The War of 1812 in Tennessee
A Driving Tour
War of 1812 in Tennessee: A Driving Tour

sponsored and developed by the Center for Historic Preservation, Middle Tennessee State University, Murfreesboro

Two hundred years ago, an international war raged across the United States of America. Thousands of American soldiers died in the conflict; the nation’s capital city was invaded, leaving both the White House and the U.S. Capitol in near ruins. An American invasion of Canada ended in failure. Defeat appeared to be certain—leaving the nation’s future in doubt—but down on the southern frontier Tennesseans fought and won major battles that turned the tide and made the reputation of a future U.S. president, Andrew Jackson.

This conflict between the United States, Great Britain, Canada, and a score of sovereign Indian nations was called the War of 1812 because the United States declared war on England in June of that year. Thousands of Tennesseans fought with distinction in three southern campaigns: the 1813 Natchez campaign, the 1813–14 Creek War, and the campaign against the British in New Orleans in 1814–15. There were additional companies of Tennesseans and others who served with U.S. armies in the Great Lakes region, the Northwest Territories, and Canada. Many famous Americans with Tennessee ties—Davy Crockett, Sam Houston, Sequoyah, and Thomas Hart Benton, for example—distinguished themselves during the war years.

Today, you can travel across Tennessee and find historic homes, museums, sites, and cemeteries that tell us about this almost forgotten war and the veterans who returned and helped build a state and a nation.

This driving tour begins in Knoxville, a city that was then the political heart of the new state of Tennessee, and then moves from east Tennessee into middle Tennessee, which was then on the edge of the western frontier. It closes with a few select locations in west Tennessee, since the war’s results soon opened that region to settlement, and many veterans, such as Davy Crockett, moved there to make new lives in the wake of the war.

Many historic properties are open to the public, but a few are privately owned. Enjoy your exploration of the legacies of the War of 1812, but always respect private property rights. Do not enter private property without the owner’s permission.
of 1812, Williams served as a U.S. senator from 1815 to 1823, when his former commander, Jackson, won Williams’ Senate seat. Williams’s wife, Melinda, designed and supervised construction of the family residence (1825–1826). It is now privately owned by a golf course. John and Melinda Williams are buried in the First Presbyterian Cemetery in downtown Knoxville.

4. Marble Springs Historic Farmstead
1220 West Governor John Sevier Highway, Knoxville

Marble Springs documents the 1792–1815 farmstead of Gen. John Sevier, Tennessee’s first state governor. In 1811–12, Sevier was one of the “War Hawks” in the U.S. Congress, and he offered his sword to President James Madison once war was declared. The president instead convinced Sevier to chair the House Committee on Military Affairs, a position he held throughout the war years. In 1815, Sevier was appointed to a federal commission to determine boundaries between the Creek Indians and the state of Georgia. While carrying out those duties, Sevier died on September 24, 1815, near Fort Decatur, Alabama.

5. Samuel McSpadden House
Tennessee Highway 66, Dandridge vicinity (private)

In 1792, Samuel McSpadden (1756–1844) claimed a large land grant along the French Broad River in return for his Revolutionary War service. In 1804, he built the present two-story brick house. In 1812, McSpadden built a powder mill a quarter mile to the north. During the New Orleans campaign of 1814, he used the river to send loads of gunpowder to Andrew Jackson’s troops. He became known as “Gunpowder Sam.” McSpadden is buried in Old Hopewell Presbyterian Church Cemetery in Dandridge.

6. Davy Crockett Birthplace
Davy Crockett Birthplace State Park, Limestone

Born August 17, 1786, in Greene County, David Crockett remained in east Tennessee until 1811, when he and his family moved to Lincoln County and then, in 1813, to Franklin County, where Crockett twice enlisted as a volunteer in the Creek War from 1813 to 1815 and served as a scout. After the War of 1812, he was elected a lieutenant in the Thirty-second Militia Regiment of Franklin County, beginning a meteoric political rise from backwoodsman to the halls of Congress. Crockett died at the Battle of the Alamo in 1836.

7. Sabine Hill
West G Street (Tennessee 67), Elizabethton

Mary “Polly” Patton Taylor, the widow of Gen. Nathaniel Taylor, probably directed the construction of this Federal-style home from 1815 to 1818. Gen. Taylor served with Jackson in both the Creek War and the New Orleans campaign, where he had the responsibility of protecting Mobile Bay while Jackson attacked British forces at New Orleans. Gen. Taylor and Polly are buried in the nearby family cemetery. The Tennessee Historical Commission and Tennessee State Parks are restoring the property as a state historic site.

8. Ensign Alexander Doran Memorial
2030 Crossroads Drive, Mountain City

This almost forgotten monument in Mountain City marks the life of Alexander Doran, a former member of the Tennessee General Assembly and a veteran of the Battle of King’s Mountain during the Revolution. He served as an officer in the War of 1812. Doran returned to his mountain home ill with a fever caught during his military service and died here in 1814.
War of 1812 in Tennessee: A Driving Tour
Approximate Locations of Sites and Landmarks

1. Blount Mansion
200 W. Hill Avenue, Knoxville

2. James White Fort
205 E. Hill Avenue, Knoxville

3. Col. John Williams House
2325 Dandridge Avenue, Knoxville (private)

4. Marble Springs Historic Farmstead
1220 West Governor John Sevier Highway, Knoxville

5. Samuel McSpadden House
Tennessee Highway 66, Dandridge vicinity (private)

6. Davy Crockett Birthplace
Davy Crockett Birthplace State Park, Limestone

7. Sabine Hill
West G Street (Tennessee 67), Elizabethton

8. Ensign Alexander Doran Memorial
2030 Crossroads Drive, Mountain City

9. The Pemberton Oak
152 Pemberton Road, Bristol (private)

10. Edmund Pendleton Gaines
Homeplace Site
Netherland Inn, 2144 Netherland Inn Road, Kingsport

11. Sam Houston Schoolhouse
3650 Sam Houston Schoolhouse Road, Maryville

12. Sequoyah Birthplace Museum
576 Tennessee Highway 360, Vonore

13. Hiwassee Garrison and Cherokee Agency
Calhoun, at Tennessee Highway 163 and U.S. Highway II

14. Fort Marr or Marrow Blockhouse
U.S. Highway 41, Benton

15. McNair's Stand Site
U.S. 41, Consasa (private)

16. Camp Ross
Ross's Landing Park, Chattanooga

17. Nickajack Cave
Tennessee Highway 156-W (Shellmound Road), South Pittsburg

18. Cragfont
200 Cragfont Road, Castalian Springs

19. Trousdale Place and Sumner County Museum
183 West Main Street, Gallatin

20. Historic Mansker's Station
Moss-Wright Park, Goodlettsville

21. The Hermitage
4580 Rachel's Lane, Hermitage

22. Nashville Public Square Park
Second Avenue North at Public Square, Nashville

23. Camp Good Exchange Site
Historic U.S. Customs House, 701 Broadway, Nashville

24. William Carroll's Grave
1001 4th Avenue South, Nashville City Cemetery

25. Glen Leven Farm
4000 Franklin Pike, Nashville (private)

26. Benton Homeplace Site
Leiper's Fork, Tennessee Highway 47 (private)

27. Natchez Trace Parkway

28. Rutherford County Courthouse Square
Town Square, Murfreesboro

29. Franklin County Courthouse Square
Town Square, Winchester

30. Camp Blount Site
U.S. 231 South, Fayetteville

31. Crockett Homeplace
5 Military Road, South of Town Square, Lawrenceburg

32. Riverside Cemetery
Riverside Drive, Jackson

33. Crockett Cabin
219 North Tren ton Street, Rutherford

34. Court Square Park
46 North 2nd Street, Memphis

35. Elmwood Cemetery
824 South Dudley Street, Memphis

*The numbers on this map indicate approximate locations only. Please consult a detailed map for specific directions or use the address provided with your GPS.
9. The Pemberton Oak
1152 Pemberton Road, Bristol (private)

The Pemberton Oak provided shelter and served as a muster ground for the soldiers of five wars, including the War of 1812. Under the massive oak, Col. John Pemberton assembled his command in late September 1780 for service against the British. Descendants of Col. Pemberton still own the property. In 2007, the tree was heavily damaged in a storm and only a small portion of the trunk remains today. The Daughters of the American Revolution have since marked it with a tablet.

10. Edmund Pendleton Gaines Homeplace Site
Netherland Inn, 2144 Netherland Inn Road, Kingsport

Former Sullivan County resident Edmund Pendleton Gaines was a leading U.S. Army general in the Lake Erie campaigns of the War of 1812. He is best known for his stout defense of Fort Erie (Ontario) during a British attack on August 15, 1814. Before joining the army, Gaines served in the Sullivan County militia. His family home was just north of the Netherland Inn (built c.1811), and local sources say that Gen. Gaines also visited the historic inn. Another Kingsport site, Exchange Place, is also associated with the Gaines family. Place names throughout the south—from Gainesboro in Tennessee to Gainesville in Florida—also mark the significance of this Tennessee military figure.

11. Sam Houston Schoolhouse
3650 Sam Houston Schoolhouse Road, Maryville

Sam Houston began his public career by teaching school in this one-room log building in 1812 for a class of eight students. Houston joined the army later that same year to fight in the Creek War and fought heroically in the Battle of Horseshoe Bend, where he was seriously wounded and forced to leave the army for the remainder of the war. Houston later became governor of both Tennessee and Texas, a U.S. congressman and senator, and president of the Republic of Texas.

12. Sequoyah Birthplace Museum
576 Tennessee Highway 360, Vonore

The Sequoyah Birthplace Museum is administered by the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians. Sequoyah was born c.1770 at the village of Tuskegee, which was very near where the museum is located today. His father was Nathaniel Gist, a Virginia fur trader. His mother was Wut-teh, daughter of a Cherokee chief. Sequoyah was a blacksmith by trade. He and other Cherokees enlisted on the side of the United States under Gen. Andrew Jackson to fight British troops and Creek Indians in the War of 1812. After the war, Sequoyah developed the Cherokee syllabary.

13. Hiwassee Garrison and Cherokee Agency
Calhoun, at Tennessee Highway 163 and U.S. Highway 11

From 1807 to 1814, the Hiwassee Garrison was a federal fort and Cherokee Indian Agency located near the confluence of the Hiwassee and Tennessee rivers. The towns of Calhoun, on the north side of the Hiwassee, and Charleston, on the south side, developed a few miles away from the garrison site. On Main Street in Calhoun is a marker for Col. Return J. Meigs, who was the federal Indian agent for the Cherokees throughout the War of 1812. At the Calhoun Community Cemetery is the grave of Col. Gideon Morgan, a prominent Cherokee resident who organized a Cherokee regiment to serve with Jackson’s forces during the Creek War of 1813.
14. Fort Marr or Marrow Blockhouse
U.S. Highway 411, Benton

This blockhouse originally stood at Old Fort, Tennessee, where it was built in 1814 to serve as a supply depot for Tennessee troops serving in the Creek War. It also is the last surviving blockhouse of Fort Morrow (locally known as Fort Marr), a Cherokee Removal-era military post built on the old Federal Road near the Conasauga River. The building was later moved next to the Polk County Jail in Benton.

15. McNair’s Stand Site
U.S. 411, Conasauga (private)

McNair’s Stand, located on the Conasauga School grounds, was the home of David McNair and his Cherokee wife Delilah Vann. During the War of 1812, McNair commanded a company in the Cherokee regiment in Andrew Jackson’s army. He and his wife are buried near the house site.

16. Camp Ross
Ross’s Landing Park, Chattanooga

Camp Ross, at the mouth of Chattanooga Creek, was a supply base for Tennessee troops during the Creek War of 1812–13. It also was an assembly camp for the Cherokee Regiment. The city of Chattanooga was known as Ross’s Landing until 1838.

17. Nickajack Cave
Tennessee Highway 156-W (Shellmound Road), South Pittsburg

In 1800, James Orr gained permission from the Cherokee, who owned the land, to begin mining saltpeter at Nickajack Cave. This mining continued through the War of 1812, and the deposits were heavily mined during the Civil War. Today, Nickajack Cave is a State Wildlife Refuge and home to an estimated 100,000 bats. There is an observation deck adjacent to the mouth of the cave where visitors can watch the bats leave at dusk to feed.

18. Cragfont
200 Cragfont Road, Castalian Springs

Cragfont was built in 1802 as the home of Gen. James Winchester, who was second-in-command of the Army of the Northwest during the War of 1812. Winchester won the first Battle of River Raisin, located in present-day Michigan, on January 18, 1813, defeating a combined British and Potawatomi force. Four days later, a much larger British force including allies from 10 Native American nations surprised Winchester and his troops. Native Americans captured Winchester, inflicting such damage to his troops that many Americans believed a massacre had taken place following Winchester’s surrender. According to Winchester’s own count, only 33 American troops escaped; hundreds of others ended in prison. After spending over a year in captivity, Winchester returned to service and commanded soldiers under Andrew Jackson at Mobile in 1814–15.

19. Trousdale Place and Sumner County Museum
183 West Main Street, Gallatin

Trousdale Place was built by John Bowen in 1820 and later purchased by William Trousdale, who had fought in the War of 1812 under Andrew Jackson during the Creek War and New Orleans campaign. Trousdale served as a brigadier general in the Mexican War and was governor of Tennessee from 1849 to 1851.

20. Historic Mansker’s Station
Moss-Wright Park, Goodlettsville

This reconstructed log station was home to Kasper Mansker, one of middle Tennessee’s earliest settlers. During the War of 1812, Mansker, then approaching 70 years of age, joined the Second Regiment of the Tennessee Volunteer Mounted Gunmen and served at the Battle of New Orleans.

21. The Hermitage
4580 Rachel’s Lane, Hermitage

The Hermitage was built in 1802 as the home of Gen. James Winchester, who was second-in-command of the Army of the Northwest during the War of 1812. Winchester won the first Battle of River Raisin, located in present-day Michigan, on January 18, 1813, defeating a combined British and Potawatomi force. Four days later, a much larger British force including allies from 10 Native American nations surprised Winchester and his troops. Native Americans captured Winchester, inflicting such damage to his troops that many Americans believed a massacre had taken place following Winchester’s surrender. According to Winchester’s own count, only 33 American troops escaped; hundreds of others ended in prison. After spending over a year in captivity, Winchester returned to service and commanded soldiers under Andrew Jackson at Mobile in 1814–15.
The Hermitage was the home of Gen. Andrew Jackson, who won victories in battle against the Creeks in 1813 at Tallushatchee and Talladega, leading troops from the Tennessee militia. Jackson’s victory at Horseshoe Bend over the Creeks virtually ended the Creek War. He was commissioned a major general in the U.S. Army after these victories and commanded the Seventh Military District (Tennessee, Louisiana, Mississippi) in the War of 1812. Jackson led the stunning defeat of British forces at the Battle of New Orleans on January 8, 1815, an event that made him a national hero. This popularity led to his election as seventh president of the United States in 1828. The property includes remnants of his original Hermitage log farmhouse—Jackson’s home during the war—and the Hermitage mansion built after the war.

22. Nashville Public Square Park
Second Avenue North at Public Square, Nashville

Nashville’s Public Square witnessed many War of 1812 events. The largest was when the Tennessee volunteers, led by Gen. Andrew Jackson, paraded past the public square for Gov. Blount and hundreds of citizens in mid-December 1812. The following September, the public square witnessed the infamous gunfight between Jackson and Jesse and Thomas Hart Benton, a future U.S. Senator from Missouri. When Gen. Jackson returned to Nashville following the Battle of New Orleans, town leaders hosted a dinner at one of the square’s taverns and the general gave a speech at the courthouse.

23. Camp Good Exchange Site
Historic U.S. Customs House, 701 Broadway, Nashville

The Customs House property is nearby the approximate location of Camp Good Exchange, where an estimated 1,800 Tennessee volunteers mustered on a cold winter day on December 10, 1812. Gov. William Blount addressed the volunteers that evening before Gen. Jackson and his officers began the difficult process of turning volunteers into a fighting force. On January 7, 1813, Jackson and his troops left for the Natchez campaign from Robertson’s Landing on the Cumberland River.

24. William Carroll’s Grave
1001 4th Avenue South, Nashville City Cemetery

William Carroll was one of Andrew Jackson’s most trusted officers during the War of 1812, serving in the Natchez and Creek campaigns before sustaining a severe wound at the Battle of Horseshoe Bend in 1813. After Jackson was promoted to major general in the regular army, Carroll succeeded him as commander of the Tennessee volunteers, and he led these troops during the victory at New Orleans. After the war, he became Tennessee’s governor, serving three terms from 1821 to 1827 and again from 1829 to 1835. His grave at the historic Nashville City Cemetery is the only landmark left from Carroll’s significant career.

25. Glen Leven Farm
4000 Franklin Pike, Nashville (private)

On the sprawling John Thompson plantation located south of Nashville, General Andrew Jackson bivouacked with his volunteer troops in 1814. In Jackson’s honor, the Thompson family named that part of the property “the camp lot.” Gen. Jackson resumed his march from Glen Leven and moved south on his way to the Battle of New Orleans.

26. Benton Homeplace Site
Leiper’s Fork, Tennessee Highway 47 (private)

Near a popular gateway to the Natchez Trace Parkway is the historic rural community of Leiper’s Fork, where the family of Thomas Hart Benton lived in the early 1800s. Jesse Benton, the father of brothers Thomas Hart and Jesse, built his home here in 1801. Thomas Hart Benton served in the Creek War but then in September 1813, he and his brother had an infamous downtown Nashville gunfight with Andrew Jackson and John Coffee that left the general wounded. Both Bentons left Tennessee after the war; Thomas Hart developed a famous career in Missouri and became a political stalwart for President Andrew Jackson in the 1830s.

27. Natchez Trace Parkway

The Natchez Trace Parkway is the best preserved landscape of the War of 1812 era in Tennessee. Along the modern parkway road are numerous sites associated with the Natchez and New Orleans campaigns.
Andrew and Rachel Jackson spent the night as they returned to the Hermitage from the Battle of New Orleans.

Glenrock Branch/Young Factor’s Stand
Natchez Trace Parkway Milepost 365
Chickasaw chief Old Factor’s son, Young Factor, operated a stand at this place for Natchez Trace travelers. Returning veterans of the Battle of New Orleans camped here on April 13, 1815.

Sunken Trace
Natchez Trace Parkway Milepost 350.5
The sunken trace interprets the original road, which many travelers used in the early 1800s. Militia units would have used this road to connect with the remainder of Jackson’s army in Alabama.

Colbert Ferry
Natchez Trace Parkway Milepost 327.3
Located just south of Tennessee in Florence, Alabama, Colbert Ferry marks where Andrew Jackson’s troops crossed the Tennessee River during the 1813 Natchez campaign. Colbert, a significant Chickasaw leader, operated the ferry until 1820. His nearby home (not extant) was the location of the 1816 conference between Cherokee, Creek, Choctaw, and Chickasaw leaders and federal representatives to negotiate a Chickasaw cession of lands north of the Tennessee River.

28. Rutherford County Courthouse Square
Town Square, Murfreesboro
Andrew Jackson’s victory at New Orleans proved to be a popular rallying cry in his future campaigns for the presidency. He spoke at the Murfreesboro public square during an anniversary celebration of the battle on January 8, 1828. John Spence witnessed these events and noted that the ballroom was “ornamented with busts, life size, that of the Chieftains, ornamented with a wreath of hickory and the
various plans of siege of the battle of N. Orleans, also portraits of distinguished heroes of the late war."

29. Franklin County Courthouse Square
Town Square, Winchester

After the Creek attack on Fort Mims, Alabama, many residents in southern middle Tennessee volunteered to fight. In September 1813, local men mustered at the courthouse square before joining Jackson at Camp Blount. Davy Crockett remembered: “I went to Winchester, where the muster was to be, and a great many people had collected” since there was “much fuss among the people about the war.” A courthouse square monument notes the muster as well as the role of Gen. James Winchester (for whom the town is named) in the war.

30. Camp Blount Site
U.S. 231 South, Fayetteville

Other than the Hermitage, the most important Tennessee site associated with the War of 1812 is Camp Blount, located along the bottomland of the Elk River south of the Fayetteville town square. Jackson’s command stopped here on October 7, 1813, deciding to establish a camp to gain more volunteers for the push into Creek territory. Notable figures such as Davy Crockett and Sam Houston joined the army at this camp. Between 1813 and 1814, over 5,000 men used Camp Blount as a training ground and a military base for the Creek War.

31. Crockett Homeplace
S. Military Road, South of Town Square, Lawrenceburg

Davy Crockett returned from the war and moved his family to the newly formed Lawrence County in 1817. In the Creek War, Crockett participated in many skirmishes but he missed most of the major Creek battles due to his scouting duties. Lawrenceburg has reconstructed this cabin to depict Crockett’s post-War of 1812 career. On the town square

32. Riverside Cemetery
Riverside Drive, Jackson

Established in 1830, Riverside Cemetery is the burial place of pioneers and veterans of many wars, including the War of 1812. Among them is Col. Robert I. Chester; William Edward Butler, who was known as the “Father of Jackson”; and Col. John H. Gibson, a veteran of the Battle of New Orleans for whom Gibson County, Tennessee, was named.

33. Crockett Cabin
219 North Trenton Street, Rutherford

Once the white settlement of west Tennessee was underway in 1819, Davy Crockett moved from southern middle Tennessee to this west Tennessee area and lived outside of Rutherford. In the 1920s, his log home was moved to the town and restored as a historic site. Crockett lived in west Tennessee from 1821 to 1835 and served in Congress for part of that time.
34. Court Square Park
45 North 2nd Street, Memphis

On May 22, 1819, two major Tennessee figures of the War of 1812—Gen. Andrew Jackson and Gen. James Winchester (along with their friend Judge John Overton) founded the city of Memphis on the banks of the Mississippi. The town plan featured four public squares, one of which is Court Square in the heart of downtown. The creation of Memphis as part of the general white settlement of west Tennessee is one of the most significant legacies of the War of 1812. With the war won, federal officials were able to negotiate the 1818 Jackson Purchase, acquiring the land that is now west Tennessee from the Chickasaw. The establishment of Memphis gave Tennesseans a new Mississippi River port city, ending a generation of dependence on overland travel to Natchez.

35. Elmwood Cemetery
824 South Dudley Street, Memphis

Established August 28, 1852, Elmwood Cemetery is the burial place of many of Memphis’s pioneer families and eight veterans of the War of 1812, among other later prominent Memphis residents. The War of 1812 veterans interred here include Maj. Nathaniel Anderson, James T. Crawford, Andrew Jackson Edmundson, James E. Trezevant, Thomas James, Dr. Ayers P. Merrill, and Maj. W. Ruffin.

Museums and Collections to Visit

Major collections associated with Tennessee events, places, and people significant during the War of 1812 are located at the Museum of East Tennessee History at the East Tennessee History Center, 601 S. Gay Street, Knoxville, and at the Tennessee State Museum, 505 Deaderick Street, Nashville. Important archival collections associated with the War of 1812 are at the Tennessee State Library and Archives, 403 7th Avenue North, Nashville.

Driving tour text and photography by David Calease, Layton Carr, Keith Schumann, and Carroll Van West of the Center for Historic Preservation at Middle Tennessee State University.

Photographs are from the collection of The Center for Historic Preservation unless otherwise noted.

The authors gratefully acknowledge material about the Natchez Trace Parkway received from April Cantrell and Tony Turnbow and Bill McDonald and Judy Sizemore of the Muscle Shoals National Heritage Area. They are also grateful for editorial suggestions from Myers Brown of the Tennessee State Museum.