



Tennessee Resources

Family History Sources in the Volunteer State



Tennessee History

European explorers first crossed into present-day eastern Tennessee where Cherokees occupied the region during the late 17th and early 18th centuries.

Despite several treaties, neither settlers nor Native Americans in the area accepted the restrictions. In 1790, Congress created the "Territory South of the River Ohio" while conflict over land continued. By 1796 the population of settlers had increased to the required 60,000, and Tennessee became the 16th state.

Frontier settlers migrated into Tennessee. Many Scots-Irish traveled through the valleys of Virginia via the Great Wagon Road or Warriors Path; Germans from Pennsylvania and Virginia arrived in the region west of Chattanooga. Others followed Robertson's Road from the Cumberland Gap into middle Tennessee.

In 1835, the federal government negotiated a new treaty with representatives of some of the Cherokees; in compliance, the natives left Tennessee and moved farther west. In 1837 and 1838 the federal government and military enforced the removal of the remaining Cherokee and remnants of other tribes in the state, forcing them to move via what became known as the "Trail of Tears" through Missouri and then south into present-day Oklahoma.

After several major Civil War battles in the state, the Union forces controlled the Tennessee River and the state in 1863. During the conflict, the state's infrastructure took a beating. Tennessee reestablished its government in 1864, abolished slavery within its borders in 1865, and claimed the honor of being the first to be readmitted to the Union in 1866 after ratifying the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Amendments.

A flood control system began during World War I for the Tennessee River. Work stopped before it was completed, but during the Great Depression, federal funds under the New Deal in 1933 established the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA), which finished the project to harness the Tennessee River and use its force to generate power for the region. The completion of Wilson Dam, constructed across the state boundary at Muscle Shoals, Alabama, culminated the TVA project.

This section is from [History of Tennessee](#) in the Ancestry.com Wiki, and was originally published in [Red Book: American State, County and Town Sources](#).



Library of Congress, "Eddie Butter, farm boy, holds a lamb" print from black and white negative, Prints & Photographs Online Catalog, (<http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/fsa.8d05498> : accessed 3- Jun 2014), photo taken Jun 1942, Reproduction no. LC-USW3-004074-D



Tennessee Resources

Family History Sources in the Volunteer State



Significant Dates (through 1945)

1763 – Virginia and North Carolina settlers migrated to area after France ceded the area to Great Britain.

1772 – Group of settlers formed the Watauga Association and implemented one of the first constitutions in America.

1775 – Daniel Boone, working for the Transylvania Company which had bought land from the Cherokees, blazed the Wilderness Trail from Virginia across the mountain at Cumberland Gap.

1779 – Nashville founded; Jonesboro became first chartered town and the oldest permanent settlement in the state.

1780 – Battle of Kings Mountain.

1784 – North Carolina ceded the area that is partially Tennessee to the U.S. and the state of Franklin is organized.

1787 – Marriages first recorded in county records.

1788 – The state of Franklin is dissolved.

1789 – What was the state of Franklin fell back under the jurisdiction of North Carolina.

1790 – North Carolina once again ceded the area to the U.S.; it became part of the Southwest Territory.

1795 – Walton Road linked Knoxville to Nashville over the Cumberland Plateau.

1796 – Tennessee became the 16th state on June 1, 1796; adopted constitution of common law that North Carolina had.

1812 – The New Madrid Earthquake caused the Mississippi River to flow backwards; create the Reelfoot Lake area.

1819 – First steamboat reached Nashville.

1820 – Survey conducted to establish boundary between Kentucky and Tennessee – some areas were still disputed.

1859 – Another survey determined the boundary between Kentucky and Tennessee. Records for residents who lived near the border may be in either state.

1861 – Seceded from the Union on June 24 and joined the Confederacy; strong pro-Union sentiment in eastern portion of the state.

1865 – *Sultana* exploded in the Mississippi River near Memphis.

1866 – Readmitted to the Union in July.

1878 – Yellow fever epidemic took the lives of ¼ of Memphis residents.

1884 – Clerk of the County Court in the bride's jurisdiction first required to issue a marriage license.

1902 – Coal mine fire in Coal Creek killed at least 180 people.

1911 – Coal mine fire in Briceville killed at least 80 people.

1919 – Women were eligible to vote in presidential elections.

1920 – With the passage of the 19th amendment, women receive full suffrage.

1925 – Scopes "Monkey Trial"

1933 – Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) was established.

1942 – Construction of the Atomic Energy plant in Oak Ridge began.

1945 – Statewide registration of marriages began.



Tennessee Resources

Family History Sources in the Volunteer State



Tennessee Censuses

Federal censuses for Tennessee have been lost or destroyed for 1790 and 1800, though tax lists can serve as substitutes for the missing enumerations. The 1810 census has survived for only Rutherford and Grainger counties, and the 1820 enumeration exists for only twenty-six counties, all in middle and west Tennessee.

Beginning in 1830, the censuses are available for each census year, except for the destroyed census of 1890.

No territorial or state censuses are known to exist. However, some reconstructed records can be found in [1770–1790 Census of the Cumberland Settlements: Davidson, Sumner, Tennessee Counties \(In What is Now Tennessee\)](#).

Tennessee Census Records on Ancestry.com

- [Tennessee, Compiled Census and Census Substitutes Index, 1810-1891](#)
- [Tennessee, Enumeration of Male Voters, 1891](#)
- [Selected U.S. Federal Census Non-Population Schedules, 1850-1880 \(includes Tennessee agricultural schedules, 1850-1880; industrial schedules 1850-1880; and social statistics schedules, 1850-1870\)](#)
- [U.S. Federal Census - 1880 Schedules of Defective, Dependent, and Delinquent Classes](#)
- [1890 Veterans Schedule](#)
- [U.S. Census Reconstructed Records, 1660-1820](#)
- [1770-1790 Census of the Cumberland Settlements](#)

Tennessee Vital Records

Statewide registration of births and deaths began in 1914, with general compliance achieved by the early 1920s. Some fragmented earlier records also exist. Marriages have been recorded on a county basis since as early as 1778, though many counties are incomplete or missing until as late as the 1850s.

- [Tennessee Office of Vital Records](#): Holds records of births, marriages, divorces, and deaths.
- [Tennessee State Library and Archives](#): See the Research and Collections page for a discussion of Tennessee vital records, and links to [Tennessee Death Indexes](#) covering the years 1908-1912 and 1913-1930.

Tennessee Vital Records on Ancestry.com

- [Tennessee State Marriages, 1780-2002](#)
- [Tennessee, Deaths and Burials Index, 1874-1955](#)

Population

1790	35,691
1800	105,602
1810	261,727
1820	422,823
1830	681,904
1840	829,210
1850	1,002,717
1860	1,109,801
1870	1,258,520
1880	1,542,359
1890	1,767,518
1900	2,020,616
1910	2,184,789
1920	2,337,885
1930	2,616,556
1940	2,915,841
1950	3,291,718



Tennessee Resources

Family History Sources in the Volunteer State



- [Tennessee, Death Records, 1908-1958](#)
- [Tennessee, Delayed Birth Records, 1869-1909](#)
- [Tennessee, Marriages, 1851-1900](#)

Tennessee Military Records

- [U.S., Confederate Soldiers Compiled Service Records, 1861-1865](#) *Free*
- [U.S., Union Soldiers Compiled Service Records, 1861-1865](#) *Free*
- [Tennessee, Civil War Confederate Pension Applications Index](#)
- [U.S., American Volunteer Soldiers, Mexican War, 1845-1848](#) *Free*
- [Report of the Adjutant General of the state of Tennessee : of the military forces of the state, from 1861 to 1866.](#)

Tennessee Immigration & Travel

- [Tennessee, Naturalization Records, 1907-1991](#)

Tennessee Tax, Criminal, Land & Wills

- [Tennessee, Early Tax List Records, 1783-1895](#) *Free*
- [North Carolina and Tennessee, Early Land Records, 1753-1931](#)
- [Web: Tennessee, Supreme Court Case Index, 1809-1950](#) *Free*
- [North Carolina and Tennessee, Revolutionary War Land Warrants, 1783-1843](#)

Other Collections

City Directories

Use the browse box in the upper right corner to determine what directories are available for your ancestor's area. If they lived in a rural area, check to see if that area was included with a larger city in the vicinity.

Other Resources

The organizations listed below provide information about Tennessee history and genealogy. In addition to these state-level resources, many counties and towns maintain important genealogical collections in local libraries, genealogical societies, or historical societies.

Statewide Research Resources

- [Tennessee State Library and Archives](#): In addition to the extensive on-site collections in Nashville, the Digital Collections provide a wide range of online resources, including the Tennessee Virtual Archive (TeVA), Civil War information, Nashville City Directories, and more.



Tennessee Resources

Family History Sources in the Volunteer State



- [Tennessee Historical Society](#): The Society's collections are held at the Tennessee State Library and Archives.
- [Tennessee Genealogical Society](#)
- [Tennessee GenWeb](#)
- [Tennessee Virtual Archive \(TeVA\)](#): A digital archive of Tennessee history and culture, this site contains many collections of interest to genealogists, including several on the Civil War.
- [The National Archives at Atlanta](#): This facility maintains records from Federal agencies and courts in Tennessee, including census, military, court, naturalization, and immigration records.

Specialty and Regional Resources

- [East Tennessee Historical Society – Genealogy page](#): Lists local research resources, including the McClung Historical Collection at Knox County Library, a key resource for East Tennessee research.
- [Middle Tennessee Genealogical Society](#)
- [West Tennessee Historical Society](#)

Help and Advice

- [Tennessee Family History Research](#)
- [Counties of Tennessee](#)
- [Cumberland and Atlantic States Research](#)
- [Against the Historical Background](#)
- [Why Southern Research Is Different, Part I](#) and [Part II](#)
- [The Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands](#)

[View all Tennessee collections on Ancestry.com](#)



Tennessee Resources

Family History Sources in
the Volunteer State



Important Dates for Tennessee Counties

This section is from [Tennessee County Resources](#), part of the [Ancestry.com Wiki](#), and was originally published in [Red Book: American State, County and Town Sources](#).

County	Date Formed	Parent County(ies)	Birth	Marriage	Death	Land	Probate	Court
Anderson	1801	Knox/Grainger	1881	1838	1891	1802	1827	1801
Bedford	1807	Rutherford/Indian lands	1908	1861	1908	1808	1861	1830
Benton	1835	Humphreys/Henry	1881	1838	1881	1820	1836	1836
Bledsoe	1807	Roane/Indian lands	1908	1908	1908	1808	1884	1836
Blount	1795	Knox	1881	1795	1881	1794	1795	1795
Bradley	1835	Cherokee land	1908	1864	1908	1839	1838	1838
Campbell	1806	Anderson/Claiborne	1914	1838	1914	1806	1806	1813
Cannon	1836	Rutherford/Smith/Warren/Coffee	1881	1838	1881	1836	1836	183
Carroll	1821	Chickasaw lands	1908	1838	1908	1820	1822	1821
Carter	1796	Washington	1881	1790	1881	1795	1794	1804
Cheatham	1856	Davidson/Dickson/Montgomery/Robertson	1881	1856	1881	1856	1856	1856
Chester	1879	Hardman/Madison/Henderson/McNairy	1908	1891	1908	1891	1891	1882
Claiborne	1801	Grainger/Hawkins	1908	1838	1908	1801	1801	1801
Clay	1870	Jackson/Overton	1908	1871	1908	1871	1871	1871
Cocke	1797	Jefferson	1908	1877	1908	1856	1876	1877
Coffee	1836	Franklin/Warren/Bedford	1881	1853	1881	1836	1833	1836
Crockett	1871	Madison/Dyer/Gibson/Haywood	1909	1872	1909	1870	1872	1871
Cumberland	1856	Bledsoe/Morgan/White/Rhea/Fentress/Putnam/Roane	1914	1905	1914	1854	1904	1897
Davidson	1783	Indian lands	1881	1789	1881	1784	1784	1783
Decatur	1845	Perry	1881	1869	1908	1846	1869	1860
DeKalb	1837	Warren/White/Jackson/Smith	1914	1848	1914	1838	1838	1837
Dickson	1803	Montgomery/Robertson	1859	1817	1908	1804	1800	1804



Tennessee Resources

Family History Sources in
the Volunteer State



Dyer	1823	Chickasaw lands	1908	1860	1881	1820	1853	1848
Fayette	1824	Shelby/Hardeman	1914	1838	1914	1821	1836	1824
Fentress	1823	Morgan/Overton/White	1914	1905	1914	1820	1905	1842
Franklin	1807	Bedford/Warren	1881	1838	1881	1807	1808	1832
Gibson	1823	Chickasaw lands	1881	1824	1909	1819	1824	1824
Giles	1809	Maury	1908	1865	1908	1790	1810	1810
Grainger	1796	Hawkins/Knox	1908	1796	1908	1796	1796	1796
Greene	1783	Washington, N.C.	1881	1780	1881	1785	1802	1783
Grundy	1844	Franklin/Warren/Coffee/Marion	1908	1850	1908	1852	1838	1844
Hamblen	1870	Grainger/Greene/Jefferson/Hawkins	1909	1863	1909	1870	1870	1870
Hamilton	1819	Cherokee lands	1881	1857	1881	1796	1862	1860
Hancock	1844	Claiborne/Hawkins	1914	1930	1914	1879	1929	1879
Hardeman	1823	Chickasaw lands	1881	1823	1881	1820	1823	1823
Hardin	1819	Chickasaw lands	1881	1863	1881	1820	1825	1820
Hawkins	1785	(as Spencer; renamed, 1786) Sullivan	1914	1820	1914	1787	1786	1810
Haywood	1823	Chickasaw lands	1881	1859	1908	1793	1826	1808
Henderson	1821	Chickasaw lands	1908	1893	1908	1856	1861	1850
Henry	1821	Chickasaw lands	1881	1835	1881	1820	1822	1824
Hickman	1807	Dickson	1914	1868	1914	1808	1846	1844
Houston	1871	Dickson/Stewart/Humphreys/Montgomery	1881	1871	1881	1871	1869	1871
Humphreys	1809	Stewart	1908	1864	1908	1810	1837	1842
Jackson	1801	Smith/Indian lands	1881	1870	1881	1817	1839	1839
James	1871	(abolished; became part of Hamilton, 1919) Hamilton/Bradley						
Jefferson	1792	Greene/Hawkins	1908	1792	1908	1792	1792	1792

Visit the Ancestry.com Learning Center at www.ancestry.com/learn.

For account questions or technical help, call 1-800-262-3787.



Tennessee Resources

Family History Sources in
the Volunteer State



Johnson	1836	Carter	1908	1838	1908	1836	1800	1836
Knox	1792	Greene/Hawkins	1881	1792	1881	1791	1792	1792
Lake	1870	Obion	1914	1883	1914	1870	1871	1870
Lauderdale	1835	Dyer/Tipton/Haywood	1881	1838	1881	1822	1836	1836
Lawrence	1817	Hickman/Indian lands/Maury	1908	1818	1908	1819	1829	1818
Lewis	1843	Hickman/Maury/Wayne/Lawrence	1908	1847	1908	1827	1846	1844
Lincoln	1809	Bedford	1881	1834	1881	1810	1809	1810
Loudon	1870	Blount/Monroe/Roane/McMinn	1908	1870	1908	1870	1870	1870
Macon	1842	Smith/Sumner	1908	1901	1925	1901	1901	1843
Madison	1821	Chickasaw lands	1925	1838	1925	1821	1822	1821
Marion	1817	Cherokee lands	1908	1881	1908	1819	1875	1842
Marshall	1836	Bedford/Lincoln/Maury	1914	1836	1914	1836	1865	1836
Maury	1807	Williamson/Indian lands	1908	1807	1908	1808	1806	1807
McMinn	1819	Cherokee lands	1908	1838	1908	1820	1819	1819
McNairy	1823	Hardin	1881	1861	1925	1823	1857	1855
Meigs	1836	Rhea/Cherokee lands	1909	1838	1909	1835	1836	1836
Monroe	1819	Cherokee lands	1881	1838	1881	1820	1825	1820
Montgomery	1796	Tennessee	1908	1838	1881	1786	1795	1805
Moore	1871	Bedford/Franklin/Coffee/Lincoln	1881	1872	1908	1872	1871	1872
Morgan	1817	Roane/Anderson	1908	1862	1908	1818	1866	1824
Obion	1823	Chickasaw lands	1881	1824	1881	1820	1833	1824
Overton	1806	Jackson/Indian lands	1914	1867	1914	1792	1870	1815
Perry	1819/1821	Hickman/Humphreys	1908	1865	1881	1820	1863	1826
Pickett	1879	Fentress/Overton	1934	1934	1934	1934	1934	1934
Polk	1839	Bradley/McMinn	1908	1894	1908	1894	1873	1840
Putnam	1854	White/Jackson/Overton/Smith/DeKalb	1908	1878	1879	1825	1874	1842

Visit the Ancestry.com Learning Center at www.ancestry.com/learn.

For account questions or technical help, call 1-800-262-3787.



Tennessee Resources

Family History Sources in
the Volunteer State



Rhea	1807	Roane	1908	1908	1908	1808	1825	1815
Roane	1801	Knox/Indian lands	1881	1801	1881	1801	1802	1801
Robertson	1796	Tennessee/Sumner	1908	1829	1908	1796	1796	1796
Rutherford	1803	Davidson/Williamson/Wilson	1881	1804	1881	1804	1804	1804
Scott	1849	Fentress/Morgan/Anderson/Campbell	—	1854	1901	1850	1892	1850
Sequatchie	1857	Hamilton/Marion/Warren	1881	1858	1881	1858	1858	1858
Sevier	1794	Jefferson	1914	1856	1881	1849	1824	1850
Shelby	1819	Indian lands, Hardin	1881	1819	1848	1821	1824	1820
Smith	1799	Sumner/Indian lands	1881	1838	1881	1801	1805	1799
Spencer	1785 (renamed Hawkins, 1786)	Sullivan						
Stewart	1803	Montgomery	1881	1838	1881	1789	1812	1804
Sullivan	1779	Washington Dist., Va.	1881	1861	1881	1775	1830	1861
Sumner	1786	Davidson	1881	1787	1881	1787	1789	1787
Tennessee	1788 (abolished; divided into Montgomery and Robertson)	Davidson						
Tipton	1823	Chickasaw lands	1881	1840	1881	1820	1824	1823
Trousdale	1870	Macon/Smith/Wilson/Sumner	1908	1905	1909	1905	1905	1903
Unicoi	1875	Carter/Washington	1908	1876	1908	1876	1876	1875
Union	1850	Anderson/Campbell/Knox/Claiborne/Grainger	1881	1864	1881	1856	1856	1854



Tennessee Resources

Family History Sources in
the Volunteer State



Van Buren	1840	Warren/White/Bledsoe	1908	1840	1908	1840	1840	1840
Warren	1807	White/Jackson/Smith	1881	1852	1881	1808	1827	1842
Washington	1777	Act of North Carolina Washington Dist.	1908	1787	1908	1778	1778	1778
Wayne	1817	Hickman/Humphreys	1881	1857	1881	1820	1820	1837
Weakley	1823	Chickasaw lands	1908	1843	1908	1826	1826	1794
White	1806	Jackson/Smith	1881	1838	1881	1801	1810	18106
Williams on	1799	Davidson	1881	1800	1881	1799	1800	1800
Wilson	1799	Sumner	1881	1802	1908	1789	1802*	1802