

About Tennessee

Tennessee Symbols And Honors Official Seal of the State

Even before Tennessee achieved statehood efforts were made by local governmental organizations to procure official seals. Reliable historians have assumed that as early as 1772 the Articles of the Agreement of the Watauga Association authorized the use of a seal. The Legislature of the state of Franklin, by an official act, provided “for procuring a Great Seal for this State,” and there is also evidence that a seal was intended for the Territory South of the River Ohio. The secretary of that territory requested the assistance of Thomas Jefferson in March, 1792, in “suggesting a proper device” for a seal. There is no direct evidence, however, that a seal was ever made for any of these predecessors of Tennessee.

When Tennessee became a state, the Constitution of 1796 made provision for the preparation of a seal. Each subsequent constitution made similar provisions and always in the same words as the first. This provision is (Constitution of 1796, Article II, Section 15; Constitution of 1835, Article III, Section 15; Constitution of 1870, Article III, Section 15) as follows:

There shall be a seal of this state, which shall be kept by the governor, and used by him officially, and shall be called “The Great Seal of the State of Tennessee.”

In spite of the provision of the Constitution of 1796, apparently no action was taken until September 25, 1801. On that date committees made up of members from both the Senate and the House of Representatives were appointed. One of these was to “prepare a device and motto” for a seal, while the other was to contract with a suitable person to cut a seal and press for the use of the state.



Original State Seal



Official State Seal

The committee appointed to prepare a design for the state seal recommended that:

...the said seal shall be a circle, two inches and a quarter in diameter, that the circumference of the circle contain the words THE GREAT SEAL OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, that in the lower part of said circumference be inserted Feb. 6th, 1796, the date of the Constitution of this state; that in the inside of the upper part of said circle, be set in numerical letters XVI, the number of the state in chronological order; that under the base of the upper semicircle, there be the word AGRICULTURE; that above said base, there be the figure of a plough, sheaf of wheat and cotton plant; that in the lower part of the lower semicircle, there be the word COMMERCE, and said lower semicircle shall also contain the figure of a boat and boatman.

The other committee reported that it had contracted with William and Matthew Atkinson to make the seal and press.

The seal and press were delivered to Gov. Archibald Roane in April 1802 and were used for the first time April 24, 1802, on a document ordering payment for them. Before this time, both John Sevier and Archibald Roane had used their personal seal in official documents. This seal continued in use under seven governors until 1829 when Gov. William Hall was the last governor to use it. Then, during the second series of administrations of Gov. William Carroll, a different seal came into use, though there is no record of its authorization. This second seal was only one and three-quarters inches wide and the date "Feb. 6th," was omitted. The boat, differing greatly in design from the original, was pointed in the opposite direction. The seal was at variance with the original in other respects as well. It remained in use from 1829 until the administrations of William Brownlow from 1865 to 1869.

A close examination of official documents bearing the Great Seal, particularly between 1855 and 1875, indicates that the seal now being used was introduced during the administration of Gov. William Brownlow. Only one document, dated 1865, was found containing the seal attributed to the Brownlow administration. Instead, examination of Brownlow documents of 1866 and 1867 revealed the use of two seals, evidently used simultaneously. One seal appears to be the same as that affixed to documents signed by Governors Brownlow, Senter, Porter and Hawkins.

Evidently, the so-called "Brownlow Seal" was used only in 1865, when it was replaced by two other seals which were only slightly different from each other. The seal now used was the larger of the two and appears to have been the only one used since the last year of Brownlow's administration. The current seal was officially adopted in 1987 by the 95th General Assembly, Public Chapter 402.

State Flags

Flag of the State of Tennessee

The state flag was designed by LeRoy Reeves of the Third Regiment, Tennessee Infantry, who made the following explanation of his design:

The three stars are of pure white, representing the three grand divisions of the state. They are bound together by the endless circle of the blue field, the symbol being three bound together in one—an indissoluble trinity. The large field is crimson. The final blue bar relieves the sameness of the crimson field and prevents the flag from showing too much crimson when hanging limp. The white edgings contrast more strongly the other colors.



Flag of Tennessee
Artist's original sketch

This flag was adopted as the official flag of the state of Tennessee by an act of the General Assembly passed and approved April 17, 1905. The design of the flag was described by that act, Chapter 498 of the Public Acts of 1905, as follows:

An oblong flag or banner in length one and two thirds times its width, the large or principal field of same to be of color red, but said flag or banner ending at its free or outer end in a perpendicular bar of blue, of uniform width, running from side to side—that is to say from top to bottom of said flag or banner—and separated from the red field by a narrow margin or stripe of white of uniform width; the width of the white stripe to be one fifth that of the blue bar, and the total width of the bar and stripe together to be equal to one-eighth of the width of the flag. In the center of the red field shall be a smaller circular field of blue, separated from the surrounding red field shall be a smaller circular field of blue, separated from the surrounding red field by a circular margin or stripe of white of uniform width and of the same width as the straight margin or stripe first mentioned. The breadth or diameter of the circular blue field, exclusive of the white margin, shall be equal to one-half of the width of the flag.

Inside the circular blue field shall be three five-pointed stars of white distributed at equal intervals around a point, the center of the blue field, and of such size and arrangement that one point of each star shall approach as closely as practicable without actually touching one point of each of the other two around the center point of the field; and the two outer points of each star shall approach as nearly as practicable without actually touching the periphery of the blue field. The arrangement of the three stars shall be such that the centers of no two stars shall be in a line parallel to either the side or end of the flag, but intermediate between same; and the highest star shall be the one nearest the upper confined corner of the flag.

Flag of the General Assembly



Flag of the General Assembly

power of the people vested in the state's legislative body.

The flag of the General Assembly was adopted by the 90th General Assembly in 1978 and by Public Chapter 497 of 1993. The banner was designed by art and design student Sheila Adkins, a student at Knoxville's Fulton High School. Her design was chosen from among those submitted by numerous students from across the state. The designer chose white for purity, blue to denote respect for Tennessee, red as the traditional color for America; stars to symbolize the state's three Grand Divisions; wheat for agricultural heritage; and the gavel for the

Flag of the Governor

No act has been passed by the General Assembly establishing an official flag for the governor, but in 1939, at the request of the adjutant general, one was designed by the U.S. War Department. The central design on the flag is the crest of the National Guard of Tennessee, which is described in a letter from the secretary of war, dated May 28, 1923, as:

...on a wreath argent and gules, upon amount vert a hickory tree properly charged with three mullets one and two argent, the description of which is as follows:



Flag of the Governor

The state of Andrew Jackson—"Old Hickory"—Tennessee, was the Sixteenth state admitted to the union, the original 13 plus 3, and the state flag bears three white stars. The predominant original white population within the state was of English origin, and the twists of the wreath are accordingly white and red. This design was placed upon a red background in the corners of which are placed a 5-pointed star representing the fact that the governor of the state by virtue of his office automatically becomes commander in chief of the National Guard of that state.

The first paragraph means that on a wreath of silver (or white) and red is a green hill upon which is a hickory tree bearing three five-pointed stars, each one separated from the other two, and all three silver (or white).

State Historian

The office of state historian was created in 1955 by the General Assembly. Dr. Robert H. White, the first appointed state historian, served in that capacity from 1955 until his death in 1970. During

his appointment he compiled the eight-volume series, *Messages of the Governors*, a record of Tennessee's governmental affairs from 1796-1907, which was published by the Tennessee Historical Commission. Dr. Dan H. Robison served as state historian from 1970 to 1972, Stanley F. Horn from 1972 until his death in 1980, and Wilma Dykeman from 1981 to 2002.

The position, an honorary one, is now held by Walter Durham, appointed by Gov. Don Sundquist in 2002. It is the responsibility of the state historian to prepare for publication and to disseminate Tennessee historical data and to conduct negotiations for historical publications.

Walter Durham

State Historian

Retired Gallatin businessman and public affairs activist, Walter T. Durham has been engaged in writing Tennessee history for the past thirty-five years. Holder of the B.A. and M.A. degrees from Vanderbilt University, he is a member of the Phi Beta Kappa and Pi Sigma Alpha honorary societies. During World War II, he served with the Air Force in Italy and Africa. He has received national honors in the business community for his leadership in the manufacture and sales of building materials. A practiced public speaker, he is a former chairman of the Tennessee Historical Commission and past president of the Tennessee Historical Society. Durham's writing first reached public print outside of Gallatin when, at the age of fifteen, he became Sumner County correspondent for the daily Nashville Banner. In 1969, he published *The Great Leap Westward*, the first of his seventeen Tennessee books, four of which were done with collaborators. His works have received several awards. He has written more than one hundred articles for magazines, journals, and newspapers, and he has contributed entries to Simon and Schuster's *Encyclopedia of the Confederacy*, 1993, and the *Tennessee Encyclopedia of History and Culture*, 1998. He has written chapters for other books and a number of book reviews. His support of libraries, archives, and education earned the Library Leadership Award from Vanderbilt University, the John H. Thweatt Archival Advancement Award from the Society of Tennessee Archivists, and the Glass Apple from Vanderbilt's Peabody College. A former member of the board of trustees of Monmouth College (IL) and the alumni board of Vanderbilt, Durham was chairman of the year-long celebration of the Gallatin Bicentennial, 1802-2002. Governor Don Sundquist appointed him State Historian in 2002. Advocating a candid, unadorned view of history, Durham noted, "We can see much of what is good and bad about America in Tennessee history, but rest assured, there is more glory than shame."



State Slogan

In 1965, the Tennessee General Assembly adopted as the state's official slogan, "Tennessee—America at Its Best." (Chapter 33, Section 1, Public Acts, 1965).

State Motto

The state of Tennessee's motto is "Agriculture and Commerce," taken from the wording used on the state seal. The motto was officially adopted in 1987 by Public Chapter 402 by the 95th General Assembly.

State Nicknames

Tennessee has had several nicknames, but the most popular is “The Volunteer State.” The nickname originated during the War of 1812 when thousands of Tennesseans enlisted in response to Governor Willie Blount’s call for volunteers.

Other nicknames include the “Big Bend State,” which refers to the Indian name of the Tennessee River; “The River with the Big Bend;” and “Hog and Hominy State,” now obsolete but formerly applied because “the corn and pork products of Tennessee were in such great proportions between 1830 and 1840;” and “The Mother of Southwestern Statesmen,” because Tennessee furnished the United States three presidents and a number of other leaders who served with distinction in high government office.

Tennesseans sometimes are referred to as “Volunteers,” “Big Benders” and “Butternuts.” The first two are derived from the nickname of the state, while the tag of “Butternuts” was first applied to Tennessee soldiers during the War Between the States because of the tan color of their uniforms. Later, it sometimes was applied to people across the entire state.

State Flora and Fauna

In 1919, the General Assembly, by Senate Joint Resolution 13, provided that a state flower be chosen by the school children of Tennessee. Accordingly, a vote was taken and the passion flower was chosen. In 1933, however, the Legislature adopted Senate Joint Resolution 53 designating the iris as the “State Flower of Tennessee,” but failed to formally rescind the designation of the passion flower as the state flower. To eliminate this confusion, in 1973 the 88th General Assembly, by Chapter 16, designated the passion flower the state wildflower and the iris the state cultivated flower.

State Tree

The tulip poplar was designated as the official state tree of Tennessee by Public Chapter 204 of the Acts of the 1947 General Assembly. The act stated that, as no state tree had ever before been designated, the adoption of an official tree seemed appropriate. The tulip poplar was chosen “because it grows from one end of the state to the other” and “was extensively used by the pioneers of the state to construct houses, barns, and other necessary farm buildings.”

The following description of the tulip poplar, the botanical name of which is *Liriodendron Tulipifera*, is taken from *The Complete Guide to North American Trees*:



“Perhaps the most stately tree of our range, it sometimes reaches a height of 200 feet with a stem as regular as though turned on a lathe and frequently showing 50 to 100 feet of trunk without a branch. The twigs are smooth, brownish gray, becoming cracked into a regular network of shallow, firm ridges; an old trunk broken into deep, rough ridges. Its leaves are very smooth and shining with a broad notch at the tip, usually four-lobbed, 2 to 8 inches long. Its flowers are tulip-like, green orange, 1

to 3 inches deep. The fruit is cone-like hanging on through the year, and is 2 to 3 inches long.”

State Wildflower

The passion flower, genus *Passiflora*, which grows wild in the southern part of the United States and in South America, is also commonly known as the maypop, the wild apricot and the ocoee. The last is the Indian name that has also been applied to the Ocoee River and valley. The Indians prized the ocoee as the most abundant and beautiful of all their flowers. The passion flower received its name from the early Christian missionaries to South America, who saw in the various parts of the curiously constructed flower symbols of the Crucifixion—the three crosses, the crown of thorns, nails and cords.



State Cultivated Flower

The iris, genus *Iridaceae*, is an herbacious perennial of which there are about 170 species, including several North American varieties, the most common of which is the Blue Flag. While there are several different colors among the iris, and the act naming the iris as the state flower did not name a particular color, by common acceptance the purple iris is considered the state flower.



State Fruit

The tomato, scientifically known as the *Lycopersicon lycopersicum*, was designated as Tennessee’s official state fruit by Chapter 154 of the Public Acts of 2003.



State Sport Fish

Tennessee’s official sport fish is the smallmouth bass, as designated in 2005 by Public Chapter 277 of the Acts of the 104th General Assembly.



The smallmouth bass replaced the largemouth bass as the official sport fish in 2005, due to its popularity and the fact that Tennessee has produced the three largest smallmouth bass in the world.

The smallmouth bass, *Micropterus dolomieu*, often referred to as “bronzeback,” will fight ounce for ounce harder than any other species of sport fish in Tennessee. The current state record, which is also the world record of 11 pounds, 15 ounces, was caught by D.L. Hayes at Dale Hollow Lake on July 9, 1955. It may be found in most streams and lakes in the state with the exception of West Tennessee.

State Commercial Fish



The state commercial fish is the channel catfish, *Ictalurus lacustris*, which was designated in 1988 by Public Chapter 489 as enacted by the 95th General Assembly. The channel catfish, sometimes known as “spotted cat” or “fiddler,” is widely stocked and reared in farm ponds. It may be found in most Tennessee streams and many lakes. The channel catfish

is a bottom-feeder and current feeder, generally taken by still fishing.

State Bird



According to the Nashville Banner of April 16, 1933, the mockingbird, *Mimus polyglottos*, was selected on April 11, 1933, as state bird of Tennessee in an election conducted by the Tennessee Ornithological Society. The choice was confirmed by Senate Joint Resolution 51 adopted by the General Assembly in 1933.

The mockingbird is akin to the brown thrasher and the catbird. It is ashen gray above, with darker, white-edged wings and whitish underparts; its length, inclusive of the long tail, is about 10 inches. One of the finest singers among North American birds, it possesses a melodious song of its own, and is especially noted for its skill in mimicking the songs of other birds.

State Game Bird

The bobwhite quail, genus *Colinus virginianus*, was designated as the official state game bird in 1988 by Public Chapter 775 of the Acts of the 95th General Assembly. The bobwhite, also known as the partridge, is considered one of the finest game birds in the world. It is a short-tailed chunky brown bird, usually 8 to 10 inches long. The male has a white throat and a white stripe above the eye, while the female has a buffy throat and eye stripe. In spring the male's clearly whistled bob white is answered by the female's four-syllable whistle. This game bird lays from 10 to 20 pure white eggs, more than almost any other bird.



State Wild Animal

By House Joint Resolution 156, the 87th General Assembly adopted the raccoon as Tennessee's wild animal in 1971. The raccoon, *Procyon lotor*, is a furry animal that has a bushy, ringed tail and a band of black hair around its eyes which looks like a mask. Raccoons, often called coons, eat fish and frogs that they catch in rivers and streams. Raccoons living in Tennessee measure from 30 to 38 inches long, including their tails. They weigh from 12 to 25 pounds. Most males are larger than females. Raccoons walk like bears, with all four feet on the ground, and are good swimmers.



State Horse

The Tennessee Walking Horse was named the official state horse by Public Chapter 596 of the 101st General Assembly in 2000.

The Tennessee Walking Horse is bred mainly from Standardbred, Morgan, Thoroughbred, and American Saddlebred stock. The three, easy-riding gaits of this breed: the flat-foot walk, the running walk, and the canter, are all natural, inherited characteristics, making this breed one of the smoothest riding horses in the world.

This breed was a practical utility horse in the beginning and evolved into a pleasure horse with its gentle ride. Tennessee Walking Horses generally range from 14.3 to 17 hands and weigh 900 to 1,200 pounds.



State Insects

The official state insects were designated by Public Chapter 292 of the Acts of 1975. They are the well-known firefly, or lightning bug beetle, and the lady beetle, more commonly known as the ladybug or ladybird beetle.



The firefly, or lightning bug beetle, is the popular name of the luminescent insects of the Lampyridae family. In Tennessee, *Photinus pyralis* is the most familiar species. Their extraordinary light is generated in special organs and it is most often white, yellow, orange, greenish blue or reddish.

Rather small, they are blackish, brown, yellow or reddish in color. In certain species the females remain in the larvae state and are called glowworms.

Most fireflies produce short rhythmic flashes which provide a signaling system to bring the sexes together and also a protective mechanism to repel predators.



The lady beetle, more commonly called ladybug or ladybird beetle, is the popular name given the *Coccinella* 7. This beetle was dedicated to the Virgin Mary and called "Beetle of Our Lady." They are around four-tenths of an inch long, brightly colored, round, with the popular ladybug having four black spots on each wing.

Ladybugs are sold to farmers to control insect pests because they are important aphid predators.

The life cycle is about four weeks as the ladybug lar-

vae passes through four growth stages feeding on insects and insect eggs.

In folk medicine ladybug beetles were used to cure various diseases including colic and the measles.

State Agricultural Insect



The official state agricultural insect is the honeybee and was designated by Public Chapter 725 of the Acts of 1990.

The honeybee, *Apis mellifera*, is a social, honey-producing insect that plays a fundamental role in the production of all crops. It is also very popular for its production of honey and beeswax.

The honeybee plays a vital economic role in Tennessee through its pollination of various crops, trees, and grasses. The honeybee is the only insect that can be moved for the

express purpose of pollination.

State Butterfly

The Zebra Swallowtail, *Eurytides marcellus*, was designated as Tennessee’s official butterfly by Public Chapter 896 of the 99th General Assembly in 1995. This beautiful, winged insect has black and white stripes that run the length of its body with red and blue spots on its lower back. The swallowtail grows from a tiny egg into a caterpillar that eventually molts into its pupal stage and is transformed into this striking butterfly that can be found throughout most of the United States.



State Amphibian

The Tennessee Cave Salamander, *Gyrinophilus pal-leucus*, was named official state amphibian by Public Chapter 367 of the 99th General Assembly in 1995. This large, cave-dwelling salamander has three red external gills, a broad, flat head with small eyes and a tail fin. It is most often found in limestone caves that contain streams in central and southeast Tennessee.



State Reptile

The Eastern Box Turtle, *Terrapene carolina*, was designated official state reptile by Public Chapter 367 of the 99th General Assembly in 1995. This peaceful creature usually reaches a length of less than six inches and has a shell of black or brown with spots of yellow, orange and red. This reptile usually lives between 30 to 60 years and never ventures far from its place of birth.



Legal Holidays of Tennessee

All days appointed by the governor of this state, or by the president of the United States, as days of fasting or thanksgiving; and when any of the above days fall on Sunday, then the following Monday is substituted, and when any of these days fall on Saturday, then the preceding Friday shall be substituted (T.C.A. § 15-1-101).

Name	Date
New Year’s Day	January 1

Martin Luther King Day	Third Monday in January
Presidents' Day	Third Monday in February
Good Friday	Friday before Easter
Memorial or Decoration Day	Last Monday in May
Independence Day	July 4
Labor Day	First Monday in September
Columbus Day	Second Monday in October
Veterans' Day	November 11
Thanksgiving	Fourth Thursday in November
Christmas	December 25

Observed Days of Tennessee

Pursuant to the provisions of Tennessee Code Annotated §§ 15-2-101 through 15-2-121, each year it shall be the duty of the governor to proclaim the following as days of special observance:

Name	Date
Robert E. Lee Day	January 19
Abraham Lincoln Day	February 12
Andrew Jackson Day	March 15
Memorial or Confederate Decoration Day	June 3
Nathan Bedford Forrest Day	July 13
Veterans' Day	November 11
Mother's Day	Second Sunday in May
Statehood Day	June 1
Family Day	Last Sunday in August
Franklin D. Roosevelt Day	January 30
American Indian Day	Fourth Monday in September
Tennessee P.O.W.-M.I.A. Recognition Week	Third Friday to Following Thursday of September
Scottish, Scots-Irish heritage Day	June 24
Workers Memorial Day	April 28
John Sevier Day	June 23
Harriet Tubman Day	March 10
Bluegrass Day	Fourth Saturday in May
Emancipation Day	August 8
Patriots Day	April 19
Wilma Rudolph Day	June 23
Vietnam Veterans Day	March 29
Towing and Recovery Week	Week of the Third Saturday in September
Tennessee and United States Constitution Day	September 17
Firefighters Memorial Day	October 9
Gold Star Mothers Day	Last Sunday in September
Volunteer Firefighters Week	First Full Week in March

State Arts and Crafts

State Songwriting

Senate Joint Resolution 121, adopted in 2003 by the 103rd General Assembly, designated songwriting as one of Tennessee's official art forms and applauded individuals who are or who have been skillful masters of this art form.

State Songs

My Homeland, Tennessee

In 1925, the 64th General Assembly, by House Joint Resolution 36, adopted *My Homeland, Tennessee* as an official state song. The words of this song were written by Nell Grayson Taylor and the music by Roy Lamont Smith.

First Verse

*O Tennessee, that gave us birth,
To thee our hearts bow down.
For thee our love and loyalty
Shall weave a fadeless crown.
Thy purple hills our cradle was;
Thy fields our mother breast
Beneath thy sunny bended skies,
Our childhood days were blessed.*

Third Verse

*Could we forget our heritage
Of heroes strong and brave?
Could we do aught but cherish it,
Un sullied to the grave?
Ah no! the State where Jackson sleeps,
Shall ever peerless be.
We glory in thy majesty;
Our homeland, Tennessee.*

Second Verse

*'Twas long ago our fathers came,
A free and noble band,
Across the mountain's frowning heights
To seek a promised land.
And here before their raptured eyes;
In beauteous majesty:
Outspread the smiling valleys
Of the winding Tennessee.*

Chorus

*O Tennessee: Fair Tennessee:
Our love for thee can never die:
Dear homeland, Tennessee.*

When It's Iris Time In Tennessee

In 1935, *When It's Iris Time in Tennessee* by Willa Waid Newman also became an official state song. This song was adopted by the 69th General Assembly in Chapter 154 of the Public Acts.

First Verse

*Sweetness of Spring memories bring
Of a place I long to be.
Land of Sunshine calls this old heart of mine,
Come back to Tennessee.*

Second Verse

*Rocks and the rills deep tinted hills,
There's no spot so dear to me.
Where'er I roam
still it's my Home Sweet Home,
My own, my Tennessee.*

Chorus

*When it's Iris time down in Tennessee,
I'll be coming back to stay
Where the mockingbird sings
at the break of day
A lilting love song gay.
Where the Iris grows,*

*Where the Harpeth flows,
That is where I long to be.
There's a picture there that lives in memory
When it's Iris time in Tennessee.*

My Tennessee

My Tennessee by Frances Hannah Tranum was adopted as the official public school song in 1955. It was adopted by Senate Joint Resolution 35 of the 79th General Assembly.

First Verse

*Beloved state, oh state of mine,
In all the world I could not find,
Where God has strewn with lavish hand,
More natural beauty o'er the land.
From ev'ry stream and valley green
His wond'rous art is ever seen.
Ah, let my heart beat true to thee,
And swell with pride for Tennessee.*

Second Verse

*Thy rocks and rills, and wooded hills,
My mem'ry keeps the childhood thrills
You gave to me, that I might know
The joys supreme, you could bestow.
The song of birds, the whisp'ring trees,
The low of herds, the hum of bees,
It all comes back so dear to me,
My childhood home in Tennessee.*

Third Verse

*Your battles fought, and vict'ries won,
Your freedom bought and duty done,
With daughters fair, and sons so brave,
To do and dare, their deeds they gave.
Courageously, without a fear,
And won the name of volunteer.
In sacred trust, let those who will,
By being just, preserve it still.*

Chorus

*Oh, Tennessee, My Tennessee,
Thy hills and vales are fair to see,
With mountains grand, and fertile lands
There is no state more dear to me.
Thro' other climes tho I may roam,
There will be times I'll long for home,
In Tennessee, Fair Tennessee,
The land of my nativity.*

Tennessee Waltz

In 1965, *Tennessee Waltz* by Redd Stewart and Pee Wee King became an official song of the state. It was adopted by Senate Joint Resolution 9 of the 84th General Assembly.

*I was waltzing with my darlin' to the Tennessee Waltz
When an old friend I happened to see
Introduced him to my loved one and while they were waltzing
My friend stole my sweetheart from me.*

*I remember the night and the Tennessee Waltz
Now I know just how much I have lost
Yes I lost my little darlin' the night they were playing
The beautiful Tennessee Waltz.*

Rocky Top

Rocky Top, by Boudleaux and Felice Bryant, was adopted as an official song of Tennessee by Chapter 545 of the Public Acts of 1982.

First Verse

*Wish that I was on ol' Rocky Top,
down in the Tennessee hills;
Ain't no smoggy smoke on Rocky Top;
Ain't no telephone bills;
Once I had a girl on Rocky Top;
Half bear, other half cat;
Wild as a mink, but sweet as soda pop,
I still dream about that;*

Third Verse

*I've had years of cramped-up city life
Trapped like a duck in a pen;
All I know is it's a pity life
Can't be simple again.*

Second Verse

*Once two strangers climbed ol' Rocky Top,
lookin' for a moonshine still;
Strangers ain't come down from Rocky Top;
Reckon they never will;
Corn won't grow at all on Rocky Top;
Dirt's too rocky by far;
That's why all the folks on Rocky Top
get their corn from a jar;*

Chorus

*Rocky Top, you'll always be
home sweet home to me;
Good ol' Rocky Top;
Rocky Top, Tennessee;
Rocky Top, Tennessee.*

Tennessee

Tennessee by Vivian Rorie was adopted as an official song of Tennessee in 1992. It was adopted by House Joint Resolution 744 of the 97th General Assembly.

*I do not know of another state
And don't forget the rivers
Where I had rather be
Where visitors long to stay.
Than this great state I'm living in
And many have voiced in parting,
And that is Tennessee.
'I'm sure glad I passed this way.'
I love the stars dearly
You will see the cattle grazing
And there are surely three
Beside a cotton field;
That show the Grand Divisions
And there's the Grand Ole Opry
Of my home-land, Tennessee
And a feeling it's all God's will.*

*Where could you find a meadow
I have lived here all my life
With grass so vividly green?
It's where I'm going to be
Where could you find the mountains
Although I've traveled quite a bit,
With such majestic scene?
I'll still take Tennessee!*

*You will never find so bright a moon
Oh, I sure love the state I'm in:
To shine down from above
The great state of Tennessee!
You will also see the robin
The wren, and the turtle dove.*

Smoky Mountain Rain

Smoky Mountain Rain by Nashville songwriters Kye Fleming and Dennis Morgan and performed by Ronnie Milsap was adopted as an official song of Tennessee in 2010. It was adopted by Senate Joint Resolution 966 of the 106th General Assembly.

First Verse

*I thumbed my way from LA back to Knoxville
I found out those bright lights
aint where I belong
From a phone booth in the rain
I called to tell her
I've had a change of dreams I'm comin' home
But tears filled my eyes
when I found out she was gone*

Second Verse

*I waved a diesel down outside outside a café
He said that he was goin' as far as Gatlinburg
I climbed up in the cab
all wet and cold and lonely
I wiped my eyes and told him about her
I've got to find her!
Can you make these big wheels burn?*

Third Verse

*I can't blame her for lettin' go
A woman needs someone warm to hold
I feel the rain runnin' down my face
I'll find her no matter what it takes!*

Chorus

*Smokey Mountain rain keeps on fallin'
I keep callin' her name
Smokey Mountain rain I'll keep searchin'
I can't go on hurtin' this way
She's somewhere in the Smokey Mountain rain*

Tennessee

Tennessee, written by John R. Bean of Knoxville, was adopted as an official song of Tennessee in 2011. It was adopted by the Public Chapter 242 of the 107th General Assembly.

*Oh Tennessee, I long to come back home.
I guess your dew has settled on my soul,
Everyday I stayed away,
You called my heart back, home to stay.
Oh Tennessee, I long to come back home.*

*Oh Tennessee, I'm missing you too soon.
Silver skies and lazy afternoons...
Silver clouds and golden moon,
You're Mother Nature's Tender Womb...
Oh Tennessee, I'm missing you too soon.*

*Your days, have such gentle ways,
Aimless thoughts and windblown rhymes,
Your nights sing such peaceful songs
To a tired and weary mind.*

*Oh Tennessee, I've spent more than I've earned,
But I'm much richer now for what I've learned...*

*Money won't buy peace of mind,
And peace of mind is what I'll find...
Oh Tennessee, you treated me so kind.*

*Welcome home,
Welcome home.*

The Pride of Tennessee

The *Pride of Tennessee* by Fred Congdon, Thomas Vaughn and Carol Elliot was adopted as an official song of Tennessee in 1996. It was adopted by House Joint Resolution 221 of the 99th General Assembly.

*From the Smokie Mountain Mornings to the Mississippi shores
Let's take time to remember those who went before
Whose lives made a difference in the world for you and me
Their courage faith and vision are the Pride of Tennessee
Sequoyah was a Cherokee the chief of all his tribe
His people learned to read and write with the alphabet he scribed
When Tennessee became a State its Governor was clear
There was no better leader than the gallant John Sevier
From the backwoods to the Congress to his stand at the Alamo
Davy Crockett gave his life for the country he loved so*

*Three Presidents from Tennessee made impressions on this land
Jackson, Polk and Johnson were men who took a stand
Ida Wells Barnett fought bravely for the rights of men
When they were killed by prejudice for the color of their skin
He was drafted in the first world war though he did not want to go
His shooting skills made Alvin York a national hero*

*When women of Tennessee believed they had the right to vote
Ann Dallas Dudley led the fight and gave them hope
Cordell Hull had a vision for peace around the world
The United Nations where all countries' flags unfurl
From Beale Street down in Memphis to New York front page news
W.C. Handy's music made him father of the blues*

Yes Courage, Faith and Vision are the Pride of Tennessee

State Poet Laureate of Christian Country Music in Tennessee

Colonel Hugh X. Lewis of Nashville was designated as the Poet Laureate of Christian Country Music in Tennessee by the 104th General Assembly. Senate Joint Resolution No. 527, adopted May 8, 2006, describes Colonel Lewis as “an inspirational poet and one of the most distinguished singer-songwriters in the nation.” A BMI award-winning country music songwriter and exciting

performer, Lewis has penned more than 250 country and Christian country songs that have been recorded by such artists as Grand Ole Opry stars: Charlie Pride, Little Jimmy Dickens, Del Reeves, Jim Ed Brown, Stonewall Jackson, Carl Smith, and Kitty Wells. He has enjoyed an accomplished and prosperous career in the country music and Christian country music recording industries for 50 years.

State Poem

The poem entitled “Oh Tennessee, My Tennessee” by Naval Adm. William Lawrence was designated and adopted as the official state poem by Public Chapter 111 of the 88th General Assembly. Adm. Lawrence composed this poem while enduring a period of 60 days of solitary confinement in a North Vietnamese prisoner of war camp. Lawrence, who spent six years as a POW during the Vietnam War, is a Nashville native and is retired from the United State Navy.

*Oh Tennessee, My Tennessee
What Love and Pride I Feel for Thee.
You Proud Ole State, the Volunteer,
Your Proud Traditions I Hold Dear.*

*I Revere Your Heroes
Who Bravely Fought our Country's Foes.
Renowned Statesmen, so Wise and Strong,
Who Served our Country Well and Long.*

*I Thrill at Thought of Mountains Grand;
Rolling Green Hills and Fertile Farm Land;
Earth Rich with Stone, Mineral and Ore;
Forests Dense and Wild Flowers Galore;*

*Powerful Rivers that Bring us Light;
Deep Lakes with Fish and Fowl in Flight;
Thriving Cities and Industries;
Fine Schools and Universities;
Strong Folks of Pioneer Descent,
Simple, Honest, and Reverent.*

*Beauty and Hospitality
Are the Hallmarks of Tennessee.*

*And O'er the World as I May Roam,
No Place Exceeds my Boyhood Home.
And Oh How Much I Long to See
My Native Land, My Tennessee.*

State Ambassador of Letters

Harriette Louise Bias Allen, former Director of Forensics in the Department of Dramatics and Speech at Fisk University, was named Tennessee’s “Ambassador of Letters” by House Joint Resolution 222 on May 12, 1977. A native of Savannah, Georgia, Ms. Allen is widely recognized as a poetess, storyteller, and oral interpreter.

State Poet Laureate

Margaret “Maggi” Britton Vaughn was designated as Tennessee’s Poet Laureate for the term of her natural life by House Joint Resolution 101 of the 101st General Assembly in 1999. Vaughn, a native of Murfreesboro, had her first critically acclaimed book, *Fifty Years of Saturday Nights*, published in 1975. Some of Vaughn’s other works include *Grand Ole Saturday Night*, *The Light in the Kitchen Window*, and the play, *I Wonder If Eleanor Roosevelt Ever Made a Quilt*.

State Declaration

House Joint Resolution No. 171 of the 95th General Assembly included a commendation of Major Hooper Penuel for writing the declaration “I Am Tennessee” which had been read at the inauguration of Governor Ned R. McWherter. The Assembly concluded their lengthy commendation by stating “Whereas, this General Assembly is pleased to honor and recognize Major Penuel, a lifelong resident of Middle-Tennessee, a man who serves his state everyday in every way, who was able to express so touchingly what most of us can only feel; now, therefore, be it resolved by the House of Representatives of the 95th General Assembly of the State of Tennessee, the Senate concurring, that the following text, which is ‘I Am Tennessee’ by Major Hooper Penuel, is hereby designated as the official state declaration of Tennessee, to wit:”

I Am Tennessee

By Major Hooper Penuel

My name came from Tanasi, the name of an Indian Cherokee village in the region. Early explorers once passed over and through my mountains and forests. Europeans fought to decide who should own me.

I Am Tennessee

Pioneers from the east crossed my mountains to settle in the wilderness. They formed their own governments in my region before any other independent governments existed in North America.

I Am Tennessee

Those pioneers brought with them the spirit of independence and daring that has become part of my history. I gained statehood on June 1, 1796. President George Washington signed the bill that made me the sixteenth state of the union. John Sevier was my first Governor. My first United States Senators were William Blount and William Cocke. At this time my only seat in the House of Representatives was held by Andrew Jackson.

I Am Tennessee

My boundaries range from the mountains of North Carolina to Arkansas in the west. I link the north with the south. I was the last state to leave the union, and the first to return. I touch eight states, more than any other state in the union.

I Am Tennessee

Tennesseans like John Sevier in the Revolutionary War, Andrew Jackson in the War of 1812, and Alvin C. York in World War I, established a military tradition of honor and bravery that continues to this day.

I Am Tennessee

I felt more battles on my soil than any other state except Virginia, my neighbor to the east. I have produced three Presidents: Andrew Jackson, James K. Polk, and Andrew Johnson. All distinguished themselves in the true Tennessee tradition.

I Am Tennessee

Two of my early residents - Davy Crockett and Sam Houston - became heroes of the Texas Revolution. Each carried the true Tennessee Volunteer spirit. I'm known worldwide as the Volunteer State. John Sevier called for 100 good men. 200 answered the call. For this I will always be grateful.

I Am Tennessee

Today, we have 19,000 Guard men and women serving as volunteers in the Tennessee National Guard, once known as the Militia. Each one is ready to answer the call of the Governor or the President to defend this great land.

I Am Tennessee

My land is rich with mountains and thick forests in the eastern and central region. It produces excellent recreation for hunters, campers, and sightseers. The majestic beauty of the Great Smoky Mountains attracts 6 million visitors every year. My lakes and rivers provide excellent boating and fishing or just for relaxing.

I Am Tennessee

My fertile soil, thick forests, temperate climate, water supply, and an abundance in minerals makes my state rich in natural resources. Manufacturing, agriculture, and mining are all important parts of my makeup. TVA generates my electricity. Early in my history, between 1800 and 1860, private companies built turnpikes and collected tolls to keep them up. In 1913 my leaders passed legislation to construct major highways. Today I have over 8,000 miles of highways and roads. I have about 125 airports, almost 6,000 miles of track for trains, and barges float my major rivers, The Cumberland, The Mississippi, and The Tennessee.

I Am Tennessee

My music is heard around the world. Blues, soul and rock and roll from the Memphis Delta, Country from Nashville, and the unique sound of the dulcimer from Appalachia. Yes, my history is a proud one. From my early beginnings as an unsettled territory until today as a leader and a state that looks toward the future.

I Am Tennessee

Memphis, Chattanooga, Knoxville, and the Capital City of Nashville are my largest cities, but I couldn't survive without the 3,000 communities and the 95 counties in-between. From the delta river banks of Memphis to Bristol, and from Frog Mountain near Copperhill to the Reelfoot Lake near Tiptonville, 4.6 million residents keep me going.

I Am Tennessee

For almost two centuries I have held my own. My future looks bright. I am a great place to live. I am a Volunteer.

I Am Tennessee

State Folk Dance

Chapter 829 of the Public Acts of 1980 designated the square dance as the official state folk dance stating, "Among the traditions (of our ancestors) that have survived intact is the Square Dance, a uniquely attractive art form that remains a vibrant and entertaining part of Tennessee folklore."

State Jamboree and Crafts Festival

The Smithville Fiddlers' Jamboree and Crafts Festival was adopted in 1997 by House Joint Resolution 24 of the 100th General Assembly as the official jamboree and crafts festival.

State Paintings

The paintings *Tennessee Treasures* and *Tennessee Treasures Too*, by Tennessee artist Michael Sloan, were designated as official paintings of Tennessee by Senate Joint Resolution 57 of the 100th General Assembly in 1997 and by Senate Joint Resolution 82 of the 105th General Assembly in 2007 respectively.

Tennessee Treasures features Tennessee’s ten most recognizable symbols—raccoon, mock-



Tennessee Treasures



Tennessee Treasures Too

ingbird, iris, passion wildflower, tulip poplar, Tennessee River pearl, lady bug, zebra swallowtail, largemouth bass, and limestone—as well as images of the state flag, the actual geographic layout of the state, a gold-embossed seal of the state, and the signature of Tennessee’s first governor, John Sevier. *Tennessee Treasures Too*, a follow-up work, also contains imagery of the tulip poplar, passion wildflower, and iris; however, in addition, it depicts the yellowwood tree, honey bee, firefly, bobwhite quail, agate, box turtle, and channel catfish.

State Tartan



Chapter 82 of the Public Acts of 1999 designated the state of Tennessee's official state tartan as the design adopted by the Heart of Tennessee Scottish Celebration in conjunction with all the other Scottish Societies in Tennessee. The design is a symmetrical tartan set, using the following colors: natural white, dark green, purple, red, and dark blue.

State Artists

H. R. Lovell was designated Tennessee's official artist-in-residence by House Joint Resolution 435 of 2000. The resolution stated that the official artist-in-residence will express the spirit and assets of Tennessee through his works.

Burton Callicott was designated Tennessee's official state artist by Senate Joint Resolution 118 of 1991. The resolution recognized Mr. Callicott for his many contributions to the art community in Memphis and the state of Tennessee.

Other State Facts

State Distinguished Service Medal

The "Tennessee Distinguished Service Medal" was created in May 1979 by House Joint Resolution 239 of the 91st General Assembly. The medal was presented in a special ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery and placed on display in the Memorial Amphitheater. The display case is framed with wood from the tulip poplar, Tennessee's state tree. The following citation appears on the display:

"This medal is hereby posthumously dedicated to the memory of all veterans of Tennessee who have given their lives in the defense of our nation and the Volunteer State."

State Aviation Hall of Fame

The Tennessee Aviation Hall of Fame, located at the Gatlingburg-Pigeon Forge Airport in Sevier County, was designated as the official state aviation hall of fame by Chapter 78 of the Public Acts of 2001. The Hall of Fame was founded for the purpose of honoring aviation pioneers and leaders in Tennessee.

State Official Outdoor Drama

"Liberty!" was designated Tennessee's official outdoor drama by House Joint Resolution 286 of the 106th General Assembly in 2009. The resolution stated that "Liberty!" was the longest running drama of any kind in the state. "Liberty!" tells the story of Tennessee's frontier beginnings, as well as that of the westward expansion.

State Beverage

Milk was designated as the official state beverage of Tennessee by Public Chapter 31 of the Acts of the 106th General Assembly in 2009. The act stated that milk is an essential component to building strong muscle and bones in children, as well as mending injured muscle and bones in adults. Other benefits cited include milk's help in building strong and healthy teeth, hair, skin and nails. Tennessee's dairy industry produced nearly 100 million pounds of milk in 2007, with cash receipts for milk and milk products totaling nearly \$202 million.



State Gem

The pearl, taken from mussels in the fresh water rivers of the state, is the official state gem, as designated by 1979 Public Chapter 192 of the 91st General Assembly. During the years between 1882 and 1914, beautiful pearls were taken from many of the state's streams, from the Pigeon and Holston in the east to the Forked Deer and Obion in the west. The Caney Fork in Middle Tennessee was noted for its pearl-bearing mussels, and "pearling" was a favorite sport for young people on Sunday afternoons at the turn of the century.



Tennessee river pearls are of all colors and they are "natural" as the mussel made them—all pearl, all the way through. They have been found in various shapes—spherical, pear-shaped, and baroque or irregular.

After World War I, dams were built on many of the rivers, and the mussels lost their swift and shallow shoals. Also, the waters became more toxic and pearling became unprofitable. Today, pearling exists as a by-product of shell harvests which supply the cultivated pearl industry of Japan.

Tennessee river pearls are among the most beautiful and durable in the world. At Camden in West Tennessee, these river pearls are collected and crafted into rings, cuff links, stick pins, and other jewelry. The historic Tennessee River Freshwater Pearl Farm and Museum located in Camden, Benton County, is the official site of freshwater pearl culturing in the State, as designated by 2004 Public Chapter 506 of the 103rd General Assembly.

State Rock

Limestone, found just about everywhere in Tennessee, was designated the official state rock by the General Assembly with Public Chapter 42 in 1979. Tennessee marble, as the metamorphic version of limestone is known, is widely used in public and private buildings.



State Mineral

Agate is the official state mineral, as designated by Public Chapter 30 of the 106th General Assembly in 2009. Agate, a semiprecious gemstone, is a waxy, cryptocrystalline variety of mineral quartz in which the colors are present in bands, clouds or distinct groups. On March 5, 1969, the General Assembly, in adopting House Joint Resolution 42, declared agate as the official state rock. However, the designation was changed by the General Assembly in 2009 to state mineral because stone, rock and mineral were used interchangeably in the original resolution, and the Legislature wanted to correct this discrepancy.



State Fossil

Pterotrigonia (*Scabrotrigonia*) *thoracica* is the official state fossil, as designated by House Joint Resolution 552 of the 100th General Assembly in 1998. Tennessee was the 38th state to designate a state fossil.



Pterotrigonia (*Scabrotrigonia*) *thoracica* (nicknamed “Ptero”) was a Cretaceous bivalve found in the Coon Creek Formation of West Tennessee. It was a wedge-shaped, shallow-burrowing suspension feeder that inhabited the marine clayey-sand ocean floor that was West Tennessee 70 million years ago. Shells of “Ptero” are preserved unaltered in great abundance and are easily recognized by collectors. The associated ocean floor inhabitants were diverse and included other bivalves, snails, squid-like animals, worms, sponges, corals, crustaceans, sharks, fish, turtles, and marine reptiles. “Ptero” now is extinct. In fact, the extinction event that was responsible for the demise of the dinosaurs 65 million years ago may have contributed to the demise of Ptero (*Scabrotrigonia*) *thoracica*. Only the genus *Neotrigonia*, with five species, has survived to the present, and is found only in the Pacific Ocean, most commonly near New Zealand.

Origins of Tennessee County Names

As Indian treaties opened up the land that is now Tennessee for settlement, settlers rushed in to clear farms and establish communities. The new inhabitants sought protection for life and property and other benefits of government—courts of law, militia organizations, and legal title to newly acquired land. Counties were quickly organized once migration into the frontier region had begun. Access to the seat of government was a main difficulty for the pioneers, since it was necessary to travel to the county seat to conduct legal business or present oneself to the court. Over time, residents in areas remote from the county seat would petition the General Assembly for a new county centered closer to their homes. Twenty-two new counties were formed between 1806 and 1819, and twenty-five between 1820 and 1840. This process of carving counties out of the land began in the 1780s and ended a century later. Counties were named for military heroes, American statesmen, physical features, European noblemen, Indian tribes and settlements, and

one for a woman. Some counties were authorized but never organized, some organized and then abolished. At present Tennessee has 95 counties, each with its own unique story to tell.

Anderson County

Created 1801 from Knox and Grainger counties; named in honor of Joseph Anderson (1757-1847), U.S. senator, judge of the Superior Court of the Territory South of the River Ohio (later Tennessee) and U.S. comptroller of the treasury.

Bedford County

Created 1807 from Rutherford County and Indian lands; named in honor of Thomas Bedford, Jr. (? - 1804), Revolutionary War officer, Middle Tennessee land owner of Jefferson Springs in Rutherford County who contributed to the development of that area.

Benton County

Created 1835 from Humphreys County; named in honor of David Benton (1779-1860), member of the Third Regiment, Tennessee Militia in the Creek wars, early settler and farmer who was instrumental in establishing the county.

Bledsoe County

Created 1807 from Roane County and Indian lands; named in honor of Anthony Bledsoe (1733-1788), colonial and Revolutionary War soldier, surveyor, Tennessee militia colonel and early settler of Sumner County who was killed by Indians.

Blount County

Created 1795 from Knox County; named in honor of William Blount (1749-1800), member of the Continental Congress, governor of the Territory South of the River Ohio (later Tennessee), founder of Knoxville, U.S. senator, speaker of the state senate.

Bradley County

Created 1836 from Indian lands; named in honor of Edward Bradley (? - 1829), Tennessee militia officer, colonel of First Regiment, Tennessee Infantry in the War of 1812, member of the Tennessee state house and the Shelby County court.

Campbell County

Created 1806 from Anderson and Claiborne counties; named (reportedly) in honor of Arthur Campbell (1743-1811), member of Virginia House of Burgesses, Revolutionary and Indian wars officer, commissioner for negotiation of Indian treaties.

Cannon County

Created 1836 from Rutherford, Smith and Warren counties; named in honor of Newton Cannon (1781-1841), Creek War and War of 1812 soldier, Tennessee state senator, U.S. congressman, first Whig governor of Tennessee.

Carroll County

Created 1821 from Indian lands; named in honor of William Carroll (1788-1844), colonel and major-general in the War of 1812, governor of Tennessee for six terms, known as Tennessee's "reform governor."

Carter County

Created 1796 from Washington County; named in honor of Landon Carter (1760-1800), treasurer of Washington and Hamilton districts of North Carolina, speaker of the State of Franklin senate and its secretary of state, militia officer.

Cheatham County

Created 1856 from Davidson, Dickson, Montgomery and Robertson counties; named in honor of Edward Cheatham (1818-1878), member of Tennessee state house, member and speaker of the state senate, businessman and railroad president.

Chester County

Created 1879 from Hardeman, Henderson, McNairy and Madison counties; named in honor of Robert I. Chester (1793-1892), quartermaster in the War of 1812, colonel in Texas war for independence, U.S. marshal and state legislator.

Claiborne County

Created 1801 from Grainger and Hawkins counties; named in honor of William C. C. Claiborne (1775-1817), judge of the superior court of Tennessee, U.S. congressman and senator, governor of the Mississippi Territory and of Louisiana.

Clay County

Created 1870 from Jackson and Overton counties; named in honor of Henry Clay (1777-1852), member of the Kentucky state house and senate, U.S. congressman and senator, secretary of state and commissioner for treaty with Great Britain in 1815.

Cocke County

Created 1797 from Jefferson County; named in honor of William Cocke (1748-1828), Revolutionary and War of 1812 soldier, member of legislatures of Virginia, North Carolina, State of Franklin, Territory South of the River Ohio, Tennessee and Mississippi; Chickasaw Indian Agent.

Coffee County

Created 1836 from Bedford, Warren and Franklin counties; named in honor of John Coffee (1772-1833), Creek War and War of 1812 cavalry commander, frontiersman, congressionally appointed surveyor-general, land dealer and prosperous planter.

Crockett County

Created 1871 from Haywood, Madison, Dyer and Gibson counties; named in honor of David Crockett (1786-1836), frontier humorist, author, soldier, state legislator, U.S. congressman, defender and a casualty of the Alamo in the Texas war for independence.

Cumberland County

Created 1855 from White, Bledsoe, Rhea, Morgan, Fentress and Putnam counties; named in honor of the Cumberland Mountains which Thomas Walker may have named for the Duke of Cumberland, then prime minister of England, ca. 1748.

Davidson County

Created 1783 by Act of North Carolina; named in honor of William Lee Davidson (ca. 1746-1781), colonial soldier, Revolutionary War officer in the North Carolina Third, Fourth and Fifth Regiments who was killed in action at Valley Forge.

Decatur County

Created 1845 from Perry County; named in honor of Stephen Decatur (1779-1820), American naval officer who won fame in the War with Tripoli in 1804, in the War of 1812, and in the Algerine War in 1815 for his daring exploits.

DeKalb County

Created 1837 from Franklin, Cannon, Jackson and White counties; named in honor of Johann DeKalb (1721-1780), German baron who came with Lafayette to America in 1777, became a Revolutionary army officer and was killed in action at Camden.

Dickson County

Created 1803 from Montgomery and Robertson counties; named in honor of William Dickson (1770-1816), Nashville physician, member and speaker of the state house, U.S. congressman, trustee of the University of Nashville.

Dyer County

Created 1823 from Indian lands; named in honor of Robert Henry Dyer (ca. 1774-1826), Creek and War of 1812 officer, cavalry colonel in the 1818 Seminole War, state senator, instrumental figure in formation of Dyer and Madison counties.

Fayette County

Created 1824 from Indian lands; named in honor of the Marquis de la Fayette (1757-1834), French nobleman, statesman and soldier who entered American service in the Revolutionary War and was commissioned major-general.

Fentress County

Created 1823 from Morgan, Overton and White counties; named in honor of James Fentress (1763-1843), speaker of the state house, chairman of Montgomery County Court, commissioner to select seats for Haywood, Carroll, Gibson and Weakley counties.

Franklin County

Created 1807 from Rutherford County and Indian lands; named in honor of Benjamin Franklin (1706-1790), American printer, diplomat, author, philosopher, scientist, statesman and member of the committee to draft the Declaration of Independence.

Gibson County

Created 1823 from Indian lands; named in honor of John H. Gibson (? - 1823), who served with distinction under Andrew Jackson in the Natchez Expedition (1812-1813) and in the Creek Wars.

Giles County

Created 1809 from Indian lands; named in honor of William B. Giles (1762-1830), Virginia state legislator, U.S. congressman and senator from Virginia who advocated admission of Tennessee into the Union in 1796, governor of Virginia.

Grainger County

Created 1796 from Hawkins and Knox counties; named in honor of Mary Grainger (? - 1802), daughter of Kaleb Grainger of North Carolina, who married William Blount and became first lady of the Territory South of the River Ohio (later Tennessee).

Greene County

Created 1783 from Washington County; named in honor of Nathanael Greene (1742-1786), Revolutionary War commander at Trenton who succeeded Horatio Gates in command of the Army of the South and forced the British out of Georgia and the Carolinas.

Grundy County

Created 1844 from Coffee, Warren and Franklin counties; named in honor of Felix Grundy (1777-1840), chief justice of the Kentucky Supreme Court, U.S. congressman and senator from Tennessee, U.S. attorney general under President Van Buren.

Hamblen County

Created 1870 from Jefferson, Grainger and Greene counties; named in honor of Hezekiah Hamblen (1775-1854), early settler, landowner, attorney and member of the Hawkins County circuit and county courts for many years.

Hamilton County

Created 1819 from Rhea County and Indian lands; named in honor of Alexander Hamilton (1757-1804), American statesman, Revolutionary War soldier, member of the Continental Congress and secretary of the U.S. treasury under President Washington.

Hancock County

Created 1844 from Hawkins and Claiborne counties; named in honor of John Hancock (1737-1793), president of the Continental Congress, first signer of the Declaration of Independence, Revolutionary War militia officer, governor of Massachusetts.

Hardeman County

Created 1823 from Hardin County and Indian lands; named in honor of Thomas Jones Hardeman (1788-1854), Creek War and War of 1812 soldier, prominent figure in the fight for Texas independence and Republic of Texas Congressman.

Hardin County

Created 1819 from Indian lands; named in honor of Joseph Hardin (1734-1801), Revolutionary War soldier, speaker of the State of Franklin legislature, and member and speaker of the territorial legislature whose sons settled Hardin County.

Hawkins County

Created 1786 from Sullivan County; named in honor of Benjamin Hawkins (1754-1818), member of the North Carolina legislature and the Continental Congress, U.S. senator, agent for the Creek, Cherokee, Chickasaw and Choctaw.

Haywood County

Created 1823 from Indian lands; named in honor of John Haywood (1762-1826), North Carolina Superior Court and Tennessee Supreme Court judge, author of *Civil & Political History of Tennessee*, “father of Tennessee history.”

Henderson County

Created 1821 from Indian lands; named in honor of James Henderson (fl.1815), commander of Tennessee troops preceding the Battle of New Orleans, and staff officer to Andrew Jackson in the Creek and Natchez campaigns.

Henry County

Created 1821 from Indian lands; named in honor of Patrick Henry (1736-1799), Virginia statesman, patriot and Revolutionary leader, member of the Virginia colonial and state legislatures and the Continental Congress, governor of Virginia.

Hickman County

Created 1807 from Dickson County; named in honor of Edwin Hickman (?-1791), longhunter who while on a mission to survey land on the Piney River was killed by Indians near the present site of Centerville.

Houston County

Created 1871 from Dickson, Humphreys, Montgomery and Stewart counties; named in honor of Sam Houston (1793-1863), U.S. congressman from and governor of Tennessee, Texas war for independence commander, president of the Texas Republic, U.S. senator from Texas.

Humphreys County

Created 1809 from Stewart County; named in honor of Parry Wayne Humphreys (1778-1839), judge of the Superior Court of Tennessee, U.S. representative from Tennessee, and longtime judge of the state judicial district.

Jackson County

Created 1801 from Smith County and Indian lands; named in honor of Andrew Jackson (1767-1845), U.S. congressman and senator, Tennessee Supreme Court judge, troop commander at the Battle of New Orleans, seventh U.S. president.

Jefferson County

Created 1792 from Greene and Hawkins counties; named in honor of Thomas Jefferson (1743-1826), member of the Virginia House of Burgesses and the Continental Congress, governor of Virginia, U.S. secretary of state, third U.S. president.

Johnson County

Created 1836 from Carter County; named in honor of Thomas Johnson (ca. 1836), early settler of Carter County on the Doe River, prominent citizen and one of the first magistrates of Johnson County.

Knox County

Created 1792 from Greene and Hawkins counties; named in honor of Henry Knox (1750-1806), American Revolutionary War artillery commander, one of the founders of the Society of the Cincinnati and first U.S. secretary of war.

Lake County

Created 1870 from Obion County; named for Reelfoot Lake, formed by a series of earthquakes in 1811 that dammed the Reelfoot River and altered the course of the Mississippi River, an area now part of the state park system.

Lauderdale County

Created in 1835 from Haywood, Dyer and Tipton counties; named in honor of James Lauderdale (?-1814), Indian War and War of 1812 officer who fell leading troops against the British in 1814, a few days before the Battle of New Orleans.

Lawrence County

Created 1817 from Hickman County and Indian lands; named in honor of James Lawrence (1781-1813), American naval officer who died commanding the "Chesapeake" against the British frigate "Shannon," known for his dying words, "Don't give up the ship!"

Lewis County

Created 1843 from Hickman, Lawrence, Maury and Wayne counties; named in honor of Meriwether Lewis (1774-1809), appointee of President Jefferson to explore the Louisiana Purchase in 1804 who died violently on the Natchez Trace.

Lincoln County

Created 1809 from Bedford County; named in honor of Benjamin Lincoln (1733-1810), American Revolutionary officer, U.S. secretary of war, commander of forces that suppressed Shay's Rebellion in 1787 and lieutenant governor of Massachusetts.

Loudon County

Created 1870 from Roane, Monroe, Blount and McMinn counties; named for Fort Loudoun, erected 1756 by the British and named in honor of the Earl of Loudoun, commander-in-chief of British and American forces in the French and Indian War.

Macon County

Created 1842 from Smith and Sumner counties; named in honor of Nathaniel Macon (1757-1837), Revolutionary War Soldier, North Carolina legislator, congressman and senator, president of the 1835 North Carolina Constitutional Convention.

Madison County

Created 1821 from Indian lands; named in honor of James Madison (1751-1836), member of the Continental Congress, the 1787 Constitutional Convention and the U.S. Congress, U.S. secretary of state and fourth U.S. president.

Marion County

Created 1817 from Indian lands; named in honor of Francis Marion (1732-1795), continental and Revolutionary War officer whose guerilla tactics in the Revolutionary War won him the title "Swamp Fox."

Marshall County

Created 1836 from Giles, Bedford, Lincoln and Maury counties; named in honor of John Marshall (1755-1835), Revolutionary War soldier and Federalist leader, U.S. congressman, secretary of state, and chief justice of the U.S. Supreme Court.

Maury County

Created 1807 from Williamson County and Indian lands; named in honor of Abram Poindexter Maury, Sr. (1766-1825), pioneer, farmer, lawyer, civil engineer who laid out the town of Franklin in the late 1790s, commissioner of the town, state senator.

McMinn County

Created 1819 from Indian lands; named in honor of Joseph McMinn (1758-1824), militia commander, member of territorial legislature, speaker of the state senate, governor of Tennessee, and superintendent of the Cherokee Agency.

McNairy County

Created 1823 from Hardin County; named in honor of John McNairy (1762-1837), North Carolina Superior Court judge for Mero District, 1796 Constitutional Convention delegate, U.S. district judge for Tennessee, Davidson Academy trustee.

Meigs County

Created 1836 from Rhea County; named in honor of Return Jonathan Meigs (1740-1823), Tennessee country pioneer, American Revolutionary officer who distinguished himself at Sag Harbor and Stony Point, and longtime Indian agent.

Monroe County

Created 1819 from Indian lands; named in honor of James Monroe (1758-1831), American Revolutionary War soldier, member of the Continental Congress and the U.S. Senate, governor of Virginia, U.S. secretary of state and of war, fifth U.S. president.

Montgomery County

Created 1796 from Tennessee County; named in honor of John Montgomery (?-1794), explorer, Revolutionary War officer, signer of the Cumberland Compact, founder of Clarksville, Nickajack Expedition commander who was killed by Indians in Kentucky.

Moore County

Created 1871 from Bedford, Lincoln and Franklin counties; named in honor of William Moore (1786-1871), early settler, Lincoln County justice of the peace, War of 1812 officer, turnpike company president, state legislator.

Morgan County

Created 1817 from Anderson and Roane counties; named in honor of Daniel Morgan (1736-1802), American Revolutionary War officer who commanded the troops that defeated the British at Cowpens, and U.S. congressman from Virginia.

Obion County

Created 1823 from Indian lands; named for the Obion River, chief watercourse of the area, the origin of the name of which is obscure: possibly an Indian word meaning "many prongs" or the name of a French-Irish explorer.

Overton County

Created 1806 from Jackson County and Indian lands; named in honor of John Overton (1766-1833), pioneer attorney, supporter of Andrew Jackson, Tennessee Supreme Court judge, cofounder (with Jackson and James Winchester) of Memphis.

Perry County

Created 1819 from Humphreys and Hickman counties; named in honor of Oliver Hazard Perry (1785-1819), American War of 1812 naval officer who, after his flagship "Lawrence" was damaged continued the fight from the "Niagara," forcing the surrender of the British fleet.

Pickett County

Created 1879 from Fentress and Overton counties; named in honor of Howell L. Pickett (1847-after 1909), attorney and member of Tennessee state house from Wilson County who moved to Arizona and continued his career in law and politics.

Polk County

Created 1839 from McMinn and Bradley counties; named in honor of James Knox Polk (1795-1849), clerk of the state senate, member of the state house, member and speaker of the U.S. House, governor of Tennessee, eleventh U.S. President.

Putnam County

Created 1854 from Fentress, Jackson, Smith, White and Overton counties; named in honor of Israel Putnam (1718-1790), French and Indian War soldier and commander at the Revolutionary War battles of Bunker Hill and Long Island.

Rhea County

Created 1807 from Roane County; named in honor of John Rhea (1753-1832), Revolutionary War soldier, member of North Carolina and Tennessee state houses, member of U.S. Congress, U.S. commissioner to treat with the Choctaws.

Roane County

Created 1801 from Knox County and Indian lands; named in honor of Archibald Roane (1760-1819), 1796 Constitutional Convention delegate, Superior Court of Law and Equity judge, Supreme Court judge, governor of Tennessee.

Robertson County

Created 1796 from Tennessee and Sumner counties; named in honor of James Robertson (1742-1814), pioneer, surveyor, soldier, founder of the Watauga Settlements and of Nashville, and state senator, known as “Father of Tennessee.”

Rutherford County

Created 1803 from Davidson, Williamson and Wilson counties; named in honor of Griffith Rutherford (1721-1805), North Carolina legislator, Indian War soldier, chairman of the legislature of the Territory South of the River Ohio (later Tennessee).

Scott County

Created 1849 from Anderson, Campbell, Fentress and Morgan counties; named in honor of Winfield Scott (1786-1866), War of 1812 soldier and commander of U.S. troops at Vera Cruz, Cerro Gordo and Molino del Rey in the Mexican War.

Sequatchie County

Created 1857 from Hamilton, Marion and Warren counties, the name linked with a Cherokee word “sequachee,” probably meaning “opossum, he grins or runs,” also the name of a Cherokee chief for whom the Sequatchie Valley is named.

Sevier County

Created 1794 from Jefferson County; named in honor of John Sevier (1745-1815), governor of the State of Franklin, territorial militia officer, U. S. congressman from North Carolina and Tennessee, state senator and first governor of Tennessee.

Shelby County

Created 1819 from Indian lands; named in honor of Isaac Shelby (1750-1826), Revolutionary War troop commander at Kings Mountain, first governor of Kentucky, negotiator for the purchase of the western district from the Chickasaws.

Smith County

Created 1799 from Sumner County and Indian lands; named in honor of Daniel Smith (1748-1818), surveyor, Revolutionary War officer, secretary of the Territory South of the River Ohio (later Tennessee), maker of the first map of the state, U.S. senator.

Stewart County

Created 1803 from Montgomery County; named in honor of Duncan Stewart (1752-1815), member of the North Carolina legislature, early settler, Tennessee state senator, surveyor-general and lieutenant governor of the Mississippi Territory.

Sullivan County

Created 1779 from Washington County; named in honor of John Sullivan (1740-1795), Revolutionary War officer, member of the Continental Congress, attorney general, legislator, U.S. district judge and governor of New Hampshire.

Sumner County

Created 1786 from Davidson County; named in honor of Jethro Sumner (1733-1785), French and Indian War soldier, Revolutionary War commander at Charleston, Brandywine and Germantown who defended North Carolina against Cornwallis in 1780.

Tipton County

Created 1823 from Indian lands; named in honor of Jacob Tipton (?-1791), organizer for the defense of the Northwest Territory against hostile Indians who was killed leading an attack in 1791.

Trousdale County

Created 1870 from Wilson, Macon, Smith and Sumner counties; named in honor of William Trousdale (1790-1872), "War Horse of Sumner County," Creek and Mexican War soldier and officer, state senator and governor of Tennessee, U.S. minister to Brazil.

Unicoi County

Created 1875 from Washington and Carter counties, the name of which, shared with the Southern Appalachian mountains in the area, probably derives from an Indian word "u'nika" meaning white, foglike, or fog-draped.

Union County

Created 1850 from Grainger, Claiborne, Campbell, Anderson and Knox counties; named possibly for the "union" of fragments of five counties, or for the strong feelings in eastern Tennessee for the preservation of the Federal Union.

Van Buren County

Created 1840 from Warren and White counties; named in honor of Martin Van Buren (1782-1862), attorney general and governor of New York, U.S. senator from New York, U.S. secretary of state, eighth U.S. president.

Warren County

Created 1807 from White, Jackson, Smith counties and Indian lands; named in honor of Joseph Warren (1741-1775), Revolutionary War officer who sent Paul Revere on his famous midnight ride to Lexington in 1775, and who was killed at Bunker Hill.

Washington County

Created 1777 by Act of North Carolina; named in honor of George Washington (1732-1799), member of the Virginia House of Burgesses and the Continental Congress, Revolutionary War commander unanimously elected first U.S. president.

Wayne County

Created 1817 from Hickman County; named in honor of daring “Mad Anthony” Wayne (1745-1796), American statesman and officer in the Revolutionary War who later led troops against hostile Indians.

Weakley County

Created 1823 from Indian lands; named in honor of Robert Weakley (1764-1845), Revolutionary War soldier, state legislator, U.S. congressman, U.S. commissioner to treat with Chickasaws, 1834 Tennessee Constitutional Convention delegate.

White County

Created 1806 from Jackson and Smith counties; named in honor of John White (1751-1846), Revolutionary War soldier who saw action at Brandywine, Germantown and Stony Point, and was the first white settler of White County.

Williamson County

Created 1799 from Davidson County; named in honor of Hugh Williamson (1735-1819), surgeon-general of North Carolina troops in the American Revolution, North Carolina legislator, member of the Continental and U.S. Congresses.

Wilson County

Created 1799 from Sumner County; named in honor of David Wilson (1752-1804?), Revolutionary War soldier, member of the North Carolina legislature and the legislature of the Territory South of the River Ohio (later Tennessee).



Tennessee Counties



The Three Grand Divisions

Pursuant to Tennessee Code Annotated Title 4, Chapter 1, Part 2

The western division comprises the counties of Benton, Carroll, Chester, Crockett, Decatur, Dyer, Fayette, Gibson, Hardeeman, Hardin, Haywood, Henderson, Henry, Lake, Lauderdale, McNairy, Madison, Obion, Shelby, Tipton and Weakley.

The middle division comprises the counties of Bedford, Cannon, Cheatham, Clay, Coffee, Davidson, DeKalb, Dickson, Fentress, Franklin, Giles, Grundy, Hickman, Houston, Humphreys, Jackson, Lawrence, Lewis, Lincoln, Macon, Marshall, Maury, Montgomery, Moore, Overton, Perry, Pickett, Putnam, Robertson, Rutherford, Sequatchie, Smith, Sumner, Stewart, Trousdale, Van Buren, Warren, Wayne, White, Williamson and Wilson.

The eastern division comprises the counties of Anderson, Blount, Blount, Bradley, Campbell, Claiborne, Carter, Cocke, Cumberland, Grainger, Greene, Hancock, Hamilton, Hamblen, Hawkins, Jefferson, Johnson, Knox, Loudon, Marion, McMinn, Meigs, Monroe, Morgan, Polk, Rhea, Roane, Scott, Sevier, Sullivan, Union and Washington.