

A REVIEW OF THE CONFIGURATION OF
TRIAL LEVEL JUDICIARY OF THE STATE OF
TENNESSEE FROM 1978-2016.

compiled by:

Tony A. Childress
Chancellor 29th Judicial District

JUDICIAL CIRCUITS and CRIMINAL COURTS IN 1978¹

CIRCUIT	COUNTIES
1	Washington, Johnson, Carter, Unicoi
2	Cocke, Union, Sevier, Jefferson, Grainger, Hancock
3	Knox
4	Loudon, Roane
5	Clay, White, Overton, Putnam, Cumberland, Pickett
6	Hamilton
7	Part 1: Warren, DeKalb, Van Buren; Part 2 Coffee
8	Rutherford and Cannon
9	Montgomery, Sumner, Robertson
10	Davidson
11	Lawrence, Giles, Maury, Wayne
12	Madison, Chester and Henderson
13	Crockett, Gibson, Henry, Haywood
14	Obion, Weakley
15	Shelby
16	Fayette, Hardeman, Lauderdale, McNairy and Tipton
17	Williamson, Hickman, Perry and Lewis
18	Franklin, Meigs, Rhea, Sequatchie, Bledsoe, Marion and Grundy
19	Fentress, Campbell, Scott, Morgan and Claiborne
20	Sullivan, Greene, Hamblen, Hawkins
21	Dickson, Cheatham, Houston, Stewart, Humphreys
22	Carroll, Benton, Decatur, Hardin
23	Bedford, Marshall, Lincoln, Moore
24	McMinn, Monroe, Polk, Bradley (criminal only)
25	Jackson, Macon, Smith, Trousdale, Wilson
26	Sullivan at Blountville
27	Greene, Hawkins, Hamblen
28	Anderson (civil, criminal, and chancery division)
29	Bradley
30	Blount
31	Dyer, Lake

¹ Tenn. Code Ann. § 16-207 to 236. (Supp. 1978).

CHANCERY DIVISIONS IN THE 1978²

DIVISION	COUNTIES
1	Washington, Johnson, Carter, Unicoi, Sullivan
2	Loudon, Hawkins, Claiborne, Hancock, Campbell, Roane, Scott, Morgan
3	Hamilton
4	Overton, Clay, Pickett, Fentress, Jackson, Cumberland, DeKalb, White, Putnam
5	Marshall, Bedford, Moore, Lincoln
6	Robertson, Montgomery, Hickman, Stewart, Humphreys, Dickson, Cheatham, Houston
7	Davidson
8	Carroll, Henry, Henderson, Decatur, Benton
9	Part 1: Fayette, Hardeman, McNairy, Hardin, Chester; Part 2: Haywood, Lauderdale, Tipton, Crockett
10	Shelby
11	Knox
12	Rhea, McMinn, Warren, Bledsoe, Sequatchie, Marion, Van Buren, Bradley, Meigs, Polk, Grundy, Coffee, Monroe, Franklin
13	Cocke, Blount, Sevier, Jefferson
14	Madison
15	Greene, Hamblen, Grainger, Union
16	Obion, Lake, Weakley
17	Wilson, Sumner, Trousdale, Macon Smith

Special Chancery division within the 11th circuit: Giles, Lawrence, Maury and Wayne

Special Chancery division within the 17th circuit: Williamson, Perry, Lewis

Law and Equity Court of Dyer County

Law and Equity Court of Gibson County

Law and Equity Court of Montgomery County

Rutherford and Cannon Chancellor in the 8th Circuit

Anderson (civil, criminal, and chancery division) in 28th Circuit

² Tenn. Code Ann. § 16-237to 255. (Supp. 1978).

CIRCUIT and CRIMINAL CIRCUITS IN 1980³

CIRCUIT NUMBER	COUNTIES
1	Washington, Johnson, Carter, Unicoi
2	Cocke, Union, Sevier, Jefferson, Grainger, Hancock
3	Knox
4	Loudon, Roane
5	Clay, White, Overton, Putnam, Pickett, Cumberland
6	Hamilton
7	Warren, Dekalb, Van Buren, Coffee
8	Rutherford, Cannon
9	Montgomery, Sumner, Robertson
10	Davidson
11	Lawrence, Giles, Maury, Wayne
12	Madison, Chester, Henderson
13	Crockett, Gibson, Haywood, Henry
14	Obion, Weakley
15	Shelby
16	Fayette, Hardeman, Lauderdale, McNairy, Tipton
17	Williamson, Hickman, Perry, Lewis
18	Franklin, Meigs, Rhea, Sequatchie, Bledsoe, Marion, Grundy
19	Campbell, Morgan, Scott, Claiborne, Fentress
20	Sullivan, Greene, Hamblen, Hawkins
21	Dickson, Cheatham, Houston, Stewart, Humphreys
22	Carroll, Benton, Decatur, Hardin
23	Bedford, Marshall, Lincoln, Moore
24	McMinn, Monroe, Polk, Bradley
25	Jackson, Macon, Smith, Trousdale, Wilson
26	Sullivan at Blountville
27	Greene, Hawkins, Hamblen
28	Anderson
29	Bradley
30	Blount
31	Dyer, Lake

³ Tenn. Code Ann. §§ 16-2-201 to 231 (1980)

CHANCERY DIVISIONS IN 1980

DIVISION NUMBER	COUNTIES ⁴
1	Carter, Johnson, Unicoi, Washington, Sullivan
2	Loudon, Union, Claiborne, Hancock, Campbell, Roane, Scott, Morgan
3	Hamilton
4	Overton, Clay, Pickett, Fentress, Jackson, Cumberland, DeKalb, White Putnam
5	Marshall, Bedford, Moore, Lincoln
6	Robertson, Montgomery, Hickman, Stewart, Humphreys, Dickson, Cheatham, Houston
7	Davidson
8	Carroll, Henry, Henderson, Decatur, Benton
9	Fayette, Hardeman, McNairy, Hardin, Chester, Haywood, Lauderdale, Tipton, Crockett
10	Shelby
11	Knox
12	Rhea, McMinn, Warren, Bledsoe, Sequatchie, Marion, Van Buren, Bradley, Meigs, Polk, Grundy, Coffee, Monroe, Franklin
13	Cocke, Blount, Sevier, Jefferson
14	Madison
15	Greene, Hamblen, Grainger, Hawkins
16	Obion, Lake, Weakley
17	Wilson, Sumner, Trousdale, Macon, Smith
Division in 11 th circuit	Giles, Lawrence, Maury, Wayne ⁵
Division in 17 th circuit	Williamson, Perry, Lewis ⁶
Law and Equity Court	Dyer
Law and Equity Court	Gibson
Law and Chancery Court	Rutherford, Cannon ⁷
Civil, Criminal, Chancery	Anderson ⁸

⁴ Tenn. Code Ann. § 16-2-301-317 (1980)

⁵ Tenn. Code Ann. § 16-2-401(1980)

⁶ Tenn. Code Ann. § 16-2-402(1980)

⁷Tenn. Code Ann. § 16-2-208 (1980)

⁸Tenn. Code Ann. § 16-2-228(1980)

**WHAT DID THE MAP OF THE TRAIL LEVEL JUDICIARY
LOOK LIKE ON SEPTEMBER 1, 1984?**

DISTRICTS AFTER SEPTEMBER 1, 1984⁹

DISTRICT NUMBER	COUNTIES
1	Carter, Johnson, Unicoi, Washington
2	Sullivan
3	Green, Hamblen, Hancock, Hawkins
4	Cocke, Grainger, Jefferson, Sevier
5	Blount
6	Knox
7	Anderson
8	Campbell, Claiborne, Fentress, Scott, Union
9	Loudon, Meigs, Morgan, Roane
10	Bradley, McMinn, Monroe, Polk
11	Hamilton
12	Bledsoe, Franklin, Grundy, Marion, Rhea, Sequatchie
13	Clay, Cumberland, DeKalb, Overton, Pickett, Putnam, White, Jackson
14	Coffee
15	Jackson, Macon, Smith, Trousdale, Wilson
16	Cannon, Rutherford
17	Bedford, Lincoln, Marshall, Moore
18	Sumner
19	Montgomery, Robertson
20	Davidson
21	Williamson, Hickman, Perry, Lewis
22	Lawrence, Giles, Maury, Wayne
23	Dickson, Cheatham, Houston, Stewart, Humphreys
24	Carroll, Benton, Decatur, Hardin, Henry
25	Fayette, Hardeman, Lauderdale, McNairy, Tipton
26	Madison, Chester, Henderson
27	Obion, Weakley
28	Crockett, Gibson, Haywood
29	Dyer, Lake
30	Shelby
31	Warren, Van Buren

⁹ Tenn. Code Ann. § 16-2-506(Supp. 1984)

HOW DID THE JUDICIAL DISTRICT BOUNDARIES THAT WENT INTO EFFECT ON SEPTEMBER 1, 1984, DIFFER FROM THE JUDICIAL CIRCUIT BOUNDARIES THAT EXISTED ON AUGUST 31, 1984?

Surprisingly, the answer is very little. The combination of counties that made up the judicial districts that when into effect on September 1, 1984, are almost identical to the combination of counties that made up the judicial circuits in 1980. In fact, the **ONLY** counties that were moved from one combination of counties that made up a judicial circuit to another combination of counties that became a judicial district were:

1: **Bradley County (sort of):**

In 1980 the criminal court for Bradley County was in the 24th judicial circuit with McMinn, Monroe and Polk counties, and the circuit court for Bradley County was the 29th judicial circuit. On September 1, 1984, Bradley County became a part of the 10th Judicial District with McMinn, Monroe and Polk, which it was already of part of in 1980.

2. **Meigs County:**

In 1980 Meigs County was part of the 18th judicial circuit with Franklin, Rhea, Sequatchie, Bledsoe, Marion, and Grundy counties. On September 1, 1984, Meigs County became part of the 9th Judicial District with Loudon, Morgan, and Roane counties.

3. **Morgan County:**

In 1980 Morgan County was part of the 19th judicial circuit with Campbell, Morgan, Scott, Claiborne, and Fentress counties. On September 1, 1984, Morgan County became part of the 9th Judicial District with Loudon, Meigs, and Roane counties.

4. **Roane and Loudon counties:**

In 1980 Roane and Loudon counties were the 4th judicial circuit. On September 1, 1984, they became part of the 9th Judicial District with Meigs and Morgan counties.

5. **Union County:**

In 1980 Union county was part of the 2nd judicial circuit with Cocke, Sevier, Jefferson, Grainger, and Hancock counties. On September 1, 1984, Union County became part of the 8th Judicial District with Campbell, Claiborne, Fentress, and Scott counties.

6. **Hancock County:**

In 1980 Hancock County was part of the 2nd judicial circuit with Cocke, Sevier, Jefferson, Grainger, and Union Counties. On September 1, 1984, Hancock County became part of the 3rd Judicial District with Green, Hamblen, and Hawkins counties.

7. **Sullivan County: (sort of. It finally became exclusively a single county judicial district)**

In 1980 the circuit court of Sullivan County was part of the 20th judicial circuit with Greene, Hamblen, Hawkins. In 1980 the criminal court of Sullivan County at Blountville was the 26th judicial circuit. On September 1, 1984, Sullivan County became the 2nd Judicial district.

8. **Jackson County:**

In 1980 Jackson County was part the 25th judicial circuit with Macon, Smith, Trousdale, and Wilson counties. On September 1, 1984, Jackson County became part of the 13th Judicial District with Clay, Cumberland, DeKalb, Overton, Pickett, Putnam, and White counties.

9. **DeKalb County:**

In 1980 Dekalb County was part of the 7th judicial circuit with Coffee, Warren, and Van Buren counties. On September 1, 1984, Dekalb County became part of the 13th Judicial District with Clay, Cumberland, Jackson, Overton, Pickett, Putnam, and White counties.

10. **Coffee County: (became a single county judicial district)**

Coffee County was part of the 7th judicial circuit with DeKalb, Warren, and Van Buren counties. On September 1, 1984, Coffee County became the 14th Judicial District.

11. **Warren and Van Buren Counties:**

Warren and Van Buren counties were part of the part 7th judicial circuit with DeKalb and Coffee. In 1985, Warren and Van Buren Counties became the 31st Judicial District.

12. **Sumner County: (became a single county judicial district)**

In 1980 Sumner County was part of the 9th judicial circuit with Montgomery and Robertson counties. On September 1, 1984, Sumner County became the 18th Judicial District.

13. **Henry County:**

In 1980 Henry County was part of the 13th judicial circuit with Crockett, Gibson, and Haywood counties. On September 1, 1984, Henry County became part of the 24th Judicial District with Carroll, Benton, Decatur, and Hardin counties.

HOW DID THE JUDICIAL DISTRICT BOUNDARIES THAT WENT INTO EFFECT ON SEPTEMBER 1, 1984, DIFFER FROM THE CHANCERY DIVISIONS, SPECIAL CHANCERY DIVISIONS, LAW & CHANCERY AND LAW & EQUITY COURT BOUNDARIES THAT EXISTED IN 1980?

The combination of counties that made up the judicial districts that when into effect on September 1, 1984, are almost identical to the combination of counties that made up the 1980 judicial circuits. On September 1, 1984, the overlapping that existed between the judicial circuits and the 17 Chancery Divisions, the 2 Special Chancery Divisions, the 1 Law & Chancery Court, the 1 Civil, Criminal & Chancery Court and the 2 Law & Equity Courts mostly disappeared with the creation of the Judicial Districts. In fact, the chancery divisions practically disappeared and were absorbed into what was the judicial circuit structure that existed in 1980. The only vestige of the combination of counties that made up a Chancery Division, Special Chancery Division, Law & Chancery Court, Civil, Criminal & Chancery Court and or Law & Equity Court in 1980 that survived post-September 1, 1984, were those combination of counties that also made up a judicial circuit. Those combination of counties were:

1. **Knox County:** Was the 11th Chancery Division, the 3rd Judicial Circuit, and it became the 6th Judicial District.
2. **Anderson County:** Had the Civil, Criminal & Chancery Court and it was in the 28th Judicial Circuit. It became the 7th Judicial District.
3. **Hamilton County:** Was the 3rd Chancery Division, the 6th Judicial Circuit, and it became the 11th Judicial District.
4. **Rutherford and Cannon Counties:** Had the Law & Chancery Court, they were the 8th Judicial Circuit, and those counties became the 16th Judicial District.
5. **Davidson County:** Was the 7th Chancery Division, the 10th Judicial Circuit, and it became the 20th Judicial District.
6. **Bedford, Lincoln, Marshall, and Moore counties:** Were the 5th Chancery Division, the 23rd Judicial Circuit, and those counties became the 17th Judicial District.
7. **Giles, Lawrence, Maury, and Wayne:** Were the 11th Judicial Circuit and they were a Special Chancery Division within that Judicial Circuit. Those counties became the 23rd Judicial District.
8. **Shelby County:** Was the 10th Chancery Division, the 15th Judicial Circuit, and it became the 30th Judicial District.