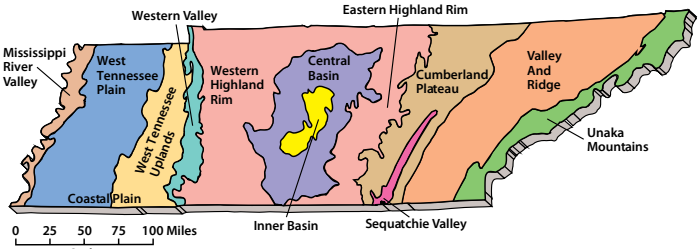
A History of Tennessee

The Land and Native People

Tennessee's great diversity in land, climate, rivers, and plant and animal life is mirrored by a rich and colorful past. Until the last 200 years of the approximately 12,000 years that this country has been inhabited, the story of Tennessee is the story of its native peoples. The fact that Tennessee and many of the places in it still carry Indian names serves as a lasting reminder of the significance of its native inhabitants. Since much of Tennessee's appeal for settlers lay with the richness and beauty of the land, it seems fitting to begin by considering some of the state's generous natural gifts

Tennessee divides naturally into three "grand divisions"—upland, often mountainous, East Tennessee; Middle Tennessee, with its foothills and basin; and the low plain of West Tennessee. Travelers coming to the state from the east encounter fi st the lofty Unaka and Smoky Mountains, flanked on their western slope by the Great Valley of East Tennessee. Moving across the Valley fl or, they next face the Cumberland Plateau, which historically attracted little settlement and presented a barrier to westward migration. West of the Plateau, one descends into the Central Basin of Middle Tennessee—a rolling, fertile countryside that drew hunters and settlers alike. The Central Basin is surrounded on all sides by the Highland Rim, the western ridge of which drops into the Tennessee River Valley. Across the river begin the low hills and alluvial plain of West Tennessee. These geographical "grand divisions" correspond to the distinctive political and economic cultures of the state's three regions.

Tennessee possesses an advantageous climate for people and agriculture, with abundant rainfall and a long, temperate growing season. The area is generally free from the long droughts and freezes of more extreme climes. The three major rivers that fl w around and across Tennessee—the Mississippi, Tennessee, and Cumberland rivers—have created watersheds that cover most of the state. The Tennessee River forms near Knoxville and fl ws in a southwesterly direction into Alabama, then loops back north to the Kentucky border. The Cumberland River drains northern Middle Tennessee, and West Tennessee is covered by a network of sluggish streams, swamps, and lakes that fl w directly into the Mississippi River. These rivers and their tributary streams have



Physiographic Map of Tennessee

played a signifi ant role from the earliest times by yielding fish and mussels, by serving as major transportation routes, and by creating the fertile bottom soils that attracted farmers.

Fossil-laden rocks found across Tennessee attest to the fact that warm, shallow seas covered the state in the distant past. Coal-bearing strata of the Pennsylvanian period are present throughout the Cumberland Plateau. Plant and dinosaur fossils of the Cretaceous epoch occur in the sandstones of West Tennessee. Remains of extinct mammoths, mastodons, and giant sloths, driven south by the advancing glaciers of the Ice Age, can be found in the Pleistocene deposits of West and Middle Tennessee.

Early man hunted mastodon that roamed during the last Ice Age.

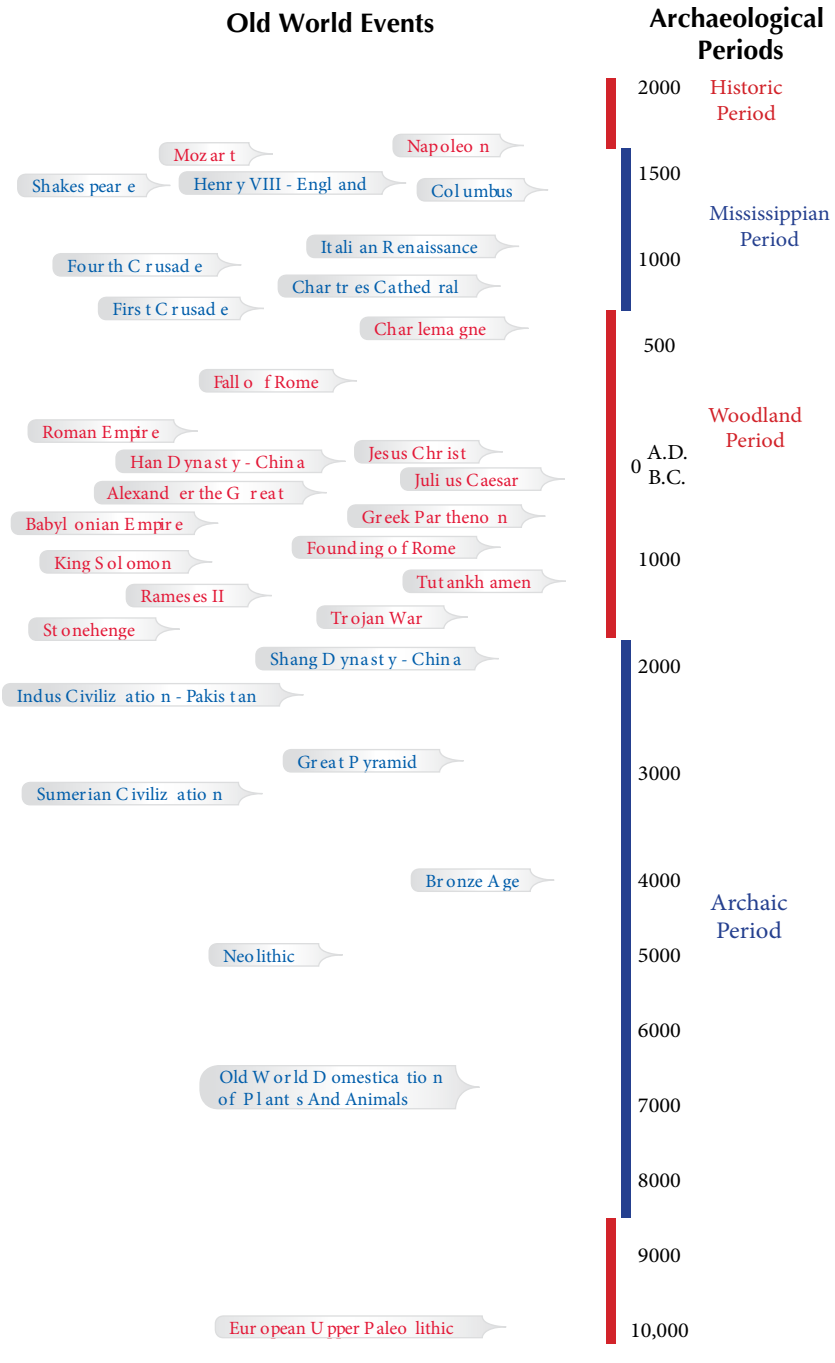
The story of man in Tennessee begins with the last retreat of the Ice Age glaciers, when a colder climate and forests of spruce and fir prevailed in the region. Late Ice Age hunters probably followed animal herds into this area some 12,000–15,000 years ago. These nomadic Paleo-Indians camped in caves and rock shelters and left behind their distinctive arrowheads and spear points. They may have used such Paleolithic tools to hunt the mastodon and caribou that ranged across eastern Tennessee. About 12,000 years ago, the region's climate began to warm, and the predominant vegetation changed from conifer to our modern deciduous forest. Abundant acorn, hickory, chestnut, and beech mast attracted large numbers of deer and elk. Warmer climate, the extinction of the large Ice Age mammals, and the spread of deciduous forests worked together to transform Indian society.

During what is known as the Archaic period, descendants of the Paleo-Indians began to settle on river terraces, where they gathered wild plant food and shellfish in addition to hunting game. Sometime between 3,000 and 900 B.C., natives took the crucial step of cultivating edible plants such as squash and gourds—the first glimmerings of agriculture. Archaic Indians thereby ensured a dependable food supply and freed themselves from seasonal shortages of wild plant foods and game. With a more secure food supply, populations expanded rapidly, and scattered bands combined to form larger villages.

Woodland Indians fir t developed farming in Tennessee.

The next major stage of Tennessee pre-history lasted almost 2,000 years and is known as the Woodland period. Th s era saw the introduction of pottery, the beginnings of settled farming communities, the construction of burial mounds, and the growing stratifi ation of Indian society. Native Americans in Tennessee made the transition from societies of hunters and gatherers to well-organized tribal, agricultural societies dwelling in large, permanent towns.

The peak of prehistoric cultural development in Tennessee occurred during the Mississippian period (900–1600 A.D.). Cultivation of new and improved strains of corn and beans fueled another


Old World Events
Archaeological Periods
2000
Historic Period
Napoleon
Mozart
Shakespeare
Henry VIII - England
Columbus
1500
Mississippian Period
Italian Renaissance
Fourth Crusade
Chartres Cathedral
1000
First Crusade
Charlemagne
500
Fall of Rome
Woodland Period
Roman Empire
Jesus Christ
Han Dynasty - China
0 A.D. B.C.
Julius Caesar
Alexander the Great
Babylonian Empire
Greek Parthenon
Founding of Rome
King Solomon
1000
Tutankhamen
Rameses II
Trojan War
Stonehenge
Shang Dynasty - China
2000
Indus Civilization - Pakistan
Great Pyramid
3000
Sumerian Civilization
Bronze Age
4000
Archaic Period
Neolithic
5000
6000
Old World Domestication of Plants And Animals
7000
8000
9000
European Upper Paleolithic
10,000

Stone pipe from Roane County (left) nd engraved shell gorget (right), both from the Mississippian period

large jump in population. An increase in territorial warfare and the erection of ceremonial temples and public structures attest to the growing role of chieftains and tribalism in Indian life. Elaborate pottery styles and an array of personal artifacts, such as combs, pipes, and jewelry, marked the complex society of these last prehistoric inhabitants of Tennessee.

The fi st European incursions into Tennessee proved highly disruptive to the people living in the region. In their futile search for gold and silver, Hernando de Soto's band in 1541, and two later expeditions led by Juan Pardo, encountered Native Americans. By introducing fi earms and, above all, deadly Old World diseases, these contacts hastened the decline of the tribes and their replacement by other tribes, notably the Cherokee. The advent of the gun brought about major changes in Native American hunting technique and warfare. Indians grew increasingly dependent on the colonial fur trade by supplying European traders with deer and beaver hides in exchange for guns, rum, and manufactured articles. Th s dependence, in turn, eroded the Indians' traditional self-suffici t way of life and tied them ever closer to the fortunes of rival European powers.

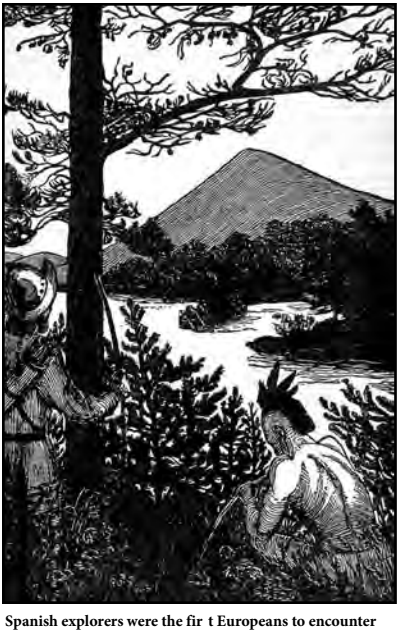
Struggle for the Frontier

During the 150 years following de Soto's visit, new tribes moved into the Tennessee region. The powerful Cherokee built their towns and villages along the Hiwassee and Little Tennessee rivers, while the Chickasaw Nation held sway over the territory west of the Tennessee River. The Shawnee, a large Ohio-Valley tribe, moved south into the Cumberland River country, but by 1715, the last Shawnee had been driven out by Chickasaw and Cherokee attacks. Henceforth, the game-filled woods of Middle Tennessee would be home to no Indian towns, although various tribes used it as a common hunting ground.

Europeans resumed their exploration of the area in 1673, when both the British and the French came from opposite directions to lay claim to the region. James Needham and Gabriel Arthur, English traders from Charles Town (later Charleston), South Carolina, crossed the Appalachians hoping to establish trade contacts among the Cherokee. Far to the west, Father Jacques Marquette and fur trader Louis Joliet came down the Mississippi River and claimed its entire valley in the name of the King of France. In time, Britain and France would build forts and trading posts, trying to reinforce their rival claims to unspoiled lands beyond the mountains.

The early fur traders, colorful characters like Alexander Cummings, James Adair, and Martin Chartier, lived among the Indians and became the crucial link between tribesmen, colonial governments, and international markets. They employed Indian hunters to supply them with beaver skins and deer pelts, which they then carried on pack trains to Charles Town or shipped down river to New Orleans. South Carolina merchants dominated the early Tennessee fur trade, exporting more than 160,000 skins worth $250,000 in 1748 alone. The fur trade was profitable for the traders, but it wiped out much of Tennessee's native animal life. The competition for the Indian trade sharpened Anglo-French rivalry, and the Indians were drawn into a global power struggle.

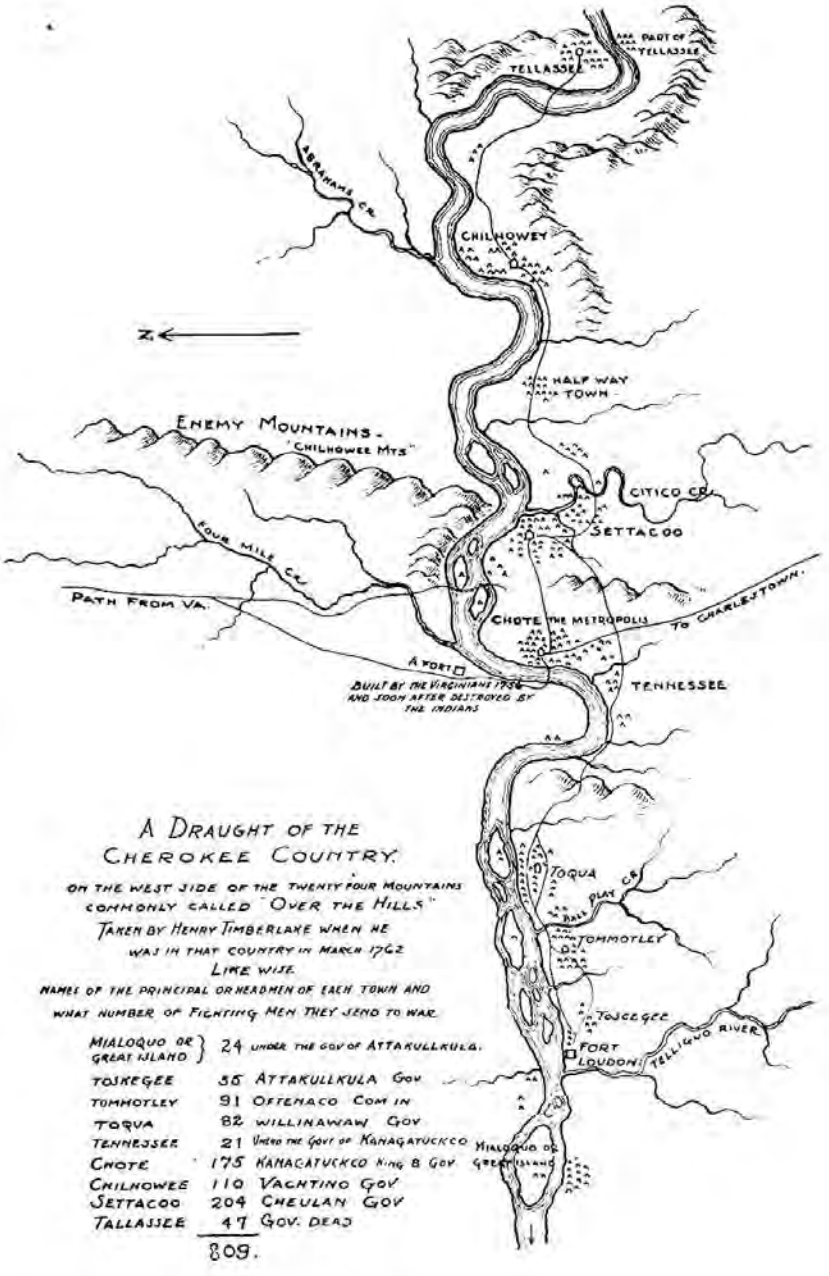
In 1754, the contest between the French and British for control of a New World empire burst forth in the French and Indian War, in which native alliances became the objects of European military strategy. English soldiers built Fort Loudoun near present-day Vonore in an effort to keep the divided Cherokee loyal. The plan backfi ed, as Cherokee warriors laid siege to the fort and starved out its garrison, most of whom were massacred on their march to captivity. Despite the English disaster at Fort Loudoun, the outcome of the war was the defeat of the French and the decline of their influence in North America. France ceded all her claims to land east of the Mississippi River to the British, whose Proclamation of 1763 prohibited all westward settlement beyond the Appalachians. Although still a force to be reckoned with, the Cherokee faced an uncertain future. Not only had their independence been compromised by mixing in European affairs, but the land they occupied lay squarely in the path of migration across the mountains.



Spanish explorers were the fir t Europeans to encounter native Tennesseans.

The end of the French and Indian War brought a new presence to the Tennessee wilderness, as restless back-country Virginians and North Carolinians began moving across the mountains into the valleys of East Tennessee, ignoring the British prohibition against settling on Indian lands. By the early 1770s, four different communities had been established in northeastern Tennessee—on the Watauga River, the North Holston, the Nolichucky, and in Carter's Valley. With the founding of these tiny settlements, frontier diplomacy entered a new phase: the possession of land, not trading privileges, now became the white man's goal. When an extended survey of the North Carolina–Virginia boundary line showed most whites to be squatting illegally on Indian land, the settlers negotiated leases for their farms from the Cherokee.

A race to grab western lands developed between North Carolina and Virginia land speculators, who hoped to obtain cheap land from the Indians and resell it at a profit to incoming settlers. Richard Henderson of Hillsborough, North Carolina, settled the issue by boldly arranging a private "treaty" with the Cherokee for the purchase of a vast tract that included most of Kentucky and Middle Tennessee. Henderson was the most ambitious speculator to take advantage of the Indians' willing-


PART OF YELLASSEE
TELLASSEE
ABRAHAMS CR.
CHILHOWEY
N.
HALF WAY TOWN
ENEMY MOUNTAINS.
"CHILHOWEE MTS"
CITICO CR.
SETTACOO
FOUR MILE CR.
PATH FROM VA.
CHOTE THE METROPOLIS
TO CHARLESTOWN.
A FORT
BUILT BY THE VIRGINIANS 1756 AND SOON AFTER DESTROYED BY THE INDIANS
TENNESSEE
A DRAUGHT OF THE CHEROKEE COUNTRY.
ON THE WEST SIDE OF THE TWENTY FOUR MOUNTAINS COMMONLY CALLED "OVER THE HILLS"
TAKEN BY HENRY TIMBERLAKE WHEN HE WAS IN THAT COUNTRY IN MARCH 1762
LIKE WISE
NAMES OF THE PRINCIPAL OR HEADMEN OF EACH TOWN AND WHAT NUMBER OF FIGHTING MEN THEY SEND TO WAR.
MIALOQUO OR GREAT ISLAND } 24 UNDER THE GOV OF ATTAKULLKULA.
TOSKEGEE 55 ATTAKULLKULA GOV
TOMMOTLEY 91 OFFEMACO COM IN
TOQUA 82 WILLINAWAW GOV
TENNESSEE 21 UNDER THE GOVT OF KANAGATUCKCO
CHOTE 175 KANAGATUCKCO King & GOV
CHILHOWEE 110 VACHTINO GOV
SETTACOO 204 CHEULAN GOV
TALLASSEE 47 GOV. DEAD
809.
TOQUA
PLAY CR.
TOMMOTLEY
TOSCEGEE
FORT LOUDON
TELLIGWO RIVER
MIALOQUO OR GREAT ISLAND

ness to trade land for money and goods, exchanging some twenty million acres for six wagon loads of goods worth about 10,000 English pounds. Dragging Canoe, a young Cherokee chief opposed to selling ancestral hunting grounds, warned the whites that they were purchasing a "dark and bloody ground." With other disaffected warriors, Dragging Canoe retreated south to establish the warlike Chickamauga tribe, which plagued the Tennessee settlements for the next twenty years.

The men and women who ventured over the mountains to clear trees, plant fi lds, and build houses in Tennessee were a highly independent, self-suffici t breed. Their desire for land brought them into confli t with the Indians, and their insistence on freedom from arbitrary and remote government put them on a collision course with Great Britain. Th s independent spirit was expressed in the writing of the Watauga Compact, a new model of self-government for people who had migrated beyond the reach of organized government. However, their persistence in settling on Indian land brought hostility from most of the natives, who would align themselves with the British in their confli t with the colonists.

In July 1776, the Cherokee launched well-orchestrated attacks on the East Tennessee settlements. The Wataugans, led by their popular and soon-to-be-famous Indian-fi hter John Sevier, repulsed the onslaught and swiftly counter-attacked. With the help of militia from North Carolina and Virginia, they invaded the heartland of the Cherokee and put their towns to the torch. Siding with the British during the American Revolution proved disastrous for the Cherokee, as it gave the Americans a pretext to reduce the tribe's military power and to encroach further on their land.

The high-water mark of Tennessee's part in the Revolution came in the autumn of 1780. With American fortunes lagging after a series of military defeats, a motley force of backwoodsmen and farmers destroyed a British and Tory army at Kings Mountain, South Carolina. Th s key victory,

Map of the Watauga Settlements, Showing the Supposed Virginia Line.

in which Tennessee militia played an important part, saved the Patriot cause in the region and set in motion the chain of events that ended one year later with Cornwallis's surrender at Yorktown.

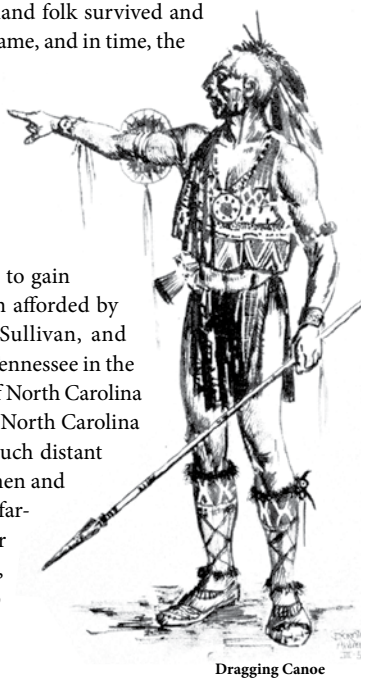
This ainting by Peggy Harvill depicts a flatboat voyage of the Donelson party to Nashville, 1780.

The Revolution gave settlers an opening to push the frontier westward to the Cumberland River. Intrepid "long hunters" had been traveling to the Cumberland country since the 1760s. Men such as James Robertson, Kasper Mansker, Thomas Sharpe Spencer, Anthony and Abraham Bledsoe, and John Rains hunted and trapped through Middle Tennessee and spoke of its richness to their neighbors at home. On the heels of his vast Transylvania land purchase, Henderson hired Robertson and others to go there and survey the prospects for settlement. In the winter and spring of 1779, 300 pioneers—black and white—made the difficult trek to the French Lick, the future site of Nashville. Most of the men came overland under Robertson's leadership, while John Donelson led a fl tilla with the women and children on a hazardous voyage down the Tennessee and up the Cumberland River.

This first band of settlers established a number of fortified stations and spread across the Central Basin in search of good farmland. They withstood fourteen years of brutal attacks by Creek and Chickamauga warriors from the Tennessee River towns. Nearly all of the early families lost someone in the fi hting, but the Cumberland folk survived and planted the seeds of future communities. More settlers came, and in time, the Indian threat faded. Treasure seekers, traders, hunters, and land speculators had found the Tennessee country, but it would take the farmers to hold what they had found.

From Territory to Statehood

In the days before statehood, Tennesseans struggled to gain a political voice and suffered for lack of the protection afforded by organized government. Six counties—Washington, Sullivan, and Greene in East Tennessee, and Davidson, Sumner, and Tennessee in the Middle District—had been formed as western counties of North Carolina between 1777 and 1788. After the Revolution, however, North Carolina did not want the trouble and expense of maintaining such distant settlements, embroiled as they were with hostile tribesmen and needing roads, forts, and open waterways. Nor could the far-flung settlers look to the national government, for under the weak, loosely constituted Articles of Confederation, it was a government in name only. The westerners' two



Dragging Canoe

Overmountain men muster at Sycamore Shoals before the battle of Kings Mountain in this painting by Lloyd Branson, courtesy of the Tennessee State Museum.

main demands—protection from the Indians and the right to navigate the Mississippi River—went largely unheeded during the 1780s.

In 1784, North Carolina's insensitivity led frustrated East Tennesseans to form the breakaway State of Franklin, also known as "Frankland." The ever-popular John Sevier was named governor, and the fl dgling state began operating as an independent but unrecognized government. At the same time, leaders of the Cumberland settlements made overtures for an alliance with Spain, which controlled the lower Mississippi River and was held responsible for inciting the Indian raids. In drawing up the Watauga and Cumberland Compacts, early Tennesseans had already exercised some of the rights of self-government and were prepared to take political matters into their own hands. Such stirrings of independence caught the attention of North Carolina, which quietly began to reassert control over its western counties. These policies and internal divisions among East Tennesseans doomed the short-lived State of Franklin, which passed out of existence in 1788.

Attack on Fort Nashborough, 1781

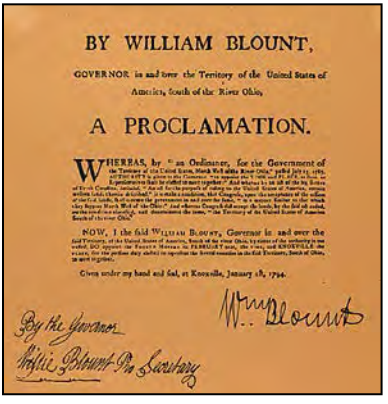
When North Carolina fi ally ratifi d the new Constitution of the United States in 1789, it also ceded its western lands, the Tennessee country, to the Federal government. North Carolina had used these lands as a means of rewarding its Revolutionary soldiers, and, in the Cession Act of 1789, it reserved the right to satisfy further land claims in Tennessee. Congress now designated the area as the Territory of the United States, South of the River Ohio, more commonly known as the Southwest Territory. The Territory was divided into three districts—two for East Tennessee and the Mero District on the Cumberland—each with its own courts, militia, and offi holders.

President George Washington appointed as territorial governor William Blount, a prominent North Carolina politician with extensive holdings in western lands. Land grant acts passed in North

Tennessee circa 1796; note the separation of East and Middle Tennessee by Indian territory.

MAP of The
TENNESSEE GOVERNMENT
formerly part of
NORTH CAROLINA
taken Chiefly from Surveys by
Gen. J. Sevier & others
PART OF KENTUCKY
Ohio River
Mississippi River
Cumberland River
Tennessee River
Nolichucky
Holston
Clinch
Powell
Emmons
Bedford
Nashville
Mulberry
Duck River
Elk River
Bear Creek
Tuckasegee
Nantahala
Cherokee Town
Cherokee Town
Cherokee
Cherokee
Cherokee

Carolina created a booming market in Tennessee land before actual settlers had ever arrived. Land speculation was based upon cheaply amassing large amounts of western land, or claims to it, in hopes that increased immigration would raise the price of these lands. Most of Tennessee's early political leaders—Blount, Sevier, Henderson, and Andrew Jackson, among others—were involved in land speculation, making it difficult sometimes to tell where public responsibility left off and private business began. The sale of public land was closely linked to Indian aff irs, because settlers would not travel to the new land until it was safe and could not legally settle on lands until Indian title was extinguished. The business of the territorial government, therefore, centered on land and Indian relations.


BY WILLIAM BLOUNT,

GOVERNOR in and over the Territory of the United States of America, south of the River Ohio,

A PROCLAMATION.

WHEREAS, by "an Ordinance, for the Government of the Territory of the United States, North West of the River Ohio," passed July 13, 1787, [illegible] "Legislatures shall be formed in most respects as follows: And whereas by an act of the 26 Congress of the United States of America, entitled "An act for the purpose of ceding to the United States of America, certain western lands, therein described" it is made a condition, that Congress, upon the acceptance of the cession of the said lands, shall assume the government as and over the same, "in a manner similar to that which they possess North West of the Ohio" And whereas Congress did accept the lands, by the said act ceded, upon the said conditions, and constituted the same, "the Territory of the United States of America South of the river Ohio."

NOW, I the said WILLIAM BLOUNT, Governor in and over the said Territory, of the United States of America, South of the river Ohio, by virtue of the authority in me vested, DO [illegible] Governor Blount, by PLEASANT [illegible] and the Town of KNOXVILLE the [illegible] for the purpose they shall be required to operate the Territorial [illegible] in the said Territory, South of Ohio, as aforesaid.

Given under my hand and seal, at Knoxville, January 28, 1794.

By the Governor

Willie Blount Pro Secretary

Wm Blount

Gov. Blount summons Tennessee's first territorial Legislature.

Despite the government's prohibition, settlers continually squatted on Indian land, which only increased the natives' hostility. Indian warfare flared up in 1792, as Cherokee and Creek warriors bent on holding back the tide of white migration launched frequent attacks. The Cumberland settlements in particular were dangerously remote and exposed to Creek raiding parties, and by 1794, it seemed questionable whether these communities could withstand the Indian onslaught. Exasperated by the unwillingness of the Federal government to protect them, the Cumberland militia took matters into their own hands. James Robertson organized a strike force that invaded the Chickamauga country, burned the renegade Lower Towns, and eliminated the threat from that quarter. The Nickajack Expedition and threats of similar action against the Creeks fi ally brought a halt to raids on the Cumberland settlements.

Indian warriors lying in ambush

With frontier warfare subsiding, the way seemed clear for peaceful growth and the possible creation of a state for the people of the Southwest Territory. In 1795, a territorial census revealed a suffici t population for statehood, and a referendum showed a three-to-one majority in favor of joining the Union. Governor Blount called for a constitutional convention to meet in Knoxville, where delegates from all the counties drew up a model state constitution and democratic bill of rights. The voters chose Sevier as governor, and the newly elected Legislature voted for Blount and William Cocke as senators, and Andrew Jackson as representative. Tennessee leaders thereby converted the territory into a new state, with organized government

We the People of the Territory of the United States South of the River Ohio having the right of admission into the General Government as a member State thereof, consistent with the Constitution of the United States and the act of Cession of the State of North Carolina, recognizing the Ordinance for the Government of the Territory of the United States Northwest of the River Ohio do ordain and establish the following Constitution or form of Government and do mutually agree with each other to form ourselves into a free and Independant State, by the name of the State of Tennessee.

Article 1st

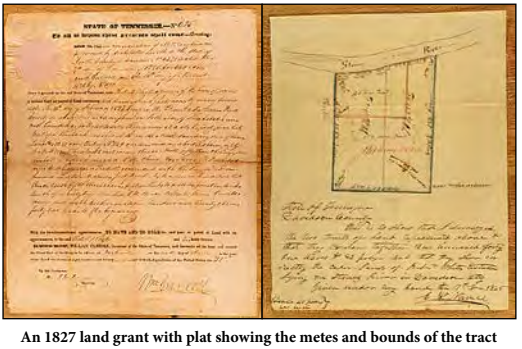
Section 1st The Legislative Authority of this State shall be vested in a General Assembly which shall consist of a Senate and House of Representatives both dependant on the People.

Page from Tennessee's fir t Constitution, adopted in 1796

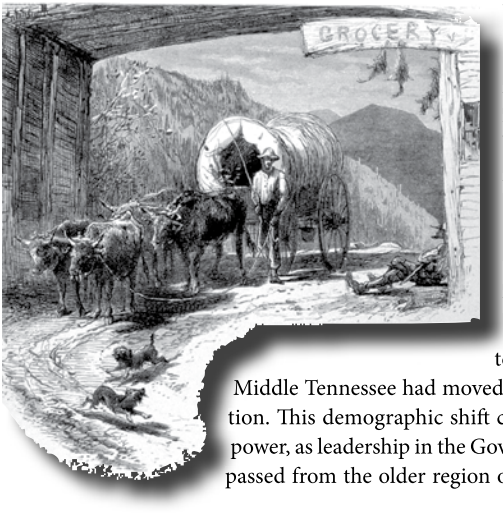
and a constitution, before applying to Congress for admission. Since the Southwest Territory was the fi st Federal territory to present itself for admission to the Union, there was some uncertainty about how to proceed, and Congress divided on the issue along party lines. Nonetheless, in a close vote on June 1, 1796, Congress approved the admission of Tennessee as the sixteenth state of the Union.

Tennessee's Coming of Age

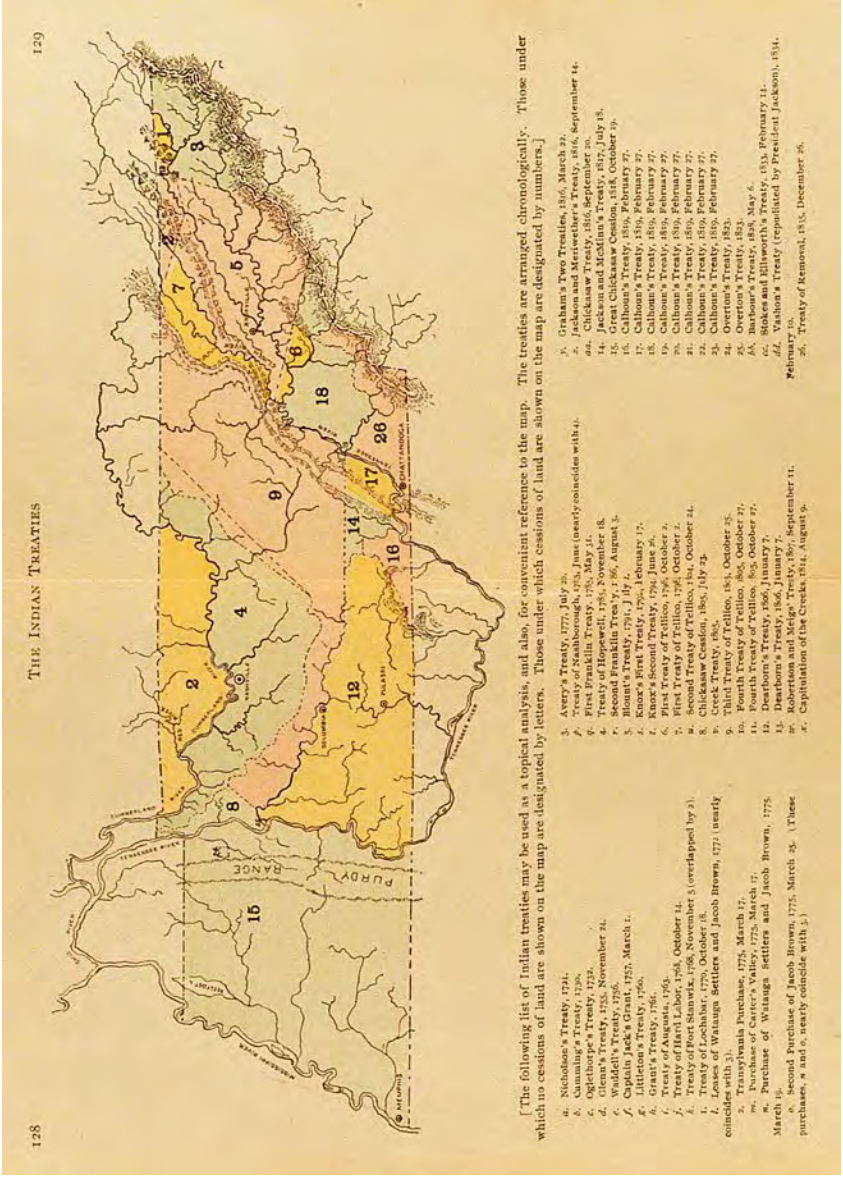
Once the threat of Indian warfare had subsided, the pace of settlement and growth in Tennessee quickened. A brisk business in public lands arose from the continued issue of North Carolina military warrants, which Tennessee agreed to honor with grants within its boundaries. After 1806, the state also began to dispose of its public domain by selling off unclaimed land for a nominal fee. Cheap public land and the circulation of so many old claims had the desired effect of attracting settlers from the East. Even more favorable for immigration were the various cessions of Indian land negotiated between 1798 and 1806. Treaties signed with the Cherokee and Chickasaw during that period resulted in the acquisition of much of south-central Tennessee and most of the Cumberland Plateau, fi ally removing the Indian barrier between the eastern counties and the Cumberland settlements. Tennessee now had jurisdiction over contiguous territory from east to west, which made it easier for westward travelers to reach Middle Tennessee.



An 1827 land grant with plat showing the metes and bounds of the tract



With so much fresh land—some of it quite fertile—opening for settlement, the state experienced a very rapid rate of population growth. Between 1790 and 1830, Tennessee's growth rate exceeded that of the nation, as each successive Indian treaty opened up a new frontier. Between 1790 and 1800, the state's populace tripled. It grew 250 percent from the years 1800 to 1810, increasing from 85,000 to 250,000 during the fi st fourteen years of statehood alone. By 1810, Middle Tennessee had moved ahead of the eastern section in population. This demographic shift caused a shift in the balance of political power, as leadership in the Governor's Offic and the General Assembly passed from the older region of East Tennessee to the middle section,



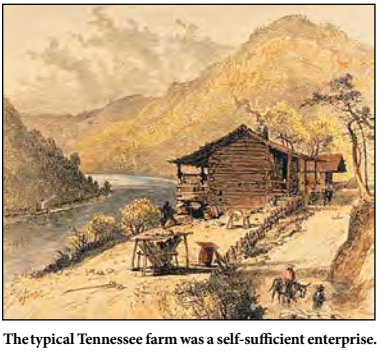
Map of Indian Treaties, 1770–1835

State of Tennessee

Slave traders taking slaves to Tennessee to be sold at auction

particularly the up-and-coming town of Nashville. The state capital was Knoxville from 1796 to September 1807, when the capital was Kingston for a day. The capital was relocated back to Knoxville until 1812, moved to Nashville from 1812 to 1817, then returned briefly to Knoxville. From 1818 to 1826, the General Assembly met in Murfreesboro, and in 1826, the capital moved to its permanent site in Nashville. After the fall of Fort Donelson, the General Assembly met in Memphis for one month and did not convene again until 1865 in Nashville.

Slavery played a major role in Tennessee's rapid expansion. The territorial census of 1791 showed a black population of 3,417—ten percent of the general population; by 1800, it had jumped to 13,584 (12.8 percent), and by 1810, African Americans constituted more than twenty percent of Tennessee's people. More black slaves were brought to the state following the invention of the cotton gin and the subsequent rise of commercial cotton farming. Slavery, because it depended on the cultivation of labor-intensive crops such as tobacco and cotton, was always sectional in its distribution, and it quickly became more prevalent in Middle Tennessee than in the mountainous East. By 1830, there were seven times as many slaves west of the Cumberland Plateau as in East Tennessee.



The typical Tennessee farm was a self-sufficient enterprise.

In addition to blacks brought involuntarily into the state, a sizeable number of free blacks lived in early Tennessee. The 1796 Constitution had granted suffrage and relative social equality to free blacks and made it easy for owners to manumit, or free, their slaves. With the growing commercial success of slavery, however, laws were passed that made it difficult for an owner to free his slaves, and the position of free blacks in Tennessee became more precarious. A reaction against the expansion of slavery developed with the emancipation movement, making early headway in the eastern section. In 1819, Elihu Embree established at Jonesborough the fi st newspaper in the United States devoted entirely to freeing slaves, the *Manumission Intelligencer* (later called the *Emancipator*). By the 1820s, East Tennessee had become a center of abolitionism—a staging ground for the issue that would divide not only the state but the nation.

THE EMANCIPATOR.

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EDITED AND PUBLISHED BY ELIHU EMBREE, AT $1 PER ANNUM—IN ADVANCE.

With the opening of former Indian lands and the heavy migration into the state, the period from 1806 to 1819 was one of prosperity and rapid development in Tennessee. Thi ty-six of Tennessee's ninety-five counties were formed between 1796 and 1819. Raw, isolated settlements developed quickly into busy county seats, and the formerly beleaguered outpost of Nashville grew into one of the leading cities of the Upper South.

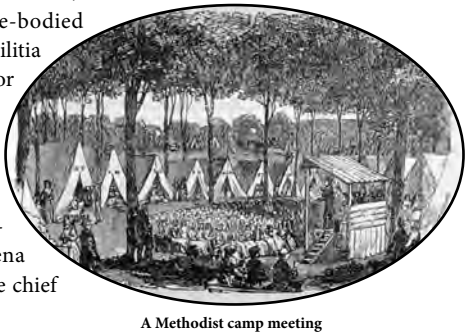
Still, with eighty percent of its people engaged in agriculture, Tennessee retained an overwhelmingly rural character. Although most farmers worked simply to supply the food needs of their families, income could be made from selling certain "cash crops." Cotton and tobacco were commercial crops from the beginning. They were profitable, easily transported, and could be worked on large farms, or plantations, with slave labor. Tennessee farmers also converted corn, the state's most important crop, into meal, whiskey, or (by feeding it to hogs) cured pork and shipped it by keelboat or flatboat to Natchez and New Orleans. Land-locked as they were and plagued by poor roads, early Tennesseans relied mainly on rivers to move their crops to market.

Flatboats and steamboats allowed farmers to send their crops to market.

Most types of manufacturing, like spinning cloth, soap-making, and forging tools, were done in the farm household. Even larger enterprises like gristmills, sawmills, tanneries, and distilleries centered on the processing of farm products. The one true industry in early Tennessee was iron-making. Frontier ironworks were erected in upper East Tennessee by men who had brought knowledge of the craft from Pennsylvania. Beginning with James Robertson's Cumberland Furnace in 1796, Middle Tennessee ironmasters built numerous furnaces and forges to capitalize on the abundant iron ores of the western Highland Rim region. These were complicated enterprises employing hundreds of men (slave and free) to dig the ore, cut the wood for charcoal, and operate the furnace. The early Tennessee iron industry supplied blacksmiths, mill owners, and farmers with the metal they needed and laid the groundwork for future industrial development.

Great Western furnace in Stewart County, a typical early ironworks

As nearly all farm work was performed by hand and much of the settlers' time was devoted to raising or making the goods necessary to survive, little time remained for cultural diversions. All able-bodied men were subject to militia duty, and the militia musters served as festive social occasions for the whole county. There was little opportunity for organized religious practices in the early days and few ministers to preach. In the absence of formal churches, camp meetings—conducted by itinerant and self-taught ministers—served as the main arena for frontier religion. These revivals were the chief means by which the Methodist and Baptist



A Methodist camp meeting

The Creek War was a civil war among the Creek Nation, in which many chiefs, including McIntosh (left) and Yoholo-Micco (right), fought with the Americans against the Red Sticks.

faiths gained new converts. Presbyterianism was much in evidence because of the prevalence of Scots-Irish settlers in early Tennessee. Presbyterianism, unlike the other two denominations, insisted on an educated clergy, accounting for much of the early development of schools in Tennessee. Ministers such as Reverend Samuel Doak in East Tennessee and Reverend Thomas Craighead in Middle Tennessee founded academies in the 1790s that became the seeds of future educational institutions. Academies chartered by the state were supposed to receive part of the proceeds from the sale of state lands, but this rarely happened. While state support for education languished, ministers and private teachers took the lead in setting up schools across the state.

Relations between whites and Native Americans were relatively peaceful after 1794, although trespassing on Indian land was rampant and life continued to be hazardous for settlers in outlying areas. As Tennesseans pushed west and south toward the Tennessee River, however, they began to press upon Creek territory, and hostilities resumed. The Creeks were the most formidable tribe on the Tennessee borders, and they were widely believed to be under the influence of belligerent British and Spanish agents. Moreover, in 1812, ominous rumors reached the frontier of a warlike confederacy of the Ohio Valley tribes led by Tecumseh and his brother, the Prophet. Tecumseh had visited the Creek Nation the year before to urge the southern tribesmen to join his warrior crusade to roll back white settlement. His prophecy that the earth would tremble as a sign of the impending struggle was seemingly confi med by a series of massive earthquakes that convulsed western Tennessee and created Reelfoot Lake.

Tecumseh (left) and his brother, the Prophet, leaders of the last great Indian confederacy in the East

Anti-British sentiment ran high in Tennessee, and Tennesseans were easily disposed to link the Indian threat with British outrages on the high seas. Led by Felix Grundy of Nashville, the state's representatives were prominent among the "War Hawks" in Congress, who clamored for war with Great Britain. When war was declared in June 1812 (with the unanimous assent of Tennessee's delegation), Tennesseans saw an opportunity to rid their borders once and for all of Indians. Their chance came soon enough.

News reached Nashville in August 1813 of the massacre of some 250 men, women, and children at Fort Mims, Alabama. Tecumseh's message had taken hold, and the Creek Nation was split

by civil war. The Fort Mims attack was carried out by the war faction, called Red Sticks, under their chief, William Weatherford. Governor Willie Blount immediately called out 2,500 volunteers and placed them under the command of Andrew Jackson. Jackson's 1813–1814 campaign against Weatherford's warriors, known as the Creek War, really constituted the Southern phase of the War of 1812. Despite a chronic shortage of supplies, lack of support from the War Department, and mutiny, Jackson's militia army prevailed in a series of lopsided victories over the Red Sticks. His victory at the Battle of Tohopeka (Horseshoe Bend) utterly destroyed Creek military power and propelled not only Jackson, but also his lieutenants, William Carroll and Sam Houston, to national prominence.

Creek Chief Weatherford surrenders to Jackson.

Map from Andrew Jackson's report on the Battle of Horseshoe Bend

On the heels of his success against the Indians, Andrew Jackson was appointed major general in the U.S. Army and given command of the Southern military district just in time to meet an impending British invasion of the Gulf Coast. Having secured Mobile and driven the British out of Pensacola, Jackson hurriedly marched his troops to New Orleans to rendezvous with other Tennessee units converging to defend the city. On January 8, 1815, Jackson's ragtag troops infli ted a crushing defeat on a veteran British army under Sir Edward Pakenham, who was killed along with hundreds of his soldiers. The Americans suffered twenty-three casualties. Despite having occurred fi een days after the signing of the peace treaty with Great Britain, the Battle of New Orleans was a brilliant victory and one of the few unequivocal American successes of the war. Th s triumph launched Andrew Jackson on the road to the presidency. Th ee years later, he led yet another force composed largely of Tennesseans into Florida—an action supposedly directed against the Seminoles, but one that convinced Spain to cede Florida to the United States.

An 1818 Tennessee State bank note

For Tennessee, these military campaigns resulted in the clearing of Indian claims to nearly all of the state. The Chickasaw Treaty of 1818, negotiated by Jackson and Governor Isaac Shelby of Kentucky, extended Tennessee's western boundary to the Mississippi River and opened up a rich, new agricultural region for settlement. Instead of the two-thirds to three-fourths of the state occupied or claimed by Indians during the fi st year of statehood, the only Indians remaining in Tennessee by 1820 were squeezed into the southeast corner of the state. The heavy influx of set-

tlers and a booming land market in West Tennessee fueled a frantic period of business prosperity, which ended abruptly with the Panic of 1819. Th s brief but violent economic depression ruined most banks and many individuals. The state's economy bounced back quickly, however, as West Tennessee became one of the centers of the South's new cotton boom. Having gained stature by their recent martial successes, Tennesseans could look back on their fi st quarter century of statehood as a period of growth and prosperity comparable to that of any state in the young nation.

The Age of Jackson

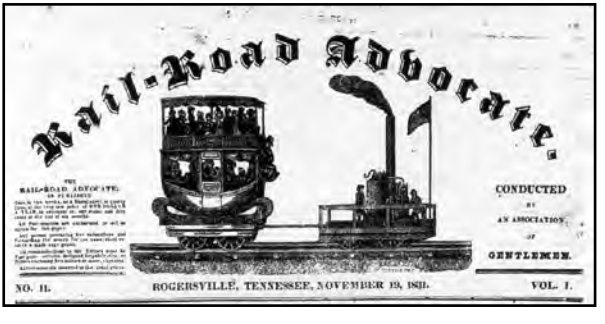
The rapid settlement of West Tennessee ended the frontier phase of Tennessee's history. Thereafter, the state served more as a seedbed for migration to other states than as a destination for emigrants. Forever restless and searching for fresh land, Tennesseans were frequently in the

Memphis waterfront

Nashville wharf

vanguard of westward migration. They were prominent among the pioneer settlers of Arkansas, Texas, Missouri, Illinois, Mississippi, and Alabama and joined enthusiastically in the California gold rush.

Transportation needs loomed large as Tennessee sought to widen its traffi with the rest of the United States. By 1820, the fi st steamboats had reached Nashville, providing the midstate region with quicker, more reliable service to downriver markets. Goods often arrived at Nashville by steamboat and were then transported overland on roads that radiated from the city like the spokes of a wheel. The most famous of these roads, the Natchez Trace, connected Middle Tennessee directly with the lower Mississippi River. Memphis was established in the southwestern corner of the state after the Chickasaw Treaty and quickly developed into a thriving river port on the strength of its steamboat traffic. Cotton bales from delta plantations were carted into Memphis to be loaded onto boats and shipped to New Orleans.



Rail-Road Advocate.

CONDUCTED BY AN ASSOCIATION OF GENTLEMEN.

NO. II. ROGERSVILLE, TENNESSEE, NOVEMBER 19, 1831. VOL. I.

More difficult was the situation of land-locked

THE AGRICULTURIST.

ND JOURNAL OF THE STATE AND COUNTY SOCIETIES.

SHELBY, G. TROOST, } Editors. WM. CAMERON, } Publishers.
ISE Y. FANNING, J. T. S. FALL,

VOL. III. NASHVILLE, TEN., JANUARY, 1842. NO. 1.

East Tennessee, which, because of Muscle Shoals and other obstructions on the Tennessee River, lacked a ready outlet to the western waters. Although the steamboat Atlas managed the fi st upstream navigation as far as Knoxville in 1828, East Tennesseans saw their future in better roads and other improvements to connect them with cities on the eastern seaboard. As early as the 1830s, businessmen in that section began asking for state assistance in building railroads. Generally averse to government spending and with a capital city already served by fi e waterways, Tennessee got a late start in railroad construction. The state had no railroad mileage in 1850, but by 1860, 1,200 miles of track had been laid, most of it in East Tennessee. So meager were the commercial ties between the middle and eastern sections that no line connected Knoxville directly with Nashville. East Tennessee began to develop coal mines and industries that, together with its eastward railway connections, caused the section to diverge even further from the rest of the state.

Tennessee agriculture achieved great success during this period. In 1840, the state was the largest corn producer in the nation, and in 1850, it raised more hogs than any other state. Th s success was due as much to the ready access to markets enjoyed by Tennessee farmers as it was to the natural fertility of their land. Tennessee's corn and hog farms contributed a large share of the foodstuffs going downriver to supply Deep South plantations. Diversifi ation was also a strength. While much of the South was caught up in the cotton mania and devoted so much land to the cash crop that food had to be imported, Tennessee developed a varied farm economy. Farmers in different parts of the state raised mules and livestock and produced vegetables and fruits, hemp and tobacco, and various grains in abundance. Tennessee served as a breadbasket to the Cotton South, thus tying it to its sister southern states and setting it apart from them.

Another sign of Tennessee's emergence from the frontier stage was the rapid development of cultural and intellectual life. Nashville became an early center of the arts and education in the South. Music publishing gained a foothold here as early as 1824, making possible the preservation of many traditional American tunes. By the 1850s, the University of Nashville had grown into one of the nation's foremost medical schools, training many of the physicians who practiced in the trans-Appalachian West.

The noted Philadelphia architect William Strickland came to Nashville in 1845 to design and build the new state capitol, one of the finest examples of Greek revival architecture in the country.

Depicted here muzzling the chief, Henry Clay was Jackson's great rival.

Strickland, Nathan Vaught, and the Prussian-born architect Adolphus Heiman also designed a number of ornate churches and residences in Middle Tennessee. The patronage of businessmen in the towns and wealthy planters in the countryside gave employment to a considerable number of silversmiths, engravers, furniture makers, stencil cutters, printers, and music teachers. Early Tennessee portrait painters, most notably Ralph E. W. Earl, Washington B. Cooper, and Samuel Shaver, turned out a large volume of technically competent, direct likenesses that were well-suited to the sober Presbyterian character of their subjects. Antebellum Tennessee supported a sizeable community of indigenous crafts en and artists who, nonetheless, had always to compete against imported goods brought from Eastern cities.

The period from 1820–1850 was a golden age for Tennessee politics—a time when the state's political leaders wielded considerable influence in the aff irs of the nation. None had more of an impact than Andrew Jackson, whose campaigns revolutionized American electoral politics. Jackson was unsuccessful in his fi st bid for the presidency in 1824, although he received more of the popular and electoral vote than any other candidate. His election by landslide majorities in 1828 and 1832 brought huge numbers of new voters into the system and ushered in the triumph of western democracy. Gone were the old Virginia and New England aristocrats who had dominated the White House. With Jackson, the torch passed

"The olitical Barbecue" shows how Jackson was a force for political passions.

to the heroes of the common man. His image-conscious campaigns made it difficult for anyone to be elected president who could not identify himself with the workers and farmers of the country. Well after his second term expired, Jackson continued to cast a long shadow over Tennessee and national politics, with politicians generally defini g themselves according to where they stood on Jackson and his policies.

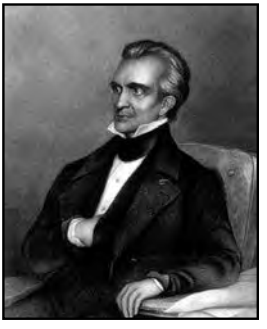
The Trail of Tears **by Robert Lindneux, courtesy of the Woolaroc Museum**

The headstrong chief executive weathered several crises during his eight-year presidency. His veto of a major internal improvements bill, his war against the Second Bank of the United States, and his clash with the South Carolina nullifie s, led by John C. Calhoun, were signifi ant marks of Jackson's administration—political victories that nonetheless cost the president a good deal of support.

Most signifi ant for Tennessee, however, was Jackson's Indian removal policy. The effort to remove the remnants of the Southern tribes to land beyond the Mississippi River grew out of Georgia's attempts to take over Cherokee land and property in that state. The Cherokee in north Georgia and southeast Tennessee had long since adopted much of the white man's civilization—some were slaveholders and prosperous farmers; they had their own newspaper and constitution; and many were more literate than their white neighbors. Georgia was allowed to proceed with its grasping evictions because President Jackson refused to enforce the Supreme Court decision protecting Cherokee autonomy. Instead, he actually ordered the Army to begin preparations to remove—forcibly, if necessary—the Cherokee from their ancestral land. With the power of the Federal government arrayed against them, a handful of tribal members gave in and signed the removal treaty in 1835, but most steadfastly opposed giving up their land. Many Cherokee were still on their land in 1838 when the U.S. Army was dispatched to evict them and send them on a woeful trek to Indian Territory—the "Trail of Tears." A small band of Cherokee who refused to comply with forced removal escaped into the Smoky Mountains, where their descendants still live.

These fi al lands taken from the once-powerful Cherokee were quickly sold by the state to settlers, who soon turned Chief John Ross's Landing into the town of Chattanooga.

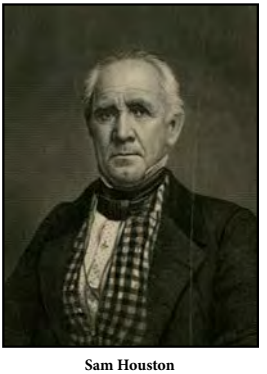
Among other leading politicians of Tennessee's golden age, ironically, were several who developed their careers in opposition to Jackson and his party. William Carroll served six terms as governor, from 1821 through 1835, despite a conspicuous lack of support from Jackson. David Crockett, Hugh Lawson White, Ephraim Foster, James C. Jones, Newton Cannon, and John Bell made their political fortunes as part of the opposition to the Democrats. While some businessmen resented Jackson's war on the national bank, others felt excluded by Jackson's tight circle of political handlers. More signifi antly, many Tennesseans, particularly in the eastern division, favored internal improvements and government aid to industry—measures generally at odds with Jacksonian economic policy.


James K. Polk

As a result, Andrew Jackson's home state became a birthplace of the anti-Jackson Whig Party and a battleground for two evenly matched political parties. Whig candidates for governor won six out of nine contests between 1836 and 1852; all of the races were extremely close, with none of the victorious candidates receiving as much as fi y-two percent of the vote. Whigs also carried Tennessee in six consecutive presidential elections. The state went so far as to vote against native Democrat James K. Polk for president in 1844. The ebb and fl w of the Democrat and Whig rivalry marked the high point of electoral politics in Tennessee. Voter participation rates reached all-time highs due to the fie ce competitiveness of the two parties, plentiful political talent, the mass appeal of stump speeches and barbecues for rural voters, and the wide readership of partisan newspapers.

David Crockett

Tennessee earned the nickname "Volunteer State" during this period for its role in America's wars of expansion. The list of Tennesseans who figu ed prominently in the War of 1812, the Texas Revolution, the Seminole Wars, and the Mexican War is impressive. Jackson and his troops saved the Gulf Coast from British and Spanish claims and forced Native American tribes to give up major portions of Tennessee, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, and Kentucky. Jackson's expedition into Florida in 1818 fi st brought that territory into the American hold. In 1836, Tennesseans David Crockett and Sam Houston led the fi ht for Texan independence at the Alamo and San Jacinto. That same year, William Lauderdale took a militia force into central Florida to subdue the Seminoles. Tennesseans volunteered in large numbers for the war with Mexico and bore the brunt of fi hting in several key battles. Perhaps the ultimate military adventurer was Nashvillian William Walker, who, during


Sam Houston

Storming of Chapultepec: Heavy enlistment for the Mexican War earned Tennessee the name "Volunteer State."

the 1850s, led several freebooting expeditions to carve out independent, slaveholding republics in Lower California and Central America.

Tennessee supplied political as well as military leadership for an aggressive young nation seeking to expand its borders. Felix Grundy declared in 1811 that he was "anxious not only to add the Floridas to the South, but the Canadas to the North of this empire." Tennessee's congressional representatives were leading "War Hawks" in 1812 and throughout the confli t with Mexico. Having already removed the Southern tribes from millions of acres of land, Jackson's fi al act as president was to recognize the Lone Star Republic. When James K. Polk of Maury County was elected president in 1844, his fi st act was to annex Texas. The Mexican War was primarily a war of Southern expansion, and when it was over, the Polk administration had added California, Oregon, and the New Mexico territory to the country—nearly as much land as was acquired with the Louisiana Purchase. Tennessee's political golden age thus overlapped with an era when vast domains were added to the nation, in part through the military and political exploits of Tennesseans.

Having supplied much of the manpower for the war with Mexico, most Tennesseans resented when anti-slavery Northerners chose the moment of their triumph to raise the issue of banning slavery in the newly won territories. The Wilmot Proviso, which sought to do just that, was introduced in Congress in 1848, setting a match to the political powder keg of slavery.

Slaves picking cotton

Tennessee's slave population had increased at a faster rate than the general populace, growing from 22.1 percent of the state's inhabitants in 1840 to 24.8 percent in 1860. Ownership of slaves was concentrated in relatively few hands: 4.5 percent of the state's white populace (37,000 out of

UNION AND AMERICAN—Extra.

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Your Homes are in Danger! - - - Rouse you to the Great Conflict!!

Their Idea of Neutrality.

The Short Way!

Invade the South!

No More Parleying.

The Kind of Men we have to Fight.

No Friends at the North Now.

827,000) were slaveholders in 1860. As the world cotton market and the plantation economy that supplied it geared up, the value of slaves (and, hence, their importance to slave owners) rose. Nashville and Memphis were renowned centers of the slave trade. The profitability of cotton and slave labor made planters determined to resist Northern attacks on their "peculiar institution."

In the early 1830s, two events signaled a hardening of Tennessee's position on slavery. The Virginia slave uprising led by Nat Turner badly frightened slave owners, prompting whites in Tennessee to step up "patrols" for runaways and tighten the codes regulating slave conduct, assembly, and movement. Amendment of the state Constitution in 1834 to prohibit free blacks from voting refl cted whites' growing apprehensiveness over African Americans living in their midst. Free blacks were pressured to leave the state, and rumors of planned slave insurrections kept tensions high. Tennessee had earlier been home to a peaceful emancipation movement but, by the 1850s, had become sharply polarized between anti-slavery advocates in East Tennessee and diehard defenders of slavery in West Tennessee.

From 1848 onward, slavery became a national issue and overshadowed state issues in the political arena. Political parties and church denominations broke apart over slavery. Newspapers waged a vicious war of words over abolitionism and the fate of the Union. Angry over Northern interference with slavery, delegates from across the South met in 1850 at the Southern Convention in Nashville to express their defiance. With strong economic ties and even stronger social and cultural bonds to the Lower South, Tennessee supported the pro-slavery movement but not, generally speaking, secessionism. Tennessee was home to a powerful nationalist tradition, forged through decades of "volunteer" duty, and most of its citizens were loath to follow Deep South "fi e-eaters" in breaking up the Union. The rest of the country stood poised on the brink of disaster in 1860.

The Time of Troubles

Unaffected by the strident political rhetoric of the 1850s, commerce and farm wealth had climbed to unprecedented heights. To some Tennesseans, the prosperity of the decade only confi med the superiority of the Southern agrarian system—slavery and all. With more capital than ever invested in slaves, planters did not intend to willingly suffer the loss of that property or even to have restrictions put on its use. They viewed the election of Abraham Lincoln to the presidency and the elevation of his anti-slavery Republican Party to national power in 1860 as a disaster. Lincoln had so little support in Tennessee that his name was not even on the ballot. Though relatively small in numbers, slaveholders exerted great influence over the political aff irs of Middle and West Tennessee, and they

Lucy Pickens, born in Fayette County, was pictured on this Confederate bank note.

were convinced that the time had come for a break with the North. They had a staunch ally, moreover, in Governor Isham Harris, who was ardently pro-secession and worked hard to align Tennessee with the ten states that had already left he Union.

Johnson's Island in Ohio, where Confederate officers captured at Fort Donelson were imprisoned

Most Tennesseans initially showed little enthusiasm for breaking away from a nation whose struggles it had shared for so long. In 1860, they had voted by a slim margin for the Constitutional Unionist John Bell, a native-son moderate who continued to search for a way out of the crisis. In February 1861, fi y-four percent of the state's voters voted against sending delegates to a secession convention. With the fi ing on Fort Sumter in April, followed by Lincoln's call for 75,000 volunteers to coerce the seceded states back into line, public sentiment turned dramatically against the Union. Governor Harris began military mobilization, submitted an ordinance of secession to the General Assembly, and made direct overtures to the Confederate government. In a June 8 referendum, East Tennessee held fi m against separation, while West Tennessee returned an equally heavy majority in favor. The big shift came in Middle Tennessee, which went from fi y-one percent against secession in February to eighty-eight percent in favor in June. Having ratifi d by popular vote its support for the fl dgling Confederacy, Tennessee became the last state to withdraw from the Union. The die was cast for war.

Brothers in arms: Raford and Benjamin Ammons, Tennessee Confederates

Much is made of the glory and great deeds that occurred during the next four years. Without diminishing in any measure the heroism of both soldiers and civilians, of women as well as men, the fact remains that this was the worst of times for Tennessee and its people. The trauma of war brought out greatness in some, but the worst in many more. Hardship visited households from one end of the state to the other, and few families were spared suffering and loss during the confli t. Great battles were fought in Tennessee as much as in any theater of the war, and the men who fought them deserve the respect of posterity for their sacrifices. For most Tennesseans, however, the period from 1861–1865 was a grim, brutish time when death and ruin ruled the land.

Tennessee was one of the border states that sent large numbers of men to fi ht on both sides of the Civil War. A sizeable part of the male population—187,000 Confederate and 51,000 Federal soldiers—mustered in from Tennessee. In no state more than this one, loyalties divided regions, towns, and even families: on Gay Street in Knoxville, rival recruiters signed up Confederate and Federal soldiers just a few blocks from each other. Rebels enlisted from mostly Unionist East Tennessee, while pockets of Federal support could be found in the predominantly Confederate middle and western sections.

Gov. Harris led Tennessee into the Confederacy.

The provisional troops that Governor Harris turned over to the Confederate government became the nucleus of the Confederacy's main

western army, the Army of Tennessee. While a few Tennessee Confederates were sent east to Lee's army, most of the state's enlistees, like the Virginians with Lee, had the distinction of fighting on their home soil to contest the invasion of their state. Being in part a homegrown force, the Confederate Army of Tennessee fought tenaciously against a foe that was generally better-armed and more numerous.

The ower water battery at Fort Donelson, courtesy of Tom Kanon

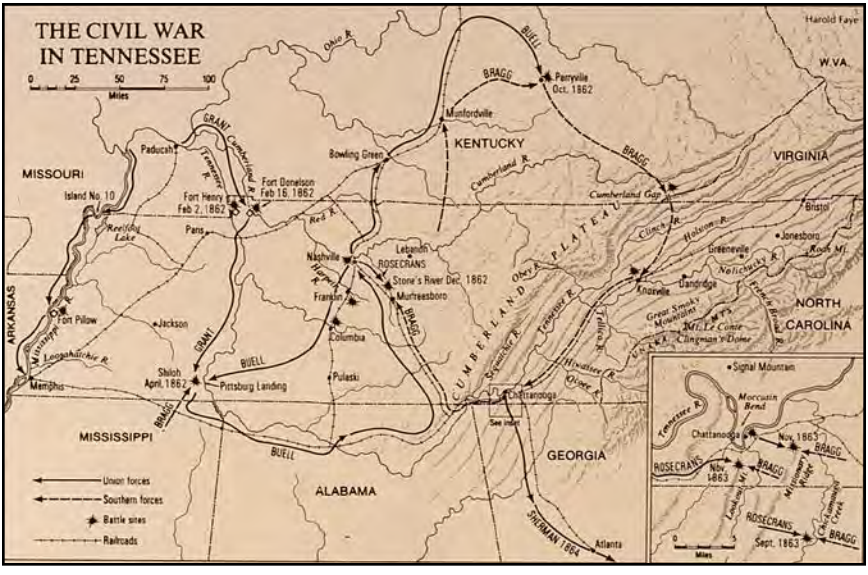
Geography dictated a central role for Tennessee in the coming confli t: its rivers and its position as a border state between North and South made Tennessee a natural thoroughfare for invading Federal armies. The Confederate commander in the West, Albert Sidney Johnston, set up a line of positions across Kentucky and Tennessee to defend the Confederacy from the Appalachians to the Mississippi River. It was a porous defensive line whose weakest points were two forts in Tennessee—Fort Henry on the Tennessee River and, twelve miles away, Fort Donelson on the Cumberland River. The Union high command was quick to recognize the strategic advantage of controlling these two rivers, fl wing as they did through the heartland of the Upper South and holding the key to Nashville.

General Ulysses S. Grant

In late January 1862, General Ulysses S. Grant and Commodore Andrew Foote steamed up the Tennessee River with seven gunboats and 15,000 troops to attack Fort Henry. Union gunboats quickly subdued the half-fl oded fort, and, while Foote's fl tilla came back around to the Cumberland River, Grant marched his army overland to lay siege to Fort Donelson. The Confederate batteries there were more than a match for Yankee gunboats, however, and the infantry battled back and forth around the fort's perimeter. Despite fair prospects for the garrison's escape, a trio of Confederate generals—John Floyd, Gideon Pillow, and Simon Buckner—decided on the night of February 15 to surrender their forces. Col. Nathan Bedford Forrest refused to surrender and, in the fi st of many brilliant exploits, managed to lead some troops out of the entrapment. Approximately 10,000 Confederate soldiers, many of whom had enlisted only a few months earlier, were surrendered and packed off o Northern prison camps.

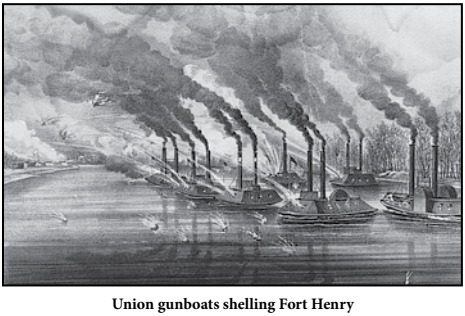
Nathan Bedford Forrest

The loss of Fort Donelson was the fi st real catastrophe to befall the Confederacy. Just to show who now controlled the waterways, Foote sent two gunboats steaming unmolested up the Tennessee River into Alabama. The rivers that had been such an asset to Tennessee before the war now became avenues by which Federal invaders captured the region's towns and cities. Nashville, which had been left undefended except for the two shaky forts, fell to Yankee troops on February 24, 1862, as panic-stricken refugees streamed southward out of the city. With the fall of Nashville and Middle Tennessee,



the South lost one of its chief manufacturing centers, tons of badly needed supplies, the western Highland Rim iron industry, and one of its richest farm regions. Nashville remained in Union hands until the end of the war, sparing it the physical destruction suffered by other Southern cities. The city would, in fact, serve as the headquarters, supply depot, and hospital center of the Union command in the West.

The retreat of Confederate forces to Mississippi left much of Tennessee occupied by enemy troops, a harsh condition that soon stirred up resistance from civilians. Guerrilla warfare was the Confederacy's answer to having lost control of its rivers: Federals might secure the towns and waterways, but they could not always control a hostile countryside. Vicious behind-the-lines warfare between Confederate partisans and Federal troops, and between bushwhackers of both stripes and ordinary citizens, affl ted much of the state. Military rule in Confederate-controlled East Tennessee was equally onerous, and fi hting there was widespread between Unionists and Confederate sympathizers. Military occupation offered many opportunities for settling blood feuds, vendettas, and scores of all sorts. Ambushes of Union soldiers in Middle Tennessee brought reprisal in the form of lynchings, house-burnings, and even the razing of courthouses and churches. With most of the fi hting-age men away, bands of armed men—little more than bandits—roamed the country, leaving in their wake the breakdown of civil order.



Union gunboats shelling Fort Henry

In April 1862, near tiny Shiloh Chapel in Hardin County, General Johnston had his chance for revenge on Grant and the

Federals. On a Sunday morning, his army of about 40,000 collided in the woods with an encamped Union force of roughly equal size. By dusk that evening, the Confederates had come close to driving Grant into the river, but they did not deliver the knockout blow. Their attempts cost the lives of many men, among them Johnston himself. During the night, 25,000 fresh Union troops reinforced Grant's battered brigades, allowing him to mount a strong counter-attack the next day. The weary Confederates, now under the command of General P.G.T. Beauregard, were not pursued as they withdrew that evening from the fi ld. Shiloh was a bloody wake-up call—more men were lost in that one battle than in all of America's previous wars, and both sides began to realize that the war would be neither brief nor cheaply won.

John Hunt Morgan

West Tennessee now lay open to Federal rule, and the Union flag was raised over Memphis after a brief naval fi ht on June 6, 1862. Ironically, only pro-Union East Tennessee remained in Confederate hands. Governor Harris and the state government, which had moved to Memphis after Nashville's fall, were forced to fl e the state altogether. The secessionist regime that had led Tennessee into the Confederacy lasted less than a year and spent the rest of the war as a government-in-exile. In its place, President Lincoln appointed former Governor Andrew Johnson to be military governor. A staunch Greeneville Unionist, he had kept his seat in the U.S. Senate despite Tennessee's secession. Johnson introduced a new political order to Federal-occupied Tennessee, aiming to return the state to the Union as soon as possible by favoring the Unionist minority and suppressing the pro-Confederate crowd. Johnson was unpopular and often heavy-handed, requiring the support of the Federal military presence.

Braxton Bragg

Confederate hopes were raised in late summer of 1862, when brilliant cavalry raids by Forrest and John Hunt Morgan thwarted the Federals' advance on Chattanooga and returned control of lower Middle Tennessee to the Confederates. The Army of Tennessee, now commanded by the irascible Braxton Bragg and emboldened by recent successes, advanced into Kentucky. Following the inconclusive Battle of Perryville, Bragg's army withdrew to winter quarters near Murfreesboro to await the Federals' next move. In late December, an army of 50,000 under William Rosecrans moved out from Nashville to confront the Confederates thirty miles to the southeast. Once again, after successfully driving back the Union flank on the fi st day of battle, December 31, the Confederate advance faltered and wore itself down battering against strong defensive positions. On January 2, Bragg launched a disastrous infantry assault in which the Southerners were decimated by massed Federal artillery. The next day, when the bone-cold Army of Tennessee trudged away from Murfreesboro, it left behind one of the bloodiest battlefi lds of the war. One of every four men who fought at Stone's River was killed, wounded, or missing.

William S. Rosecrans

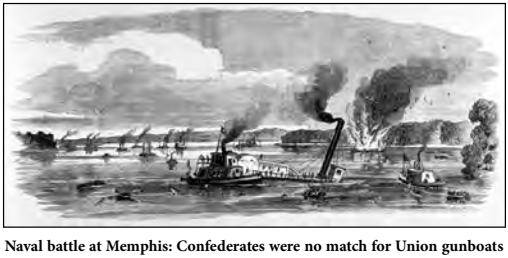
The Army of Tennessee stayed in a defensive line along Duck River until late July 1863, when Rosecrans bloodlessly maneuvered Bragg's Confederate army out of Tennessee altogether. Having

relinquished the vital rail center of Chattanooga without fi ing a shot, Bragg then awaited the Federal advance into north Georgia. Overconfide t from the ease with which he had pushed the Confederates so far, Rosecrans stumbled into Bragg's army drawn up along Chickamauga Creek. On September 19 and 20, the two armies grappled savagely in the woods—a battle that one general likened to "guerrilla warfare on a grand scale." On the second day, part of Bragg's left wing poured through a gap in the Union line and touched off a ear-rout of the Federal army.

With two-thirds of the Union army in full flight back to Chattanooga, a total collapse was averted by the stand of George Thomas's corps on Snodgrass Hill, which covered the escape of the rest of Rosecrans's army. The Army of Tennessee won a great tactical victory at Chickamauga but at a frightful cost (21,000 casualties out of 50,000 troops), and Bragg again failed to follow up his success. The Federals dug in around Chattanooga, while the Confederates occupied the heights above the town. Grant hastened to Chattanooga to take charge of the situation, and, on November 25, his troops drove Bragg's army off Missionary Ridge and back into Georgia. It would be nearly a year before the Confederate army returned to Tennessee.

Shiloh Chapel in Hardin County

At the same time that Bragg abandoned Chattanooga, a Union force under Ambrose Burnside captured Knoxville and restored East Tennessee to the nationalist fold. The whole state was now in Federal hands, and the grip of military occupation began to tighten. With constant requisitions of food, grain, and livestock, soldiers became a greater burden on local citizens. Adding to the problem was the indiscriminate stealing and foraging by undisciplined troops. Anything of value that could be eaten or carried off was taken by soldiers of both sides. Tennessee's unfortunate position as the breadbasket for two different armies, especially the vast Federal forces quartered here, brought more destruction and loss of property than was caused by actual combat.



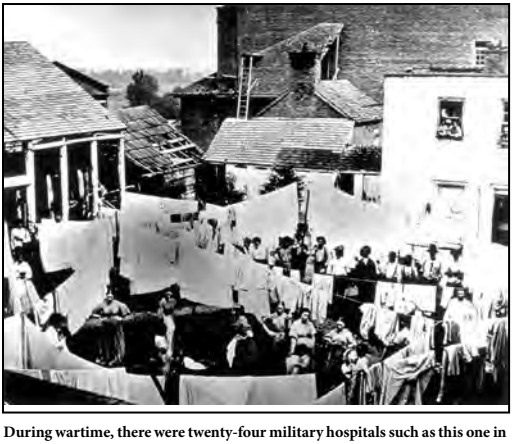
Naval battle at Memphis: Confederates were no match for Union gunboats on the western rivers.

The war brought a sudden end to slavery, making the times even more turbulent for African Americans than for other Tennesseans. The system of plantation discipline and slave patrols began to break down early in the war, particularly in Union-occupied areas. Northern commanders organized "contraband" camps to accommodate the large numbers of fugitive slaves who fl cked to Federal army encampments. Black laborers impressed from these camps built much of the Federal military infrastructure—railroads, bridges, and forts—in Tennessee. In these camps, too, missionaries and sympathetic Union offic s provided education, solemnized marriages, and arranged for some ex-slaves to work for wages on military projects. Th s wartime conversion of blacks from unpaid forced labor to paid employees of the U.S. government was an important element in the

transformation of "contraband" to freedmen. In late 1863, the Union army started mustering in "colored regiments," some of which eventually saw combat duty in their home state. Tennessee furnished one of the largest contingents of black troops during the Civil War: 20,133 served in Federal units, comprising forty percent of all Tennessee Union recruits. African Americans in Tennessee, partly because of their experience with military duty, secured citizenship and suffrage earlier than most black Southerners.

Railroad tracks and trains were frequent targets of Confederate raiders.

After the long Atlanta campaign and the capture of that city by William T. Sherman's army, the new commander of the Army of Tennessee, John Bell Hood, decided on an aggressive plan of action. He would leave Georgia to Sherman and strike back north into Tennessee, threaten Nashville, and draw Union pressure away from threatened areas of the Deep South. It was an idealistic plan with little chance of success, but the Confederacy's situation was desperate, and Hood was desperate for glory. The Tennessee troops were in high spirits as they crossed into their home state. When they and their comrades reached Franklin on the afternoon of November 30, 1864, the Army of Tennessee stood on the verge of its fi est performance of the war, as well as a blow from which it would never recover. On Hood's orders, nearly 20,000 infantry, including a large contingent of Tennesseans, made a grand, near-suicidal charge across an open fi ld against an entrenched Federal army. As regiment after regiment hurled itself against the Union breastworks for five ferocious hours, 1,750 Confederate soldiers were killed. When the carnage was over, Hood's recklessness had destroyed the Army of Tennessee. It would go on to fi ht a two-day battle outside Nashville in the sleet and mud, but its defeat there was a foregone conclusion. As the tattered remnants of the western Confederate army hastily retreated across the state line, the military struggle for Tennessee ended, although the war would continue for another four months.



During wartime, there were twenty-four military hospitals such as this one in Nashville. Pictured is the hospital's laundry yard, July 1863.

The devastation of the war in Tennessee was profound. A substantial portion of a generation of young men was lost or maimed, resulting in an unusually high percentage of unmarried women in the years to come. Planting and harvesting were extremely difficult during the war, and foraging

consumed what little was produced between 1862 and 1865. With the slaves gone, husbands and sons dead or captive, and farms neglected, many large plantations and small farms alike reverted to wasteland. The economic gains of the 1850s were erased, and farm production and property values in Tennessee would not reach their 1860 levels again until 1900. On the other hand, the 275,000 Tennesseans who had been enslaved four years earlier were no longer anyone's property. They were free at last. Others who benefited from the Civil War were the behind-the-lines profiteers who siphoned off some of the Federal capital that fl wed into Tennessee's occupied towns. Veterans of both sides lived with the wounds and memories of the war for the rest of their lives, and the chief reward for most was a place of honor in their communities.

Reconstruction and Rebuilding

President Andrew Johnson of Greeneville, Tennessee

Tennessee's ordeal did not cease with the end of military hostilities, but continued during the postwar period known as Reconstruction. The war's legacy of political bitterness endured for years after the surrender of Confederate armies. Civil confli t split Tennessee society into rival and vindictive camps, with each side seeking to use politics to punish its enemies and bar them from participating in the system. Th s political warfare was only slightly less violent than the just-concluded military struggle.

President Lincoln's formula for reconstructing the Southern states required that only ten percent of a state's voters take the oath of allegiance and form a loyal government before that state could apply for readmission. In January 1865, after Andrew Johnson departed for Washington to become Lincoln's vice president, a largely self-appointed convention of Tennessee Unionists met in Nashville to begin the process of restoring the state to the nation. They nominated William G. "Parson" Brownlow of Knoxville for governor, repudiated the act of secession, and submitted for referendum a constitutional amendment abolishing slavery. A small turnout of voters, about 25,000, approved the amendment and elected Brownlow as governor, essentially meeting the requirements of Lincoln's plan. Tennessee thereby became the only seceded state to abolish slavery by its own act.

Governor William G. Brownlow

Lincoln's assassination in April catapulted Johnson into the presidency and signaled a drastic shift in the course of Reconstruction. The Radical Republicans were gaining power in Congress, and they wanted a more punitive approach to the South than either Lincoln or Johnson had envisioned. Never a very skillful negotiator, the new president soon found himself out of step with the pace of political change in Washington. Congress refused to seat Tennessee's congressional delegation, claiming that Johnson's amnesty plan was too lenient. It decreed that only states that ratifi d the proposed Fourteenth Amendment, extending citizenship and legal protection to freedmen and denying the franchise to former Confederates, would be readmitted.

Scene from Memphis race riots, 1866

Just as the Radicals' star rose in Congress, so did that of the most radical Unionists—Brownlow's faction—in Tennessee. Opposition developed quickly to the Fourteenth Amendment, particularly to the liabilities it placed on ex-Confederates, and extraordinary exertions were required on Governor Brownlow's part to force the General Assembly to ratify the measure. This it did on July 18, 1866, paving the way for Tennessee's early readmission to the Union. Tennessee became the third state to ratify the Fourteenth Amendment, before any other Southern state and earlier than most Northern states. Brownlow's regime—noxious as it was to many of the state's citizens—ensured that Tennessee rejoined the nation sooner than any other seceded state. More importantly, it meant that Tennessee would be the only Southern state to escape the harsh military rule infli ted by the Radical Congress.

Governor Brownlow's administration acted in concert with the Radical Republicans in Congress, but not with the majority of the people in its own state. Even with a hand-picked Legislature and the exclusion of most conservative voters, Brownlow faced considerable opposition from other Unionists who resented his despotic methods. He decided, therefore, to give the vote to freedmen in order to bolster his support at the polls. Accordingly, in February 1867, the Tennessee General Assembly endorsed black suffrage—a full two years before Congress did likewise by passing the Fifteenth Amendment. With the aid of a solid black vote, Brownlow and his slate of candidates swept to victory in the 1867 elections.

Contraband camp in Memphis, 1867

Brownlow's unpopular and undemocratic regime caused its own downfall. Driven underground by the governor and his state militia, the conservative opposition assumed bizarre and secretive forms. The Ku Klux Klan emerged in the summer of 1867, one of several shadowy vigilante groups opposed to Brownlow and freedmen's rights. These groups were made up largely of ex-Confederates whose aim was to intimidate the black voters who supported Brownlow. As a political organization, the Klan fl urished because of the Radicals' near-total exclusion of men who had served the Confederacy from the normal channels of political activity. Consequently, when Brownlow left Tennessee in 1869 to become a U.S. Senator, the Klan formally disbanded.

Ku Klux Klan

Brownlow's departure for Washington was the opening for which conservatives had been waiting. The man who succeeded him as governor, DeWitt Senter, had impeccable Radical credentials, but once in offi , he used his power to permit the registration of ex-Confederate voters, thereby ensuring his victory in the 1869 gubernatorial race. Seven times as many Tennesseans voted in that election as in Brownlow's rigged election of 1867.

In order to codify the changes wrought during the past decade, delegates from across the state met in 1870 to rewrite the Constitution. Th s convention, although it was dominated by conservatives, walked a middle road in an effort to avoid the threat of Federal military occupation. Delegates ratifi d the abolition of slavery and voting rights for freedmen but limited voter participation by enacting a poll tax. Political reconstruction effectively ended in Tennessee with the rewriting of the Constitution, but the struggle over the civil and economic rights of black freedmen had just begun.

African Americans were in a more destitute and unsettled condition after the war than most other Tennesseans. Having left the plantations and rural communities in large numbers, black refugees poured into Memphis, Nashville, Chattanooga, Knoxville, and a host of smaller towns. Urban areas experienced a large increase in their black populations, as more freedmen fl d the countryside to escape the violence of groups like the Klan. These newcomers settled near the contraband camps or military forts where black troops were stationed, forming the nuclei of such major black communities as North Nashville and South Memphis. In time, urbanization grew the black professional and business class and laid the foundation for economic self-sufficiency among freedmen.

Fisk University was established in army barracks.

One institution created specifi ally to aid former slaves was the Freedmen's Bureau, which had its greatest impact in the fi ld of education. In conjunction with Northern missionaries and John Eaton, the reformer whom Brownlow had appointed as the state's fi st school superintendent, the Freedmen's Bureau set up hundreds of black public schools. Freedmen responded enthusiastically to the new schools, and a number of black colleges—Fisk, Tennessee Central, LeMoyne, Roger Williams, Lane, and Knoxville—were soon founded to meet the demand for higher education. The Bureau, on the other hand, was not generally successful in helping blacks achieve land ownership, and the overwhelming majority of rural blacks continued to farm as tenants or laborers. The influence of the Freedman's Bureau dwindled rapidly after 1866, the same year the Federal army departed. Henceforth, Tennessee freedmen had to rely on themselves and their own leaders to advance their goals.

S. A. McElwee

Black Tennesseans were politically active and exercised their newfound legal rights even after the ouster of the Radicals in 1869. They brought suits in the county courts, filed wills, and ran for local elected offices particularly in the cities where they commanded strong voting blocs. Beginning with Sampson Keeble of Nashville in 1872, thirteen black legislators were elected to the Tennessee House of Representatives. Much of their legislative work consisted of fi hting actions to preserve some of the hard-won gains of Reconstruction. S. A. McElwee, Styles Hutchins, and Monroe Gooden, elected in 1887, would be the last black lawmakers to serve in Tennessee until the 1960s.

With the restoration of Democrat Party rule, a reaction set in against the moves that had been made toward racial equality. Lynchings, beatings, and arson had been used to enforce white

supremacy during the Klan era. Beginning in the 1870s, this system was refined to include the legal enforcement of second-class citizenship for blacks—statutory discrimination commonly referred to as "Jim Crow" laws. By the 1880s, the Legislature mandated separate facilities for whites and blacks in public accommodations and on railroads. One young woman, Ida B. Wells, challenged the "separate but equal" law on the railroads in an 1883 court case and spent much of her later life drawing the nation's attention to the use of lynching as a means of terrorism against blacks. Nashvillian Benjamin Singleton also attacked the practice of lynching and urged his fellow freedmen to leave the South altogether to homestead in Kansas—in the "Exo-duster" movement. The allegiance of black voters to the Republican Party made them ready targets for Democrat politicians, and "Jim Crow" laws gradually whittled down the participation of African Americans in the political system.

Ida B. Wells

One response to the labor shortage and property losses caused by the war was the campaign to rebuild a "New South" based on industry, skilled labor, and outside capital. Promoters and state officials worked hard to attract skilled foreign immigrants to make up for the shortfall of labor caused by blacks' exodus to the cities. With the exception of a few isolated German and Swiss colonies, such as Gruetli in Grundy County, the state never succeeded in attracting a large number of immigrants. As late as 1880, the foreign-born part of Tennessee's population was still only one percent, compared with a national average of fifteen percent.

"New South" advocates backed the educational reform act of 1873, which tried to establish regular school terms and reduce the state's high illiteracy rate. A statewide administrative structure and general school fund were put in place, but the Legislature failed to appropriate sufficient funds to operate full-term schools. Better progress was made during the 1870s in the field of higher education: Vanderbilt University was chartered; East Tennessee College was converted to the University of Tennessee; Meharry Medical College, the first and, for many years, the leading black medical school in the nation, was founded; and the University of Nashville became the Peabody State Normal School, one of the earliest Southern colleges devoted exclusively to training teachers.

Benjamin Singleton

The "New South" promoters also met with some success in attracting outside capital to Tennessee. Northern businessmen, many of whom had served in Tennessee during the war, relocated here to take advantage of cheap labor and abundant natural resources. Perhaps the most prominent of these "carpetbag" capitalists was General John Wilder, who built a major ironworks at Rockwood in Roane County. Chattanooga's iron and steel industry benefited greatly from the infusion of Northern capital, and the city grew rapidly into one of the South's premier industrial cities. By 1890, the value of manufactured goods produced in Tennessee reached $72 million, a far cry from the $700,000 worth that had been produced at the height of the antebellum economy.

Tennessee had incurred a debt of $43 million, the second-highest state debt in the nation, as a result of underwriting railroad construction before the war and during the Brownlow administration. The state eventually repudiated part of this debt, but the question of how to pay it dominated

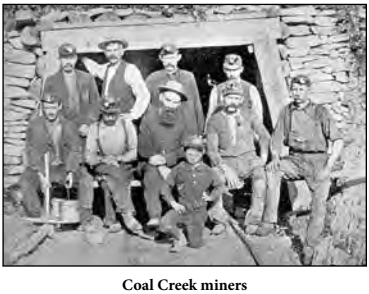
state politics well into the 1880s. Generating revenue to deal with this indebtedness was one reason for the adoption of the infamous convict lease system.

In addition to putting money in the state's coffers, leasing convicts to private business was seen by legislators as a way of saving the state the expense of building a new central prison. To relieve overcrowding at the old main prison, the General Assembly in 1871 established branch penitentiaries in the East Tennessee coal fi lds and leased the prisoners for work in the mines. In the rich coal seams of the Cumberland Plateau, the largest mine operator was the Tennessee Coal, Iron and Railroad Company (TCI). In 1884, TCI signed an exclusive lease with the state for the use of convicts in its mines. In addition to keeping labor costs low, convict lease labor was one means of overcoming strikes. According to A. S. Colyar, TCI's president, "the company found this an effective club to hold over the heads of free laborers."

Rockwood Iron Works

Trouble erupted in 1891 at mines in Anderson and Grundy counties, when TCI used convicts as strikebreakers against striking coal miners. Miners began releasing convicts and burning down the stockades where they were housed. Violence in the coal fi lds peaked during the summer of 1892, when state militia were dispatched to the Coal Creek area by Governor John Buchanan. The militia fought pitched battles with armed miners, arresting more than 500 of them and killing twenty-seven. The miner uprisings prodded the General Assembly to end convict leasing in 1895 when the TCI contract expired, making Tennessee one of the fi st Southern states to get rid of the system. The state also built two new prisons at Nashville and Brushy Mountain in Morgan County, using prisoners at the latter site to mine coal in state-owned mines.

Late nineteenth-century Tennessee was still predominantly agricultural, although the economic position of farmers became more precarious with each passing decade. The state's once-diversified farm economy had been lost in the war, and farmers increasingly concentrated on growing cash crops such as cotton, tobacco, and peanuts. The Depression of 1873, falling farm prices, excessive railroad rates, and the burdens of tenancy all worked against farmers. Sharecropping, one form of tenant farming, grew rapidly and spread across areas where cash crops were cultivated. Sharecroppers were nearly always in debt at high interest rates for land, tools, and supplies, and they were typically the poorest class of farmers.



Coal Creek miners

Conscious of their declining status, Tennessee farmers in the 1880s began to organize in a series of political movements. The first evidence of the growing clout of agrarian voters came in the gubernatorial election of 1886, when the farmer-supported candidate Robert Taylor defeated his brother Alfred in the famous "War of the Roses" campaign. Th ee years later, a farmers' organization called the Agricultural Wheel signed up 78,000 members in Tennessee, more than in any other state. That same year, the Wheel merged with a growing cooperative association called the Farmers'

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Newspaper of the Tennessee Farmers' Alliance

Alliance to create a strong grassroots agrarian movement.

In 1890, Alliancemen dominated the Democratic nominating convention and put their candidate, John Buchanan, in the Governor's Office. Buchanan's farmer-dominated Legislature passed the fi st pension act for Confederate veterans, but his popularity suffered as a result of his handling of the Coal Creek uprising. The Tennessee Alliance affiliated with the newly formed Populist Party, which looked for a time as if it might mount a serious challenge to the traditional two-party system. Democrats, however, circulated rumors of a Populist-Republican deal and denounced the alliances for admitting black members, undermining the Populists' credibility among white farmers. By 1896, the Populists and Farmers' Alliance had virtually disappeared in Tennessee, another victim of the dismal racial politics of the period.

The state continued its martial tradition. Following the outbreak of war with Spain in 1898, four regiments of Tennesseans were mustered into the volunteer United States Army. The Second, Thi d, and Fourth regiments were sent to Cuba, where they suffered from heat and disease but saw little action. The First Tennessee Infantry, however, was dispatched to San Francisco and then by troopship to Manila in the Philippines. There, these troops aided in the suppression of the Filipino nationalist movement, returning to Nashville late in 1899.

Late nineteenth-century Tennessee has been called a "social and economic laboratory" because of the variety of experimental communities established here. The state was a haven for utopian colonies, land company settlements, and recreation spas—due in part to the availability of cheap land in remote natural surroundings.

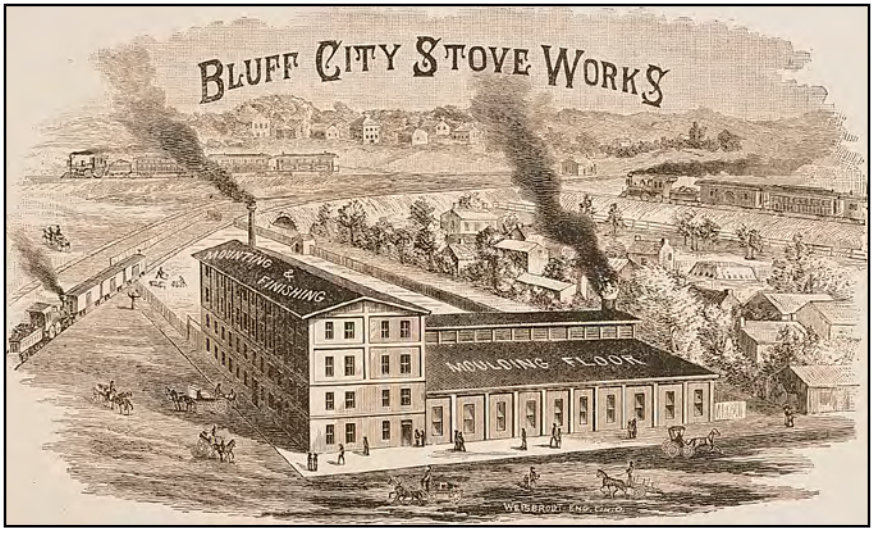
In 1880, some absentee landowners sold English author Thomas Hughes a large tract of land in Morgan County, on which he established the Rugby colony. For the next twenty years, English and American adventurers settled here to partake of Rugby's intellectual and vocational opportunities in the bracing solitude of the Tennessee hills. Another experimental colony was Ruskin, founded in 1894 by the famous socialist publicist Julius Wayland. Located on several hundred acres in rural Dickson County, Ruskin was a cooperative community in which wealth was held in common and members were paid for their work in paper scrip based on units of labor. Both Rugby and Ruskin had passed from the scene by 1900.

Yellow fever scene from Memphis

Turn-of-the-century Tennessee presented an improved appearance over the devastated landscape of three decades earlier. Sixteen percent of

the state's two million people lived in cities in 1900, with the largest city, Memphis, having a population of 102,300. "The Bluff City" represented quite a success story, having weathered three separate outbreaks of deadly yellow fever during the 1870s. The epidemics killed 7,750 people; many more fl d in panic; and Memphis almost ceased to exist as a functioning city. A new state board of health helped the river city to overhaul its health and sanitation system, and people and business fl cked to Memphis in the ensuing decades.

Nashville, too, was proud of its postwar civic development. As if to advertise itself to the rest of the country, Nashville staged a huge centennial celebration in 1897 in honor of the state's 100th birthday. The Tennessee Centennial Exposition was the ultimate expression of the Gilded Age in the Upper South—a showcase of industrial technology and exotic papier-mâché versions of the world's wonders. During its six-month run at Centennial Park, the Exposition drew nearly two million visitors to see its dazzling monuments to the South's recovery. Governor Robert Taylor observed, "Some of them who saw our ruined country thirty years ago will certainly appreciate the fact that we have wrought miracles."



Early Twentieth Century

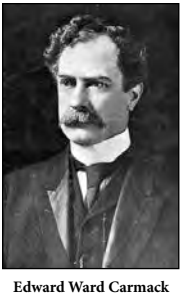
As the new century began, Tennessee was troubled by confli ts between the values of its traditional, agrarian culture and the demands of a modern, increasingly urban world. Having lost its position of national leadership during the Civil War, the state had become somewhat isolated from the changes taking place in metropolitan centers. Tremendous intellectual, scientific, and technological innovations were sweeping America early in the twentieth century, and Tennessee became a major battleground where these forces clashed with older rural folkways. Issues such as prohibition, Women's Suffrage, religion, and education came to the forefront of political debate,

Moonshiners, Sequatchie County

replacing the economic issues that had dominated late nineteenth-century politics.

By 1900, Temperance, the movement to limit the consumption of alcohol, had become a moral and political crusade to prohibit liquor altogether. Distilling whiskey and other spirits was an old and accomplished craft in Tennessee, one that had continued despite the efforts of Federal agents and local sheriffs to stamp it out. In 1877, Temperance advocates in the General Assembly had managed to pass a "Four Mile Law," prohibiting the sale of alcohol within a four-mile radius of a public school. Thi ty years later, the liquor issue dominated the gubernatorial race between Senator Edward Carmack, the "dry" candidate, and Malcolm Patterson, who opposed prohibition and eventually won by a slender margin. Th ough his newspaper, *Th Tennessean*, the defeated Carmack waged a vicious war of words against Governor Patterson and his supporters. On November 9, 1908, the squabble culminated in a gun battle on the Nashville streets that left Carmack dead and two of the governor's closest advisors charged with murder.

Carmack's killing gave the prohibition movement a martyr (in part because the man who shot him was pardoned by the governor) and created the momentum to pass legislation extending the Four Mile Law. The new law banned liquor over virtually the entire state. Prohibitionists gained control of the Republican Party, and their candidate, Ben Hooper, won election as governor in 1910 and 1912. Tennessee remained nominally "dry" from 1909 until the repeal of national Prohibition in 1933, although the law met with considerable resistance from, among others, the mayors of Nashville and Memphis, whose political machines functioned to some extent through saloons. Statewide prohibition was never effectively enforced, yet the issue continues today in the form of "local option" ordinances against liquor.



Edward Ward Carmack

Tennessee became the focus of national attention during the campaign for women's voting rights. Women's Suffrage, like Temperance, was an issue with its roots in middle-class reform efforts of the late 1800s. The organized movement came of age with the founding of the Tennessee Equal Suffrage Association in 1906. Despite a determined (and largely female) opposition, Tennessee suffragists were moderate in their tactics and gained limited voting rights before the national question arose. In 1920, Governor Albert Roberts called a special session of the Legislature to consider ratifi ation of the Nineteenth Amendment. Leaders of the rival groups fl oded into Nashville to lobby the General Assembly. In a close House vote, the suffrage amendment won passage when an East Tennessee legislator, Harry Burn, switched sides after receiving a telegram from his mother encouraging him to support ratifi ation. Tennessee thereby became the pivotal state that put the Nineteenth Amendment over the top. Women immediately made their presence felt by swinging Tennessee to Warren Harding in the 1920 presidential election—the fi st time the state had voted for a Republican presidential candidate since 1868.

Further national attention—not necessarily praiseworthy—came Tennessee's way during the celebrated trial of John T. Scopes, the so-called "Monkey Trial." In 1925, the Legislature, as part of a general education bill, passed a law that forbade the teaching of evolution in public schools.

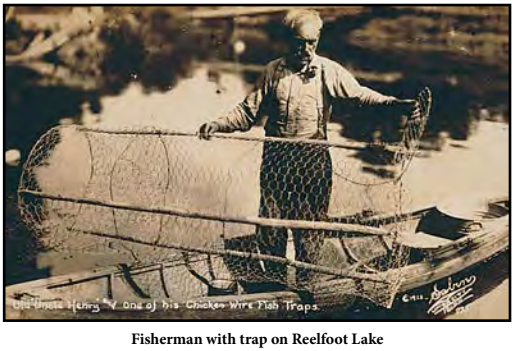
Some local boosters in Dayton concocted a scheme to have Scopes, a high school biology teacher, violate the law and stand trial as a way of drawing publicity and visitors to the town. Their plan worked all too well, as the Rhea County courthouse was turned into a circus of national and even international media coverage. Thousands fl cked to Dayton to witness the high-powered legal counsel (William Jennings Bryan for the prosecution and Clarence Darrow for the defense, among others) argue their case.

Night riders, Gibson County, 1908

Tennessee was ridiculed in the Northern press as the "Monkey State," even as a wave of revivals defending religious fundamentalism swept the state. The legal outcome of the trial was inconsequential: Scopes was convicted and fi ed $100, a penalty later rescinded by the state court of appeals. The law itself remained on the books until 1967. More important was the law's symbolic importance: an expression of the anxiety felt by Tennessee's rural people over the threat to their traditional religious culture posed by modern science. Th s issue, too, is still being contested in Tennessee.

Another clash between community practices and the forces of modernity took place in 1908 at Reelfoot Lake in the northwest corner of the state. The lake, an exceptionally rich fishery and game habitat, had for many years supported local fishermen and hunters who supplied West Tennessee hotels and restaurants with fish, turtles, swans, and ducks. Outside businessmen and their lawyers began buying up the lake and shoreline in order to develop it as a private resort. In the process, they denied access to the lake to local citizens who had long made their livelihoods from it. Some of these people, having failed to stop the developers in court, resorted to the old custom of vigilante acts or night-riding to stop them.

Dressed in masks and cloaked in darkness, the night riders terrorized county offi als, kidnapped two land company lawyers, and lynched one of them in the autumn of 1908. Governor Patterson called out the state militia to quell the violence; eight night riders were brought to trial, but all eventually went free. Fearing further outbreaks of violence over the private development of the lake, the state began to acquire the lake property as a public resource. In 1925, Reelfoot Lake was established as a state game and fish preserve, marking a fi st step toward the conservation of Tennessee's natural resources.



Fisherman with trap on Reelfoot Lake

Ironically, at the very time that Tennessee's rural culture was under attack by city critics, its music found a national audience. In 1925, WSM, a powerful Nashville radio station, began broadcasting a weekly program of live music that was soon dubbed the *Grand Ole Opry*. Such music came in diverse forms: banjo-and-fid le string bands of Appalachia, family gospel-singing groups, and country vaudeville acts like that of Murfreesboro native Uncle Dave Macon. One of the most popular stars of the early

Opry was a black performer, Deford Bailey. Still the longest-running radio program in American history, the Opry used the new technology of radio to tap into a huge market for "old time" or "hillbilly" music. Two years after the Opry's opening, in a series of landmark sessions at Bristol, Tennessee, fi ld scouts of the Victor Company recorded Jimmie Rodgers and the Carter Family to produce the fi st nationally popular rural records. Tennessee thus emerged as the heartland of traditional country music—home to many of the performers as well as the place from which it was broadcast to the nation.

Appalachian string trio

Just as Tennessee was fertile ground for the music enjoyed by white audiences, so was it a center for the blues music popular with African Americans. Both had their roots in the dances, harvest festivals, work songs, and camp meetings of rural communities. Memphis, strategically located at the top of the Mississippi River Delta where the blues sound originated, was already a center for this music by the 1920s. The city became a magnet that drew performers from cotton farms to the clubs of Beale Street, the Upper South's premier black main street. Lacking the radio exposure that benefited white country music, Beale Street nonetheless offered a rich musical setting where one could hear everything from W. C. Handy's dance band to the jazz-accompanied blues of Ma Rainey or Chattanooga-born Bessie Smith. Delta blues spread across the country as better highways and the lure of wartime jobs brought greater numbers of rural blacks into the cities.

Though far removed from the European fi lds of World War I, Tennesseans contributed their usual full complement to America's war effort. Around 100,000 of the state's young men volunteered or were drafted into the armed services, and a large proportion of those actually served with the American Expeditionary Force in Europe. More than 17,000 of the 61,000 Tennessee conscripts were African Americans, although black units were still segregated and commanded by white offic s. Four thousand Tennesseans were killed in combat or perished in the influenza epidemic that swept through the crowded troop camps at war's end. Tennessee provided the most celebrated American soldier of the First World War: Alvin C. York of Fentress County, a former conscientious objector who, in October of 1918, subdued an entire German machine gun regiment in the Argonne Forest. Besides receiving the Congressional Medal of Honor and assorted French decorations, York became a powerful symbol of patriotism in the press and Hollywood film.

Beale Street club scene

State politics and government were transformed following World War I. Austin Peay of Clarksville served as the fi st three-term governor since William Carroll, due in large part to the backing of rural and small-town voters. Governor Peay streamlined government agencies and reduced the state property tax while imposing an excise tax on corporate profits. When his administration began, the state

had only 250 miles of paved roads, but Peay undertook a massive road-building program with the revenue generated by Tennessee's fi st gasoline tax. He criss-crossed the state with thousands of miles of hard-surface highways, making him very popular among voters in once-remote rural areas.

Alvin C. York, left

Another achievement of the Peay administration was the part it played in overhauling public education. At the beginning of the century, Tennessee had no state-supported high schools, and fewer than half its eligible children attended school. Teachers' salaries were abysmal, and there was only one public university (which received no state funding). In 1909, the Legislature allotted twenty-five percent of state revenues to education, and in 1913, that share was increased to one-third. A compulsory school attendance law was passed, county high schools were established, normal schools for teachers were built (including Tennessee Agricultural and Industrial Normal School, a segregated black college), and the University of Tennessee fi ally received state support. Building on this base, Governor Peay's 1925 education law gave funding for an eight-month school term and inaugurated the modern system of school administration. The 1925 act also supplemented teacher salaries, standardized teacher certifi ation, and turned the normal schools into four-year teacher colleges. Although some of these reforms did not survive the thirties, Tennessee nevertheless had dramatically improved its public school system.

Austin Peay

The stock market crash of October 1929 is usually considered the start of that decade of hardship known as the Great Depression. In Tennessee, the hard times had started earlier, particularly for farmers. World War I had raised agricultural prices and brought flush times, but with the coming of peace, the export markets dried up and prices plummeted. The longest and most devastating drought on record added to stagnant farm markets. Low returns on farming drove many of the poorest class of farmers completely off the land, as the old system of tenancy, landlord stores, and scrip money began to collapse. Tractors and mechanical cotton pickers were also reducing the number of hands needed to farm, and the 1920s witnessed a sustained exodus of black and white sharecroppers to the cities. The black population of Tennessee actually declined during this period because of the heavy migration to northern industrial centers like Chicago.

Smoky Mountain school room

Some of these displaced country people found jobs at Tennessee factories, such as the DuPont plant in Old Hickory, the

rayon plants in Elizabethton, Eastman Kodak in Kingsport, and the Aluminum Company of America Works plant in Blount County. These large enterprises had replaced the earlier "rough" manufacturing—textiles, timber, and flour and mill products—as the state's leading industries. The Alcoa plant was built specifi ally to take advantage of East Tennessee's fast-falling rivers in order to generate electricity. Private hydroelectric dams were constructed in the state as early as 1910, and the prospect of harnessing rivers to produce power would eventually prove a strong attraction for industry. Tennessee was still a predominantly agricultural state, but it now had a growing industrial workforce and, in East Tennessee, the beginnings of an organized labor movement. Strikes, while less common than in northern states, were becoming more prevalent. Th s emerging industrial economy, however, was soon hobbled by the shutdowns and high unemployment of the thirties.

Eastman Kodak plant, Kingsport

Th Depression made everyone's lot worse: farmers produced more and made less in return; young people left the farms only to be laid off in the cities; merchants could not sell their goods; doctors had patients who could not pay; and teachers were paid in heavily discounted scrip instead of U.S. currency. In the countryside, people dug ginseng or sold walnuts to make a little extra income, while city dwellers lined up for "relief" or went back to the farms where, at least, they could survive. Local governments were unable to collect taxes, and hundreds of businesses failed (578 in 1932 alone). In 1930, the failure of three major banking institutions, including one of the South's premier fi ms, Caldwell and Company, brought most fi ancial business in the state to a grinding halt. The demise of the fi ancial empire of Nashvillian Rogers Caldwell not only liquidated the savings of thousands of depositors and $7 million in state funds, it nearly caused the impeachment of newly elected Governor Henry Horton. Governor Horton had close ties with Caldwell and his political ally, Luke Lea, a newspaper publisher who was ultimately convicted of fraud and sent to prison.

Depression-era children

Leading the outcry for the governor's impeachment was former Memphis mayor Edward H. Crump, who quickly assumed the role as "boss" of state politics and Shelby County. Between 1932 and 1948, anyone who wished to be governor or senator had to have Crump's blessing, although some of his proteges defi d the "boss" once they were in offi . A two-dollar poll tax kept voter turnout low during these years, and heavy majorities from Shelby County (which the Crump organization routinely achieved by paying the tax for compliant voters) could easily swing a statewide Democratic primary. In 1936, for example, Gordon Browning won election as governor with the help of 60,218 votes from Shelby County to only 861 for his

opponent. Crump was the most powerful politician in Tennessee during most of the thirties and forties, by virtue of being able to deliver a vast bloc of votes to whichever candidate he chose.

Part of the success of urban political machines like Crump's and that of Nashville Mayor Hilary Howse was due to the support they received from black political organizations. Robert Church, Jr., was the political leader of the Memphis black community, major Republican power broker, and dispenser of hundreds of Federal patronage jobs. In Nashville, James C. Napier held much the same position as a political spokesman for middle-class African Americans. While these leaders followed a moderate course, avoiding confrontation and accepting the "half loaf" offered by white politicians like Crump, other African Americans were willing to attack "Jim Crow" laws more directly. In 1905, R. H. Boyd and other Nashville entrepreneurs followed a successful boycott of segregated streetcars by organizing a competing, black-owned streetcar company. Twenty years later in Chattanooga, black workingmen organized to defeat a resurgent Ku Klux Klan at the polls and responded to black nationalist leader Marcus Garvey's visit to the city by forming a local chapter of his Universal Negro Improvement Association. By taking industrial jobs at higher wages, serving in the military, or simply by leaving the landlord's farm, black Tennesseans achieved a degree of independence that made them less willing to tolerate second-class citizenship.

Edward H. Crump

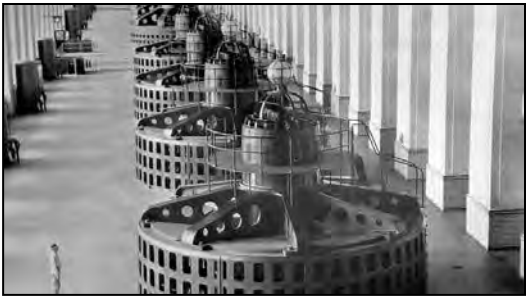
Tennessee, which had been out of the political spotlight since Reconstruction, returned to national prominence in the 1920s. Joseph W. Byrns of Robertson County was Speaker of the United States House of Representatives during the crucial early years of the New Deal. Senator Kenneth D. McKellar of Memphis, who worked closely with the Crump organization, served six consecutive terms, from 1916 to 1952. As powerful chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee, he steered a considerable amount of military spending and industry Tennessee's way during World War II. Cordell Hull of Celina, who was in Congress continuously from 1907 to 1933 (except for two years as Democratic National Chairman), authored the 1913 Federal Income Tax bill and guided American foreign policy for twelve years as Secretary of State.

Tennesseans, like most Americans, gave a resounding majority to Franklin D. Roosevelt in the 1932 presidential election, and, over the next twelve years, his New Deal programs would have as great an impact in Tennessee as anywhere in the nation. One hundred thousand farmers statewide participated in the crop reduction program of the Agricultural Adjustment Act (AAA), while 55,250 young men enlisted in one of the thirty-five Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) camps in the state. The road building projects and public works of the Public Works Administration (PWA) and Works Progress Administration (WPA) put thousands of unemployed Tennesseans to work. New Deal agencies spent large sums of tax dollars in Tennessee ($350 million in 1933–1935 alone) in an effort to stimulate the region's economy through public employment and investment.

Robert Church, Jr., left, and associates

By far the greatest expenditure of Federal dollars in Tennessee was made through the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA). In one way or another, TVA had an impact on the lives of nearly all

The arly TVA dam system



Wilson Dam generators

Tennesseans. The agency was created in 1933, largely through the persistence of U.S. Senator George Norris of Nebraska, and headquartered in Knoxville. It was charged with the task of planning the total development of the Tennessee River Valley. TVA sought to do this primarily by building hydroelectric dams (twenty between 1933 and 1951) and several coal-fi ed power plants to produce electricity. Inexpensive and abundant electrical power was the main benefit that TVA brought to Tennessee, particularly to rural areas that previously did not have electrical service. TVA electrifi d some 60,000 farm households across the state. By 1945, TVA was the largest electrical utility in the nation, a supplier of vast amounts of power whose presence in Tennessee attracted large industries to relocate near one of its dams or steam plants.

One group of Tennessee-based intellectuals achieved national prominence by questioning the desirability of such industrialization for the South. The "Agrarians" at Vanderbilt University celebrated the region's agricultural heritage and challenged the wisdom of moving rural people aside to make room for modern development. Donald Davidson, in particular, objected to massive government land acquisitions that displaced communities and flooded some of the best farmland in the Valley. TVA, for example, purchased or condemned 1.1 million acres of land, flooded 300,000 acres, and moved the homes of 14,000 families in order to build its fi st sixteen dams. On a slightly smaller scale, 420,000 acres of forested, mountainous land along the crest of the Appalachian range was set aside during the 1930s for a national park. Although much of this land belonged to timber companies, creation of the hugely popular Great Smoky Mountains National Park displaced some 4,000 mountain people, including long-standing communities like Cades Cove. The price of progress was often highest for those citizens most directly affected by such projects.

Nashville's Berry Field, circa 1945

Despite the millions of dollars that TVA and the Federal government pumped into Tennessee, the Depression ended with only the economic stimulus that came from going to war. World War II brought relief mainly by employing ten percent of the state's populace (308,199 men and women) in the armed services. Most of those who remained on farms and in cities worked in war-related production, as Tennessee received war orders amounting to $1.25 billion. From the giant shell-loading plant at Milan to the Vultee Aircraft works at Nashville and the TVA projects in East Tennessee, war-based industries hummed with the labor of a greatly enlarged workforce. Approximately thirty-three percent of the state's workers were female by the end of the war. Tennessee military personnel served with distinction from Pearl Harbor to the fi al, bloody assaults at Iwo Jima and Okinawa, and 7,000 died in combat during the war. In 1942–1943, Middle Tennessee residents played host to twenty-eight Army divisions that swarmed over the countryside on maneuvers preparing for the D-Day invasion.

Cornelia Fort, early Tennessee aviator present at the attack on Pearl Harbor

Tennesseans participated in all phases of the war—from combat to civilian administration and military research. Cordell Hull served twelve years as President Roosevelt's Secretary of State and became one of the chief architects of the United Nations, for which he received the Nobel Peace Prize. Even ordinary citizens experienced the war's deprivation through the rationing of food and gasoline and the planting of victory gardens. Especially signifi ant for the war effort was Tennessee's role in the Manhattan Project, the military's top secret project to build an atomic weapon. Research and production work for the fi st A-bombs were conducted at the huge scientific-i dustrial installation at Oak Ridge in Anderson County. The Oak Ridge community was entirely a creation of the war: it mushroomed from empty woods in 1941 to Tennessee's fi h largest city, with a population of 70,000, four years later. Twice in 1945, city streets and courthouse squares erupted with celebrations as the news of victory in Europe and the Pacific reached the state. For Tennessee, World War II constituted a radical break with the past. TVA had transformed the physical landscape of the state, and wartime industrialism had irreversibly changed the economy. Soldiers who had been overseas and women who had worked in factories returned home with new expectations for the future.

Modern Tennessee

The pace of change accelerated dramatically for Tennesseans after 1945, especially for the majority who were farmers. Th s group experienced a head-spinning lifestyle transformation more than any other. Ex-servicemen who had earned regular paychecks, many of them for the fi st time in their lives, and seen other parts of the world simply were not willing to return to the back-breaking, mule-powered farm labor of the old days. Less risky, better-paying jobs were now available. Mechanization came late to Tennessee farms, but once it began, the changeover was rapid. The number of tractors in the state

Women in textile mill

The witch from mules to machine-powered farming

doubled during the war and increased almost tenfold between 1940 and 1960. Soybeans, dairy cattle, and burley tobacco replaced the old regime of cotton, corn, and hogs in the agricultural economy of Tennessee.

Technological change was sweeping the countryside, bringing higher productivity but raising the cost of farming. New livestock breeds, fertilizers, better seed, chemical pesticides and herbicides, electricity, and machinery all combined to increase output—at the cost of pricing many small producers out of farming. The trickle of people leaving the farms had, by the 1950s, become a fl od, and many local Tennessee papers ran regular news columns from places like Detroit and Chicago. From a farm population that stood at 1.2 million in 1930, only 317,000 remained on farms in 1970. By 1980, fewer than six percent of Tennesseans earned their main income from farming, a fact that refl cted the downsizing of agriculture that began sixty years earlier.

As rural livelihoods became more precarious, Tennessee's urban landscape continued to encroach on the countryside. In 1960, for the fi st time, the state had more urban than rural dwellers, as the baby boom boosted growth in Tennessee's four major cities. The demands of military production had brought several large industries to Tennessee, some of which, like the Atomic Energy Commission facilities at Oak Ridge and the Arnold Engineering Center at Tullahoma, remained in operation after the war. Chemicals and apparel led manufacturing growth between 1955 and 1965, a decade in which Tennessee made greater industrial gains than any other state. Inexpensive TVA power, abundant resources, and a workforce no longer tied to the land encouraged rapid industrialization. By 1963, Tennessee ranked as the sixteenth-largest industrial state—a remarkable transformation for a state that, not so long ago, had been overwhelmingly agricultural.

Th Tennessee Valley Authority loomed large in the state's postwar development. Heightened international tensions during the Cold War expanded TVA's role as a power supplier for military projects. By the time of the Korean War, TVA essentially had become the Federal power utility in the South, providing over half its electricity to the government's uranium enrichment facilities at Oak Ridge. To meet these growing power demands, TVA built eleven coal-fi ed, steam-generating plants between 1950 and 1970, including several of the largest of these structures in the world. Feeding these huge plants turned TVA into the nation's foremost consumer of strip-mined coal, forced a series of electrical rate hikes, and made the agency the target of numerous lawsuits over air pollution. Compounding TVA's environmental troubles was its expensive foray into nuclear power. By 1975, TVA had become the non-communist world's largest producer of nuclear power. Cost overruns and safety problems, however, closed down eleven of TVA's reactors and turned the bulk of the nuclear program into a costly write-off. Although it continues to serve as the Tennessee Valley's unique public utility, TVA has reduced both the size and the scope of its mission.

Returning servicemen and women helped bring about a change of the old political order in Tennessee. On primary election day in Athens on August 1, 1946, a pitched battle occurred between former soldiers and the supporters of the entrenched political machine in McMinn County. For more than six hours, the streets of Athens blazed with gunfi e as armed veterans laid siege to the jail where the sheriff and fi y "deputies" were holed up with the ballot boxes. The so-called "Battle of Athens" actually represented the beginning of a statewide political cleanup, in which a reform-minded opposition challenged local bosses and machine politics. The veterans' victory demonstrated to Congressman Estes Kefauver and other up-and-coming politicians that the old strategies of boss control in Tennessee had fi ally become vulnerable.

Chattanooga Daily Times

M'KELLAR, M'CORD, KEFAUVER WIN; GI'S FIRE ON M'MINN COUNTY JAIL, KILL TWO DEPUTIES, WOUND EIGHT

Despite this day-after headline, no one was killed in the Battle of Athens.

In the 1948 elections, with the help of the veterans' vote, Kefauver won a U.S. Senate seat, and former Governor Gordon Browning returned as Tennessee's chief executive, both defeating hand-picked candidates of Memphis Mayor Ed Crump. The Kefauver and Browning victories spelled the end of Boss Crump's twenty-year domination of state politics. Although Crump continued to exert a powerful influence in the aff irs of the Shelby County Democratic Party, he never again called the shots in statewide elections. The 1953 limited constitutional convention dealt a further blow to machine politics by repealing the state poll tax, a key element in politicians' ability to limit and manipulate the vote.

Round two of the changing of the political guard came in 1952, when Albert Gore, Sr., defeated eighty-five-year-old Kenneth D. McKellar for the Senate seat that McKellar had held for thirty-six years. That same year, Governor Browning himself was unseated by a rising young political star from Dickson County, Frank Goad Clement. The constitutional revision had changed the governor's term from two to four years and, for most of the next two decades, either Clement or his friend and campaign manager, Buford Ellington, would occupy the governor's mansion. Clement, Gore, and Kefauver represented a moderate wing of the Southern Democrats (Kefauver and Gore, for example, refused to sign the segregationist Southern Manifesto of 1956), and all three made bids for national office. In 1956, Governor Clement delivered the keynote address at the Democratic National Convention, the same convention that named Kefauver as the party's vice presidential candidate.

Senator Estes Kefauver (left) ith LBJ at the latter's ranch

While veterans in Athens were helping overthrow the old political order, newly returned black veterans in Columbia helped inaugurate a new day in race relations. A fi ht in a downtown Columbia department store in February

Rosa Parks is shown at the far left at this civil rights training session at Highlander Folk School.

1946 touched off a rampage by whites through the black business district. African-American veterans were determined to defend their community and themselves against the racial attacks and lynchings that had occurred in the past. Although the State Guardsmen prevented widespread riots, highway patrolmen ransacked homes and businesses, and two black men taken into custody were killed. Twenty-five black defendants accused of inciting the violence were acquitted in the legal proceedings that followed, due in part to the efforts of Nashville attorney Z. Alexander Looby and National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) counsel Thurgood Marshall. More importantly, the Columbia riot focused national attention on violence against black citizens and elicited at least a verbal commitment from the Federal government to protect the civil rights of all Southerners. The aftermath of the Columbia events created a precedent for organizations like the NAACP to push for further government protection of civil rights during the following decade.

The growing assertiveness of African Americans after 1945 was not an accidental development. The sacrifices of black soldiers during World War II had made discrimination back home less tolerable. Favorable Supreme Court rulings and President Roosevelt's overtures toward black leaders had encouraged government protection of civil rights. By 1960, two-thirds of Tennessee blacks lived in towns or cities, creating the proximity and numbers necessary for collective action. Organization and discipline, crucial assets of the early movement, were nurtured in places like the Highlander Folk School in Grundy County. Founded by Myles Horton and Don West, Highlander became an important training center during the 1950s for community activists and civil rights leaders. The school was shut down by state offi als at the height of the desegregation crisis, but it soon reopened to continue its work. Governor Clement, although he was no integrationist, was less strident than other Southern governors in his opposition to the 1954 Supreme Court's decision on *Brown v. Board of Education*, which ordered an end to segregated schools. He did not use his offic to "block the schoolhouse door," and he pledged to abide by the law of the land with regard to civil rights.

National Guardsmen patrol Clinton streets, 1956.

In 1950, four years before the landmark *Brown* decision, black parents in Clinton filed suit in Federal district court to give their children the right to attend the local high school instead of being bused to Knoxville to an all-black school. Early in 1956, Judge Robert Taylor ordered

Clinton to desegregate its schools based on orders from the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals to rule in accordance with the *Brown* decision. Twelve black students registered for classes that fall, and matters proceeded smoothly until agitators John Kasper of New Jersey and Asa Carter of the Birmingham White Citizens' Council arrived in Clinton to organize resistance to integration. Governor Clement had to call out 600 National Guardsmen a few days after school opened to defuse the violent atmosphere. The black teenagers courageously endured months of taunts and threats while attending the school. In May of 1957, Bobby Cain became the fi st African American to graduate from an integrated public high school in the South. A year and a half later, three bomb blasts ripped apart the Clinton High School building.

In the fall of 1957, Kasper was back in the spotlight, this time in Nashville where the school board—again in response to suits brought by black parents—agreed to integrate fi st grade. Thi teen black students registered at five formerly all-white schools, while as many as fi y percent of the white students stayed home. On September 9, Hattie Cotton School, where one black child was enrolled, was dynamited and partially destroyed. Two years later, the Supreme Court approved Nashville's grade-a-year integration plan. Memphis and many smaller towns, meanwhile, adopted an even slower pace in desegregating their schools. By 1960, only 169 of Tennessee's 146,700 black children of school age attended integrated schools.

From 1960 to 1963, a series of demonstrations took place in Nashville that would have a national impact on the civil rights movement. Nashville's African-American community was uniquely situated to host these historic events due to the concentration of local black universities, strong churches and politically active ministers, and black doctors and lawyers lending considerable support to the demonstrators. Kelly Miller Smith of the First Baptist Church, along with C.T. Vivian and James Lawson, who had studied Ghandi's tactics of non-violent resistance, provided leadership and training for young activists who were determined to confront segregation in downtown facilities.

Young student carried away from downtown Nashville protests, May 10, 1963

The fi st Nashville sit-in took place on February 13, 1960, as students from Fisk University, Tennessee A & I, and the American Baptist Theological Seminary attempted in peaceful fashion to be served at whites-only downtown luncheon counters. Two months went by, hundreds of students were arrested, and some were beaten, but still they kept taking their places at the segregated counters. A black consumer boycott of downtown stores spread through the community and put additional pressure on merchants. Finally, on April 19, in the wake of an early-morning bombing that destroyed Z. Alexander Looby's home, several thousand protesters silently marched to the courthouse to confront city offi als. The next day, as public opinion recoiled from the violent tactics of the extreme segregationists, Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., spoke to a large audience at Fisk. On May 10, 1960, a handful of downtown stores opened their lunch counters on an integrated basis as Nashville became the fi st major city in the South to begin desegregating its public facilities. The Nashville sit-in movement and the students' disciplined use of non-violent tactics served as a model for future action against segregation.

Bombed out Clinton High School, October 1957

Activists in several Tennessee cities kept the pressure on restaurants, hotels, and transportation facilities that refused to drop the color barrier. High school and college students in Nashville were instrumental in organizing the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, which trained many civil rights leaders during the 1960s. Tennesseans participated in the Freedom Rides, in which groups of black and white passengers tried to integrate bus terminals across the South.

MLK speaking at Fisk

In 1965, A.W. Willis, Jr., of Memphis became the fi st African-American representative elected to the General Assembly in sixty-five years. From 1959 to 1963, the struggle for voting rights centered on rural Fayette County, where 700 black tenant families were forced off the land when they tried to register to vote. Community activists, such as Viola and John McFerren, helped organize a "tent city" where evicted tenants were fed and sheltered despite harassment and a trade ban by local white merchants. In 1968, Memphis sanitation workers broadened the struggle by going on strike against discriminatory pay and work rules. In support of the strike, Dr. King came to Memphis, and on April 4, he was assassinated by a sniper as he stood on the balcony of the Lorraine Motel. The 1960s thus ended on an ominous note, with historic strides having been made in race relations, but with much yet to be done.

Student activists (including Diane Nash, second from left) fin lly being served at Nashville lunch counter, May 1960

The end of the Clement-Ellington era saw the demise of single-party domination in Tennessee politics. Beginning in 1966 with Howard Baker's election to the U.S. Senate, Tennesseans turned increasingly toward the Republican Party. Between 1968 and 1972, Tennessee voted for Richard Nixon twice and elected Winfi ld Dunn—the fi st Republican governor since 1921—and two Republican senators, Baker and William Brock. Watergate put a dent in GOP fortunes in the mid-1970s, as Democrat Ray Blanton defeated Maryville attorney Lamar Alexander for governor, James Sasser won a Republican-held Senate seat, and Jimmy Carter carried the state's vote for President. Howard Baker, meanwhile, became a leader in the Senate and was eventually named White House Chief of Staff in the Reagan White House. In 1978, Alexander turned the tables by winning the governor's race; he then took offic early because of questionable acts by the out-going Blanton administration.

State government services had grown by leaps and bounds since the New Deal and World War II, but particularly since the passage of the fi st sales tax in 1947. Governor McCord's two percent tax, initially targeted for schools and teachers, was raised to three percent in 1955. By the late 1950s, sales tax revenue had become the chief means of fi anc-ing state government. In order to fund Governor Alexander's school reform package in 1985, the Legislature raised the state sales tax to 5.5 percent, which, with local options, became one of the highest in the nation.

A beaten civil rights worker is helped by a colleague, Somerville, 1965.

In the late twentieth century, Tennessee carried on its long tradition of military service. From 1950 to 1953, more than 10,500 Tennesseans served in the Korean War, with 843 losing their lives in combat. The long Vietnam War of the 1960s and early 1970s cost 1,289 Tennessee lives and caused student unrest on campuses across the state. One outstanding participant was Navy Captain (and later Vice Admiral) William P. Lawrence of Nashville, who was shot down over North Vietnam in 1967. During his six-year captivity as a prisoner of war (POW), part of it in solitary confi ement, Captain Lawrence's refl ctions on his native state produced what the Legislature adopted as the state's offi al poem shortly after his return. The Persian Gulf War of 1990–1991 generated considerable excitement and support, as Tennesseans rallied around the tweny-four units mobilized for Operation Desert Storm at the Fort Campbell Army Base. More recently, Tennesseans have made major contributions to the Global War on Terror. In addition to thousands of regular army personnel, more than 14,000 Tennessee soldiers, sailors, and airmen (more than eighty-four percent of the entire Tennessee National Guard) have deployed

to the confli ts in Afghanistan and Iraq. As of September 2013, 147 men and women in service of our nation have given their lives in the War on Terror.

In the late twentieth and early twenty-fi st centuries, Tennessee has enjoyed a period of business expansion and growth. In 1980, Nissan Corporation of Tokyo announced plans to build the largest truck assembly plant in the world in Smyrna. Nissan's American corporate headquarters is now located in Williamson County. By 1994, sixty-nine Japanese manufacturers with investments in excess of $4 billion and more than 27,000 employees had established operations in Tennessee, making it a prime market for foreign investment. Tennessee also landed the General Motors plant; construction on the $2.1 billion facility near Spring Hill was completed in 1987. Volkswagen announced in 2008 that it was building a major automobile production facility in Chattanooga, and the fi st automobiles rolled out of the factory in 2011. Tennessee's reputation as an innovation center was further enhanced with the announcement of new plants to be built in Clarksville and Cleveland, giving the state three billion-dollar projects in a single year.

Tennessee's lack of a tax on earned income continues to attract many individuals and businesses looking to relocate and expand. Tennesseans rank among the lowest taxed citizens in the United States and enjoy a per capita income of $37,678. Since the 1960s, the state economy has been strengthened by its diversity, making it less vulnerable to recessions than other, single-industry states. Tourism and entertainment, a burgeoning medical and hospital industry, and banking and insurance have combined with a strong agribusiness and manufacturing base to turn Tennessee into a major player in the nation's economy.

Tennessee continues to produce distinguished figu es in science and the arts. In 1977, Alex Haley of Henning was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for *Roots*, the most successful book ever penned by a Tennessean and one largely responsible for reviving popular interest in family history. Two members of the Vanderbilt University faculty, Earl Sutherland in 1971 and Stanley Cohen in 1987, won Nobel Prizes for their pioneering medical research, and Albert Gore, Jr., was awarded the 2008 Nobel Peace Prize for work on global warming. In 1985, Dr. Margaret Rhea Seddon became the fi st Tennessean in space, eventually flying on three Space Shuttle missions.

Supporter at "Desert Storm" rally, Nashville, 1991

Few Americans have ever matched the personal popularity of Memphian Elvis Presley, the "King of Rock 'n' Roll," whose recordings for Memphis's Sun Records Studio in the mid-1950s launched a new era in popular music. The classic rock 'n' roll music of Elvis and his fellow performers at Sun Records, as well as the rhythm-and-blues "Memphis sound" represented by Stax Records, have achieved worldwide renown. Also global in its impact is the Nashville-based country music industry, a multi-billion-dollar business employing a large community of professional songwriters, producers, and engineers in addition to musicians and singers. Country music attractions, particularly live music and the Country Music Hall of Fame in Nashville, are important to Tennessee's $16 billion-a-year tourism industry. Elvis's home, Graceland, is the most visited celebrity museum in the country.

A new generation of Tennessee public servants rose to prominence during the 1980s and 1990s. Women carved out a more prominent role, with Jane Eskind becoming the

fi st woman to be elected to statewide political offic as Public Service Commissioner in 1986 and Martha Craig Daughtrey rising through the judicial ranks to win appointment as the fi st woman on the Tennessee Supreme Court. Albert Gore, Jr.'s, 1976 election to the U.S. House of Representatives began a political career that would carry him to the vice presidency of the United States in 1992 and a run for the presidency in 2000. Gore lost that election by a handful of electoral votes and failed to carry his home state, although he won a majority of the nation's popular vote. In 1982, Lamar Alexander won his second term as governor, becoming the first executive to serve consecutive four-year terms. His "Better Schools" program was one of the earliest and most signifi ant attempts at fundamental school reform in the country, and on the strength of his reputation as an innovator, Alexander was appointed by President Bush as Secretary of Education in 1990. He was succeeded as governor by Ned Ray McWherter of Dresden.

Memphis

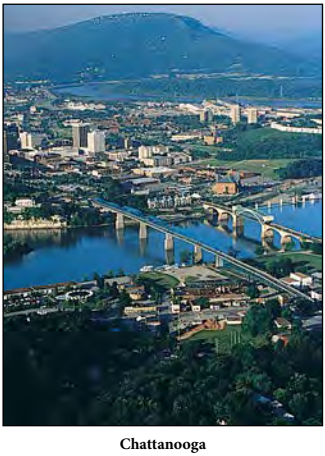
The past two decades have witnessed the strong ascendancy of the Republican Party in Tennessee. William Frist defeated three-term U.S. Senator James Sasser, and Fred Thompson won election to the U.S. Senate seat vacated by Albert Gore, Jr., as Republicans swept both Senate seats. Don Sundquist won the battle for the governorship over Nashville Mayor Phil Bredesen. The 2002 election confi med Tennessee's place in the Republican column, with Lamar Alexander succeeding Senator Thompson. Senator Frist was tapped in 2003 to serve as the Republican Majority Leader of the Senate. In 2006, Bob Corker of Chattanooga won the election to take Dr. Frist's place in the Senate, defeating Harold Ford, Jr., the fi st African-American candidate for statewide offic in Tennessee history. After his reelection, Sen. Corker now chairs the Senate Foreign Relations committee. He and Senator Alexander remain increasingly influential voices in the United States Senate.

At the state level in 2007, State Senator Ron Ramsey was elected the fi st Republican Lieutenant Governor in 140 years, defeating Democrat John Wilder, who had held the post for a record thirty-six years. Speaker Ramsey is now the longest-serving Republican Lieutenant Governor in Tennessee history. In November 2008, for the fi st time in the state's history, voters gave the Republican Party a majority in both houses of the General Assembly. Two years later, Nashvillian Beth Harwell became the fi st female Speaker of the House of Representatives. Because of the Republican majority from the 2008 elections, Republican constitutional offic s were appointed by joint vote of the General Assembly for the fi st time since Reconstruction. Tre Hargett was elected Secretary of State; Justin P. Wilson was elected Comptroller of the Treasury; and David H. Lillard, Jr., was elected State Treasurer. Republican majorities in both houses were further strengthened in the 2014 elections.

Knoxville

As the eight-year McWherter administration drew to a close, Tennesseans chose Republican Don Sundquist of Germantown as the 47th Governor of the state. Governor Sundquist's fi st year in offic was marked by the passage of a comprehensive anti-crime package, focusing on victims' rights and restoration of the death penalty.

Though reelected by a landslide victory in 1998, Governor Sundquist will be remembered for his attempt to change Tennessee's tax structure by reducing the reliance on a sales tax and introducing an income-based levy. The effort to pass a state income tax proved unsuccessful in a tumultuous summer session of the 102nd General Assembly, and the deadlocked Legislature ended up adding another penny to the state's sales tax. The battle to defeat the proposed income tax ultimately proved to be a watershed in Tennessee political history; it played a significant role in the state Legislature changing from a Democratic majority to Republican control. In November 2002, Tennesseans elected former Nashville Mayor Phil Bredesen as Governor, leaving him to grapple with a seemingly chronic budget shortfall and TennCare, the state Medicaid plan that was losing hundreds of millions of dollars. Having enacted a sweeping reform of TennCare and signed into law the Tennessee Lottery and lottery-funded scholarships, Governor Bredesen was reelected by a wide margin in 2006.



Chattanooga

Four years later, William "Bill" Haslam of Knoxville won the Governor's Offic in a landslide victory. His administration has already teamed with Republican majorities in both chambers of the General Assembly to enact changes in tort liability reform, teacher tenure laws, and teacher collective bargaining rights. Bill Haslam was reelected to his second term as Tennessee's governor with the largest victory in modern Tennessee history. He is committed to education and has launched the Tennessee Promise to give graduating high school seniors a chance to earn a certifi ate or degree beyond high school free of charge. He has focused on making Tennessee the number one location in the Southeast for high quality jobs.

Sports have long been a popular entertainment and source of pride for Tennesseans. The University of Tennessee's Lady Vols, under Coach Pat Head Summitt, set the standard of excellence for women's collegiate basketball by winning eight national championships between 1987 and 2008. The football team of the University of Tennessee reached the pinnacle of college football in 1998 by going undefeated and being crowned national champions. Professional sports have come to Tennessee in a big way, with the NBA's Memphis Grizzlies, the NHL's Nashville Predators, and the NFL's Tennessee Titans. The Titans went to the Super Bowl and two AFC Championships between 1998 and 2003, during which time they were the winningest team in the NFL. The Predators and Grizzlies are consistent playoff c ntenders.

Tennesseans draw great strength from their heritage, not only of great deeds and events, but of the more enduring legacy of community ties and respect for tradition. One does not have to look hard for Tennessee's signifi ance in American history. The state played a key role in winning the fi st frontier west of the Appalachian mountains and provided the young nation with much of its political and military leadership, including the dominant figu e of Andrew Jackson. Divided in loyalties and occupied for much of the Civil War, Tennessee was the main battleground in the western theater of that confli t. The early twentieth century witnessed clashes over cultural issues such as prohibition, Women's Suffrage, and school reform. World War II accelerated the changeover from an agricultural to an industrial and predominantly urban state. As older cultural byways fade, Tennessee has become home to some of the most advanced sectors of American business and technology. Our state's mix of forward-looking innovation, great natural beauty, and a people solidly grounded in tradition and community has proven an irresistible allure for the rest of the country.

Acknowledgments

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