

Prehistoric Tennessee

The earliest inhabitants of Tennessee were hunter-gatherers who moved into the region near the end of the last Ice Age. These people, known as Paleo Indians, used caves and rock shelters as temporary campsites. Paleo Indians were hunter gatherers who hunted now-extinct animals such as mastodons. At the Coats-Hines site in Williamson County, the remains of a mastodon with cut marks on the bone were discovered. Thirty-four stone cutting tools were also found at the site.¹ The presence of stone tools and cutting marks provides evidence that Paleo Indians lived in Tennessee.

As the climate warmed, the Archaic Indians, descendants of the Paleo Indians, began to move into river valleys and eventually began small scale farming. Chenopod, or lambsquarters, sunflowers, and a type of squash were grown by Archaic farmers. Archaic people continued to gather hickory nuts, acorn, and other plants as well. Archaic people hunted white-tailed deer using an atlatl, or spear thrower. The simple tool served as a lever which gave spears increased distance and speed.²

During the Woodland period, settlements and agriculture evolved and high quality pottery was created. The Woodland Indians were the first to use bows and arrows for hunting in this region. As more crops were grown, populations expanded and large settlements were created. Pinson Mounds and Old Stone Fort are sites created during the Woodland period. The Pinson Mounds site in Madison County is made up of

¹ Jefferson Chapman. "Prehistoric American Indians in Tennessee." *McClung Research Notes*, Number 28, 2009. <https://mcclungmuseum.utk.edu/2009/01/01/prehistoric-american-indians/> Accessed 12 June 2018.

² Jefferson Chapman. "Prehistoric American Indians in Tennessee." *McClung Research Notes*, Number 28, 2009. <https://mcclungmuseum.utk.edu/2009/01/01/prehistoric-american-indians/> Accessed 12 June 2018.

seventeen mounds surrounded by an earthworks enclosure. While at least three of the mounds were used for burials, the majority seem to have served a ceremonial purpose; also, the lack of everyday items such as pottery shards and stone tools suggests that the area was not a permanent settlement, but an area that was visited for specific ceremonial purposes. There is some evidence that the mounds were laid out according to the cardinal directions and in alignment for the summer solstice. The Old Stone Fort site in Coffee County seems to have had a similar ceremonial purpose. The structure was initially assumed to have been built for military defense. However, later excavations proved this assumption to be false as the structure was built over several hundred years and the walls were too low to provide protection. Also, the large structure would have needed a large defensive force which most Woodland tribes did not have.³ While Woodland tribes grew some crops, they still depended on hunting and gathering for much of their food supply, so they could not support a permanent defensive force in one location.

The Mississippian period, which lasted from roughly 900 to 1600 CE, saw the creation of larger ceremonial mounds, the development of chiefdoms, large scale farming, and increased warfare. Mississippian people grew corn and beans to feed the large populations in towns. Social rank was determined by family ties. The chief, his family, and related families led privileged lives. The mounds were often used as burial sites for high ranking individuals as well as ceremonial centers.⁴ The Chucalissa site in Memphis is the best known Mississippian mound site in Tennessee. While archeological

³ Charles Faulkner, *The Old Stone Fort: Exploring an Archaeological Mystery* (Knoxville, Tenn.: University of Tennessee Press, 1971)

⁴ Jefferson Chapman. "Prehistoric American Indians in Tennessee." *McClung Research Notes*, Number 28, 2009. <https://mcclungmuseum.utk.edu/2009/01/01/prehistoric-american-indians/> Accessed 12 June 2018.

digs have contributed a great deal to our knowledge of these civilizations, none left written records on which modern historians depend. Thus, Tennessee's historic period began with the arrival of the Spanish explorer Hernando de Soto in 1540.⁵

Spanish Exploration

De Soto's expedition was indicative of Spain's approach to creating an empire in the New World that began with Christopher Columbus' arrival in the Caribbean in 1492. Columbus, like most Europeans of his day, viewed the native peoples he encountered as inferior to Europeans. Columbus reported to King Ferdinand that upon arriving in the region he "took some of the natives by force, in order that they might learn and might give me information of whatever there is in these parts."⁶ The mistreatment of Native Americans would be repeated by later Spanish explorers, including Hernán Cortés who found the riches Columbus had promised but never delivered to the Spanish monarchs.

Cortés sailed for Mexico against the orders of the governor of Cuba in 1519. He quickly made an alliance with the Tlaxcaltec, a tribe who resented the demands of their Aztec overlords. Cortés and his allies entered the Aztec capital of Tenochtitlan on November 8, 1519. Tenochtitlan, which was built on land reclaimed from Lake Texcoco, was home to roughly 200,000 people. The Spanish were awed by the wealth of the Aztecs and marveled at the size and magnificence of the city. Three causeways

⁵ For more information on Tennessee's prehistoric inhabitants, see history section of the Tennessee Blue Book.

⁶ Christopher Columbus. "Letter to King Ferdinand of Spain, describing the results of the first voyage." 1493. University of Virginia, <http://xroads.virginia.edu/~hyper/hns/garden/columbus.html>, accessed June 6, 2018.

connected the city to the mainland, and two aqueducts provided residents with clean drinking water. The Spanish were forced out of the city in 1520, but Cortés and his allies returned in May of 1521 and laid siege to the city. After three months the city fell, and Cortés became the ruler of an enormous territory known as New Spain.

In 1531, another conquistador, Francisco Pizarro, set out to conquer the immense Inca Empire of South America. The Incan emperor Atahualpa had only recently defeated his half brother during a bloody civil war that divided loyalties in the empire. Pizarro, following Cortés' example, made alliances with Atahualpa's enemies and took the emperor captive after a decisive victory at Cajamarca on November 16, 1532. Atahualpa had his followers turn over a vast ransom of more than twenty tons of gold and silver to Pizarro in exchange for his freedom. The Spanish took the treasure but did not free Atahualpa. He was executed on August 29, 1533. The Spanish established the viceroyalty of Peru to govern its new territory in South America.

A number of factors allowed Cortés and Pizarro to succeed in conquering two of the great civilizations of the Americas including steel weapons, horses, and written language. Perhaps their greatest advantage was their inadvertent introduction of deadly diseases to New World populations. Smallpox, bubonic plague, and other diseases were introduced into Native populations that had no natural immunity to them. Some scholars estimate that up to 90% of Native populations died as a result. Epidemics wiped out entire villages and left many Native groups unable to resist Spanish conquest. As the Spanish solidified their control of New Spain and South America, mining and plantation agriculture became the most important economic activities. At first, some Native Americans were enslaved to serve as the labor force in mines and on

plantations. However, their numbers rapidly declined due to disease and cruel treatment by the Spanish.⁷ This forced the Spanish to turn to a new source of labor: importing enslaved Africans. Other European countries including Portugal, France, and Great Britain would also enslave Africans as a source for labor in their New World colonies. Ultimately, over twelve million Africans were kidnapped and transported to the Americas between the 16th and 19th centuries.⁸

The introduction of European diseases into North America had a profound effect on the native peoples. Diseases such as smallpox and flu were likely introduced in the early 1500s by European fishermen exploiting the incredibly rich fishing grounds of the Grand Banks off the coast of Newfoundland. The fishermen probably came into contact with Native Americans when coming ashore to replenish their supplies or preserve their catch. The newly introduced diseases quickly spread from coastal populations to interior regions. The arrival of permanent settlers from Britain in the early 1600s only intensified the process. The tremendous loss of life caused by these epidemics caused massive changes in Native American societies. In the southeast, scholars believe that epidemic diseases brought an end to the great Mississippian, or mound-building societies, that had flourished in the fertile river valleys. Survivors began to band together and form new tribes.

The second great force of change for Native Americans in the colonial era was the introduction of chattel slavery. Slavery existed in most Native American societies prior

⁷ For more information on the conquest of the Aztecs and Incas, please see *Guns, Germs and Steel* by Jared Diamond. For more information on the role of disease, please see, *The Columbian Exchange: Biological and Cultural Consequences of 1492* by Alfred Crosby.

⁸ The website <http://www.slavevoyages.org/> contains a wealth of information on the transAtlantic slave trade including searchable databases of slave ship voyages and the names of enslaved people transported.

to European contact but in a very different form. Native American slaves were generally prisoners of war or debtors, who could earn their freedom in a variety of ways. Importantly, their children were not considered to be slaves. In chattel slavery, the slave was seen as the personal property of the master and could be bought or sold like any other form of property. Chattel slaves were enslaved for life and the children of a female slave were also considered to be slaves. European settlers wanted slave laborers to fill the pressing need for labor in the colonies. Colonists would arm one group of Native Americans with guns and supply them with ammunition in exchange for slaves. The armed groups would then raid unarmed communities to acquire slaves. This led the unarmed communities to seek weapons for protection which also had to be paid for in slaves. The introduction of large scale slave raiding in North America caused massive shifts in power among Native Americans. Some groups moved repeatedly in order avoid slavery while other groups simply disappeared from the historical record as the twin forces of disease and slavery decimated their societies.⁹

Tennessee's native societies were transformed by the forces of disease and slavery in the period following DeSoto's expedition in 1541. For example, some scholars believe the name Tennessee comes from the Yuchi word "Tana-tsee" meaning a place where rivers come together. Other scholars dispute this origin for Tennessee and indeed find no hard evidence that a tribe known as the Yuchi ever lived in the region now known as Tennessee. What is clear is that by the time British traders ventured into present day Tennessee in the early 1700s, the region was under the control of the Cherokee, Creek, Chickasaw, and Shawnee.

⁹ Robbie Ethridge. "English Trade in Deerskins and Indian Slaves." New Georgia Encyclopedia. 02 October 2017. Web. <https://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/articles/history-archaeology/english-trade-deerskins-and-indian-slaves> accessed 07 June 2018.

Cherokee

The Cherokee occupied territory that covered present-day East Tennessee, western North Carolina, and northern Georgia. Unlike their neighbors the Creeks and Chickasaws, who speak Muskogean languages, the Cherokee speak an Iroquoian language. This indicates that the Cherokee migrated to the southeast before the arrival of Europeans. Like all Native Americans, the Cherokee were impacted by European diseases and slave-trading practices. However, the Appalachian Mountains provided the Cherokee with some protection from slave-raiding parties. The Cherokee towns took in many refugees and soon formed the allied towns often described by British traders and soldiers: the Overhill Towns, the Middle Towns, the Out Towns, the Valley Towns, and the Lower Towns.¹⁰ The Overhill Towns were located along the Little Tennessee River in present day Monroe and Blount counties.

Cherokee political organization puzzled the British who were used to European style monarchies in which one person, usually male, ruled a territory. Cherokee government was much more complex. Individual towns were ruled through democratic consensus and led by war chiefs, peace chiefs, and priests.¹¹ Additionally, the towns sometimes worked together as part of a Cherokee nation or confederation but other times would take different paths due, in part, to their geographic locations.¹² The British also had trouble understanding the prominent role that women played in Cherokee society.

¹⁰ Robbie Ethridge. "English Trade in Deerskins and Indian Slaves." New Georgia Encyclopedia. 02 October 2017. Web. <https://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/articles/history-archaeology/english-trade-deerskins-and-indian-slaves> accessed 07 June 2018.

¹¹ William L. Anderson and Ruth Y. Wetmore, "Cherokee Origins and First European Contact." Encyclopedia of North Carolina. 2006. <https://www.ncpedia.org/cherokee/origins> accessed Web. 07 June 2018.

¹² Boulware, Tyler. "Cherokee Indians." New Georgia Encyclopedia. 20 February 2018. Web. 07 June 2018.

Cherokee society was matrilineal, meaning that family ties and political status came through the mother. Fields and property passed from mothers to daughters, and Cherokee women had a voice in political decisions as well. Cherokee women could also divorce their husbands.¹³

The Cherokee religious and world view emphasized the need for balance and harmony with the natural world and with other Cherokee. The idea of balance strongly influenced the Cherokee legal system. Before 1800, Cherokee justice was based on the “blood law” or “law of revenge.”¹⁴ Blood law was similar to the Old Testament concept of “an eye for an eye.” For example, if a member of the Bird Clan killed a member of the Turtle Clan, the Turtle Clan could demand the life of a member of the Bird Clan.

Cherokee society was transformed by the arrival of British traders in the late 1600s. In order to acquire European goods, especially guns, the Cherokee became important players in the deerskin trade. British traders moved to the Cherokee towns and often married Cherokee women to solidify their place in Cherokee society. For example, Chief John Ross’s maternal grandfather and father were both white traders who settled among the Cherokee.¹⁵ By the 1740s, deerskins were South Carolina’s second greatest export behind rice. By 1747, the deerskins exported had an estimated worth of

¹³ William L. Anderson and Ruth Y. Wetmore, “Cherokee Origins and First European Contact.” Encyclopedia of North Carolina. 2006. <https://www.ncpedia.org/cherokee/origins> accessed Web. 07 June 2018.

¹⁴ Bob L. Blackburn. “From Blood Revenge to the Lighthorsemen: Evolution of Law Enforcement Institutions among the Five Civilized Tribes to 1861.” American Indian Law Review Vol. 8, No. 1 (1980), pp. 49-63. Web <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20068138>. 07 June 2018.

¹⁵ Bob L. Blackburn. “From Blood Revenge to the Lighthorsemen: Evolution of Law Enforcement Institutions among the Five Civilized Tribes to 1861.” American Indian Law Review Vol. 8, No. 1 (1980), pp. 49-63. Web <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20068138>. 07 June 2018.

£57,143 sterling.¹⁶ South Carolina's colonial government set the exchange rate for goods and deerskins; in 1751, a blanket was worth 3 buckskins or 6 doe skins.¹⁷ Many believe that the use of the slang term "bucks" to refer to money is a legacy of the colonial deerskin trade.

However, the relationship between the British and the Cherokee was volatile and fluctuated between periods of peaceful trade and warfare. Colonial records show many instances of Native Americans complaining to the British officials that they were being cheated by the traders, while the traders complained that the prices were set so low that they made no profit from the trade. In 1730, English adventurer Sir Alexander Cuming arrived in South Carolina with the intention of re-establishing trade with the Cherokee. Cuming may have been acting on orders from King George II, or he may have been inserting himself into the situation in a bid to gain wealth and prestige.¹⁸ In any event, Cuming travelled into Cherokee territory and convinced them to recognize the authority of the king. Cuming endorsed the Cherokee Chief Moytoy as "emperor" of the Cherokee; a leader who would henceforth represent the Cherokee in all negotiations with the British. Cuming also extended an invitation for seven Cherokee to visit England and renew the treaty with the king.¹⁹ The Cherokee delegation, including Attakullakulla, known to the English as Little Carpenter, renewed the treaty known as the Articles of

¹⁶ Mark D. Groover. "Deerskin Trade." South Carolina Encyclopedia. May 17, 2016. <http://www.scencyclopedia.org/sce/entries/deerskin-trade/> accessed Web. 07 June 2018.

¹⁷ Vickie Rozema. "Lists of the Prices of Goods." *Cherokee Voices: Early Accounts of Cherokee Life in the East*. (Winston-Salem NC: John F. Blair, 2002.) 18-19. It is extremely difficult to accurately convert historical totals into modern money, however a rough estimate is that South Carolina's 1757 deerskin trade would be worth \$12 million in today's money.

¹⁸ Ian McGibney. "Cuming, Alexander." North Carolina Encyclopedia. 2013. <https://www.ncpedia.org/biography/cuming-alexander> accessed Web. 12 June 2018.

¹⁹ James Mooney. (1900) *Myths of the Cherokee and Sacred Formulas of the Cherokees*. Reprint. (Nashville: Charles and Randy Elder Publishers, 1980.), 35.

Friendship and Commerce before returning to South Carolina in September.²⁰ Treaties such as the Articles of Friendship and Commerce were part of the British plan to maintain their colonies and access to raw materials in North America despite a strong French presence on the continent. The British also traded with the Creeks and Chickasaws who had some settlements in present day Tennessee. The Creeks and Chickasaws were centered further south in present day Alabama and Mississippi respectively. The Shawnee hunted in Middle Tennessee, but mainly lived north of the Ohio River.

French and Indian War

Britain and France competed for land and resources in North America throughout the 1600's and early 1700's. Both nations wanted access to valuable natural resources, especially furs. In Europe, furs and skins were used for making clothing, hats, and other items; beaver fur was especially valuable because it was waterproof. The British claimed land along the North American coast and along Hudson's Bay. The French claimed the lands along the St. Lawrence River, Great Lakes, and Mississippi River. As both nations expanded their settlements in the Ohio River Valley, conflict ensued. In 1755, British General Braddock was defeated by a force of both French and Native American troops while attempting to reach Fort Duquesne. This led the British to declare war on France in 1756. The fighting that took place in North America was known as the French and Indian War.

²⁰ Ian McGibney. "Cuming, Alexander." North Carolina Encyclopedia. 2013. <https://www.ncpedia.org/biography/cuming-alexander> accessed Web. 12 June 2018.

During the French and Indian War (1754-1763) both the British and the French depended on their Native American allies to help them fight in North America. This was especially important as the two European nations were also fighting in Europe, Cuba, the West Indies, India, and the Philippines. The more widespread conflict is known as the Seven Years' War. Frontier warfare between European settlers and Native Americans led to increased anger and violence toward all Native Americans. Despite seeking Native American tribes as allies, the British misunderstood Native American culture, looked on Native Americans as uncivilized, and often treated their allies poorly. The Cherokee had been strong allies of the British in the years leading up to the French and Indian War, however, a number of events during the conflict led to a break down in the alliance between the Cherokee and British.

Fort Loudoun

In 1756, the British began to build Fort Loudoun near the Cherokee town of Chota. The Cherokee were pleased to have the fort as protection against attacks from the French and their Native American allies. However, the military alliance between the Cherokee and the British began to sour after the fort's construction began. A group of Cherokee travelled north in February 1756 to fight the Shawnee alongside two hundred Virginian troops.²¹ Conditions were brutal, and a lack of supplies forced the group to kill their horses. When the returning Cherokee encountered roaming horses on their way home, they took the horses reasoning that it was only fair since their own horses were lost while serving the interests of the colonists. However, the colonists did not share the

²¹ James Mooney. (1900) *Myths of the Cherokee and Sacred Formulas of the Cherokees*. Reprint. (Nashville: Charles and Randy Elder Publishers, 1980.), 41.

Cherokee point of view, and they pursued the Cherokee and killed several men. Seeking vengeance, young warriors then attacked and killed several backcountry settlers in South Carolina.²² For the Cherokee, these deaths were justified under the concept of “blood law” which demanded that one death be balanced with another.

South Carolina Governor Lyttleton demanded that every Cherokee who had taken part in the attacks be surrendered for execution, including the chiefs of Citico and Tellico. Though the Cherokee wanted to avoid all-out war on the frontier, they could not hand over their leaders.²³ A group of thirty-eight Cherokee leaders, including Oconostota, traveled to South Carolina in 1759 to seek peace with Governor Lyttleton, but he instead had them imprisoned at Fort Prince George. This action angered the Cherokee; even enraging Peace Chief Attakullakulla who had strongly supported the British. Attakullakulla arranged the release of the three most prominent captives, including the war leader Oconostota, by agreeing to turn over the Cherokee men who had killed the white settlers. When Fort Prince George’s commander, Richard Coytmore, refused to release the remaining prisoners, Oconostota’s warriors killed him. In revenge, the soldiers in the fort killed the remaining Cherokee prisoners. After the deaths of the Cherokee prisoners, the Cherokee near Fort Loudoun surrounded the fort and cut off the soldiers’ supply of food. After a five month siege, Captain Paul Demere was forced to surrender to the Cherokee on August 7, 1760; the terms of surrender stipulated that the Cherokee promised to allow the soldiers and their families to leave in peace as long as the troops left their cannons and ammunition at the fort.

²² James Mooney. (1900) *Myths of the Cherokee and Sacred Formulas of the Cherokees*. Reprint. (Nashville: Charles and Randy Elder Publishers, 1980.), 41.

²³ James Mooney. (1900) *Myths of the Cherokee and Sacred Formulas of the Cherokees*. Reprint. (Nashville: Charles and Randy Elder Publishers, 1980.), 42.

However, the British tried to hide the cannons and ammunition before leaving. This angered the Cherokee who then attacked the retreating soldiers on August 10, 1760. The Cherokee killed twenty-three soldiers, and three women, and took one hundred twenty hostages. The Cherokee viewed the massacre as justified since the British had killed Cherokee prisoners at Fort Prince George and had not kept the terms of the surrender.

By this point, the British had won several important victories against the French in the north including capturing Quebec, the French capital. This allowed the British to focus on the Cherokee, sending two thousand troops into Cherokee territory where they destroyed fifteen towns and the Cherokee food supply for winter. By 1762, the Cherokee surrendered and peace was restored, but hard feelings lingered. The next year, in 1763, the war between Britain and France officially ended with the Treaty of Paris. As a result of the French and Indian War, France lost all its territories in North America except for a few islands in the Caribbean. Spain conceded Florida to the British but gained the French lands west of the Mississippi River. Britain gained all of France's lands east of the Mississippi River. Native Americans who had sided with the French feared how they would be treated by the British. After years of fighting France, the British found themselves victorious and deeply in debt. The British knew that continued warfare with Native Americans would further increase the debt. Therefore, they issued the Proclamation of 1763 which said that no British subject could settle west of the Appalachian Mountains. However, many settlers simply ignored the law and continued to move west onto Cherokee lands.

Longhunters and Explorers

Until 1750, the rugged Appalachian Mountains served as a very effective barrier to the westward expansion of the colonies. In that year, English-born physician-turned-land speculator Dr. Thomas Walker made a monumental discovery. While working for the Loyal Company of Virginia, Walker led an expedition southward along the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains, and discovered the Cumberland Gap. Cumberland Gap, a natural passage through the mountains, became a gateway to the West for generations of explorers and settlers. Through that gateway flooded a diverse group of individuals known as longhunters. These hunters, enticed by circulating rumors of bountiful game across the mountains, embarked on hunting expeditions typically lasting six to seven months, setting out in October and returning in April or May. The longhunters were responsible for the majority of geographical knowledge the American colonists accumulated about the Trans-Appalachian West. As tales of their adventures spread throughout the colonies, the longhunters attracted a new element, land speculators. Companies which bought and sold land looked anxiously to the unspoiled, unclaimed wilderness west of the mountains, and with the discovery of the Cumberland Gap saw their opportunity. These companies began hiring longhunters as surveyors to map the Trans-Appalachian lands while on hunting expeditions. The most famous of these hunters was Daniel Boone, who would ultimately explore and map vast swaths of Northeast Tennessee and southern Kentucky while working for land speculator Richard Henderson.

Settlement of Tennessee

Tennessee's first permanent white settler, William Bean, established a small settlement along the Watauga branch of the Holston River in 1769. Other settlers followed, including James Robertson and John Sevier. The Watauga Settlement found itself in difficult circumstances when a survey revealed that it was outside the boundaries of Virginia and in violation of the Proclamation of 1763. Whether the settlers had truly believed their settlement to be in Virginia or had decided to skirt the law is debatable.²⁴ In any event, the government ordered the settlers off Cherokee land. The settlers, unwilling to give up the community they had worked to establish, decided to strike a deal with the Cherokee. The Watauga settlers arranged to lease the land from the Cherokee for a period of ten years. However, the Wataugans were still beyond the boundary of any organized government. To solve this problem they created the Watauga Association in 1772. This group of white, male settlers worked together to create a system of laws for their settlement based on the laws of Virginia.²⁵ The laws were written in a document called the Watauga Compact. The settlement had five elected officials called commissioners who were in charge of recording legal documents such as land titles and enforcing the law.

The Watauga Association made no claims of independence from Great Britain. Even so, the Wataugans were under the authority of no other government and thus represent the first independent white government in the British colonies. In 1774, Lord Dunmore, the royal governor of Virginia, wrote to the British official in charge of the

²⁴ Jeff Biggers. *The United States of Appalachia*. (Berkeley: Counterpoint, 2006), 52.

²⁵ Jeff Biggers. *The United States of Appalachia*. (Berkeley: Counterpoint, 2006), 54.

Americas about the Wataugans. He described the Wataugans' refusal to leave their lands, their agreement with the Cherokee, and their extra-legal government. Further, Dunmore stated that the Wataugans' state formation "sets a dangerous example to the people of America, of forming governments distinct from and independent of his majesty's authority."²⁶

With the aid of Boone's exploration reports, Richard Henderson formulated a plan to purchase huge amounts of land from the Cherokee in order to establish his own colony. Completely ignoring the Proclamation of 1763, Henderson completed the Transylvania Purchase in March 1775 at Sycamore Shoals. The Cherokee gave up their claims to the Cumberland River Valley and most of modern Kentucky in exchange for trade goods valued at £10,000. Inspired by Henderson's Transylvania Purchase, the Wataugans also purchased their land from the Cherokee for £2,000.²⁷ As part of the agreement, white settlers would be allowed the use of a path through the Cumberland Gap. Immediately, Henderson dispatched Boone and a team of 30 axmen to carve a path through the heavily forested area. By April, Boone's team had completed the path which was known as the Wilderness Road.²⁸ Though Henderson's Transylvania Purchase was later largely invalidated by the Virginia assembly, it did lead to the creation of the Cumberland Settlement.

With the carving out of a safe pathway through the Cumberland Gap, settlers began to pour into the western regions. While groups such as Bean and the Wataugans remained relatively close to home in the eastern portions of the West, other pioneers

²⁶ Jeff Biggers. *The United States of Appalachia*. (Berkeley: Counterpoint, 2006), 57.

²⁷ David L. Cockrell. "Watauga Settlement." North Carolina Encyclopedia. 2013. <https://www.ncpedia.org/watauga-settlement> accessed Web. 12 June 2018.

²⁸ Michael Toomey. "Daniel Boone." Tennessee Encyclopedia, March 7, 2018. <https://tennesseeencyclopedia.net/entries/daniel-boone/> accessed 12 June 2018.

pushed further into the frontier. Thomas Sharpe Spencer, a longhunter renowned for his enormous physical strength and stature, traveled as far as the Cumberland River in what is now Middle Tennessee. In 1776, Spencer and a small party of companions built several cabins and planted the first crop along the Cumberland River. Though most of the party returned to the east, Spencer remained in the area until 1779, famously spending his final winter along the river living in a hollowed out sycamore tree.²⁹ Though forced to abandon his initial venture, Spencer returned in the winter of 1779-1780 as part of the expedition commissioned by Richard Henderson and led by Capt. James Robertson and Col. John Donelson with the intent of founding a permanent settlement along the Cumberland River.

Life on the Frontier

Many different factors motivated the settlers who crossed the Appalachian Mountains into the future state of Tennessee. The most important factor was economic opportunity in the forms of trade, farmland, and land speculation. While tensions with the Cherokee remained high, the potential profits from trade lured many people to the west. Nathaniel Gist, father of Sequoyah, explored the region with his father in the early 1750's and established strong ties with the Cherokee. Gist eventually set up a trading post on the Long Island of the Holston River.³⁰ Glowing reports of the fertile land from longhunters and explorers such as Daniel Boone also encouraged people to move west. Finally, men like Richard Henderson and, later, William Blount saw an opportunity to

²⁹ Walter Durham. "Thomas S. Spencer." Tennessee Encyclopedia, March 1, 2018.
<https://tennesseeencyclopedia.net/entries/thomas-sharp-spencer/> accessed 12 June 2018.

³⁰ Jeff Biggers. *The United States of Appalachia*. (Berkeley: Counterpoint, 2006), 32-33.

make fortunes through land speculation. Speculators purchased land at low prices with the hope that they could see the land double or triple in value within a few years.

Another factor that motivated settlement of the west was the desire to escape high taxes and supposedly corrupt colonial governments. The Regulator movement in western North Carolina challenged the colonial government by intimidating and harassing colonial officials considered to be corrupt. North Carolina Governor Tryon sent the militia to enforce the law which led to the Battle of Alamance.³¹ The Regulators lost the battle, and many of the survivors moved west rather than submit to the government.³² The westbound settlers also had to deal with the arrival of murderers, horse thieves, and other criminals who fled across the mountains to escape prosecution by colonial governments.³³ In addition, many enslaved Africans and African Americans were brought to the settlements by their owners. These men and women faced the same dangers as the other settlers and played an important role in the eventual success of the settlements.³⁴

Most of Tennessee's early settlers came from North Carolina, Pennsylvania or Virginia with their belongings carefully packed in a Conestoga or Virginia Road Wagon. These heavy wagons had high curved sides which prevented cargo from sliding out on steep mountain slopes and functioned like boats when fording rivers.³⁵ Once across the mountains, settlers often turned to the area's rivers as an easy way to continue their journey west. In 1779, John Donelson led a group of flatboats down the Tennessee

³¹ ANCHOR. "The Regulators." North Carolina Encyclopedia <https://www.ncpedia.org/anchor/regulators> accessed 12 June 2018.

³² Jeff Biggers. *The United States of Appalachia*. (Berkeley: Counterpoint,2006), 52.

³³ Jeff Biggers. *The United States of Appalachia*. (Berkeley: Counterpoint,2006), 55.

³⁴ Jeff Biggers. *The United States of Appalachia*. (Berkeley: Counterpoint,2006), 50-51.

³⁵ National Museum of American History. "Conestoga Wagon." Smithsonian. http://americanhistory.si.edu/collections/search/object/nmah_842999 accessed 12 June 2018.

River and up the Cumberland River to join James Robertson at the future site of Nashville. Settlers brought essential items such as seeds for planting and tools for building cabins in the wilderness. Cattle, pigs, and other animals were driven along with the wagons or transported in cages. Weapons and ammunition were also vital for protection against both wild animals and hostile Native Americans. Wealthier families often brought luxury items such as fine china or silver.

Once settlers arrived at a suitable location, the hard work of creating a homestead in the wilderness began. Trees were cut and notched to build a one-room log cabin. Kitchens were usually separate buildings because of the risk of fire. As families prospered, cabins were enlarged and glass windows were added.³⁶ In the early frontier period, many settlers enclosed their homes within a sturdy log wall for protection. These forts, or “stations,” became places of refuge during attacks and also provided travelers with a place to rest, acquire information, and resupply as necessary. Sites like James White’s Fort in Knoxville and Mansker’s Station in Goodlettsville interpret these early frontier dwellings and community centers.

Because life on the frontier was difficult, many settlers came in large groups including members of extended families; other families moved into established communities where they already had family or friends. James Robertson cleared fields near the Watauga settlement on the recommendation of his friend Daniel Boone and then brought his family from North Carolina.³⁷ Robertson later moved his family to the Cumberland Settlement near present day Nashville. Frontiersmen like Robertson and Boone spent a great deal of time away from home. As a result, frontier women often

³⁶ Tennessee4me. “Housing.” Tennessee State Museum. http://www.tn4me.org/article.cfm/a_id/250/minor_id/79/major_id/25/era_id/3 accessed 12 June 2018.

³⁷ Jeff Biggers. *The United States of Appalachia*. (Berkeley: Counterpoint,2006), 50.

had to do the planting, plowing, and harvesting in addition to preparing food, weaving cloth, making clothes, preserving food, making soap and candles, caring for children, and many other daily tasks. Slavery on the frontier was much different than the plantation slavery that developed in the 1800s. Frontier slaves worked alongside their masters in the fields and helped defend settlements from Native American attacks.³⁸

Settlers and the Cherokee

The relationship between the Cherokee and the settlers of Tennessee was as complex and diverse as the individuals involved. Attakullakulla, Cherokee peace chief and diplomat, played a key role in Tennessee's early history. By the time of the Transylvania and Watauga Purchases, Attakullakulla was an old man who had spent his life trying to find a way for the Cherokee and Europeans to peacefully coexist. Felix Walker, a young adventurer present during the Transylvania Purchase, described Attakullakulla in detail.

Attakullakulla, the Indian name, known to the white people by the name of Little Carpenter- in allusion, say the Indians, to his deep, artful, and ingenious diplomatic abilities, ably demonstrated in negotiating treaties with the white people, and influence in their national councils; like as a white carpenter could make every notch and joint fit in wood, so he could bring all his views to fill and fit their places

³⁸ Tennessee4me. "Slavery." Tennessee State Museum. http://www.tn4me.org/article.cfm/a_id/260/minor_id/81/major_id/25/era_id/3 accessed 12 June 2018.

in the political machinery of his nation. He was the most celebrated and influential Indian among all the tribes then known.³⁹

Attakullakulla first appeared in the historical record as one of the seven Cherokee who visited England to renew a treaty known as the Articles of Friendship and Commerce in 1730. Attakullakulla helped to create a military alliance between the Cherokee and the British during the French and Indian War and tried to stop the hostilities that arose when the alliance broke down. It was also Attakullakulla who negotiated the treaty that ended the war between the British and Cherokee that broke out after the Fort Loudoun Massacre. Attakullakulla was one of several Cherokee leaders who agreed to the Transylvania and Watauga Purchases in March 1775. The Watauga Purchase codified the purchase of the Watauga lands previously leased from the Cherokee. Attakullakulla's name and mark are clearly visible on the Watauga Purchase document held by the Tennessee State Library and Archives.

Another Cherokee leader who favored peace with the settlers was the Beloved Woman Nanye-hi who was also known by the English name Nancy Ward. Nanye-hi was born in the town of Chota in 1738. Her mother was Tame Doe, the sister of Attakullakulla. In 1755, Nanye-hi accompanied her husband into battle with the Creek. When he was killed in the battle, Nanye-hi took up his gun, rallied the other warriors, and led a charge which resulted in victory for the Cherokee.⁴⁰ Because of her bravery, Nanye-hi was chosen as Ghighau or Beloved Woman. The Beloved Woman played an important role in Cherokee society. She was leader of the Council of Women, served

³⁹ Felix Walker. "Narrative of an Adventure in Kentucky in the Year 1775." *The Western Journal and Civilian*. 11 (1854): 392-394. Internet Archive June 23, 2016.
<https://archive.org/details/westernjournala00cobbgoog>

⁴⁰ David Ray Smith. "Nancy Ward." Tennessee Encyclopedia. March 1, 2018.
<https://tennesseeencyclopedia.net/entries/nancy-ward/> accessed 13 June 2018.

on the Council of Chiefs, and decided the fate of prisoners.⁴¹ It was in this role, that Nanye-hi saved the life of Lydia Bean, wife of Tennessee's first settler William Bean, in 1775.⁴² Lydia Bean taught Nanye-hi how to make butter and cheese before her return to her home. Nanye-hi was later credited with introducing dairying to the Cherokee.⁴³

Nanye-hi married English trader Bryant Ward in the late 1750's and was thereafter known to the English as Nancy Ward. Nanye-hi, like her uncle Attakullakulla, favored peace between the Cherokee and the settlers. She twice sent warnings to John Sevier of planned attacks by the Cherokee. She also spoke during the treaty negotiations in 1781 and again in 1785 as the Treaty of Hopewell was being negotiated.⁴⁴

Unlike Attakullakulla and Nanye-hi, Cherokee leader Dragging Canoe opposed attempts at peace with the settlers and bitterly resented the loss of Cherokee lands. Dragging Canoe, the son of Attakullakulla, had the heart of a warrior from an early age. Legend says that as a young boy he begged his father to allow him to accompany a war party. Attakullakulla refused, but the determined boy hid in a canoe where he was discovered. Attakullakulla told him that he could go, if he could carry the canoe to the water. The boy could not lift the heavy canoe, so he began to drag it towards the water. Thereafter, he was known as Dragging Canoe.⁴⁵ Dragging Canoe vehemently opposed the Transylvania and Watauga Purchases. He saw the start of the American Revolution

⁴¹ David Ray Smith. "Nancy Ward." Tennessee Encyclopedia. March 1, 2018. <https://tennesseencyclopedia.net/entries/nancy-ward/> accessed 13 June 2018.

⁴² James Mooney. (1900) *Myths of the Cherokee and Sacred Formulas of the Cherokees*. Reprint. (Nashville: Charles and Randy Elder Publishers, 1980.), 204.

⁴³ David Ray Smith. "Nancy Ward." Tennessee Encyclopedia. March 1, 2018. <https://tennesseencyclopedia.net/entries/nancy-ward/> accessed 13 June 2018.

⁴⁴ David Ray Smith. "Nancy Ward." Tennessee Encyclopedia. March 1, 2018. <https://tennesseencyclopedia.net/entries/nancy-ward/> accessed 13 June 2018.

⁴⁵ Patricia Bernard Ezell. "Dragging Canoe." Tennessee Encyclopedia. October 8, 2017. <https://tennesseencyclopedia.net/entries/dragging-canoe/> accessed 13 June 2018.

as an opportunity to drive the settlers off of Cherokee lands. The Cherokee were defeated and ceded more land in the treaties that followed. Dragging Canoe refused to accept defeat and left the Cherokee towns with likeminded warriors. They established a new town on Chickamauga Creek near present-day Chattanooga.⁴⁶ Creek and Shawnee warriors joined the group which eventually expanded to five towns. The Chickamauga continued to attack settlements in East and Middle Tennessee until their towns were destroyed in 1794.⁴⁷

Tennessee during the American Revolution

The American Revolution brought profound changes to the settlements in East Tennessee. The settlers supported the Patriot cause, but, the outbreak of fighting at Lexington and Concord, which came only one month after the Transylvania and Watauga Purchases, made the settlers realize how precarious their situation was. The settlers in the Watauga, Nolichucky, Carter's Valley, and other settlements formed a Committee of Safety and later took the name Washington District.⁴⁸

The British intended to use Native American allies to attack settlements along the frontier and began arming warriors from the Great Lakes to the Gulf of Mexico with hatchets, guns, and ammunition.⁴⁹ The Cherokee and many other tribes sided with the British for a number of reasons. First, since the removal of the French at the end of the

⁴⁶ James Mooney. (1900) *Myths of the Cherokee and Sacred Formulas of the Cherokees*. Reprint. (Nashville: Charles and Randy Elder Publishers, 1980.), 54.

⁴⁷ James Mooney. (1900) *Myths of the Cherokee and Sacred Formulas of the Cherokees*. Reprint. (Nashville: Charles and Randy Elder Publishers, 1980.), 54.

⁴⁸ Paul Bergeron, Stephen Ash and Jeanette Keith. *Tennesseans and Their History*. (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1999), 24.

⁴⁹ James Mooney. (1900) *Myths of the Cherokee and Sacred Formulas of the Cherokees*. Reprint. (Nashville: Charles and Randy Elder Publishers, 1980.), 47.

French and Indian War, the British had been the key trading partner of most tribes. Secondly, many Native Americans had close personal or family ties with British traders and Indian agents. For example, John Stuart, British Indian Agent during the Revolution, was spared during the Fort Loudoun Massacre because of his friendship with Attakullakulla. Lastly, the British government had made clear efforts to stop the flow of settlers into Native American lands.

When the British government repeated its demand that the settlers abandon their lands or face war with the Cherokee in the spring of 1776, the settlers took action. The settlers asked North Carolina for help in a document known as the Watauga Petition. North Carolina eventually agreed to assist the Washington District. However, before help could arrive, Dragging Canoe and his allies launched a series of attacks against the settlements in 1776 known as the Cherokee War of 1776. The settlers were warned of the attack by Nanye-hi and had time to prepare.⁵⁰ The settlers defeated the force led by Dragging Canoe at the Battle of Long Island. The Wataugans held out against a two week siege of their fort at Sycamore Shoals near present-day Kingsport. The Carter's Valley settlers fled allowing the Cherokee to easily raid and burn the homesteads there.⁵¹ Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia retaliated by sending militia forces to attack Cherokee towns in the region. By 1777, more than fifty Cherokee towns had been burned and hundreds of Cherokee had been killed or sold into slavery. The Treaty of Long Island negotiated in 1777 ended the hostilities, but also created a rift

⁵⁰ James Mooney. (1900) *Myths of the Cherokee and Sacred Formulas of the Cherokees*. Reprint. (Nashville: Charles and Randy Elder Publishers, 1980.), 47-48.

⁵¹ Paul Bergeron, Stephen Ash and Jeanette Keith. *Tennesseans and Their History*. (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1999), 27-28.

within the Cherokee which resulted in Dragging Canoe and others moving south to Chickamauga.⁵²

The Battle of King's Mountain

By 1780 the British had turned their attention to the southern colonies, in part because of the large number of loyalists, or Tories, who lived there. The British won an impressive victory over the Patriot force at Camden in August of 1780. Cornwallis, the British commander, then sent Major Patrick Ferguson to suppress rebellion in the backcountry including the Washington District settlements. Ferguson selected a prisoner to carry a message back to the rebels across the mountains, "If you do not desist from your opposition to the British arms, I will march over the mountains, hang your leaders, and lay waste to your country with fire and sword."⁵³ Upon hearing of Ferguson's threat, Isaac Shelby, leader of the North Carolina mountain militia, immediately consulted with John Sevier at Sycamore Shoals. Shelby and Sevier decided to combine their forces and take the battle across the mountains to Ferguson. The men agreed to meet at Sycamore Shoals along the Watauga River on September 25, 1780. Eventually over 1,000 militia or Overmountain Men, including some from Virginia, gathered at Sycamore Shoals, present-day Elizabethton. Before leaving, the men heard an inspirational sermon from Presbyterian minister and educator Samuel Doak. Doak reminded the men of the biblical story of Gideon whose small force

⁵² James Mooney. (1900) *Myths of the Cherokee and Sacred Formulas of the Cherokees*. Reprint. (Nashville: Charles and Randy Elder Publishers, 1980.), 53-54.

⁵³ Jeff Biggers. *The United States of Appalachia*. (Berkeley: Counterpoint, 2006), 70.

defeated the larger Midianite army.⁵⁴ Armed with inspiration from Doak and five hundred pounds of gunpowder, the men began the difficult march across the mountains. Two defectors from Sevier's command warned Ferguson of the approaching force. Ferguson ordered his 1,100 men, who were part of the Tory militia, to march to King's Mountain, just south of the border between North Carolina and South Carolina. Upon arriving Ferguson reportedly said, "I am on King's Mountain, I am king of that mountain, and God Almighty could not drive me from it."⁵⁵ The Overmountain Men reached King's Mountain on October 7, 1780. The force encircled the mountain and began to fight their way up using the trees for cover giving their war cry as they advanced. Both these tactics had been learned from years of warfare with the Cherokee. Ferguson's men fired as the Patriots advanced, but because they were aiming downhill, most of the shots went over their heads. Patriot sharpshooters methodically annihilated the British forces with their deadly accurate long rifles. Within an hour, the Patriots reached the top of the mountain. Knowing defeat was inevitable, Ferguson mounted his horse in an attempt to fight his way through the lines and escape. Ferguson was fatally shot with several men claiming to have fired the fatal shot.⁵⁶ The remainder of Ferguson's forces surrendered. The Overmountain Men had won a resounding and important victory. Following the battle, thirty of the prisoners were tried for atrocities committed prior to the battle, and nine were hanged before Shelby stopped the proceedings. The victory at King's Mountain had two important effects. First, news of the victory reenergized the Patriot spirit throughout the colonies. Years later Thomas Jefferson referred to it as the "joyful

⁵⁴ Jeff Biggers. *The United States of Appalachia*. (Berkeley: Counterpoint,2006), 74.

⁵⁵ Randall Jones.. "The Overmountain Men and the Battle of Kings Mountain." North Carolina Encyclopedia <https://www.ncpedia.org/anchor/overmountain-men-and-battle> accessed 13 June 2018.

⁵⁶ Jeff Biggers. *The United States of Appalachia*. (Berkeley: Counterpoint,2006), 78.

annunciation of that turn of the tide of success which terminated the Revolutionary War, with the seal of independence.”⁵⁷ Secondly, it caused Cornwallis to reevaluate his strategy and retreat to South Carolina and ultimately to Yorktown. British general Sir Henry Clinton later called the Battle of King’s Mountain, “The first link in a chain of evils that followed each other in regular succession until they at last ended in the total loss of America.”⁵⁸

The Cumberland Settlement

When Richard Henderson purchased roughly twenty million acres of land in what is now Middle Tennessee and Kentucky in 1775, he was operating solely on his own authority. While Henderson was not able to convince Virginia and North Carolina to recognize his entire claim, he was able to claim the region near the Cumberland River in Middle Tennessee.⁵⁹ In 1779, Henderson planned a settlement in order to take advantage of the region’s rich natural resources including fertile soil and abundant animal life. Henderson’s settlement was named the Cumberland Settlement for the Cumberland River which served as the main transportation route in the region. Henderson gave the difficult task of establishing the settlement to James Robertson and John Donelson. Donelson was an experienced land surveyor and veteran of the Cherokee War. James Robertson was one of first Watauga settlers and had served as one of the five magistrates established under the Watauga Compact. Robertson had

⁵⁷ Jeff Biggers. *The United States of Appalachia*. (Berkeley: Counterpoint,2006), 79.

⁵⁸ Jeff Biggers. *The United States of Appalachia*. (Berkeley: Counterpoint,2006), 80.

⁵⁹ Terry Weeks. “ Transylvania Purchase.” Tennessee Encyclopedia. October 8, 2017. <https://tennesseeencyclopedia.net/entries/transylvania-purchase/> accessed 13 June 2018.

also served as commander of Fort Watauga during the Cherokee War.⁶⁰ Henderson had a two part plan for settling the Cumberland region. First, Robertson and a small group of Wataugans traveled overland in the spring of 1779 to select a site for the settlement near French Lick. French Lick was a natural salt lick along the Cumberland River that had been the location of a French trading post. In December of 1779, Robertson and the men returned and built cabins and Fort Nashborough in preparation for the arrival of Donelson's party in the spring of 1780.⁶¹ Donelson's party of thirty families had the task of transporting the supplies the new settlement would need to survive including farm tools and household goods. He was also responsible for the safety of many women and children including his and Robertson's families. Additionally, over thirty enslaved people were part of the group. Because of the difficulty in crossing the Cumberland Plateau, Donelson's party took an indirect route by way of the Holston, Tennessee, Ohio, and Cumberland rivers. Donelson's group left Watauga on December 22, 1779. Donelson kept a journal during the four month journey in which he recorded a number of difficulties the travelers faced including: extreme cold, rough waters, an outbreak of smallpox, and fighting with the Chickamauga.⁶² On April 24, 1780, Donelson's party arrived at the settlement after traveling over one thousand miles. Like Watauga before it, the Cumberland Settlement existed outside the boundaries and government of any colony. Therefore, on May 1, 1780, Richard Henderson drew up the Cumberland Compact. The compact set up a form of government similar to that of the

⁶⁰ Terry Weeks. "James Robertson." Tennessee Encyclopedia. October 8, 2017. <https://tennesseeencyclopedia.net/entries/james-robertson/> accessed 13 June 2018

⁶¹ Terry Weeks. "James Robertson." Tennessee Encyclopedia. October 8, 2017. <https://tennesseeencyclopedia.net/entries/james-robertson/> accessed 13 June 2018

⁶² Paul Bergeron, Stephen Ash and Jeanette Keith. *Tennesseans and Their History*. (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1999), 30-32.

Watauga Association. Each station in the settlement was allowed to elect men to serve on the twelve person committee known at the “Tribunal of Notables.” These “Notables” then carried out the functions of government including enforcing law and order and recording land claims.⁶³ The Cumberland Compact served as the basis for government in the settlement until North Carolina created Davidson County in 1783.⁶⁴ Almost immediately, the settlement came under attack from the Chickamauga. In April 1781, they attacked Fort Nashborough and drove off the horses found outside the walls. A short time later, the settlers gave chase, but were attacked by a large party of Native Americans. According to legend, Charlotte Robertson, wife of James Robertson, saved the men by releasing the hunting dogs inside the fort to attack the Native Americans. The men were able to return to the fort, but eleven men were killed in what came to be called the Battle of the Bluffs.⁶⁵ The danger eventually led Donelson to move his family and slaves back to the relative safety of Kentucky. Donelson continued to travel to the area and was killed along the Barren River in 1785.⁶⁶ James Robertson stayed in the Cumberland Settlement, but lost two brothers and two sons to the fighting before it ended in 1794. Robertson is often called the “Father of Middle Tennessee” for his contributions to the region’s development.⁶⁷

⁶³ Kenneth Fieth. “Cumberland Compact.” Tennessee Encyclopedia. October 8, 2017. <https://tennesseeencyclopedia.net/entries/cumberland-compact/> accessed 13 June 2018

⁶⁴ Paul Bergeron, Stephen Ash and Jeanette Keith. *Tennesseans and Their History*. (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1999), 34.

⁶⁵ Carole Stanford Bucy. “Charlotte Reeves Robertson.” Tennessee Encyclopedia. October 8, 2017. <https://tennesseeencyclopedia.net/entries/charlotte-reeves-robertson/> accessed 13 June 2018

⁶⁶ Anne-Leslie Owens. “John Donelson.” Tennessee Encyclopedia. October 8, 2017. <https://tennesseeencyclopedia.net/entries/john-donelson/> accessed 13 June 2018

⁶⁷ Terry Weeks. “James Robertson.” Tennessee Encyclopedia. October 8, 2017. <https://tennesseeencyclopedia.net/entries/james-robertson/> accessed 13 June 2018

State of Franklin

Even before the Revolutionary War was over, Continental Congress began to plan for independence by creating a new government in a document called the Articles of Confederation. The government created by the Articles reflected the fear many leaders had of a powerful central government. The Articles of Confederation were approved by Continental Congress in 1777, but it immediately ran into difficulty in getting the states to ratify the document. The main issue that held up ratification was land claims west of the Appalachians. A number of states, including Virginia and Massachusetts, claimed that their charters gave them vast areas of land west of the Appalachians. Maryland refused to ratify unless the states gave up their claims and accepted that the western lands belonged to the United States government. Eventually, Virginia gave up its claim, Maryland ratified the document, and the Articles of Confederation became the first constitution of the United States.⁶⁸ Nonetheless, the weaknesses in the Articles of Confederation and the issue of western territories would continue to plague the new nation and led to the creation and failure of the State of Franklin.

Due to the Confederation government's inability to collect taxes from states, one of the most effective ways for states to pay their debts was to cede, or give up, their western land holdings to the national government. However, in 1783, North Carolina opened up its western lands for private sale through what has been called "The Land Grab Act". Settlers and wealthy land speculators flooded the region known today as East Tennessee. When the land was later ceded to the national government, the

⁶⁸ Eric Foner and John A. Garraty editors. *The Reader's Companion to American History*. (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 1991) *History.com*, <https://www.history.com/topics/articles-of-confederation> accessed 14 June 2018.

settlers and speculators kept their private property rights in the region.⁶⁹ Meanwhile, residents in the region faced numerous hardships without aid from either North Carolina's government or the national government. They built their own schools and courthouses, and defended themselves from Indian attacks with no support. By August of 1784, many of the settlers did not feel that they owed allegiance to North Carolina, refused to pay taxes, and began speaking of forming their own independent state. The state was ultimately named Franklin in honor of Benjamin Franklin, whose support the settlers wanted to secure. In May 1785, the Confederation Congress heard William Cocke's petition asking for Franklin's admission to the Union as an independent state. A vote was held but Franklin supporters failed to reach the two-thirds majority required under the Articles of Confederation, so legally Franklin remained part of North Carolina. Nevertheless, Franklin continued to act independently. The unrecognized state signed its own treaties with the Cherokee in June 1785, establishing new territorial boundaries and opening up more land for Franklin's citizens to settle.⁷⁰ However, due to Franklin's lack of legal status, the treaties were unrecognized by the national government. The national government negotiated its own treaty, the Treaty of Hopewell, with the Cherokee in November 1785, which established different boundaries. This created many problems for settlers who had moved onto lands they believed they could legally claim only to be told that they were illegally living on lands belonging to the Cherokee. The conflicting treaties led to intense fighting between the Cherokee and the settlers. Disagreements between the Franklin settlers themselves were an important reason for

⁶⁹ Michael Toomey. "State of Franklin" Tennessee Encyclopedia, March 7, 2018. <https://tennesseeencyclopedia.net/entries/state-of-franklin/> accessed 14 June 2018

⁷⁰ Paul Bergeron, Stephen Ash and Jeanette Keith. *Tennesseans and Their History*. (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1999), 41.

the state's failure. John Tipton, a well-known landowner in the region became the leader of the anti Franklin settlers in Washington County. Tipton was insulted that the popular John Sevier was chosen as Franklin's governor instead of him. In August 1786, Tipton began convincing people that they needed to give up on independence and return their loyalty to North Carolina.⁷¹ In February 1788, Tipton and his small number of followers seized several of John Sevier's slaves as payment for North Carolina taxes while Sevier was away. When Sevier returned, he went to Tipton's farm to recover the slaves and a battle broke out between John Sevier's forces and Tipton's followers.⁷² The battle was broken up by the arrival of a North Carolina militia brigade, but the fighting among the settlers continued. Though the Franklinites managed to beat back the Cherokee, the state all but collapsed as laws went un-enforced, taxes went uncollected, and courts failed to meet during its final fifteen months of existence. The State of Franklin officially ceased to exist in June 1789 when the new United States Constitution replaced the Articles of Confederation and North Carolina officially ceded its western land, including the Franklin territory, to the new federal government. The newly ceded land was quickly established as the federal Territory South of the River Ohio commonly known as the Southwest Territory.

William Blount and Statehood

William Blount, the eldest son of Jacob Blount, Sr., and Barbara Gray Blount, was born in Bertie County, North Carolina, on March 26, 1749. He was active in the family

⁷¹ Michael Toomey. "State of Franklin" Tennessee Encyclopedia, March 7, 2018. <https://tennesseeencyclopedia.net/entries/state-of-franklin/> accessed 14 June 2018

⁷² Paul Bergeron, Stephen Ash and Jeanette Keith. *Tennesseans and Their History*. (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1999), 44-45.

mercantile business and later served in the American Revolution as paymaster of the 3rd North Carolina regiment and for the state militia.⁷³ Blount believed the future of the new nation lay beyond the Appalachian Mountains so he and friend John Sevier accumulated as much western land as possible by buying up land grants given to Revolutionary War veterans.⁷⁴ In 1787, he was appointed as a North Carolina delegate to the Constitutional Convention. Blount did not actively participate in the convention, but he did attend the sessions and signed the new U.S. Constitution.⁷⁵ It was during this time that Blount came to the attention of George Washington. In 1789, Washington appointed Blount governor of the new territory. The Territory South of the River Ohio was commonly called the Southwest Territory, and comprised all of present day Tennessee, stretching from the crest of the Appalachian Mountains to the Mississippi River. From Blount's perspective it was an ideal assignment. By this time he had acquired a million acres of western land, and it is likely that through partnerships he controlled much more. In fact Blount had already determined that he must move west in order to protect his vast holdings; his appointment as governor made the task easier. Blount arrived in the territory in October 1790. He lived first in Northeast Tennessee at William Cobb's home, Rocky Mount.⁷⁶ One aspect of Blount's job as governor was to resolve disputes with the Cherokee. In June 1791, Blount called the Cherokee to a treaty at White's Fort on the Holston River, in present-day Knoxville. The Treaty of the Holston, signed in early July, called for additional Cherokee land cessions and set a

⁷³Terry Weeks. "William Blount." Tennessee Encyclopedia. October 8, 2017.
<https://tennesseeencyclopedia.net/entries/william-blount/> accessed 13 June 2018

⁷⁴ Terry Weeks. "William Blount." Tennessee Encyclopedia. October 8, 2017.
<https://tennesseeencyclopedia.net/entries/william-blount/> accessed 13 June 2018

⁷⁵ Stanley Folmsbee, "William Blount." North Carolina Encyclopedia. 1979.
<https://www.ncpedia.org/biography/blount-william> accessed 14 June 2018.

⁷⁶ Terry Weeks. "William Blount." Tennessee Encyclopedia. October 8, 2017.
<https://tennesseeencyclopedia.net/entries/william-blount/> accessed 13 June 2018.

new boundary. However, the Cherokee were unhappy because they believed Blount had treated them unfairly.⁷⁷ Blount later built a home near the site of the treaty signing along the Tennessee River known as Blount Mansion. Despite the successes of the treaty, militant Cherokees and Creeks continued to attack settlers who wanted protection from the army. Blount's superiors refused and Blount was left looking for a solution. Blount decided that the best solution was for Tennessee to become a state. Thousands of settlers had entered Tennessee by following the Holston River Valley from Virginia or through the Cumberland Gap. When a 1795 census showed a population of more than 60,000 people which was large enough to satisfy the statehood requirements of the Northwest Ordinance, Blount sent a delegate to Congress with instructions to ask for immediate admission.⁷⁸ The delegate soon discovered that the Federalist-controlled Congress was certain that angry westerners would vote against the Federalist candidate in the upcoming presidential election. Therefore, Congress did not take any steps to admit Tennessee to statehood. To get around this obstacle, Blount decided to proceed without the blessing of Congress. Blount called for a constitutional convention and when the new document was approved, Blount simply declared that the new Tennessee state constitution was operational.⁷⁹ On June 1, 1796, Tennessee became a state. John Sevier, former governor of the State of Franklin was elected as Tennessee's first governor. Blount held office as one of the first Senators from Tennessee. He hoped to use this position to manipulate land prices in the west in his

⁷⁷ Terry Weeks. "William Blount." Tennessee Encyclopedia. October 8, 2017. <https://tennesseeencyclopedia.net/entries/william-blount/> accessed 13 June 2018.

⁷⁸ Paul Bergeron, Stephen Ash and Jeanette Keith. *Tennesseans and Their History*. (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1999), 62-63.

⁷⁹ Paul Bergeron, Stephen Ash and Jeanette Keith. *Tennesseans and Their History*. (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1999), 69.

favor. He was convinced that land values would rise if the British controlled the port of New Orleans, and so he arranged for Creek and Cherokee Indians to assist the British in capturing the city from the Spanish. Blount's traitorous plot was discovered, and in August 1797, he was promptly expelled from the Senate. Blount returned to Tennessee, where he remained popular.⁸⁰ He was elected to the state senate and served in this capacity until September 1799. In March of the following year, William Blount complained of a chill and died after a six-day illness. He is buried at the First Presbyterian Church in Knoxville.

John Sevier

Perhaps no person had a greater effect on Tennessee's early history than John Sevier. John Sevier was born in Virginia in 1745 to successful farmer Valentine Sevier. Sevier's ancestors were French Huguenots who left France for England and changed their name from Xavier to Sevier.⁸¹ Like many frontier children, John Sevier had a limited formal education, but learned a great deal about farming, trading, and running a tavern from his father.⁸² At the age of sixteen, John Sevier married Sarah Hawkins. In 1773, Sevier moved his family to Watauga and became a commissioner of the Watauga Association.⁸³ Sevier, who was known as Nolichucky Jack for the river he lived along,

⁸⁰ Stanley Folmsbee, "William Blount." North Carolina Encyclopedia. 1979. <https://www.ncpedia.org/biography/blount-william> accessed 14 June 2018.

⁸¹ Robert E. Corlew. "John Sevier." Tennessee Encyclopedia. October 8, 2017. <http://tennesseencyclopedia.net/entries/john-sevier/> accessed 14 June 2018.

⁸² Robert E. Corlew. "John Sevier." North Carolina Encyclopedia. 1994. <https://www.ncpedia.org/biography/sevier-john> accessed 14 June 2018.

⁸³ Robert E. Corlew. "John Sevier." North Carolina Encyclopedia. 1994. <https://www.ncpedia.org/biography/sevier-john> accessed 14 June 2018

was a fierce fighter and took part in many battles against the Cherokee. In one famous instance, he rescued his future wife Bonny Kate by pulling her over Fort Watauga's walls to safety when she was caught outside during an attack by the Cherokee. When North Carolina formed the Washington District in 1776, Sevier represented the district. Sevier's reputation as a military leader was greatly increased by his leading role as a militia general in the Overmountain Men's victory at King's Mountain in 1780.⁸⁴

In 1784, settlers in the region took the bold step of creating the new State of Franklin with John Sevier as its governor. The State of Franklin failed and Sevier was arrested for treason for his role in the state, but never prosecuted. Instead, he was elected to the North Carolina Senate and later was elected to the United States Congress.⁸⁵ John Sevier played an important role in the Southwest Territory and was elected as Tennessee's first governor in 1796. He would ultimately serve six terms as governor. Sevier was later elected to represent Tennessee in Congress. In 1815, while on a survey mission, he died and was buried along the Tallapoosa River in modern day Alabama. Sevier's body was later exhumed and reburied on the courthouse lawn in Knoxville in 1887.⁸⁶

War of 1812 and the Battle of Horseshoe Bend

The outbreak of the French Revolution in 1789 had profound consequences for the United States. Many Americans cheered the Revolutionaries who were motivated by

⁸⁴ Robert E. Corlew. "John Sevier." Tennessee Encyclopedia. October 8, 2017. <http://tennesseencyclopedia.net/entries/john-sevier/> accessed 14 June 2018.

⁸⁵ Robert E. Corlew. "John Sevier." North Carolina Encyclopedia. 1994. <https://www.ncpedia.org/biography/sevier-john> accessed 14 June 2018

⁸⁶ Robert E. Corlew. "John Sevier." North Carolina Encyclopedia. 1994. <https://www.ncpedia.org/biography/sevier-john> accessed 14 June 2018

many of the same ideals of liberty that had inspired the American Revolution.⁸⁷

However, the French Revolution quickly became much more radical than the American Revolution. French Revolutionaries seized the property of the middle and upper classes and executed hundreds of people, including King Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette. France's declaration of war against Britain in 1793 put President Washington in a difficult position. Secretary of State Thomas Jefferson thought that the United States should support France because France had aided the Patriots during the American Revolution and because a French victory would weaken Britain's hold on North America. Conversely, Secretary of the Treasury Alexander Hamilton advocated support for Britain, the United States' most important trading partner.⁸⁸ Washington choose a policy of neutrality, but the British eventually began seizing American ships that traded with France and impressing or forcing American sailors to serve in the British navy.⁸⁹

The conflict between Britain and France continued to have important consequences for the United States, including Napoleon's decision to sell Louisiana to the United States in 1803. Presidents Washington, Adams, and Jefferson all dealt with foreign policy issues stemming from the war between Britain and France, but were able to avoid war with both countries. By the time James Madison took office in 1809, tensions between the United States and Britain had skyrocketed due to the continued British practice of searching and seizing American ships and arming Native Americans, led by Tecumseh, along the frontier. On June 18, 1812, Madison, urged on by War Hawks

⁸⁷ Joyce Appleby et al. *The American Journey*. (Columbus, Ohio: Glencoe McGraw Hill, 2003), 264-65.

⁸⁸ Joyce Appleby et al. *The American Journey*. (Columbus, Ohio: Glencoe McGraw Hill, 2003), 264-65.

⁸⁹ "Answering the Call: Tennesseans in the War of 1812." Tennessee State Library and Archives. 2014. <https://sharetn.gov.tnsosfiles.com/tsla/exhibits/1812/index.htm>. Accessed 5 July, 2018.

Henry Clay, John C. Calhoun, and Felix Grundy, asked Congress to declare war on Britain.⁹⁰ While the United States dealt with British forces along the Great Lakes, Tennessee's militiamen, led by Andrew Jackson, fought in Alabama against members of the Creek nation who were part of Tecumseh's alliance.

Following Tennessee's admission to the Union in 1796, settlement in Middle and West Tennessee increased. The increase in white settlers led to tensions with the Creeks who lived in a loose confederation of towns south of Tennessee's border. In 1811, the Shawnee leader Tecumseh visited the southeastern tribes as part of his plan to build an alliance of tribes in order to stop the spread of white settlements.⁹¹ While the southern Creeks were uninterested in Tecumseh's plan, many people in the northern towns supported it. A few warriors joined Tecumseh and the British in fighting the Americans at the beginning of the War of 1812. The War of 1812 triggered a civil war in the Creek towns. The Creeks friendly to the United States were known as the White Stick Creeks, and those hostile to the United States were known as the Red Sticks.⁹² When members of the Mississippi militia attacked the Red Stick Creeks in 1813, they retaliated by killing 250 settlers at Fort Mims, located just north of Mobile, Alabama. The Fort Mims Massacre, as it was called, caused the civil war to expand into a larger conflict between the Creeks and forces from Tennessee, Georgia, and Mississippi.⁹³

Andrew Jackson was selected to lead Tennessee's volunteer militia. He was first ordered to New Orleans, but was stopped in Natchez, Mississippi. On the march back to

⁹⁰ "Answering the Call: Tennesseans in the War of 1812." Tennessee State Library and Archives. 2014. <https://sharetn.gov.tnsosfiles.com/tsla/exhibits/1812/index.htm>. Accessed 5 July, 2018.

⁹¹ Ove Jensen, "Battle of Horseshoe Bend." Encyclopedia of Alabama. 2017. <http://www.encyclopediaofalabama.org/article/h-1044> accessed 5 July 2018.

⁹² Ove Jensen, "Battle of Horseshoe Bend." Encyclopedia of Alabama. 2017. <http://www.encyclopediaofalabama.org/article/h-1044> accessed 5 July 2018.

⁹³ Ove Jensen, "Battle of Horseshoe Bend." Encyclopedia of Alabama. 2017. <http://www.encyclopediaofalabama.org/article/h-1044> accessed 5 July 2018.

Nashville, Jackson earned the nickname “Old Hickory” by marching alongside his men in difficult conditions.⁹⁴ Following the Fort Mims Massacre, Jackson took his force of militiamen, White Stick Creeks, and allied Cherokee south into Red Stick Creek territory. By December of 1813, most of Jackson’s volunteer force was ready to return home. They believed that their one year enlistment would soon expire. However, Jackson’s thoughts differed. The conflict eventually led to a number of men being court-martialed, but the volunteers returned home.⁹⁵ Jackson’s expedition was saved by the arrival of nine hundred new recruits in January of 1814. By March, the Red Sticks had taken refuge in the Horseshoe Bend of the Tallapoosa River. The bend of the river protected the camp on the sides and to the rear. The Creeks constructed a log barricade across the peninsula where the camp was located. On March 27, Jackson launched a two pronged assault.⁹⁶ A force of American, Creek, and Cherokee warriors crossed the river downstream to attack the Red Stick village from the rear. At the same time Jackson’s force attacked the barricade using artillery fire and then a frontal assault. Young Sam Houston took part in the charge and was seriously wounded. Red Sticks who tried to escape across the river were gunned down by the Americans on the opposite shore. Approximately, eight hundred Red Stick Creeks were killed and three hundred and fifty women and children made prisoners of the White Sticks and Cherokee allies. By comparison, Jackson had only forty-nine men killed and one hundred and fifty

⁹⁴ “Answering the Call: Tennesseans in the War of 1812.” Tennessee State Library and Archives. 2014. <https://sharetn.gov.tnsosfiles.com/tsla/exhibits/1812/index.htm>. Accessed 5 July, 2018.

⁹⁵ Robert Morgan, *Lions of the West: Heroes and Villains of the Westward Expansion*. (Chapel Hill, NC: Shannon Ravenel, 2011), 78.

⁹⁶ Ove Jensen, “Battle of Horseshoe Bend.” Encyclopedia of Alabama. 2017. <http://www.encyclopediaofalabama.org/article/h-1044> accessed 5 July 2018.

four wounded.⁹⁷ The Creek War ended with the signing of the Treaty of Fort Jackson on August 9, 1814. Jackson forced the Creeks to cede twenty-three million acres of land to the United States government. The White Sticks who had fought as allies of Jackson were furious that they too had their lands taken from them.⁹⁸ Junaluska, the Cherokee chief who saved Jackson's life during the battle, later said that if he had known the Jackson would one day drive the Cherokee from their homes, he would have killed Jackson at Horseshoe Bend.⁹⁹

Following his victory over the Creeks, Andrew Jackson traveled south to New Orleans and began to strengthen the city's defenses against the British on December 1, 1814.¹⁰⁰ Jackson pieced together a defensive force that included free African Americans, Choctaws, and Tennessee, Kentucky, and Louisiana militia units. When British General Pakenham attacked the strongly fortified American position on January 8, 1815, his forces were devastated by deadly accurate fire from the American riflemen. The British suffered over three thousand casualties, including Pakenham who was killed.¹⁰¹ Conversely, Jackson's forces only lost thirteen men. Jackson's stunning victory in the Battle of New Orleans, despite occurring after the Treaty of Ghent was signed in December of 1814, filled Americans with a sense of national pride.¹⁰² The

⁹⁷ Ove Jensen, "Battle of Horseshoe Bend." Encyclopedia of Alabama. 2017. <http://www.encyclopediaofalabama.org/article/h-1044> accessed 5 July 2018.

⁹⁸ "Answering the Call: Tennesseans in the War of 1812." Tennessee State Library and Archives. 2014. <https://sharetn.gov.tnsosfiles.com/tsla/exhibits/1812/index.htm>. Accessed 5 July, 2018.

⁹⁹ Robert Morgan, *Lions of the West: Heroes and Villains of the Westward Expansion*. (Chapel Hill, NC: Shannon Ravenel, 2011), 85.

¹⁰⁰ "Answering the Call: Tennesseans in the War of 1812." Tennessee State Library and Archives. 2014. <https://sharetn.gov.tnsosfiles.com/tsla/exhibits/1812/index.htm>. Accessed 5 July, 2018.

¹⁰¹ "Answering the Call: Tennesseans in the War of 1812." Tennessee State Library and Archives. 2014. <https://sharetn.gov.tnsosfiles.com/tsla/exhibits/1812/index.htm>. Accessed 5 July, 2018.

¹⁰² "Answering the Call: Tennesseans in the War of 1812." Tennessee State Library and Archives. 2014. <https://sharetn.gov.tnsosfiles.com/tsla/exhibits/1812/index.htm>. Accessed 5 July, 2018.

Americans had proven that their victory in the American Revolution was more than happenstance.

The decisive victory at New Orleans also made Andrew Jackson a national hero. Jackson reinforced this view when he seized two Spanish forts in Florida in 1818. His actions led Spain to sign the Adams-Onís Treaty in 1819 which ceded Florida to the United States. Jackson, along with Isaac Shelby, also acquired the land between the Tennessee and Mississippi Rivers from the Choctaw in 1818.¹⁰³ The land deal was known as the Jackson Purchase. Jackson, John Overton, and James Winchester established the town of Memphis and began to encourage settlement in 1819.¹⁰⁴ Andrew Jackson's actions in Florida and land deal in west Tennessee reinforced the popular image of him as a hero of the common man.

Age of Jackson

By 1824, Andrew Jackson had served as Tennessee's first member of the House of Representatives, a Senator, a judge on Tennessee's Superior Court, and as major general of the Tennessee militia.¹⁰⁵ Jackson was nominated for the presidency in 1824, but faced a field crowded with political leaders including Henry Clay, John C. Calhoun, and John Quincy Adams. Jackson won more popular and electoral votes than his

¹⁰³ Blythe Semmer. "Jackson Purchase." Tennessee Encyclopedia. October 8, 2017. <https://tennesseeencyclopedia.net/entries/jackson-purchase/> accessed 5 July 2018.

¹⁰⁴ Blythe Semmer. "Jackson Purchase." Tennessee Encyclopedia. October 8, 2017. <https://tennesseeencyclopedia.net/entries/jackson-purchase/> accessed 5 July 2018.

¹⁰⁵ Harold D. Moser, "Andrew Jackson." Tennessee Encyclopedia. October 8, 2017. <https://tennesseeencyclopedia.net/entries/andrew-jackson/> accessed 5 July, 2018.

competitors, but not enough to win the presidency.¹⁰⁶ The task of deciding who would be the next president fell to the House of Representatives. Henry Clay, knowing that his chances of being selected were slim, went to John Quincy Adams with a proposal. Clay would use his influence in the House of Representatives to help Adams win the presidency, if Adams made Clay Secretary of State in return. Adams agreed and became the nation's sixth president in 1825. Jackson's supporters labelled the arrangement the "corrupt bargain" and used it as ammunition against many of the policies Adams hoped to enact.

The election of 1828 was a rematch between Adams, whose popularity was waning, and Jackson. The election featured a great deal of mudslinging from both sides. Jackson and his supporters reminded voters of the "corrupt bargain" and accused Adams of betraying the citizens. Adams and the National Republicans retaliated by bringing up Jackson's duels, the questionable nature of his wife Rachel's divorce from her first husband, and his decision to execute six men for desertion during the War of 1812.¹⁰⁷ Andrew Jackson ultimately won by a landslide thanks to southern and western voters. However, his victory was tempered by loss. His beloved wife Rachel, who had been particularly affected by the mudslinging of the campaign, died in December of 1828 before seeing her husband take office.¹⁰⁸

Jackson's two terms as president were marked by a number of controversies including his use of the "spoils system," his war on the National Bank, and the South Carolina Nullification Crisis. For Tennesseans, Jackson's Indian Removal Act and the

¹⁰⁶ Harold D. Moser, "Andrew Jackson." Tennessee Encyclopedia. October 8, 2017. <https://tennesseeencyclopedia.net/entries/andrew-jackson/> accessed 5 July, 2017.

¹⁰⁷ Joyce Appleby et al. *The American Journey*. (Columbus, Ohio: Glencoe McGraw Hill, 2003), 337.

¹⁰⁸ Harold D. Moser, "Andrew Jackson." Tennessee Encyclopedia. October 8, 2017. <https://tennesseeencyclopedia.net/entries/andrew-jackson/> accessed 5 July, 2017.

subsequent removal of the Cherokee people had the most significant consequences. From the earliest days of settlement in Northeast Tennessee, tensions had always existed between the settlers and their Cherokee neighbors. Between 1775 and 1819, the Cherokee agreed to a series of land treaties that reduced their holdings to a small corner in Southeast Tennessee along the Georgia border. However, the Cherokee faced increasing pressure from both Tennessee and Georgia to abandon their lands entirely. As early as 1817, some Cherokee had voluntarily relocated to Arkansas.¹⁰⁹ Most Cherokee wanted to remain on their lands so Cherokee leaders took steps to ensure their people were not forced out. Many Cherokee had already adopted customs from their white neighbors including the practice of slavery. Sequoyah's invention of a written language and the translation of the Bible into Cherokee helped spread Christianity to a significant proportion of the population.¹¹⁰ In 1827, Cherokee leaders meet at New Echota in Polk County to write a constitution for the Cherokee Nation based on the United States Constitution.¹¹¹ John Ross and other leaders believed these steps would protect the Cherokee from removal.

Events beyond his control soon proved the belief to be false. Two momentous events occurred in 1828. The first was the discovery of gold on Cherokee lands in north Georgia. Georgia residents had already been pushing for Cherokee removal, but the discovery of gold made removal even more urgent in the eyes of Georgia's government

¹⁰⁹ "A Brief History of the Trail of Tears." Cherokee Nation. 2018. <http://www.cherokee.org/About-The-Nation/History/Trail-of-Tears/A-Brief-History-of-the-Trail-of-Tears> accessed 5 July 2018.

¹¹⁰ Tim Garrison, "'Cherokee Removal.'" New Georgia Encyclopedia. 2017. <https://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/articles/history-archaeology/cherokee-removal> accessed 5 July 2018.

¹¹¹ Tim Garrison, "'Cherokee Removal.'" New Georgia Encyclopedia. 2017. <https://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/articles/history-archaeology/cherokee-removal> accessed 5 July 2018

officials.¹¹² The second event was the election of President Andrew Jackson. Jackson had fought with the Cherokee and White Stick Creeks against the Red Stick Creeks in the Creek War of 1813-1814. However, in the Treaty of Fort Jackson, he forced the White Stick Creeks, his allies, to cede land along with the Red Sticks. The Creek nation was forced to cede twenty-three million acres of land in Alabama and Georgia.¹¹³ Jackson had also played a key role in the Jackson Purchase of 1818 in which the Chickasaw gave up their land claims in West Tennessee.¹¹⁴

In 1830, Jackson introduced his Indian Removal Act to Congress. Jackson argued the removal helped Native Americans by removing them from the corrupting influences of white society and allowing them to maintain their distinctive way of life in the face of inevitable loss of land.¹¹⁵ Few among the Cherokee agreed with his thinking. The act was challenged in Congress by Henry Clay and Daniel Webster, members of the Whig party. David Crockett, a fellow Tennessean also spoke against the act.¹¹⁶ As principal chief, John Ross's strategy was to challenge removal through the courts. Though the Cherokee lost the 1831 Supreme Court case *Cherokee v. State of Georgia*, they won in *Worcester v. Georgia* the following year. In this case, missionary Samuel Worcester had

¹¹² Tim Garrison, "Cherokee Removal." New Georgia Encyclopedia. 2017. <https://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/articles/history-archaeology/cherokee-removal> accessed 5 July 2018

¹¹³ Robert Morgan, *Lions of the West: Heroes and Villains of the Westward Expansion*. (Chapel Hill, NC: Shannon Ravenel, 2011), 88.

¹¹⁴ Blythe Semmer. "Jackson Purchase." Tennessee Encyclopedia. October 8, 2017. <https://tennesseeencyclopedia.net/entries/jackson-purchase/> accessed 5 July 2018.

¹¹⁵ Robert Morgan, *Lions of the West: Heroes and Villains of the Westward Expansion*. (Chapel Hill, NC: Shannon Ravenel, 2011), 166.

¹¹⁶ Robert Morgan, *Lions of the West: Heroes and Villains of the Westward Expansion*. (Chapel Hill, NC: Shannon Ravenel, 2011), 139.

challenged Georgia's claim to Cherokee lands.¹¹⁷ In the majority opinion John Marshall wrote that Indian nations were ""distinct, independent political communities retaining their original, natural rights" and that the Cherokee Nation "remained a separate, sovereign nation with a legitimate title to its national territory."¹¹⁸ However, President Jackson refused to enforce the decision. He is said to have remarked, "John Marshall has made his decision, now let him enforce it."

While John Ross continued to fight removal, other Cherokee leaders came to see taking the money offered by the United States and moving west voluntarily as the best option for the Cherokee. In 1835, Major Ridge and other Cherokee leaders signed the Treaty of New Echota without Ross's knowledge or consent.¹¹⁹ Major Ridge had long been a leader in the Cherokee nation and had worked with Ross to establish a three branch government for the Cherokee based on the government of the United States.¹²⁰ In the treaty, Ridge and the other Treaty Party members ceded all Cherokee lands east of the Mississippi River. In return, the Cherokee received a grant of land in Indian Territory and five million dollars. Ross protested that Ridge and the others did not have the authority to sign the treaty, and Ross's allies in Congress tried to block it; however the treaty passed in the Senate by one vote. Ross continued to resist removal until 1838 when General Scott, under orders from President Martin van Buren, arrived to begin

¹¹⁷ Tim Garrison, "Cherokee Removal." New Georgia Encyclopedia. 2017. <https://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/articles/history-archaeology/cherokee-removal> accessed 5 July 2018.

¹¹⁸ Tim Garrison, "Worcester v. Georgia." New Georgia Encyclopedia. 2017. <https://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/articles/government-politics/worcester-v-georgia-1832> accessed 5 July 2018.

¹¹⁹ Tim Garrison, "Cherokee Removal." New Georgia Encyclopedia. 2017. <https://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/articles/history-archaeology/cherokee-removal> accessed 5 July 2018.

¹²⁰ Taylor-Colbert, Alice. "Major Ridge (ca. 1771-1839)." New Georgia Encyclopedia. 31 January 2017. <https://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/articles/history-archaeology/major-ridge-ca-1771-1839>. 11 December 2018.

rounding up the Cherokee.¹²¹ A small number of Cherokee were able to evade the military and remained in the mountains of Western North Carolina on the land leased to them by William Holland Thomas. Eventually, that community was recognized as the Eastern Band of the Cherokee, and the lands they occupied became a reservation.

Cherokee men, women, and children were forced from their homes with nothing but the clothes on their backs. The land and possessions they were forced to leave behind were immediately seized by white settlers.¹²² Militia troops marched the Cherokee to stockades where they spent a miserable summer with very little protection from the weather. Sickness spread quickly in crowded stockades, and many Cherokee died. When the Cherokee finally began the long journey west, they faced freezing temperatures and very little food.¹²³ John Burnett, a soldier on the journey, later wrote that "I have known as many as twenty-two of them to die in one night of pneumonia due to ill treatment, cold, and exposure."¹²⁴ John Ross's wife, Quatie, died after giving away her only blanket. She was one of an estimated 4,000 to 5,000 Cherokee who died on the "trail where they cried," commonly known as the Trail of Tears.

¹²¹ Tim Garrison, "Cherokee Removal." New Georgia Encyclopedia. 2017. <https://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/articles/history-archaeology/cherokee-removal> accessed 5 July 2018.

¹²² Tim Garrison, "Cherokee Removal." New Georgia Encyclopedia. 2017. <https://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/articles/history-archaeology/cherokee-removal> accessed 5 July 2018.

¹²³ "A Brief History of the Trail of Tears." Cherokee Nation. 2018. <http://www.cherokee.org/About-The-Nation/History/Trail-of-Tears/A-Brief-History-of-the-Trail-of-Tears> accessed 5 July 2018.

¹²⁴ John Burnett, Trail of Tears Account." Digital History. 2016. http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/disp_textbook.cfm?smtID=3&psid=1147 accessed 6 July 2018.

Sequoyah

Sequoyah was born in the Cherokee town of Tuskegee along the Tennessee River in what is now Monroe County. Sequoyah was the son of a Virginia trader named Nathaniel Gist and Wureth, the daughter of a prominent Cherokee family.¹²⁵ While he was sometimes known by his English name of George Gist, Sequoyah was raised in the traditions of the Cherokee with his identity and status coming from his mother's clan. Sequoyah was a silversmith, farmer, and soldier.¹²⁶ He fought with the Cherokee allied to the United States at the Battle of Horseshoe Bend. Sequoyah had already become interested in "talking leaves" as Native Americans referred to written language before the war. While away from home during the Creek War, he saw that white soldiers could read orders, write home, and keep journals. He recognized how beneficial it could be to the Cherokee to have their own written language.¹²⁷ He spent the next ten years perfecting his language even though many of his friends and family ridiculed him. He was even accused of witchcraft by some Cherokee who believed that creating a written language was wrong.¹²⁸ In 1821, Sequoyah and his daughter publicly demonstrated the language for the first time. Within five years, literacy rates among the Cherokee far surpassed their white neighbors.¹²⁹ Sequoyah created a symbol to represent each of

¹²⁵ Kevin Smith. "Sequoyah." Tennessee Encyclopedia. 2018.
<https://tennesseencyclopedia.net/entries/sequoyah/> accessed 6 July 2018.

¹²⁶ Wadley, Ted. "Sequoyah." New Georgia Encyclopedia. 2017
<https://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/articles/history-archaeology/sequoyah-ca-1770-ca-1840> 6 July 2018.

¹²⁷ Kevin Smith. "Sequoyah." Tennessee Encyclopedia. 2018.
<https://tennesseencyclopedia.net/entries/sequoyah/> accessed 6 July 2018.

¹²⁸ Kevin Smith. "Sequoyah." Tennessee Encyclopedia. 2018.
<https://tennesseencyclopedia.net/entries/sequoyah/> accessed 6 July 2018

¹²⁹ Kevin Smith. "Sequoyah." Tennessee Encyclopedia. 2018.
<https://tennesseencyclopedia.net/entries/sequoyah/> accessed 6 July 2018

the 85 syllables in the Cherokee language. This made the Cherokee language easier to learn than English, where the same letter can represent multiple sounds. Another factor in the language's success was missionary Samuel Worcester's work to make the language easily printable.¹³⁰ Worcester believed that translating the Bible into native languages was an excellent way to spread the gospel. He urged his missionary board in Boston to send him a hand printing press in 1827. On February 21, 1828, the first issue of the Cherokee Phoenix was published.¹³¹ The newspaper was published with parallel columns of English and Cherokee. By 1843, more than four million pages had been printed using Sequoyah's "talking leaves." Using the syllabary, Cherokee could write letters home, record their history, and use the language for government purposes. During the Indian Removal crisis, Cherokee literacy and conversion to Christianity were cited by their allies as evidence of the successful civilization of the Cherokee nation.¹³²

John Ross

John Ross was born in Turkey Town on the Coosa River in Alabama in 1790. Ross's father was a Scotch trader and his mother was Cherokee, although her father was also a Scotch immigrant. His family then moved to Lookout Mountain where his father ran a store.¹³³ The store served the Cherokee community and allowed Ross to learn about

¹³⁰ Wadley, Ted. "Sequoyah." New Georgia Encyclopedia. 2017
<https://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/articles/history-archaeology/sequoyah-ca-1770-ca-1840> 6 July 2018.

¹³¹ Kevin Smith. "Sequoyah." Tennessee Encyclopedia. 2018.
<https://tennesseeencyclopedia.net/entries/sequoyah/> accessed 6 July 2018.

¹³² Kevin Smith. "Sequoyah." Tennessee Encyclopedia. 2018.
<https://tennesseeencyclopedia.net/entries/sequoyah/> accessed 6 July 2018.

¹³³ Taylor-Colbert, Alice. "John Ross." New Georgia Encyclopedia. 2017.
<https://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/articles/history-archaeology/john-ross-1790-1866> 6 July 2018.

Cherokee customs and traditions. Like many Cherokee families of that era, Ross's family spoke English at home and practiced European traditions.¹³⁴ Ross attended school in Tennessee and married. He began to sell goods to the United States government and ran a store near present day Chattanooga on the Tennessee River. By 1827, Ross had accumulated enough wealth to begin a plantation and ferry business near the junction of the Oostanaula and Etowah rivers.¹³⁵ During this same period, the Cherokee formed the new Cherokee Nation with a constitution based on that of the United States. Ross was known for his diplomatic skills and in 1828 was chosen to lead the newly formed nation as Principal Chief.¹³⁶ At the same time, white Georgians were increasing their demand for the removal of the Cherokees from the Southeast. When gold was discovered on Cherokee land in 1828, a gold rush began and made the demands for removal even stronger.¹³⁷ In 1830, President Jackson pushed Congress to pass the Indian Removal Act. Ross believed that because the Cherokee had formed a republican government, and had the support of Whig politicians and the United States Supreme Court, they would not be removed.¹³⁸ Other Cherokee leaders, including Major Ridge, a one-time ally of Ross, saw it differently. They believed that the best hope for the Cherokee was to take the money offered by the United States and move west on their own terms. In 1835, Major Ridge and other Cherokee leaders signed the treaty of

¹³⁴ Patrice Hobbs Glass "John Ross." Tennessee Encyclopedia. 2018.
<https://tennesseencyclopedia.net/entries/john-ross/>. Accessed 6 July 2018.

¹³⁵ Taylor-Colbert, Alice. "John Ross." New Georgia Encyclopedia. 2017.
<https://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/articles/history-archaeology/john-ross-1790-1866> 6 July 2018.

¹³⁶ Patrice Hobbs Glass "John Ross." Tennessee Encyclopedia. 2018.
<https://tennesseencyclopedia.net/entries/john-ross/>. Accessed 6 July 2018.

¹³⁷ Taylor-Colbert, Alice. "John Ross." New Georgia Encyclopedia. 2017.
<https://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/articles/history-archaeology/john-ross-1790-1866> 6 July 2018.

¹³⁸ Taylor-Colbert, Alice. "John Ross." New Georgia Encyclopedia. 2017.
<https://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/articles/history-archaeology/john-ross-1790-1866> 6 July 2018.

New Echota without Ross's knowledge or consent.¹³⁹ Though Ross's allies in Congress tried to block it, the treaty passed in the Senate by one vote. Ross continued to fight removal until it became inevitable. He then negotiated with the United States government to provide for supplies along the way.¹⁴⁰ Sadly, his preparations could not prevent the horrors of the journey that came to be called the Trail of Tears. Upon reaching Indian Territory in present day Oklahoma, Ross encouraged his people to establish farms, businesses, and schools.¹⁴¹ It was a turbulent time for the Cherokee nation due to the split over removal, but Ross retained his power. When the Civil War began in 1861, Ross first supported the Confederacy, but then shifted his support to the Union.¹⁴² As with the issue of removal, the Cherokee were divided during the Civil War. Ross was re-elected by pro-union Cherokees and continued to be recognized by the United States as leader of the Cherokee. John Ross remained Principal Chief of the Cherokee until his death in 1866.¹⁴³

Tennessee Constitution of 1834

When William Blount oversaw the creation of Tennessee's constitution in 1796, Tennessee was on the frontier. By 1834, Tennessee's population had grown to almost

¹³⁹ Taylor-Colbert, Alice. "John Ross." New Georgia Encyclopedia. 2017.
<https://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/articles/history-archaeology/john-ross-1790-1866> 6 July 2018.

¹⁴⁰ Patrice Hobbs Glass "John Ross." Tennessee Encyclopedia. 2018.
<https://tennesseeencyclopedia.net/entries/john-ross/>. Accessed 6 July 2018.

¹⁴¹ Taylor-Colbert, Alice. "John Ross." New Georgia Encyclopedia. 2017.
<https://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/articles/history-archaeology/john-ross-1790-1866> 6 July 2018.

¹⁴² Taylor-Colbert, Alice. "John Ross." New Georgia Encyclopedia. 2017.
<https://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/articles/history-archaeology/john-ross-1790-1866> 6 July 2018.

¹⁴³ Taylor-Colbert, Alice. "John Ross." New Georgia Encyclopedia. 2017.
<https://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/articles/history-archaeology/john-ross-1790-1866> 6 July 2018.

700,000 and cities had developed throughout the state.¹⁴⁴ The 1796 Constitution could no longer effectively govern the state. Therefore, the Tennessee General Assembly called for a constitutional convention to meet in Nashville in 1834.¹⁴⁵ The new constitution resolved a number of problems including establishing a three branch system of government that allowed Tennessee to create a system of courts for the first time. The new constitution also changed the tax structure so that land was taxed according to its value and, for the first time, counties also had the power to tax.¹⁴⁶ Perhaps the most important changes had to do with suffrage. The requirement to own property was dropped which made many men eligible to vote for the first time. However, free black men lost their right vote which they had previously enjoyed before the word “white” was added to the franchise clause in 1834. The delegates also held a heated debate on the emancipation of slaves. Ultimately, the convention decided that the General Assembly “would have no power to pass laws for the emancipation of slaves.”¹⁴⁷ Thus, the 1834 Tennessee Constitution expanded voting rights for white men while simultaneously stripping free African American men of their right to vote and setting up legal barriers to emancipation in Tennessee that had not existed in the past.

¹⁴⁴ “The Tennessee Constitution of 1834.” Tennessee State Library and Archives. <https://tsla.tnsosfiles.com/digital/teva/intros/33662.pdf> 6 July 2018.

¹⁴⁵ “The Tennessee Constitution of 1834.” Tennessee State Library and Archives. <https://tsla.tnsosfiles.com/digital/teva/intros/33662.pdf> 6 July 2018.

¹⁴⁶ “The Tennessee Constitution of 1834.” Tennessee State Library and Archives. <https://tsla.tnsosfiles.com/digital/teva/intros/33662.pdf> 6 July 2018.

¹⁴⁷ “The Tennessee Constitution of 1834.” Tennessee State Library and Archives. <https://tsla.tnsosfiles.com/digital/teva/intros/33662.pdf> 6 July 2018.

Slavery and Cotton in Tennessee

While each enslaved person's life experience was unique, legally enslaved people were all considered to be the property of their owners. As property, enslaved people could be bought, sold, used as collateral on a loan, or bequeathed in a will. The law did not recognize the marriages of enslaved people and did little to prevent children from being sold away from their parents. The law also determined that a child's status as slave or free followed the status of his or her mother. In other words, the child of a female slave was always a slave, even if his or her father was free. Tennessee slaves were not supposed to own weapons, sell anything, or leave their master's land without explicit permission. Tennessee law also made it illegal for enslaved people to earn money to buy their freedom. After 1831, the law also required any person emancipated to leave the state within a year or face severe penalties including being returned to slavery.¹⁴⁸

In reality, while some of these laws were consistently enforced, others were mostly ignored or inconsistently enforced. For example, by the 1840's it was common practice for enslaved people living in cities to "buy their time." In this arrangement, the enslaved person was able to hire himself or herself out for wages. A portion of the wages went to the slave owner and the rest belonged to the enslaved person.¹⁴⁹ Over time, many enslaved people were able to use the money they earned to buy their freedom and the freedom of family members. For example, Sally Thomas established a very successful

¹⁴⁸ William Lloyd Imes. "The Legal Status of Free Negroes and Slaves in Tennessee." *The Journal of Negro History* 4, no. 3 (1919): Pg. 88. JSTOR database.

https://www.jstor.org/stable/2713777?seq=3#page_scan_tab_contents accessed 6 July 2018.

¹⁴⁹ William Lloyd Imes. "The Legal Status of Free Negroes and Slaves in Tennessee." *The Journal of Negro History* 4, no. 3 (1919): Pg. 88. JSTOR database.

https://www.jstor.org/stable/2713777?seq=3#page_scan_tab_contents accessed 6 July 2018.

business as a laundress in Nashville in the 1830's. She was eventually able to purchase her own freedom and that of her three sons.¹⁵⁰ Generally speaking, enslaved people who lived in urban areas had more opportunities to live and work independently from their owners than enslaved people who lived in rural areas. Additionally, enslaved people who possessed a special skill such as blacksmithing also had a better chance of earning their freedom. Sally Thomas was well known for her ability to launder expensive fabrics which made her business popular with wealthy clients.¹⁵¹

By the 1850's most of Tennessee's African American population were enslaved agricultural workers living in Middle and West Tennessee. Because East Tennessee had less land suited to large scale agriculture, there were fewer slaves there than in Middle or West Tennessee where the presence of relatively flat land and rich soil made large scale agriculture possible. In Middle Tennessee, tobacco was the most important crop. In 1860, enslaved people on the Wessyngton plantation produced 250,000 pounds of dark-fired tobacco.¹⁵² At Wessyngton, enslaved people were allowed to grow their own plots of tobacco that they worked on Sundays and in the evenings. They earned one third of the price that their owner George Washington received for the tobacco in a system similar to sharecropping.¹⁵³ However, this system was the exception, not the rule. Most enslaved people worked long hours in the master's field with little or no time for themselves. Enslaved people were subject to harsh punishments including whippings and being sold away from friends and family

¹⁵⁰ "Sally Thomas." Tennessee4me. Tennessee State Museum. http://www.tn4me.org/sapage.cfm/sa_id/172/era_id/4/major_id/21/minor_id/62/a_id/174 accessed 6 July 2018.

¹⁵¹ "Sally Thomas." Tennessee4me. Tennessee State Museum. http://www.tn4me.org/sapage.cfm/sa_id/172/era_id/4/major_id/21/minor_id/62/a_id/174 accessed 6 July 2018.

¹⁵² John F. Baker. *The Washingtons of Wessyngton Plantation*. (New York: Atria Books, 2009) 81.

¹⁵³ John F. Baker. *The Washingtons of Wessyngton Plantation*. (New York: Atria Books, 2009) 113.

members. Despite these potential punishments, enslaved people found many ways to resist. For example, Robert Cartmell often complained that on a cold day his slaves spent more time standing around a fire than baling cotton.¹⁵⁴

Following Eli Whitney's invention of the cotton gin in 1794, slavery and cotton production increased throughout the Deep South. West Tennessee became a center of cotton production after the Jackson Purchase of 1819 opened the land to white settlers. The Chickasaw sold all their lands in Tennessee and Kentucky for \$300,000.¹⁵⁵ John Overton, along with partners James Winchester and Andrew Jackson, began to develop a settlement in the area. Winchester's sons laid out the town's streets in a grid pattern based on that of Philadelphia.¹⁵⁶ Winchester referred to the Mississippi as America's Nile and suggested that the new town be named for one of ancient Egypt's most famous cities.¹⁵⁷ Despite its lofty name, many people continued to refer to the settlement as Chickasaw Bluffs. Memphis's growth was slow in the early years due to a number of factors. First, just as development was beginning in the region, a depression struck. Secondly, settlers either had to buy land from those who held the original land claims from North Carolina or simply squat on the land and risk losing it in the future.¹⁵⁸ The popular perception of Memphis as unhealthy also kept population low. The impression of ill health was seemingly verified by periodic outbreaks of dengue fever, malaria,

¹⁵⁴ "Slavery." Tennessee4me. Tennessee State Museum.

http://www.tn4me.org/minor_cat.cfm/minor_id/62/major_id/21/era_id/4 accessed 6 July 2018.

¹⁵⁵ John Finger. *Tennessee Frontiers: Three Regions in Transition*. (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press. 2001). 248.

¹⁵⁶ John Finger. *Tennessee Frontiers: Three Regions in Transition*. (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press. 2001). 251.

¹⁵⁷ John Finger. *Tennessee Frontiers: Three Regions in Transition*. (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press. 2001). 248.

¹⁵⁸ John Finger. *Tennessee Frontiers: Three Regions in Transition*. (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press. 2001). 255.

smallpox, and yellow fever.¹⁵⁹ Lastly, a sandbar near the port made docking difficult. Memphis' fortunes began to change in 1832 when the Chickasaw treaties cleared northern Mississippi of Indians and opened new lands to cotton growers. Cotton grown on the lands near Memphis was of the highest quality and consistently fetched higher prices than cotton grown in other parts of the state.¹⁶⁰ Other crops grew equally well in the fertile soil of the region including tobacco, corn, and wheat. In 1842, authorities in Memphis finally gained the upper hand over the Mississippi riverboat men who had long ignored wharf taxes. With an orderly system for controlling trade in place, the town experienced a boom in trade and population.¹⁶¹

Manifest Destiny

In the 1820's Texas was a vast unsettled territory that belonged to Spain. To encourage settlement, Spain offered large tracts of land to agents, called empresarios, who promised to bring families to settle on the land.¹⁶² American Moses Austin received a land grant in 1821, but before he could claim it, Mexico declared its independence from Spain. Mexico eventually confirmed the grant which passed to Moses' son Stephen Austin after Moses' death.¹⁶³ Austin selected three hundred families to settle the land along the Brazos and Colorado rivers. To encourage settlement, Mexico offered the land at very low prices and promised not to tax the settlers for four years. In return

¹⁵⁹ John Finger. *Tennessee Frontiers: Three Regions in Transition*. (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press. 2001). 258.

¹⁶⁰ John Finger. *Tennessee Frontiers: Three Regions in Transition*. (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press. 2001). 265.

¹⁶¹ John Finger. *Tennessee Frontiers: Three Regions in Transition*. (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press. 2001). 265.

¹⁶² Joyce Appleby et al. *The American Journey*. (Columbus, Ohio: Glencoe McGraw Hill, 2003), 363.

¹⁶³ Joyce Appleby et al. *The American Journey*. (Columbus, Ohio: Glencoe McGraw Hill, 2003), 363.

settlers were supposed to learn Spanish, obey Mexican law, and convert to Catholicism.¹⁶⁴ However, few settlers kept these promises. Mexican authorities hoped to encourage citizens from other parts of Mexico to move to Texas, but the majority of the settlers were Americans who saw the potential for growing cotton in the fertile soil of East Texas. Most of the settlers were Southerners and many immigrated with their slaves.

By 1830, the Mexican government was fearful of the growing American influence in Texas and took measures to stop it. Mexico passed laws to stop the immigration of Americans, and placed a high tariff on goods imported from the United States. These new laws, along with Mexico's decision to abolish slavery, created even more tension in Texas.¹⁶⁵ Some American settlers began to call for independence, but Austin and others looked for a peaceful resolution. A number of small scale conflicts between Texans and the Mexican military occurred between 1830 and September 1835. Due to the rising tensions, the Mexican military commander decided to retrieve cannon that had been loaned to the town of Gonzales for its defense against Native American attacks. The citizens refused to return it and a battle resulted. The Texans were able to defeat the Mexican force and considered the Battle of Gonzales as the first battle of the Texas Revolution¹⁶⁶. Following the Battle of Gonzales, Texas called for volunteers to join its army. Two Tennesseans, Sam Houston and David "Davy" Crockett, answered the call.

Houston was already a well-known figure when he moved to Texas in 1833.

Houston had served under Andrew Jackson in the Creek War and was wounded at the

¹⁶⁴ Joyce Appleby et al. *The American Journey*. (Columbus, Ohio: Glencoe McGraw Hill, 2003), 364.

¹⁶⁵ Joyce Appleby et al. *The American Journey*. (Columbus, Ohio: Glencoe McGraw Hill, 2003), 364.

¹⁶⁶ Joyce Appleby et al. *The American Journey*. (Columbus, Ohio: Glencoe McGraw Hill, 2003), 365.

Battle of Horseshoe Bend.¹⁶⁷ Jackson, impressed by Houston's courage, became his mentor and launched his political career. Houston served as Indian agent to the Cherokee, was elected to two terms in Congress, and was elected governor of Tennessee in 1827.¹⁶⁸ Houston was forced to resign the governorship in 1829 due to a marriage scandal. He then moved to Arkansas, joining his Cherokee friends and adopted family, and running a successful trading post. Economic opportunities soon drew Houston to Texas where he was selected to lead the army in 1835.¹⁶⁹

Like Houston, Crockett also fought in the Creek War under Jackson and served in Congress. However, Crockett disliked Andrew Jackson and openly opposed him on a number of issues while serving in Congress.¹⁷⁰ Crockett's opposition to Jackson's Indian Removal Act likely caused him to lose his bid for re-election in 1835. Crockett then went to Texas where he hoped to jumpstart his political career. By the time Crockett reached Texas, the revolutionaries had divided themselves into pro and anti-Jackson factions. Not surprisingly, Crockett supported the anti-Jackson faction, which opposed Houston's appointment as commander of the army.

When Houston told the men holding the Alamo, an old Spanish mission near San Antonio, to abandon it, they refused. Crockett decided to join the anti-Jackson/Houston defenders in the fort in early February.¹⁷¹ On February 23, Santa Anna, commander of the Mexican army, laid siege to the fort. William Travis sent numerous messages asking

¹⁶⁷ Robert Morgan, *Lions of the West: Heroes and Villains of the Westward Expansion*. (Chapel Hill, NC: Shannon Ravenel, 2011), 156.

¹⁶⁸ John Hoyt Williams, "Sam Houston." Tennessee Encyclopedia. 2018.
<https://tennesseeencyclopedia.net/entries/sam-houston/> Accessed 9 July, 2018

¹⁶⁹ Robert Morgan, *Lions of the West: Heroes and Villains of the Westward Expansion*. (Chapel Hill, NC: Shannon Ravenel, 2011), 175-177

¹⁷⁰ Robert Morgan, *Lions of the West: Heroes and Villains of the Westward Expansion*. (Chapel Hill, NC: Shannon Ravenel, 2011), 126, 135-137.

¹⁷¹ Robert Morgan, *Lions of the West: Heroes and Villains of the Westward Expansion*. (Chapel Hill, NC: Shannon Ravenel, 2011), 141.

for reinforcements and supplies, but none came. On March 6, 1836, Santa Anna attacked. The one hundred and fifty defenders in the Alamo held off two attempts to breach the walls by the much larger Mexican force, but were overwhelmed by the third assault. Santa Anna had ordered that the Alamo's defenders be given no quarter, meaning that all the men were to be killed.¹⁷² While sources disagree about the exact circumstances of Crockett's death, it is certain his death and the deaths of the other men at the Alamo inspired many Texans to continue the fight.

By the time news of the Alamo reached Houston, he had regained control of the army, and Texas had formally declared its independence from Mexico. Fearing another Alamo, Houston ordered the troops at Goliad to abandon that fort and rejoin his command. The fort's commander, James Fannin, ignored Houston's order until it was too late. When his forces finally abandoned the fort, they were captured, returned to the fort, and executed.¹⁷³ The people of Texas saw the men of the Alamo and Goliad as martyrs, people who died for their beliefs. In the meantime, Houston was leading his army and a large number of civilians on a strategic retreat. Houston eventually launched a surprise attack on Santa Anna's forces on April 21, 1836 at San Jacinto. The Texan forces shouted "Remember the Alamo!" and "Remember Goliad!" as they attacked. The Texans defeated the army and captured Santa Anna who signed a treaty recognizing Texas' independence on May 14, 1836. Houston was quickly elected as president of the new Lone Star Republic.¹⁷⁴ One of Houston's first acts as president was to seek

¹⁷² Robert Morgan, *Lions of the West: Heroes and Villains of the Westward Expansion*. (Chapel Hill, NC: Shannon Ravenel, 2011), 145-46.

¹⁷³ Robert Morgan, *Lions of the West: Heroes and Villains of the Westward Expansion*. (Chapel Hill, NC: Shannon Ravenel, 2011), 142.

¹⁷⁴ John Hoyt Williams, "Sam Houston." Tennessee Encyclopedia. 2018.
<https://tennesseeencyclopedia.net/entries/sam-houston/> Accessed 9 July, 2018

annexation by the United States. Southerners favored the addition of a new slave state, but most Northerners opposed annexation because it would have tipped the balance of power in favor of the South. President Van Buren wanted to avoid both conflict over slavery and war with Mexico; he therefore declined to annex Texas.¹⁷⁵ Houston served two terms as President of the Lone Star Republic before Texas became a state in 1845.¹⁷⁶ He later served as a Senator and governor of Texas, making him the only American to serve as governor of two states and president of an independent nation.

The issue of Texas annexation came to the forefront of American politics during the election of 1844. James K. Polk, the protégé of Andrew Jackson known as “Young Hickory,” made the annexation of Texas a central part of his platform. Polk also proposed acquiring California and resolving the Oregon boundary dispute with Great Britain. This platform greatly appealed to Americans caught up in the idea of Manifest Destiny and helped Polk win the election in 1844. Newspaper editor John O’Sullivan first coined the phrase “manifest destiny” in the 1840’s to describe the feeling shared by many Americans that the United States was destined to stretch from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean.¹⁷⁷

James K. Polk was born in Pineville North Carolina, on November 2, 1795. Polk’s father Samuel was a successful farmer and surveyor. Seeking new opportunities, he moved his family to Tennessee in 1806. The family settled in the town of Columbia along the Duck River. Samuel was a successful land speculator and judge.¹⁷⁸ Polk was

¹⁷⁵ Joyce Appleby et al. *The American Journey*. (Columbus, Ohio: Glencoe McGraw Hill, 2003), 368.

¹⁷⁶ Robert Morgan, *Lions of the West: Heroes and Villains of the Westward Expansion*. (Chapel Hill, NC: Shannon Ravenel, 2011), 142.

¹⁷⁷ Joyce Appleby et al. *The American Journey*. (Columbus, Ohio: Glencoe McGraw Hill, 2003), 360-361.

¹⁷⁸ Robert Morgan, *Lions of the West: Heroes and Villains of the Westward Expansion*. (Chapel Hill, NC: Shannon Ravenel, 2011), 196-97.

a serious and sickly child. At the age of sixteen, he underwent a painful operation for kidney stones. After that his health improved somewhat and he was able to enter the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Polk excelled there and graduated first in his class in 1818.¹⁷⁹ Polk returned to Tennessee and began to study law under Felix Grundy. When Grundy was elected to the legislature, Polk became clerk of the state senate. There he learned parliamentary procedure while also finishing his legal education. Polk was admitted to the Tennessee Bar in 1820 and began to practice law.¹⁸⁰

During this time, Polk met both his future wife Sarah Childress and his mentor Andrew Jackson. Sarah Childress, a wealthy and intelligent young woman, would prove to be a great asset to Polk's political career. Quiet and serious, Polk lacked the social skills of his contemporaries, Crockett and Houston. Sarah helped to make up for the deficit.¹⁸¹ With the advice and support of Jackson, Polk was elected to Congress in 1825. Polk used his position in Congress to defend Jackson and to help Jackson win the election in 1828. With Jackson's support, Polk was elected Speaker of the House in 1835. In 1839, Polk was elected governor of Tennessee. He was very disappointed when he lost his bid for re-election in 1841. He lost again in 1843 leading most people to believe his political career was over.¹⁸²

The issue of Texas annexation was the most important issue in 1844, and Jackson wanted to make sure that Texas joined the United States. Jackson backed Polk as the

¹⁷⁹ Robert Morgan, *Lions of the West: Heroes and Villains of the Westward Expansion*. (Chapel Hill, NC: Shannon Ravenel, 2011), 197.

¹⁸⁰ Wayne Cutler. "Samuel K. Polk." Tennessee Encyclopedia. 2018. <https://tennesseeencyclopedia.net/entries/james-knox-polk/> Accessed 9 July 2018.

¹⁸¹ Robert Morgan, *Lions of the West: Heroes and Villains of the Westward Expansion*. (Chapel Hill, NC: Shannon Ravenel, 2011), 199.

¹⁸² Robert Morgan, *Lions of the West: Heroes and Villains of the Westward Expansion*. (Chapel Hill, NC: Shannon Ravenel, 2011), 200-02.

Democratic candidate for president in 1844. When the early favorite Martin Van Buren did not earn the nomination, supporters were able to sway opinion towards Polk.¹⁸³ As a “dark horse” candidate, Polk faced a difficult campaign against the well-known Henry Clay, but won in a very close election. A “dark horse” candidate is one who unexpectedly wins his party’s nomination. Polk believed that the nation’s future lay in farming, and continued success in farming meant gaining new lands in the west. His victory in the election was due in large part to his promise to annex Texas and control the Oregon country.¹⁸⁴

As president, Polk intended to make good on those promises. In December 1845, he signed the resolution admitting Texas into the union. Polk entered into negotiations with Britain concerning the Oregon country. Polk pushed the British to give up their claims, and in 1846 his aggressive position was rewarded when the British agreed to set the boundary at the 49th parallel.¹⁸⁵ With the Oregon question settled, Polk could turn his attention to relations with Mexico. Though Mexico had accepted Texas independence, the border was still under dispute. Polk was also interested in bringing California into the United States. Polk ordered General Zachary Taylor to cross into territory claimed by Mexico between the Nueces River and Rio Grande. When shots were fired on April 25, 1846, it gave Polk the opening he needed to ask Congress to declare war.¹⁸⁶ The Mexican War was controversial in the United States because many people viewed it as a war to expand slavery.¹⁸⁷ Public opposition did not concern Taylor who won a number

¹⁸³ Robert Morgan, *Lions of the West: Heroes and Villains of the Westward Expansion*. (Chapel Hill, NC: Shannon Ravenel, 2011), 204.

¹⁸⁴ Joyce Appleby et al. *The American Journey*. (Columbus, Ohio: Glencoe McGraw Hill, 2003), 360.

¹⁸⁵ Joyce Appleby et al. *The American Journey*. (Columbus, Ohio: Glencoe McGraw Hill, 2003), 360.

¹⁸⁶ Joyce Appleby et al. *The American Journey*. (Columbus, Ohio: Glencoe McGraw Hill, 2003), 372.

¹⁸⁷ Joyce Appleby et al. *The American Journey*. (Columbus, Ohio: Glencoe McGraw Hill, 2003), 373.

of key battles. Polk became concerned that Taylor's success in battle would lead to a nomination for President in 1848, so he replaced him with Winfield Scott.¹⁸⁸ Scott's victory at Mexico City brought an end to the war. In the 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, Mexico ceded California and 800,000 square miles of land that makes up the current states of Arizona, New Mexico, Utah, and Nevada as well as parts of Colorado and Wyoming. The United States paid Mexico \$15 million for the land and promised full citizenship to Mexican citizens who chose to stay. Polk had achieved his goal of a United States that stretched to the Pacific.¹⁸⁹ Polk left office after a single term and returned to Tennessee in March 1849. Suffering from overwork and poor health, Polk died just three months later on June 15, 1849.¹⁹⁰

Slavery and Secession in Tennessee

As the turbulent 1850's drew to a close, Tennesseans found themselves divided over the question of slavery. Fertile soil and flat land made large plantations possible in West Tennessee, so the population was almost universally pro-slavery. West Tennessee was tied to the Deep South states not only through their shared interest in cotton, but also in their dependence on the Mississippi River as a transportation route. By contrast, in East Tennessee where rocky soil and mountains made large scale farming difficult, there were few slaves and less interest in expanding slavery. In Middle Tennessee where

¹⁸⁸ Robert Morgan, *Lions of the West: Heroes and Villains of the Westward Expansion*. (Chapel Hill, NC: Shannon Ravenel, 2011), 236.

¹⁸⁹ Joyce Appleby et al. *The American Journey*. (Columbus, Ohio: Glencoe McGraw Hill, 2003), 374.

¹⁹⁰ Robert Morgan, *Lions of the West: Heroes and Villains of the Westward Expansion*. (Chapel Hill, NC: Shannon Ravenel, 2011), 196.

slaves labored on tobacco plantations as well as smaller farms, the population's views on slavery and its expansion west were more divided.¹⁹¹

The presidential election of 1860 was a turning point for the nation and for Tennessee. The Republicans nominated Abraham Lincoln who vowed not to interfere with slavery where it already existed, but also to stop slavery from spreading in the West.¹⁹² The Democratic Party could not decide on a candidate and split. Stephen Douglas, the Northern Democratic candidate, favored popular sovereignty. This policy allowed the question of slavery to be decided by voters in the territories. The Southern Democratic candidate, John Breckinridge, campaigned in favor of supporting the Dred Scott decision which stated that Congress had no power to ban slavery in the territories.¹⁹³ The compromise candidate from the new Constitutional Union Party was John Bell, a Tennessean, who campaigned in favor of keeping the Union and slavery as they were. Bell received 48% of the votes in Tennessee. Breckinridge received 45%, Douglas 8%, and Lincoln none because his name did not appear on the ballot.¹⁹⁴

Lincoln's election led South Carolina to secede in December 1860 followed in early 1861 by Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Florida, and Georgia. Leaders in these states believed that Lincoln would abolish slavery despite his promises and were angry that voters in the North and West had the power to elect a candidate who did not receive any electoral votes in the South. Tennessee governor Isham Harris, a West Tennessee native, shared these views, but knew that many Tennesseans still opposed

¹⁹¹ Paul Bergeron, Stephen Ash and Jeanette Keith. *Tennesseans and Their History*. (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1999), 121-122.

¹⁹² Joyce Appleby et al. *The American Journey*. (Columbus, Ohio: Glencoe McGraw Hill, 2003), 450.

¹⁹³ Joyce Appleby et al. *The American Journey*. (Columbus, Ohio: Glencoe McGraw Hill, 2003), 450.

¹⁹⁴ Paul Bergeron, Stephen Ash and Jeanette Keith. *Tennesseans and Their History*. (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1999), 133.

secession. Harris carefully maneuvered the state towards secession by asking the state legislature to authorize a vote on the subject on February 9, 1861.¹⁹⁵ Secessionists and Unionists campaigned throughout the state. A state convention on secession was rejected by 55% of white male voters. Voters had also been asked to select delegates to attend if the convention were held. More than 75% of the delegates selected were Unionists.¹⁹⁶

However, Tennesseans' support of the Union was conditional. Many Tennesseans believed that states did have a right to secede and that the Union should not interfere with secession. Between February of 1861 and June 1861, a number of events occurred that caused many Tennesseans to shift their support to the Confederacy.¹⁹⁷ First, Lincoln decided to resupply the troops at Fort Sumter. This led the Confederacy to attack the fort on April 12, 1861. Following the battle, Lincoln issued a call for 75,000 volunteer troops. This was the final straw for most of the conditional Unionists. They agreed with Governor Harris when he said that "Tennessee will not furnish a single man for the purposes of coercion, but fifty thousand, if necessary for defense of our rights."¹⁹⁸

When a second vote on secession was held on June 8, 1861, sixty-nine percent of voters favored secession. Tennessee formally joined the Confederacy on July 2, 1861. However, Tennessee's secession did not end the struggle between Unionists and

¹⁹⁵ Paul Bergeron, Stephen Ash and Jeanette Keith. *Tennesseans and Their History*. (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1999), 134.

¹⁹⁶ Paul Bergeron, Stephen Ash and Jeanette Keith. *Tennesseans and Their History*. (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1999), 134.

¹⁹⁷ Paul Bergeron, Stephen Ash and Jeanette Keith. *Tennesseans and Their History*. (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1999), 135-136.

¹⁹⁸ Isham Harris. "Message to Simon Cameron, April 15, 1861. *Messages of the Governors of Tennessee*, Vol. 5., pp. 272-273. Civil War Sourcebook, <http://www.tnsos.net/TSLA/cwsourcebook/index.php> Accessed 9 July, 2018.

Secessionists. East Tennesseans had overwhelmingly voted against secession in February and June. Under the leadership of Andrew Johnson, William G. "Parson" Brownlow, and others, plans were made for East Tennessee to secede from Tennessee and form a new Union state.¹⁹⁹ Governor Harris believed that East Tennessee would eventually come to support secession and allowed the Unionists considerable freedom to dissent until early November. Unionists plotted with Union generals in Kentucky to burn key railroad bridges along the East Tennessee and Virginia and East Tennessee and Georgia railroads prior to a Union invasion. The goal was to weaken the Confederacy by cutting Virginia off from the Confederate states of the Deep South. The invasion did not happen, but five bridges were burned which led to a crackdown by Confederate forces and an end to any hopes of East Tennessee becoming a separate state.²⁰⁰ However, Tennesseans continued to fight for the Union as soldiers, home guards, partisans, and bushwhackers throughout the war. Hurst Nation in West Tennessee and the Free and Independent State of Scott in East Tennessee represented smaller scale attempts by Unionists to separate themselves from Confederate Tennessee.

Generally speaking, most Unionists lived in Eastern Tennessee, but pockets of Unionists could also be found in western Tennessee along the Tennessee River. In McNairy County, people living in the southern part of the county tended to support secession, while those in the northern half opposed it.²⁰¹ The leading Unionist was

¹⁹⁹ Paul Bergeron, Stephen Ash and Jeanette Keith. *Tennesseans and Their History*. (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1999), 139.

²⁰⁰ Dorothy Kelly, "[The Bridge Burnings and Union Uprising of 1861.](#)" *Tennessee Ancestors* 21, no. 2 (August 2005): 123-129.

²⁰¹ Bill Wagoner. "McNairy County." *Tennessee Encyclopedia*. 2018. <https://tennesseeencyclopedia.net/entries/mcnairy-county/> Accessed 9 July, 2018.

Fielding Hurst. Hurst was a slave owner and large landowner in McNairy County. Hurst was imprisoned in Nashville for publicly speaking out against secession. Once released, he was made a colonel by Andrew Johnson and raised the 6th Tennessee cavalry for the Union.²⁰² The land controlled by Hurst and his Unionist followers came to be called Hurst Nation. The division in the county led to brutal warfare between its residents. Many homes on both sides were looted and burned during the war years.²⁰³

Similarly, in East Tennessee, residents of Scott County were strongly Unionist. On June 4, 1861, Senator Andrew Johnson gave a speech at the courthouse in Huntsville, the county seat, in which he condemned secession.²⁰⁴ The residents of Scott County voted against secession by the highest margin of any Tennessee county, however their efforts could not stop Tennessee from seceding. The residents of Scott County responded by seceding from Tennessee and declaring themselves to be the "Free and Independent State of Scott." Tennessee did not recognize Scott County's independence. Governor Harris sent troops under Felix Zollicoffer into East Tennessee to suppress any attempt by the region to secede as West Virginia had done.²⁰⁵ As in McNairy County, Scott County experienced guerilla warfare throughout the war years.²⁰⁶

²⁰² Bill Wagoner. "McNairy County." Tennessee Encyclopedia. 2018. <https://tennesseeencyclopedia.net/entries/mcnairy-county/> Accessed 9 July, 2018.

²⁰³ Bill Wagoner. "McNairy County." Tennessee Encyclopedia. 2018. <https://tennesseeencyclopedia.net/entries/mcnairy-county/> Accessed 9 July, 2018.

²⁰⁴ Margaret D. Binnicker. "Scott County." Tennessee Encyclopedia. 2018. <https://tennesseeencyclopedia.net/entries/scott-county/> Accessed 9 July, 2018.

²⁰⁵ Oneida Independent Herald. "Remembering Scott's Defiant Independent." 3 July, 2018. Oneida Independent Herald. <https://ihoneida.com/2018/07/03/remembering-scotts-defiant-independence/> Accessed 11 December, 2018.

²⁰⁶ Margaret D. Binnicker. "Scott County." Tennessee Encyclopedia. 2018. <https://tennesseeencyclopedia.net/entries/scott-county/> Accessed 9 July, 2018.

The Free and Independent State of Scott and the less formally organized Hurst Nation both represented attempts to fight secession and remain true to the Union. Consciously or not, both communities drew on Watauga and the State of Franklin as examples of communities formed by and for the people they represented. Both communities endured years of brutal guerilla warfare as they sought to uphold their Unionist beliefs. Like many communities in Tennessee, Hurst Nation and the State of Scott faced challenges as they struggled to forget the horrors of guerilla warfare as they rebuilt their farms and lives in the years after the war.

The Civil War in Tennessee

Following the Battle of Fort Sumter, both the Union and Confederacy prepared for war. Winfield Scott created a three part strategy for the Union. First, the Union would use its vastly superior navy to blockade Southern ports. Secondly, the Union would advance south along the Mississippi River to disrupt lines of communication and supply and split the Confederacy in half. Lastly, they would capture the Confederate capital of Richmond, Virginia. In contrast, the Confederate strategy was defensive. They planned to hold as much territory as possible until the Union, under pressure from France and Britain, stopped fighting. The Confederate strategy depended on cotton diplomacy, the idea that France and Britain would be forced to aid the Confederates in order to restore their supply of cotton. In reality, France and Britain chose not to involve themselves in the Civil War. Overproduction in the years before the war had left Britain with a surplus

of cotton for their mills. The British also looked to other parts of their empire, notably Egypt and India, as a new source for cotton.²⁰⁷

Forts Henry and Donelson

The first step for the Union in fulfilling their goal of controlling the Mississippi River and dividing the Confederacy came in early 1862 when General Ulysses S. Grant and Flag-Officer Andrew H. Foote requested permission to go down the Tennessee River into Northwest Tennessee. The purpose of the expedition was to capture Fort Henry, which overlooked the western section of the Tennessee River in present day Henry County. Henry was not as strong a fort as other Southern strongholds on the Mississippi.²⁰⁸ Yet the Tennessee River cut Tennessee in half and dipped into Alabama, making it a crucial avenue for an advance into the Deep South. Also, capturing Fort Henry opened up the way to Fort Donelson on the Cumberland River in present day Stewart County. By February, Grant and Foote were on the move. The roads were too muddy for travel by Grant's large army, so Grant was ordered to steam down the Tennessee River with Foote's fleet. On February 5, Foote's transports deposited Grant's 15,000 soldiers below Fort Henry. The plan involved ironclad riverboats on the Tennessee River pounding the fort from one side with Grant approaching overland from the other. When the steamers approached the fort, an artillery duel began. The ironclads were so effective that Confederate General Lloyd Tilghman surrendered in a little over an hour. Grant's troops had not even arrived. Fort Henry was in Union hands

²⁰⁷ Eugene R. Dattel. "Cotton and the Civil War." Mississippi History Now. 2008. <http://mshistorynow.mdah.state.ms.us/articles/291/cotton-and-the-civil-war> Accessed 9 July, 2018.

²⁰⁸ James M. McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 393.

along with “seventeen heavy guns, General Lloyd Tilghman and staff, and 60 men.”²⁰⁹

Also, the Tennessee River belonged to the Federals all the way to Alabama. Foote’s gunboats sailed down to Muscle Shoals and back harassing the Confederate navy all along the way.²¹⁰

Grant planned to attack Fort Donelson the same way he had attacked Fort Henry. Foote would wear down the Confederate defenses from the Cumberland River on the east. Grant would capture the fort from the west with foot soldiers. The idea was then to march on and occupy Nashville. By February 13th, Grant’s entire force of fifteen thousand men was positioned in front of Donelson, gunboats and all. Foote and his navy attacked on the 14th hoping for the same result as at Fort Henry. Fort Donelson, however, proved formidable and well-equipped. By damaging a handful of Foote’s vessels, Confederate gunners repulsed the attack. Grant then decided to hold his lines and wait for the boats to be repaired.²¹¹

However, the Confederates in Fort Donelson, led by General John Floyd, Tennessee politician Gideon Pillow, and General Simon Bolivar Buckner, decided that the best thing they could do was try to break out of the fort and fight off Grant’s army. On the morning of February 15th, while Grant was away visiting an injured Andrew Foote, Confederate forces attacked on the Union right. The rebels shoved the Federal force back over a mile. Heavy casualties were inflicted on both sides. In confusion and exhaustion, however, the Confederates were ordered by Pillow to retreat back to their entrenchments. Considering that the Union men were out of ammunition, the

²⁰⁹ Official records of the Union and Confederate armies. Ser. I, Vol. 7, p. 121.

²¹⁰ *O.R.*, *Ibid.*, 153.

²¹¹ *O.R.*, Ser. I, Vol. 7, p. 159.

Confederate force might have broken out of the Donelson siege if they had kept up the attack.²¹²

When Grant returned and saw that the Confederates had pulled back, he assumed they were more demoralized than the Union's defeated force. "Taking advantage of this fact," Grant later reported, "I ordered a charge upon the left ..."²¹³ By nightfall, Grant's men had retaken all the ground they had lost. The following morning, while Grant prepared to attack, General Buckner sent Grant a note under a flag of truce, offering to end the fighting and discuss surrender terms. Grant replied that he would accept "no terms except an unconditional and immediate surrender."²¹⁴ Buckner, trapped with his men in the fort, had no choice. That same day Grant filed a report to his superiors: "I am pleased to announce to you the unconditional surrender this morning of Fort Donelson, with twelve to fifteen thousand prisoners, at least forty pieces of artillery, and a large amount of stores, horses, and other public property."²¹⁵ Grant's terms for Buckner's surrender earned him a nickname that stuck throughout the war: "Unconditional Surrender" Grant.

The capture of Forts Henry and Donelson were significant because they provided the Union its first foothold in the South. It also provided a much-needed morale boost to Northerners, who had been disappointed by the lack of progress in Virginia. After capturing the forts, Grant and his army moved deeper into Tennessee all the way to the town of Pittsburg Landing, home to a small church called Shiloh. It was there, in the

²¹² McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 400-01.

²¹³ O.R., Ser. I, Vol. 7, p. 159

²¹⁴ McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 402.

²¹⁵ O.R., Ser. I, Vol. 7, p. 159

spring, that Grant would clash with Confederate Generals Albert Sidney Johnston and P.G.T. Beauregard in one of the bloodiest battles of the war.

Battle of Shiloh

After defeating the Confederates at Fort Henry and Fort Donelson, Grant continued to chase the rebels. He knew the defeated rebel army was regrouping around Corinth, Mississippi, just a few miles across the Tennessee line. It was Grant's intention to build up his own forces and strike the enemy there. So, even with the "weather cold and roads impassable," Grant went south toward Pittsburg Landing on the Tennessee River. Grant estimated the Confederate strength at Corinth to be between 50,000 and 60,000 men.²¹⁶ When he arrived at Pittsburg Landing, Grant did not order his soldiers to entrench, but instead waited patiently for Major-General Don Carlos Buell's Army of the Ohio to arrive from the north. When they were united, they would have a mass of 75,000 men who were confident and ready to crush the smaller rebel force.²¹⁷ Although Grant had heard rumors of a Confederate force advancing on his location, he thought it was only a rumor. "I have scarcely the faintest idea of an attack being made upon us," Grant reported, "but will be prepared should such a thing take place."²¹⁸

At Corinth, Generals Albert Sidney Johnston and P.G.T. Beauregard were not content to dig in and wait for Grant's advance. Instead, Johnston decided to march back into Tennessee and drive Grant from the state. General Braxton Bragg brought up 15,000 men from the Gulf Coast to join the attack. In all, the Confederates had 42,000

²¹⁶ *O.R.*, Ser. I, Vol. 10, pt. II, p. 40.

²¹⁷ McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 406.

²¹⁸ *O.R.*, Ser. I, Vol. 10, pt. I, p. 89.

men.²¹⁹ Knowing that Buell was seeking to link up with Grant's army, Johnston moved out in early April, ordering his troops "forward to offer battle near Pittsburg."²²⁰ After slight delays, Johnston's advance troops reached Grant's advance troops, and the two forces skirmished on April 5th with a small handful of casualties. Grant did not take the Confederate threat seriously.

With the element of surprise on his side, Johnston sent his army charging at the Union line on the morning of April 6, 1862. According to Beauregard, the rebel soldiers advanced like an "Alpine avalanche."²²¹ The southerners pushed back Union forces all along the six mile front. Grant, still at headquarters awaiting Buell, heard the gunfire at breakfast and reached the battlefield around 9 a.m.²²² The fighting proved incredibly fierce. Two large, inexperienced armies clashed and butchered each other. Bullets ripped through leaves and severed tree limbs. Smoke blanketed the field. Many soldiers, Union and Confederate, seeing action for the first time, fled horrified from the fight.

In the midst of the chaos, however, the Confederates managed to push the Federals back past Shiloh church and on to Pittsburg Landing and the river. It looked as if the Union might be routed. But in the middle of the action, along a sunken road, General Benjamin M. Prentiss and a group of brave soldiers held a small part of the collapsing Union line. The Confederates labeled this area the "Hornets' Nest".²²³ Upon Grant's order, and despite being outnumbered four to one, Prentiss held the sunken road for most of the day. Just before sunset, when Prentiss feared that "further resistance must

²¹⁹ McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 406.

²²⁰ *O.R.*, Ser. I, Vol. 10, pt. II, p. 387.

²²¹ *O.R.*, Ser. I, Vol. 10, pt. I, p. 386.

²²² McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 409.

²²³ McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 410.

result in the slaughter of every man” in his command, he surrendered his depleted force of 2,200 men.²²⁴

The Confederates had, as Beauregard described, won a “complete victory” on April 6, but they did so at a heavy cost.²²⁵ General Albert Sidney Johnston, Commander of the Army of the Mississippi (Confederate), took a bullet to his leg and bled to death. The Confederacy, it was said, would “mourn his loss, revere his name, and cherish his manly virtues.”²²⁶ For the Union, the defeat of April 6th was a setback. But, in the middle of the night, Buell’s army arrived. By the morning, three more divisions were ready for action.²²⁷ With renewed confidence, Grant ordered his army to attack on the morning of April 7th.

Beauregard and his men were caught completely by surprise as they relaxed at the former Union camp they had captured the day before. Grant’s force swept the Confederates all the way back to the lines they possessed at the beginning of April 6. There, they stiffened and resisted. The hard fighting of the previous day resumed as if it had never quit. Beauregard saw that if he pressed the fight, his army would be destroyed. He therefore ordered a retreat. The Confederates, outnumbered and dispirited, fell back.

April 7th proved a complete turnaround from the events of April 6th. Instead of the complete Confederate victory which Beauregard had bragged about, his battered army staggered back into Mississippi. The Union victors, tired and bogged down in a downpour, did not offer a serious pursuit. Shiloh was over, and twenty thousand men

²²⁴ O.R., Ser. I, Vol. 10, pt. I, p. 279.

²²⁵ Ibid., p. 384.

²²⁶ O.R., Ser. I, Vol. 10, pt. I, p. 409

²²⁷ McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 410.

were dead or wounded. There were more casualties than all other Civil War battles up to that point combined.²²⁸ It was, up to that time, the largest battle to ever take place in the Western Hemisphere. Yet, no ground had been gained. The Union remained at Pittsburg Landing, and the Confederates returned to Corinth. “In the pages of history the hard won field of Shiloh [sic] will have a name among the great battlefields of the world,” stated the *Memphis Daily Appeal*.²²⁹ That publication, however, reported on what it believed to be an overwhelming Confederate victory and not a Union triumph. Regardless of the victor, the Battle of Shiloh was significant because it changed the nation’s expectations. Instead of a quick, bloodless campaign, Shiloh showed that the war would be a bitter, bloody struggle of horrendous magnitude.

Battle of Stone’s River

The fall and early winter of 1862 was a difficult time for the Union army and northern morale. Although he had stopped a rebel invasion, General George B. McClellan had failed to cut off the fleeing Confederates and destroy Robert E. Lee’s army after the Battle of Antietam. Instead, Lee’s rugged fighting force slipped quietly back into Virginia where it would continue to cause frustration for the Federal army. In December, the Union Army of the Potomac, commanded by General Ambrose Burnside, was soundly defeated at Fredericksburg. Also, General Ulysses S. Grant, the hero of Fort Donelson and Shiloh, had failed to capture the Mississippi River post at Vicksburg. This failure was largely due to rebel cavalry raiders, such as Nathan Bedford Forrest and Earl Van Dorn, who ran circles around Grant’s plodding army, cutting communication lines and

²²⁸ *Ibid.*, 413.

²²⁹ *Memphis Daily Appeal*, April 9, 1862.

confiscating supplies. Although a Confederate invasion of Kentucky had been repulsed at Perryville, General Don Carlos Buell seemingly refused to deploy his Army of the Cumberland to attack Confederate General Braxton Bragg's Army of the Tennessee. In October, therefore, Buell was replaced by William S. Rosecrans. Lincoln made it clear that if Rosecrans wanted to keep his job, he had better march against Bragg.²³⁰ In essence, the Union needed a victory, and Lincoln hoped Rosecrans would provide it.

In December, Confederate President Jefferson Davis visited Bragg's headquarters at Murfreesboro, Tennessee. Citizens of the small town showered the beloved president with balls and dinners. While there, Davis sent a large number of Bragg's men westward to slow Grant's approach to Vicksburg. Nevertheless, Bragg considered using his weakened force to recapture Nashville. When he received news that Rosecrans was advancing from Nashville, however, Bragg decided to stay put and prepare for his enemy's arrival. In the meantime, he dispatched "Fighting Joe" Wheeler's cavalry to harass Rosecrans. Wheeler rode around Rosecrans, tore apart supply wagons, and stole ammunition.²³¹ Despite Wheeler's attacks, the Union continued to advance.

By December 30, Rosecrans was in place along the Nashville Turnpike just northeast of Bragg who was positioned by a creek called Stones River. Both Rosecrans and Bragg planned to attack the next morning. "A fierce battle is expected to-morrow [sic] by the full force of both armies," predicted Confederate Governor of Tennessee, Isham G. Harris.²³²

That night, as soldiers from both sides bent over their campfires tensely anticipating battle the next morning, the army bands entered into a contest of their own. Trying to

²³⁰ James M. McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 579.

²³¹ *Ibid.*, 579

²³² *Chattanooga Daily Rebel*, January 1, 1863

outplay one another from across the front, the Union band's version of "Yankee Doodle" was countered by a Confederate concert of "Dixie." When the Union piped "Hail Columbia," the Confederates answered with "The Bonnie Blue Flag." Finally, one band played "Home Sweet Home," a song enjoyed by both armies. Both bands eventually played the song together with thousands of troops singing in unison.²³³ The evening's camaraderie was forgotten when the soldiers found themselves pitted against one another in fierce combat.

In the early hours of New Year's Eve 1862, Bragg struck first by charging the union's right where many soldiers were eating breakfast. The rebels pushed back the Union flank through a thick cedar wood and out into a cotton field. The battle continued there. Many of the Confederates, overwhelmed by the sound of guns, stuffed their ears with cotton.²³⁴ Fighting was terribly fierce as the Southerners tried to bend back the Union flank and get between Rosecrans and Nashville, cutting his supply and escape route. Rosecrans, however, coolly rode up and down the battle line wearing a blood-splattered uniform. The blood belonged to a staff-officer whose head had been blown off by a cannonball.²³⁵

When Rosecrans examined the battlefield and the Confederate thrust against his right, he called off his own attack plans and concentrated on defense. As reinforcements came up to fill the torn Union line, the rebels continued to sweep back the Federals. All would have been lost had it not been for a sturdy division commanded by Brigadier General Philip Sheridan. Sheridan had predicted Bragg's intent and

²³³ James L. McDonough, "Stones River, Battle of," *Encyclopedia of the American Civil War*, Vol. IV, ed. David S. Heidler and Jeanne T. Heidler (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, Inc., 2000), 1877.

²³⁴ "Battle of Stones River Campaign," *Tennessee Civil War Sourcebook*, 1862, Part IV, ed. James B. Jones (Nashville, TN: Tennessee Historical Commission, 2005), 173.

²³⁵ McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 580

therefore positioned his men in defensive positions at 4:00 a.m. In exceptionally savage combat, Sheridan was able to hold the rebels at bay. All three of Sheridan's brigade commanders were killed. His division lost a third of its men. The Confederates, as well, suffered heavy losses.²³⁶ After the initial assault, Rosecrans found his right side bent back at a right angle. At that angle was a dense patch of wilderness called the Round Forest. Bragg thought the area of strategic importance and ordered a division, under former Vice President of the United States John C. Breckinridge, to cross Stones River from the east and charge the position. The division charged but, after a murderous engagement, fell back. At an enormous cost to themselves as well as the enemy, the Federals held. Afterward, Round Forest became known as "Hell's Half-Acre."²³⁷

Near Murfreesboro, the year 1862 had concluded with a "very obstinate and bloody" fight.²³⁸ Following December 31st, Southern newspapers declared a great victory. Bragg, in a dispatch, talked about how he had driven the Union troops from every position except the extreme left. "With the exception of this point," Bragg said, "we occupy the whole field."²³⁹ Whether or not victory could be declared, one thing was certain: the fighting had been costly. "The bloodiest day of the war has closed," declared a Chattanooga newspaper.²⁴⁰ Rosecrans, however, refused to withdraw; more bloodshed was to come.

After a fight on New Year's Day, a Union division moved east of Stones River and occupied a formidable hill. The following day, Bragg ordered Breckinridge to again cross the river and attack a strong Federal position. Breckinridge, under protest, carried out

²³⁶ *Ibid.*, 580.

²³⁷ McDonough, "Stones River, Battle of," 1879.

²³⁸ Nashville *Dispatch*, January 1, 1863.

²³⁹ *O.R.*, Ser. I, Vol. 20, pt. I, p. 662

²⁴⁰ Chattanooga *Daily Rebel*, January 2, 1863

his orders. His division ran through the Union line. But on the other side of the river was a ridge blanketed in Yankee guns. The cannons opened fire and tore Breckinridge's division to shreds. After losing a third of his men, Breckinridge pulled back.²⁴¹ The following day, January 3rd, Rosecrans's army was reinforced. Seeing the strengthened enemy in front, Bragg thought it wise to retreat. The Confederates abandoned Murfreesboro and fled south to Tullahoma. The two armies suffered an estimated 24,645 combined casualties. The Battle of Stone's River was significant because it gave the Union the victory it so badly needed.²⁴² After the first day, the situation looked dire for the Yankees and promising for the Rebels; but, the Federals stood firm, and forced Bragg and his Army of Tennessee to withdraw.

The Battle of Franklin

By the fall of 1864, Union victories at Gettysburg, Vicksburg, and Lookout Mountain (Chattanooga) had decimated the Confederate armies and dramatically reduced the territory under Confederate control. The Union blockade had created dramatic shortages of everything from salt to shoes that affected soldiers and civilians alike. Despite these challenges, the Confederates refused to admit defeat. Thus, while William Tecumseh Sherman marched his army across Georgia to the sea, Confederate General John Bell Hood, a hero at both Gettysburg and Chickamauga (where he lost his right leg), pushed his Army of Tennessee into a campaign where he hoped to recapture the Volunteer State, move into Virginia, link up with Robert E. Lee, and annihilate both Sherman and Ulysses S. Grant.

²⁴¹ McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 582; McDonough, "Stones River, Battle of," 1879.

²⁴² McDonough, *Ibid*

Hood's plan was overambitious and, in a sense, delusional. One historian has written that Hood's plan "seemed to have been scripted in never-never land."²⁴³ Moving northward from Alabama into Tennessee with forty thousand men, Bell tangled with the Federal Army of the Ohio led by Generals John M. Schofield and George H. Thomas. In late November 1864, Hood faced Schofield at Franklin just south of Nashville. The Battle of Franklin was a disaster for the Confederacy both in terms of casualties and morale.

At the start of his campaign, Hood had little problem advancing through Tennessee. He sent General Nathan Bedford Forrest's cavalry ahead to ride around the enemy and cause chaos much like Stonewall Jackson had in the 1862 Shenandoah Valley campaign. After a small skirmish, Union forces held off rebel attacks but abandoned Columbia and looked to be heading north for the fortifications at Nashville. "The enemy evacuated Columbia last night and are retreating toward Nashville," Bell alerted the Confederate War Department. "Our army is moving forward. I have had no difficulty about supplies, and anticipate none in the future."²⁴⁴ By the end of November, Schofield had positioned his army at the crossing of the Harpeth River at Franklin, which sat fifteen miles south of Nashville.²⁴⁵

Hood took over the Army of Tennessee from Joseph Johnston during the defense of Atlanta. For this reason, Hood believed that the army had been trained only to fight on the defensive and did not possess an attacking spirit. Therefore, to test his troops' bravery, Hood ordered a frontal assault against Schofield's entrenched position. Hood's subordinates protested the attack, but he thought their complaints were evidence of the

²⁴³ James M. McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 811

²⁴⁴ *O.R.*, Ser. I, Vol. 45, pt. I, p. 1254.

²⁴⁵ McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 812.

army's lack of fighting spirit. Nevertheless, the Confederates faced a larger, well-protected enemy supported by artillery batteries. On the other hand, the rebel artillery had yet to make it to Franklin with the rest of the army. And, yet, despite all of these disadvantages, Hood stood firm on his order to attack. So, on November 30, 1864, the assault commenced.²⁴⁶

Across the field stormed twenty-thousand Confederates, many of them barefoot. Contrary to what Hood believed about his army's offensive capability, his soldiers charged courageously and reached the Union ranks. There, savage hand-to-hand combat broke out. The fight raged around the home of Tod Carter, who had enlisted in the Army of Tennessee in 1861. Carter was mortally wounded in the battle and was carried to his family home where he died the next day.²⁴⁷ The fighting continued well after dark as Hood's army tried again and again to break Schofield's line. Finally, near midnight, the Union troops fell back and moved toward the fortifications of Nashville.

While on the surface, the battle appeared a Confederate victory (they had driven off Schofield, after all), the heavy toll taken by Hood's army transformed Franklin into a grievous defeat. The Army of Tennessee (Confederate) had lost almost 7,000 men, nearly three times as many as Schofield's Army of Ohio (Union). Twelve Confederate generals had been killed. The ones lucky enough to survive were exhausted and crestfallen. As a fighting force, Hood's army had been rendered insignificant. Nevertheless, Hood still lived in a land of delusion. He ordered a proclamation to be read at the head of each regiment.

²⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁷ Battle of Franklin Trust, "Carter House History." www.boft.org/carterhouse . 21 December, 2018.

*The commanding general congratulates the army upon the success achieved yesterday over our enemy by their heroic and determined courage. The enemy have been sent in disorder and confusion to Nashville, and while we lament the fall of many gallant officers and brave men, we have shown to our countrymen that we can carry any position occupied by our enemy.*²⁴⁸

Hood would follow the Union army to Nashville and besiege the city. A Union newspaper in Knoxville described Hood's campaign. It read, "Hood, without any base of supplies, without any matured plans of operation, and with the recklessness of a fool, attacked our forces in their strong works at Franklin."²⁴⁹ The Battle of Franklin is significant because it crippled Hood's army. Never again would the Confederates be able to challenge the Yankees for superiority in Tennessee.

Battle of Nashville

Confederate General John Bell Hood's Army of Tennessee had been devastated by Union forces at Franklin. Nevertheless, in December of 1864, Hood and his limping troops pursued the Union Army to Nashville. Once there, Hood's army dug entrenchments and placed Tennessee's capital under siege. Hood hoped to receive reinforcements from across the Mississippi River, but the Union navy patrolled the waters and kept any reinforcements west of the river.²⁵⁰ Facing Hood was General George H. Thomas, Union hero at Chickamauga. For a time, the two did nothing but dig in and wait for the other to make a move. When Thomas finally struck, he did so with a

²⁴⁸ *O.R.*, Ser. I, Vol. 45, pt. II, p. 628.

²⁴⁹ *Brownlow's Knoxville Whig, and Rebel Ventilator*, December 7, 1864.

²⁵⁰ James M. McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 813

daring and military brilliance that dashed any Confederate hope of regaining Tennessee. The Battle of Nashville represented the Confederacy's last hope for success in the western theater.

At first, bad weather prevented Thomas from attacking. Thomas's inaction not only dismayed Hood but worried Union leadership as well. Secretary of War Edwin Stanton complained that Thomas had adopted the "McClellan and Rosecrans strategy of do nothing and let the rebels raid the country." Ulysses S. Grant also voiced displeasure at Thomas's perceived halfhearted approach at Nashville. "If Hood is permitted to remain quietly about Nashville, you will lose all the road back to Chattanooga, and possibly have to abandon the line of the Tennessee," Grant wrote Thomas. "Should he attack you it is all well, but if he does not you should attack him before he fortifies."²⁵¹

On December 15, 1864, as the fog lifted from the cold ground, Thomas ordered fifty thousand soldiers, including members of the United States Colored Troops (USCT), to smash into Hood's twenty-five thousand men. Thomas distracted Hood by launching sporadic attacks on his right side, while pounding Hood's left. Hood was confused and postponed reinforcing his left for most of the day. By the time he sent reinforcements, it was too late. As night fell, Hood's battered left side gave way, and his entire force fell back two miles south and reformed in a much shorter defensive line.²⁵²

The following day, December 16, Thomas' army again surged forward with members of the USCT leading the charge at Overton's Hill. Thomas was one of the few Union generals who believed that black troops could fight as well as white troops, and he gave the USCT a chance to prove themselves in battle. The success of the USCT troops'

²⁵¹ O.R., Ser. I, Vol. 45, pt. II, pp. 15-17.

²⁵² McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 813-15; Richard M. McMurry, *John Bell Hood and the War for Southern Independence* (Lexington, Kentucky: The University Press of Kentucky, 1982), 179.

assault on Overton's Hill proved that Thomas' confidence was warranted. As Decatur Chapin, a white officer of the 55th USCT, remarked in a letter to his brother, "Negro soldiers...make the best we have. They are bold and daring and will hazard anything commanded by their officers."²⁵³

Another innovative aspect of Thomas' plan was to have his cavalry dismount and then attack using repeating rifles. These weapons fired seven shots compared to the single shot muzzle-loading rifles of the infantry. Amidst rain and a dark sky, Confederate units crumbled. Thousands of defeated troops threw down their weapons to either flee or surrender.²⁵⁴ Rebel commanders tried to make a new line at Brentwood; but, as Tennessee Private Sam Watkins wrote, "the line they formed was like trying to stop the current of Duck River with a fish net."²⁵⁵ Hood's army was in shambles.

"Hood can't make another day's such fight, while Thomas is in good condition to press him," Union Secretary of War Edwin Stanton reported.²⁵⁶ For weeks, the pursuit raged southward, as Union cavalry tramped through thick mud and chased remnants of the Army of Tennessee into Alabama and Mississippi. Confederate armies would never challenge for Tennessee again. The Confederate defeat at Nashville was significant because it utterly destroyed any hope for Confederate victory in the western half of the Confederacy. Hood's failure in Tennessee, combined with Sherman's capture of Savannah, made December 1864 a completely disastrous month for the Confederacy.

²⁵³ Decatur Chapin, "Letter to his Brother, January 10, 1865." Tennessee State Library and Archives. <http://cdm15138.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/compoundobject/collection/p15138coll6/id/6844/rec/7> Accessed 10 July, 2018.

²⁵⁴ McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 815.

²⁵⁵ Sam R. Watkins, *Co. Aytch, or, A Side Show of the Big Show* (Chattanooga, Tennessee: The Times Printing Company, 1900), PDF e-book, 217.

²⁵⁶ *New-York Tribune*, December 19, 1864.

Nathan Bedford Forrest

Confederate General Nathan Bedford Forrest proved such a menace to Federal forces throughout the Civil War that Union General William T. Sherman stated that it would be wise to “follow Forrest to the death, if it cost 10,000 lives and breaks the Treasury.”²⁵⁷ While Sherman referred to Forrest as “the very devil,” another word that is consistently used to describe the military career of Nathan Bedford Forrest is “genius.” One historian has written, “Military observers at the time and later concluded that Forrest was a natural military genius.”²⁵⁸ Even Sherman, sworn enemy of Forrest, admitted that the Confederate General possessed a “genius for strategy that was original and to me, incomprehensible.”²⁵⁹ During the war, Forrest was renowned for his daring and his courage. He had twenty-nine horses shot out from under him and was himself wounded several times. Nevertheless, he won successes against Union armies, usually larger than his own, in battle after battle.

Forrest was born the eldest of eleven children to a blacksmith named William Forrest and Mariam Beck Forrest in Marshall County, Tennessee on July 13, 1821. After the death of his father and until his mother’s remarriage, Forrest supported the family himself. Afterward, he went to Texas, returned to Tennessee, and married Mary Montgomery in 1845. In 1857, Forrest made a fortune in Memphis selling land and slaves. He was running a profitable plantation when the war broke out in 1861.²⁶⁰

When Tennessee voted to leave the Union that June, Forrest sided with his home state. A skilled horseman, Forrest enlisted as a private in a cavalry regiment. As he was

²⁵⁷ *O.R.*, Ser. I, Vol. 39, pt. II, p. 121

²⁵⁸ Rodney P. Carlisle, “Forrest, Nathan Bedford,” from *American National Biography*, Vol. 8 (New York: Oxford University Press), 1999, 264.

²⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 263.

²⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 262.

well-known in Memphis, a handful of his friends petitioned Tennessee Governor Isham Harris to commission Forrest as an officer. Forrest quickly became a colonel and was permitted to form his own cavalry regiment.

Forrest developed a fast-paced, aggressive style of fighting battles that would become his trademark. He aimed to keep Union forces in one place with a frontal assault and then rapidly attack both sides at once. Forrest himself led the charges and engaged in hand-to-hand combat on several occasions. When Union forces under Ulysses S. Grant besieged Fort Donelson on the Cumberland River, Forrest grew impatient with his commanding officers who had decided to surrender. Disgusted with their admission of defeat, Forrest led his regiment on a late-night breakout through enemy lines. Days later, when Nashville surrendered, Forrest secured the Confederate rear guard as the army retreated into Mississippi.²⁶¹

Forrest played an important role in the Battle of Shiloh. He led a number of cavalry charges to slow down the advancing Union troops on the second day of battle. Following Shiloh, Forrest remained in West Tennessee to attack Grant's supply lines. After the Battle of Chickamauga, Forrest urged Bragg to attack the Union before they could reach Chattanooga. His advice was ignored, and Forrest obtained an independent command in West Tennessee.²⁶²

The most controversial events of Forrest's military career occurred on April 1864 when Forrest attacked Fort Pillow outside of Memphis. The fort was garrisoned by African American soldiers and Tennessee Unionists. Approximately half of the six

²⁶¹ Derek W. Frisby, "Forrest, Nathan Bedford," *Encyclopedia of the American Civil War*, Vol. 2, ed. David S. Heidler and Jeanne T. Heidler (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, Inc., 2000), 720.

²⁶² "Nathan Bedford Forrest." *Tennessee Encyclopedia and History and Culture* 1st edition. 1998. Print, 321.

hundred men in the fort were killed. Many of these men were killed as they attempted to surrender. Sixty-seven percent of the dead were members of the USCT.²⁶³ Whether Forrest ordered the killings or lost control of his men remains unclear. The Fort Pillow Massacre was widely publicized in the North. Forrest took part in a number of other major battles including the Battle of Franklin on November 30, 1864. Following the Confederate defeat at Nashville, Forrest once again slowed down the Union advance so that the Confederates could retreat. Forrest ultimately surrendered in May of 1865.²⁶⁴ Following the war, Forrest once again gained fame as the first Grand Wizard of the Ku Klux Klan. Forrest traveled throughout the South promoting the Klan along with his railroad ventures. Forrest returned to Memphis where he died on October 29, 1877.

David Farragut

On July 26, 1866, David Glasgow Farragut was named the first full admiral in American history. He was honored for a career in the navy that spanned over fifty years. One historian wrote that Farragut was similar to Ulysses S. Grant in that “he possessed great force of character rather than a subtle intellect.”²⁶⁵ It was for his service during the Civil War, however, that Farragut earned the most recognition and praise.

David Glasgow Farragut was born James Glasgow Farragut in Campbell’s Station, Tennessee, an area near Knoxville, on July 5, 1801. After his birth, he was taken to New Orleans, where he was adopted by Commodore David Porter. The story goes that Porter’s elderly father, himself once a master sailor in the U.S. Navy under George

²⁶³ *Ibid*, 321.

²⁶⁴ *Ibid*, 321.

²⁶⁵ James M. McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 419.

Washington, was fishing and collapsed with sunstroke. Farragut's father found him and took him to the Farragut home, where the family cared for the dying Porter until the end. In order to repay the tenderness of the Farragut family, Commodore Porter adopted young James and became his guardian.

James began service in the navy with his new father when he was only nine years old. In the War of 1812, James served with Porter in a sea battle with two British ships off the coast of Chile. A gunner on their ship, the *Essex*, was struck by a cannonball and fell against the young Farragut, pushing him backward through an open hatch. Farragut struck his head and received the only wound he would ever receive during his naval career. In recognition of the battle, he changed his name to David, in honor of his adopted father.²⁶⁶

Afterward, David Farragut's journeys took him to Europe and the Gulf of Mexico. During the Mexican War, he served as captain of the sloop *Saratoga*. At the outbreak of the Civil War, Farragut awaited orders in Norfolk, Virginia. As a southerner, he had to decide whether to fight for the land of his birth or for the government he flourished under. In the end, Farragut believed President Abraham Lincoln was justified in his military actions against the southern rebels. Therefore, Farragut decided to remain a U.S. naval officer. When heckled by southern leaders who tried to get him to renege and join the Confederacy, Farragut responded, "Mind what I tell you: You fellows will catch the devil before you get through with this business."²⁶⁷ After a short time at desk

²⁶⁶ Michael S. Davis, "Farragut, David Glasgow," *Encyclopedia of the American Civil War*, Vol. 2, ed. David S. Heidler and Jeanne T. Heidler (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, Inc., 2000), 683.

²⁶⁷ David D. Porter, "The Opening of the Lower Mississippi," *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*, vol. II, (New York: The Century Co., 1887), PDF book, 26.

duty, Farragut was assigned to oversee the West Gulf Blockade Squadron and their operations in the Gulf of Mexico.²⁶⁸

During the spring of 1862, Farragut received orders which laid out a plan for his fleet to travel up the Mississippi River and aid Union armies in their attempt to control the river and cut the Confederacy in half. One of the keys to the success of the operation was for Farragut to capture the port of New Orleans. The battle for the largest city in the South began in April 1862. Against heavy resistance, Farragut steamed his ships up the river, taking cannon fire from all sides. Confederates pushed flaming rafts into the river to set Union ships ablaze. The Rebels fired from incomplete ironclads still moored to their docks.²⁶⁹ None of this stopped Farragut and his fleet. They passed the river defenses, defeated them from the north, and sailed triumphantly into the city.

With New Orleans in Union hands, Farragut took his fleet up the Mississippi and won the river capturing cities and frustrating Confederates. The only city he failed to capture was Vicksburg, the final Confederate stronghold on the Mississippi. His accomplishments on the Mississippi earned Farragut a promotion to the rank of rear admiral. In March 1863, Farragut again sailed for Vicksburg to blockade the town. With the help of Grant's forces on the other side of the fortress, the town fell on July 4, 1863, one day after the Union victory at Gettysburg.

Farragut's next mission consisted of shutting down Confederate blockade runners. To do this, Farragut had to capture ports that harbored such runners. The first harbor targeted was Mobile. Attempting to mimic his success in New Orleans, Farragut tried to run the gauntlet of Mobile's defenses. Instead of cruising through, however, the Union

²⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 684

²⁶⁹ McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 419-20.

navy encountered Confederate water mines, called torpedoes. Several Union ships were lost due to the mines. With the whole operation in chaos, Farragut delivered the order for which he is best remembered. He strapped himself to the rigging of his flagship, the Hartford, and shouted the memorable phrase, "Damn the torpedoes. Full steam ahead!" His ships finally passed through, and Mobile surrendered. After the capture of Mobile, Farragut was promoted to vice admiral.²⁷⁰

In 1865, Farragut was one of the first Union officers to enter Richmond after its fall. After the war, Farragut settled in New York, where the government awarded him \$50,000 to buy a home. To commemorate his lifelong service to the navy, he was given the rank of full admiral in 1866. He was the first American to hold such rank. The newly-minted full admiral went on a European goodwill tour. In 1870, while inspecting a naval yard in New Hampshire, Farragut died after suffering a heart attack.

Sam Watkins

Samuel Rush "Sam" Watkins was born June 26, 1839, in Mount Pleasant (Maury County), Tennessee. Watkins father Frederick owned more than 100 slaves on two plantations in Maury County²⁷¹. The Watkins family was the 3rd wealthiest family in Maury County.²⁷²

Watkins enrolled in Jackson College in Columbia, Tennessee, but, at the age of twenty-one, he enlisted in the Confederate Army after Tennessee seceded from the Union in 1861. Watkins originally enlisted in the "Bigby Grays" of the Third Tennessee

²⁷⁰ Davis, "Farragut, David Glasgow," 684.

²⁷¹ Tennessee, Maury County. 1860 U.S. Census, Slave Schedule. Digital Images. Ancestry.com.. www.ancestry.com.

²⁷² Tennessee, Maury County. 1860 U.S. Census, Population Schedule. Digital Images. Ancestry.com. www.ancestry.com

Infantry in Mount Pleasant; however, in the spring of 1861, Watkins transferred to the “Maury Grays” of Company H of the First Tennessee Infantry. Watkins served as part of Company H throughout the duration of the Civil War. Company H was involved in many of the Civil War’s most important battles including: Shiloh, Corinth, Murfreesboro (Stones River), Chickamauga, Missionary Ridge (Chattanooga), Atlanta, Franklin, and Nashville.²⁷³ Watkins was one of only seven of the original one hundred and twenty soldiers left in Company H when General Joseph E. Johnston’s Army of Tennessee surrendered to General William Tecumseh Sherman in North Carolina in April 1865.²⁷⁴

Watkins is best known for his memoir *Company Aytch: Or, a Side Show of the Big Show*. Written in 1882, *Company Aytch* is a personal narrative following Watkins’s involvement in Company H throughout the Civil War. Some historians question the accuracy of some accounts within the book because it was written nearly twenty years after the Civil War. Despite these questions, *Company Aytch* has remained one of the best primary sources about the common soldier’s Civil War experience. Watkins’ memoir gained new fame when Ken Burns used sections from it in his acclaimed series *The Civil War*.²⁷⁵ Watkins’ memoir combined humorous anecdotes with heartbreaking descriptions of battle such as his description of the Battle of Franklin.

"Forward, men," is repeated all along the line. A sheet of fire was poured into our very faces, and for a moment we halted as if in despair, as the terrible avalanche of shot and shell laid low those brave and gallant heroes, whose bleeding

²⁷³ “Sam Watkins.” *Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Park*. National Park Service. <https://www.nps.gov/people/sam-watkins.htm> Accessed 10 July 2017.

²⁷⁴ “Sam Watkins.” *Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Park*. National Park Service. <https://www.nps.gov/people/sam-watkins.htm> Accessed 10 July 2017.

²⁷⁵ “Sam Watkins.” *Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Park*. National Park Service. <https://www.nps.gov/people/sam-watkins.htm> Accessed 10 July 2017.

wounds attested that the struggle would be desperate. Forward, men! The air loaded with death-dealing missiles. Never on this earth did men fight against such terrible odds. It seemed that the very elements of heaven and earth were in one mighty uproar. Forward, men! And the blood spurts in a perfect jet from the dead and wounded. The earth is red with blood. It runs in streams, making little rivulets as it flows. Occasionally there was a little lull in the storm of battle, as the men were loading their guns, and for a few moments it seemed as if night tried to cover the scene with her mantle. The death-angel shrieks and laughs and old Father Time is busy with his sickle, as he gathers in the last harvest of death, crying, 'More, more, more!' while his rapacious maw is glutted with the slain."

The Black Codes

The Thirteenth Amendment, approved by Congress in January, 1865, completed the task of abolishing slavery that the Emancipation Proclamation had begun. Almost immediately there was backlash in the southern states as Freedmen and women began to assert their rights. Southern landowners wanted to continue to exploit African Americans as agricultural workers so southern legislatures passed a series of laws known as black codes.²⁷⁶

The black codes were modeled on the slave codes which had existed before the Civil War to control enslaved populations and discourage rebellion. The laws allowed officials to arrest any unemployed or homeless African American as a vagrant and bind him or her to a term of service with a white employer until the fine was paid. Orphaned

²⁷⁶ Joyce Appleby et al. *The American Journey*. (Columbus, Ohio: Glencoe McGraw Hill, 2003), 505.

African American children could be bound as unpaid “apprentices” to their former masters.²⁷⁷ African Americans and many white Northerners saw the black codes as nothing more than a thinly veiled attempt to reestablish slavery. In response to the black codes, Congress took two important actions in 1866. First, it reauthorized and extended the powers of the Freedmen’s Bureau which had been established by Lincoln just before his assassination. Second, Congress passed the Civil Rights Act of 1866. These actions set Congress on a collision course with President Andrew Johnson.

Andrew Johnson

Andrew Johnson was born on December 29, 1808 in Raleigh, North Carolina. Johnson’s father was a porter at an inn, and his mother worked as a laundress and seamstress. Johnson’s family could not afford to send him to school. Instead he was apprenticed to a tailor at the age of ten, but ran away six years later. Johnson moved to Greeneville, Tennessee in 1826 where he opened a tailor shop and married. His wife, Eliza McCardle Johnson, tutored him in math, reading, and writing. Johnson was eventually successful enough to purchase property and slaves who worked in the Johnson home.²⁷⁸

Johnson began his political career in 1829 as an alderman. In the 1830s, Johnson was elected to the Tennessee General Assembly where he served several terms. Johnson was elected to the United States House of Representatives in 1843. As a politician, Johnson always favored the poor over the rich and wanted to give federal

²⁷⁷ Joyce Appleby et al. *The American Journey*. (Columbus, Ohio: Glencoe McGraw Hill, 2003), 505.

²⁷⁸ “Andrew Johnson.” History Channel. <https://www.history.com/topics/us-presidents/andrew-johnson> Accessed 10 July 2018.

lands in the west to settlers. However, Johnson also believed that the Constitution guaranteed the right to own slaves. Johnson became governor of Tennessee in 1853 and left the governorship in 1857 to become a United States Senator.²⁷⁹

When the secession crisis broke out in 1860, Johnson traveled across the state urging Tennesseans to remain loyal to the Union. Even after Tennessee seceded in June 1861, Johnson refused to give up his seat in the Senate. He was the only Southern Democrat who did not resign. In 1862 Lincoln appointed Johnson military governor of Tennessee. As governor, Johnson tried to restore federal authority in Tennessee.²⁸⁰

In 1864, Lincoln selected Johnson as his vice-president because he was both a Southerner and a Unionist. Following Lincoln's assassination on April 15, 1865, Johnson was sworn in as the nation's 17th president. Johnson faced the difficult task of reconstructing the nation in the wake of the Civil War, and he soon clashed with Congress over control of Reconstruction.²⁸¹

Radical Republicans wanted to punish the South for the war. They believed that Johnson was too friendly towards the South, in too much of a hurry to bring the former Confederates back into the Union, and too unwilling to give civil rights to African Americans. When Johnson vetoed the Freedman's Bureau and the Civil Rights Bill, Congress overrode his vetoes. To further limit the president's power, Congress passed the Tenure of Office Act which prohibited the president from removing government

²⁷⁹ "Andrew Johnson." History Channel. <https://www.history.com/topics/us-presidents/andrew-johnson> Accessed 10 July 2018.

²⁸⁰ Paul H. Bergeron. "Andrew Johnson." Tennessee Encyclopedia. 2018. <https://tennesseeencyclopedia.net/entries/andrew-johnson/> Accessed 10 July 2018.

²⁸¹ Joyce Appleby et al. *The American Journey*. (Columbus, Ohio: Glencoe McGraw Hill, 2003), 503.

officials.²⁸² When Johnson removed Secretary of War Edwin Stanton from office in violation of the Tenure of Office Act, the House voted to impeach Johnson in February 1868.²⁸³ Johnson was the first U.S. President to be impeached; however, he was acquitted and his presidency spared by a single vote in the Senate. Several of the more moderate Republicans voted not guilty because they did not think a president should be impeached for political disagreements with Congress. Johnson served out the remainder of his term, but was not nominated for reelection in 1870.²⁸⁴

Following his one term as president, Johnson returned to Greeneville. In 1874, he became the first former President of the United States to win a seat in the United States Senate. However, four months after taking his seat in the Senate, Johnson suffered a stroke and died on July 31, 1875. He was buried in Greeneville, wrapped in an American flag with his head resting on a copy of the Constitution.²⁸⁵

The Freedmen's Bureau and Fisk University

In March 1865, President Lincoln and Congress established the Freedmen's Bureau to assist formerly enslaved people as well as white Southerners who had been displaced by the fighting. The Freedmen's Bureau carried out a number of functions in the South. The agency provided food, clothing, shelter, and medical care for those in need. It also protected freed people from exploitation by their former masters. Agents

²⁸² Joyce Appleby et al. *The American Journey*. (Columbus, Ohio: Glencoe McGraw Hill, 2003), 507.

²⁸³ Paul H. Bergeron. "Andrew Johnson." Tennessee Encyclopedia. 2018.
<https://tennesseeencyclopedia.net/entries/andrew-johnson/> Accessed 10 July 2018.

²⁸⁴ Joyce Appleby et al. *The American Journey*. (Columbus, Ohio: Glencoe McGraw Hill, 2003), ????

²⁸⁵ Paul H. Bergeron. "Andrew Johnson." Tennessee Encyclopedia. 2018.
<https://tennesseeencyclopedia.net/entries/andrew-johnson/> Accessed 10 July 2018.

investigated claims of abuse from formerly enslaved people and helped establish employment contracts. One of the agency's most important functions was to establish schools.²⁸⁶

In Nashville, Clinton B. Fisk, leader of the Freedmen's Bureau in Tennessee, donated a former Union army barracks to establish a school for African Americans in 1865. The school, which was known as Fisk School in his honor, opened in January 1866 to students of all ages who wanted to learn. One year later, the school was incorporated as Fisk University and was open to students of all races. The school quickly fell on hard times and was nearly bankrupt by 1871. In a last ditch effort to raise money for the school, a group of Fisk students began to tour the nation singing gospel music.²⁸⁷ The Fisk Jubilee Singers were an immediate sensation. In 1873, they performed for President Grant at the White House and for Queen Victoria. Fisk University continued to prosper in the early 20th century. Students from Fisk, including Diane Nash and John Lewis, played a key role in the civil rights movement.²⁸⁸

William Brownlow and the Constitution of 1870

To understand the roots of the Constitutional Convention of 1870, one must look back to Tennessee's Civil War experience beginning with the fight over secession. Once South Carolina seceded in December 1860, Tennesseans were roughly divided into three camps. The first camp wanted to secede wholeheartedly. The second camp

²⁸⁶ Joyce Appleby et al. *The American Journey*. (Columbus, Ohio: Glencoe McGraw Hill, 2003), 502.

²⁸⁷ "Fisk University History." Fisk University. 2018. <https://www.fisk.edu/about/history> Accessed 12 July 2018.

²⁸⁸ "Today in History- January 9." Library of Congress. <https://www.loc.gov/item/today-in-history/january-09/> Accessed 12 July, 2018.

wanted to remain in the Union at any cost. The third group wanted to remain in the Union, but they did not want to force other states like South Carolina to remain in the Union if they wanted out. When the question of secession was first put to voters in February 1861, Sixty-nine thousand voted to remain in the Union while fifty-eight thousand voted for secession. After the Battle of Fort Sumter and President Lincoln's call for seventy-five thousand volunteer troops, many Tennesseans in the third group changed their minds. A second vote on secession in June 1861 resulted in one hundred and five thousand votes for secession and only forty-seven thousand votes against. Thus, Tennessee became the last state to join the Confederacy.²⁸⁹

The majority of Unionists lived in East Tennessee. William G. "Parson" Brownlow and Andrew Johnson were two key leaders of the movement. The Unionists wanted to form a separate state as West Virginia had done, but this was never accomplished. Instead, they settled down to endure four years of ruthless guerilla warfare in which they were sometimes the victims and sometimes the perpetrators of brutally violent acts.²⁹⁰ Ironically, Middle and West Tennessee, where most of the secessionists lived, quickly came under Federal control. President Lincoln appointed Andrew Johnson, the loyal Unionist, military governor. In an effort to bring order to Tennessee, Johnson ruled with an iron hand. His harsh mandates left many of the moderate Unionists feeling betrayed. Emancipation was an especially tricky issue in Tennessee. Many Unionists including the very vocal Brownlow opposed emancipation. In fact, Johnson asked Lincoln to exclude

²⁸⁹ Paul Bergeron, Stephen Ash and Jeanette Keith. *Tennesseans and Their History*. (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1999), 134-136.

²⁹⁰ Paul Bergeron, Stephen Ash and Jeanette Keith. *Tennesseans and Their History*. (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1999), 139-140.

Tennessee from the Emancipation Proclamation because he feared that to do otherwise would drive many Tennesseans into the arms of the Confederacy.²⁹¹

When Johnson left Tennessee to assume his duties as vice-president, he was replaced by William Brownlow. Brownlow was able to push ratification of the 14th amendment through the legislature and ensure that Tennessee would be the first Confederate state to rejoin the Union. Brownlow was many things, but a compromiser was not one of them. Instead of trying to reunite former Confederates (Democrats) and Unionists (Republicans), he drove them further apart with two laws. The first stripped voting rights from former Confederates in order to keep the Republicans in power. The second granted African Americans the right to vote. Voting rights or enfranchisement of African Americans angered many Conservative Republicans as well. A split developed in the Republican Party between the Radicals and Conservatives.²⁹²

It is not coincidental that the Ku Klux Klan was founded in Pulaski, Tennessee in 1865, the same year that Brownlow took office. Former Confederates who found themselves locked out of political power could not bear to see African American men voting when they could not. The Klan quickly evolved into a terrorist organization that used violence and threats of violence to intimidate voters and control the outcome of elections. Brownlow responded by sending out state troops to capture Klansmen, but they were largely unsuccessful in breaking up the group. When the state guard appeared, the Klansmen stopped their activities until the guard left. The state already

²⁹¹ Paul Bergeron, Stephen Ash and Jeanette Keith. *Tennesseans and Their History*. (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1999), 147-149.

²⁹² Hardy, William Edward, "'Fare well to all Radicals': Redeeming Tennessee, 1869-1870." PhD diss., University of Tennessee, 2013. http://trace.tennessee.edu/utk_graddiss/2432 Accessed 11 July 2018.

had massive debts from the war and could not afford to maintain the state guard. Once the guard was gone, the Klansmen returned to terrorize the countryside.²⁹³

In 1869, Brownlow left his post as governor to assume his duties as United States Senator. DeWitt Clinton Senter, Brownlow's successor, assumed the governorship. Senter eased the voting restrictions that Brownlow had put in place on Conservative Republican voters. The Conservative Republicans favored granting suffrage to former Confederates. In order to gain the support of Conservative Republicans, Senter agreed. He appointed election commissioners who allowed more Conservatives and former Confederates to vote. The former Confederates (Democrats) saw this as their path back to political power. The former Confederates began running candidates in legislative races across the state. By 1870, the Democrats had enough seats in the legislative branch to call for a constitutional convention.²⁹⁴

The new constitution did not disenfranchise African American voters as many of the legislators wanted, but it did completely restore voting rights to former Confederates. There was no need to anger the federal government by denying African American voting rights on paper when the Ku Klux Klan was doing it more effectively with violence. The Constitution of 1870 also created a poll tax, ostensibly to fund public schools. The poll tax was further assurance that while African Americans could vote in theory, few would be able to take advantage of that right. The new constitution also contained a number of other provisions designed to weaken the power of the Radical

²⁹³ Hardy, William Edward, "'Fare well to all Radicals': Redeeming Tennessee, 1869-1870." PhD diss., University of Tennessee, 2013.

http://trace.tennessee.edu/utk_graddiss/2432 Accessed 11 July 2018.

²⁹⁴ Hardy, William Edward, "'Fare well to all Radicals': Redeeming Tennessee, 1869-1870." PhD diss., University of Tennessee, 2013.

http://trace.tennessee.edu/utk_graddiss/2432 Accessed 11 July 2018.

Republicans. The constitution was overwhelmingly approved by voters in March. In November of 1870 John C. Brown was elected governor of Tennessee. Brown was a Democrat, former Confederate, and member of the Ku Klux Klan. His election signaled end of the Reconstruction Era in Tennessee.²⁹⁵ The experiences of African American legislators in the General Assembly show Tennessee's movement towards segregation and disenfranchisement.

African American Legislators

In 1872, the first African American, Sampson Keeble, was elected to represent Davidson County in the 38th General Assembly. Keeble served only one term. Between 1872 and 1887, thirteen other African Americans were elected to the Tennessee General Assembly. After 1887, no other African Americans were elected until A.W. Willis, who was elected in 1965. The African Americans who served in the Tennessee General Assembly in the 19th century had a number of things in common. Nine of the men represented counties in southwest Tennessee (Shelby, Fayette, Haywood, and Tipton counties). The others represented Davidson, Hamilton, and Montgomery counties. Eleven of the fourteen were born into slavery. Four were attorneys, four were teachers and seven attended college. Three of the representatives attended Fisk

²⁹⁵ Hardy, William Edward, "'Fare well to all Radicals': Redeeming Tennessee, 1869-1870." PhD diss., University of Tennessee, 2013.
http://trace.tennessee.edu/utk_graddiss/2432 Accessed 11 July 2018.

University, including Greene E. Evans who was part of the earliest group of Fisk Jubilee Singers.²⁹⁶

Another commonality was the lack of success these men had in preventing the passage of Jim Crow laws in Tennessee. In 1875, just after Sampson Keeble's term ended, Tennessee passed its first Jim Crow law. Jim Crow laws legalized the segregation of African Americans and whites. The laws were named after a character from a popular traveling show in the late 1800's. The Jim Crow character, played by a white actor in blackface makeup, portrayed African Americans as stupid, brutish, and completely inferior to whites. The 1875 law, Chapter 130 of the Acts of Tennessee, allowed discrimination in hotels, trains, theaters, and most other public places. Under the law, business owners could simply refuse service to anyone they chose. If a patron complained, he or she could be fined up to one hundred dollars. A number of the African Americans who served in the General Assembly introduced bills to overturn or amend Chapter 130 and similar laws, but were unsuccessful. Only Styles Hutchins (Rep. Hamilton County) had any success in passing legislation. His bills to abolish the poll tax in Chattanooga and to prevent criminals from other states from testifying in Tennessee courts were successful. In general, any legislation proposed by Tennessee's African American legislators that aimed to protect the rights granted by the 13th, 14th, and 15th amendments failed.

After the end of Reconstruction, Tennessee's African American legislators faced increasing pressure from violent groups of racist whites. David Rivers represented Fayette County from 1883-1884. He was reelected in 1885, but was prevented from

²⁹⁶ *"This Honorable Body: African American Legislators in 19th Century Tennessee."* TSLA Exhibits. Tennessee State Library and Archives, 2013. <https://sharetn.gov.tnsosfiles.com/tsla/exhibits/blackhistory/index.htm> Accessed 11 July 2018.

taking his seat when a mob of prejudiced whites drove him from Fayette County. While running for a fourth term in 1888, Samuel McElwee was targeted by white separatists in Haywood County. Armed mobs terrorized African American voters. Local officials deliberately miscounted and misreported votes to prevent McElwee from serving another term. McElwee and his family were forced to flee Haywood County and barely escaped with their lives. Like many of the other former legislators, McElwee eventually left Tennessee. The 46th General Assembly (1889-1890) was the first since 1872 to not have any African American legislators. The 46th General Assembly passed a statewide poll tax designed to greatly reduce the number of African American voters. The poll tax also meant that it would be seventy-five years before another African American would serve in Tennessee's General Assembly.²⁹⁷

Public Education

Tennessee's foray into public education came in the 1820s and 30s as part of the ideals of Jacksonian Democracy. As more and more people embraced the idea that all white men had to right to participate in the political process regardless of their wealth or status, the government identified a need to educate its white citizens.²⁹⁸ To accomplish this goal of an educated white citizenry, Tennessee established a common school fund with money from the sale of public lands. The 1834 Constitution included a mandate to

²⁹⁷ "This Honorable Body: African American Legislators in 19th Century Tennessee." TSLA Exhibits. Tennessee State Library and Archives, 2013. <https://sharetn.gov.tnsosfiles.com/tsla/exhibits/blackhistory/index.htm> Accessed 11 July 2018.

²⁹⁸ Paul Bergeron, Stephen Ash and Jeanette Keith. *Tennesseans and Their History*. (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1999), 129.

promote public education. This led to the creation of a state board of common school commissioners who distributed the money.²⁹⁹

After his election in 1853, Andrew Johnson set out to reform and improve the public education system. Johnson, who grew up poor and did not learn to read until adulthood, knew firsthand the difference that education could make in one's life. Johnson urged the legislature to provide more funds for schools with a property tax and poll tax. Both taxes were approved, nearly doubling the amount of money available for schools. As a result, the number of schools increased rapidly and Johnson became known as the "Father of Public Education in Tennessee."³⁰⁰

Unfortunately, these improvements were short lived. Many schools closed during the chaotic Civil War years. Schools reopened during the Reconstruction period, and for the first time African American children received a public education as well. However, Conservative Republicans and Democrats opposed the tax increases that funded the schools and particularly despised the idea of tax dollars funding education for African Americans.³⁰¹ When the Conservatives took control of the legislature in 1869, they abolished the state education system and repealed most of the taxes that had funded it. Control over schools was returned to individual counties, but counties were not required to provide any public education.³⁰² The 1870 Constitution exhorted the General Assembly to "cherish literature and science," and required that money from

²⁹⁹ Paul Bergeron, Stephen Ash and Jeanette Keith. *Tennesseans and Their History*. (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1999), 129.

³⁰⁰ Paul Bergeron, Stephen Ash and Jeanette Keith. *Tennesseans and Their History*. (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1999), 129.

³⁰¹ Hardy, William Edward, "'Fare well to all Radicals': Redeeming Tennessee, 1869-1870." PhD diss., University of Tennessee, 2013. http://trace.tennessee.edu/utk_graddiss/2432 Accessed 11 July 2018.

³⁰² Hardy, William Edward, "'Fare well to all Radicals': Redeeming Tennessee, 1869-1870." PhD diss., University of Tennessee, 2013. http://trace.tennessee.edu/utk_graddiss/2432 Accessed 11 July 2018.

the poll tax and common school fund be used for schools.³⁰³ However, it did not create any specific requirements for education. Additionally, the 1870 Constitution mandated the segregation of schools stating that “No school established or aided under this section shall allow white and negro children to be received as scholars together in the same school.”³⁰⁴

The Ku Klux Klan and Vigilantism

The Ku Klux Klan was formed in Pulaski, Tennessee between December 1865 and May 1866. Its founding members were six well educated former members of the Confederate Army. They claimed that they originally intended the organization to be nothing more than a social club modeled on a popular fraternity; however, the organization quickly became something much more sinister: a paramilitary group that used violence and intimidation tactics on anyone who opposed their vision of a country ruled by white men.³⁰⁵

The name Ku Klux was derived from the Greek word Kuklos meaning “circle” and “klan” was added for alliterative value. Following the fraternity tradition, the men developed secret signals and codes for passing messages. They created coded titles like Grand Cyclops (president) and Night Hawks (messengers) and rituals including hazing of new members. The original six then donned sheets with holes cut out for the

³⁰³ Tennessee’s Constitution of 1870. Tennessee State Library and Archives. 2018. <http://cdm15138.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/compoundobject/collection/tfd/id/584/rec/1> Accessed 11 July, 2018.

³⁰⁴ Tennessee’s Constitution of 1870. Tennessee State Library and Archives. 2018. <http://cdm15138.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/compoundobject/collection/tfd/id/584/rec/1> Accessed 11 July, 2018.

³⁰⁵ Susan Campbell Bartoletti. *They Called Themselves the K.K.K.: The Birth of An American Terrorist Group*. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2010). 13-16.

eyes and began riding around the countryside crashing parties and playing practical jokes. As others became aware of the group, membership grew and new clubs or dens were created in surrounding counties.³⁰⁶

According to John Lester, one of the original Klansmen, the men only gradually realized that they could use their costumes and anonymity to frighten African Americans. However, some historians find this story doubtful. They believe that the group had intimidation of African Americans as its main purpose from the beginning. The 1866 Civil Rights Act had declared African Americans to have the same rights as whites. As former Confederates and members of the upper class, the men must have found this frustrating. Racial tensions were rising all over the state. A buggy accident in Memphis involving one white and one African American driver led to a riot that killed 46 African Americans and two whites. The Memphis Race Riots of May 1866 may have been the real motivation for founding the organization.³⁰⁷

The group began patrolling roads and whipping African Americans who travelled at night. They also began collecting information about white Republicans and African Americans who were politically active. As former Confederates, the men could not vote in Tennessee elections, but they could harass and intimidate anyone who dared to vote for policies they opposed. In 1867, Klan members from all around the state met in Nashville. They revised and refined their rules, wrote a constitution called the Prescript, and devised an organizational system for spreading new dens throughout the south.

³⁰⁶ Susan Campbell Bartoletti. *They Called Themselves the K.K.K.: The Birth of An American Terrorist Group*. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2010). 25-26.

³⁰⁷ Susan Campbell Bartoletti. *They Called Themselves the K.K.K.: The Birth of An American Terrorist Group*. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2010). 21-23.

The “Invisible Empire,” as they now called themselves selected Nathan Bedford Forrest as their new Grand Wizard or leader.³⁰⁸

Nathan Bedford Forrest was a former slave trader and Confederate general. During the Civil War Forrest was known as the “Wizard of the Saddle”. It is likely that the title “Grand Wizard” was derived from this nickname. Forrest was responsible for the 1864 Fort Pillow Massacre in which both Unionists and Black Federal Troops were slaughtered.³⁰⁹ Forrest’s name drew even more former Confederates to the organization. While the organization claimed to be selective, many poor white men claimed to have been forced to join. They were threatened with fines and beatings if they did not participate.³¹⁰

This “social club” quickly became an instrument of terror throughout the South. African Americans who defied social norms by looking white men in the eye, speaking to white women or doing anything that demonstrated pride were considered “uppity” and subject to abuse from the Klan. African Americans who enjoyed economic success were especially vulnerable to the vigilante justice handed out by the Klan. George Taylor of Alabama had amassed sixty acres and two mules before the Klan broke into his home in the middle of the night. They dragged him outside where they whipped him until his backbone was visible through his wounds. Taylor and his family were forced to abandon their farm and possessions, a loss of about five hundred dollars.³¹¹

³⁰⁸ Susan Campbell Bartoletti. *They Called Themselves the K.K.K.: The Birth of An American Terrorist Group*. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2010). 41-46.

³⁰⁹ Susan Campbell Bartoletti. *They Called Themselves the K.K.K.: The Birth of An American Terrorist Group*. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2010). 39.

³¹⁰ Susan Campbell Bartoletti. *They Called Themselves the K.K.K.: The Birth of An American Terrorist Group*. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2010). 56.

³¹¹ Susan Campbell Bartoletti. *They Called Themselves the K.K.K.: The Birth of An American Terrorist Group*. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2010). 81.

In Tennessee, Klansmen increasingly targeted Radical Republicans as well as politically active African Americans. On August 12, 1868 a group of six masked men approached Lewis Powell's home in Hickman County. Powell was a member of the Black Union League. Powell hid in the woods as the men advanced. The men asked Powell's wife for food. When she told them that her family was poor and had none to spare, the men opened fire killing her. They rode off as Powell ran back to find his wife dead. Governor Brownlow tried to destroy the Klan by using the State Guard to catch Klansmen; however, the attempt was unsuccessful. When the guard appeared, the Klansmen simply ceased their activities until the guard was called elsewhere and then they promptly resumed.³¹²

Frustrated with the State Guard's lack of success, Brownlow hired a private detective named Seymour Barmore to infiltrate the Klan. Barmore managed to get admitted to a den, but was later heard bragging about breaking up the Klan. A message was relayed to Klansmen in Maury County who boarded the train Barmore was on and kidnapped him. Barmore's body was recovered six weeks later. The Klan had sent a message: anyone who crossed them would die.³¹³

As the organization grew, its ties with the Democratic Party grew as well. In Tennessee, Conservative Republicans and former Confederate Democrats were able to reclaim control of the legislature. When a new state constitution was put to a vote in 1870, Klansmen made sure that both African American and white voters voted for it or

³¹² Hardy, William Edward, "'Fare well to all Radicals': Redeeming Tennessee, 1869-1870." PhD diss., University of Tennessee, 2013.

http://trace.tennessee.edu/utk_graddiss/2432 Accessed 11 July 2018.

³¹³ Hardy, William Edward, "'Fare well to all Radicals': Redeeming Tennessee, 1869-1870." PhD diss., University of Tennessee, 2013.

http://trace.tennessee.edu/utk_graddiss/2432 Accessed 11 July 2018.

were too scared to vote at all. The ratification of the 1870 Constitution and the election of John C. Brown, a former Confederate general and Klansmen, meant that the Ku Klux Klan would continue to terrorize the state for many years to come.³¹⁴

³¹⁴ Hardy, William Edward, "'Fare well to all Radicals': Redeeming Tennessee, 1869-1870. " PhD diss., University of Tennessee, 2013. http://trace.tennessee.edu/utk_graddiss/2432 Accessed 11 July 2018.