property of such citizens as reside within the territory hereby annexed to the county of M'Minn, for the year 1834, or the collecting officer of Rhea County from collecting the State and county tax in said territory for the year 1834, in such manner as he might or could have done if this act had not passed: And provided, further, the citizens residing in the territory aforesaid, shall not be subject to the payment of tax of any kind, in the county of M'Minn for the said year of 1834, nor shall the county court of M'Minn be authorized to levy any jail or court house tax, upon real property, actually settled at the passage of this act, lying within the territory aforesaid, for and during the term of ten years: And provided also, the dividing line as designated in this act, shall be run and marked by John Locke of Rhea county, at the proper expense of M'Minn County, should the county court of M'Minn require the same to be done by an order of court, and a copy thereof duly served upon the said John Locke.

Passed: November 28, 1833.

Boundaries - Historical Notes

The following is a summary of acts which authorized boundary changes for Rhea County.

1. Acts of 1807, Chapter 9, stated that Rhea County would begin on the north bank of Tennessee, at

- the end of the ridge that divides the waters of White's creek from those of Piney river; thence along said ridge, to Wallen's ridge; thence north forty five west to Overton county line.
2. Acts of 1809, Chapter 20, stated that the line which divides Rhea County from Roane County, and Bledsoe County, shall begin on the north bank of the Tennessee River at the mouth of Whites Creek; thence up White's Creek, as it meanders, to the place where the road leading from Knoxville to Nashville crosses the main fork of said Whites Creek; thence north, forty west, to the Overton County line. Nothing in this Act shall be construed to preclude the Sheriff of Roane County from collecting the State, County, and poor tax due in that part of Rhea and Bledsoe Counties.
 3. Acts of 1815, Chapter 75, stated that all that part of Rhea County lying north and east of the following described line, that is, beginning at White's Creek near Matthew English's saw mill, at the mouth of Crab Orchard Creek, thence running up said creek to the mouth of Burkes's Creek, thence a direct course to the new comer of Roane County, at the line of Overton County, is hereby declared to be and made a part of Roane County.
 4. Acts of 1815, Chapter 200, extended the boundaries of Roane County and used the boundary lines of Rhea County as part of the description but this Act apparently does not affect the area of Rhea County.
 5. Acts of 1817, Chapter 13, provided that Rhea County begin on the South Bank of Tennessee River, opposite the mouth of White's Creek in Rhea County, thence South thirty degrees East, to the southern boundary line of this State, thence West with said boundary line to a point opposite the mouth of Opossum creek that empties in on the north side of said river; thence a direct line to the mouth of said creek; thence north thirty degrees West to the extreme height of Waldens Ridge, thence east, with Bledsoe county line, until it intersects Roane County or White's creek; thence down said creek, as it meanders, to the beginning.
 6. Acts of 1819, Chapter 3, stated that the boundary lines of the county of Rhea, shall be as follows to wit: beginning at the mouth of the first creek above the Cherokee Agency, that empties into Hiwassee River, on the north bank; thence down the said river to its confluence with the Tennessee River; thence down said river including Jollys Island in said county, to the line of the county of Hamilton; thence with the line of Hamilton county to the Bledsoe county line; thence with said county of Bledsoe to the county of Morgan; thence with said county of Morgan to the county of Roane; thence with the line of the county of Roane to Whites Creek; thence down said creek to the mouth thereof crossing Tennessee River and running south forty five degrees east, eight miles from the mouth of said creek; thence due south to the top of the ridge dividing the waters of Soowee Creek from those of Mouse Creek; thence along the top of said ridge to the head of the creek that runs to the beginning; thence down said creek to the beginning.
 7. Acts of 1821, Chapter 73, stated that the line dividing Bledsoe and Rhea counties shall be as follows, (to wit); beginning in a point on the northern boundary line of Hamilton county, near where the road from Keedy's Gap to Washington crosses the head of Sale Creek; running thence up the general course of Walden's ridge of Cumberland mountain, so as - to cross Richland Creek at the bridge on the Kincah turnpike road; thence to cross Loony's turnpike road so as to include the former residence of Richard Walker on said road in the county of Bledsoe; thence a direct line to the old Cumberland turnpike road, to T. Bound's turnpike gate, and that all persons residing near to, and south of Morgan, and west of said line shall belong to the county of Bledsoe.
 8. Acts of 1821, Chapter 169, provided that the line running between the counties of Rhea and Hamilton, shall commence at a point one half mile below Blythe's ferry, and Benjamin Jones and John Russell, thence up the foot of the said mountain to the line of said counties as now run and marked.
 9. Acts of 1833, Chapter 16, extended the Jurisdiction of the State over a portion of the Cherokee Indian Reservation and thereby enlarged the areas of several counties, including Rhea. The Act provided, among other things, that the county of Rhea, in addition to its present limits, shall commence at the point where Hamilton County terminates on the bank of the Tennessee River, as provided in this Act, running thence along said line to the house now occupied by Wilson Evans, thence a direct line to a point on the Hiwassee River, opposite the first large ridge above the mouth of Price's Creek.
 10. Acts of 1833, Chapter 214, provided that the line dividing the counties of Rhea and M'Minn, shall continue from the south bank of Hiwassee river, crossing said river opposite to the foot of the first large ridge, above the mouth of Prive's creek, thence along the extreme height or top of said ridge, as it meanders until it strikes the south line of the top of said ridge, which runs from the eight mile tree or stake from the mouth of White's creek, as established by the act of 1819, fixing

- the lines between the counties of Rhea and Roane, leaving John Igon's plantation, William Moore's plantation, Matlock's Mills, and the whole of the back valley so called and its meanders on the north side of Rhea county.
11. Acts of 1837-38, Chapter 259, changed the boundaries between Rhea and Roane Counties so as to include the land and possessions of Leonard C. Nance wholly within Roane County. If the County Court of Roane County desires, they may appoint someone to run and mark the line between and pay him a reasonable compensation.
 12. Acts of 1849-50, Chapter 82, rearranged the boundary lines between Rhea County and Hamilton County commencing at a Black Walnut and Hickory on the eastern fork of the said creek, down the creek 40 poles to a stake north, 75 west, to the fork of the said creek, thence up the said creek to the turnpike road, west with the road to the Bledsoe County line so as to include John Gray and Roman Quarles in Rhea County.
 13. Acts of 1857-58, Chapter 83, changed the boundaries between Rhea County and Bledsoe County beginning at the Pole Bridge Creek and running in a southwesterly direction so as to include B. F. Bridgeman's farm, and to intersect the established line at a white oak, black oak, and hickory, known as the old corner of Rhea, Hamilton, and Bledsoe Counties.
 14. Acts of 1859-60, Chapter 211, rearranged the lines between Rhea County and Cumberland County so as to embrace all the land belonging to the estate of Thomas J. Gillespie, deceased, in Rhea County.
 15. Acts of 1867-68, Chapter 23, had a partial metes and bounds description of the involved area but the effect of the Act was to include the farm of Mrs. Ann Russell, the farm of the heirs of John Gray, deceased, the farm of Mrs. Nancy McGill, the farm of Alexander Hickman, and the farm of F. M. Bowers, which were all formerly located in Hamilton County, in Rhea County.
 16. Acts of 1879, Chapter 137, changed the lines between Rhea County and Hamilton County which divides the farm of James A. Kelly, so as to make the same run from a stake on the county line corner to J. W. Pearce's land, thence with the said Pearce's line southwest to William Nash's line, thence with Nash's line to the county line, so as to include the farm of James A. Kelly wholly within Rhea County.
 17. Acts of 1881, Chapter 143, changed the lines between Bledsoe County, Rhea County, and Hamilton County so as to attach the lands of James Sladen to Bledsoe County. See case of McMellan v. Hannah, 106 Tenn. 691, 61 S.W. 1020 (1901), declared this act to be unconstitutional in Cheatham County because Cheatham County was under the land area requirements for counties as established in the Constitution to begin with, but the unconstitutionality would not affect Rhea County.
 18. Acts of 1889, Chapter 25, moved all the lands and improvements belonging to Oxshee John Thurman out of Rhea County and into Bledsoe County.
 19. Acts of 1889, Chapter 140, changed the boundary line between Rhea County and Hamilton County commencing at a point where Theodore Flora's line crosses the said county line, thence with the said Flora line with its different degrees so as to include all the lands of Theodore Flora and Peter B. Clouse, about 30 acres, more or less, in Rhea County entirely.
 20. Acts of 1903, Chapter 41, detached the farm of J. R. Swafford, lying partly in the 10th Civil District of Rhea County, from Rhea County and attached all the same to Bledsoe County.
 21. Acts of 1903, Chapter 54, is an exact duplicate of Acts of 1903, Chapter 41, above, which involved the property of J. R. Swafford.
 22. Public Acts of 1982, Chapter 682, transferred, four parcels of land from Hamilton County into Rhea County which were located near the old Hart Turnpike where it intersects with the Bledsoe County line. They were 6.6 acres belonging to Edgar and Bobbie Long in Graysville, 25 acres owned by Anthony and Diane Knox, in Graysville, 31 acres belonging to Howard and Wilma Bowman, in Graysville, and 28 acres owned by Charles and Carolyn Bryant in Chattanooga, Tn.

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