A Driving Tour of the Upper Cumberland

For more detailed information, reference sources, and events, please visit our website:
www.theborderlands.org
http://histpres.mtsu.edu/tncivwar

This driving tour brochure was produced by The Borderlands Foundation in partnership with the Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area, which receives funding from the National Park Service.
Nestled in the high country between the Tennessee-Kentucky border and the interstate bustle of I-40 is a rugged yet beautiful landscape carved by the Calfkiller, Obed, Obey, and Wolf Rivers, as well as countless human hands, over the centuries. The lure of this special place can be overwhelming: the richness of wildlife, the challenge of driving and hiking such uneven, spectacular terrain, and the diversity of the stories told by the peoples and the pasts that have occupied the Upper Cumberland Plateau.

This driving tour takes the region’s back roads as a departure point to explore its heritage and landscape. We focus on the human story of the Civil War era; this country witnessed some of the most vicious fighting of Tennessee’s occupation story as residents were often equally divided between the Union and the Confederacy. Determined partisans, such as Champ Ferguson and Tinker Dave Beaty, became feared names long before historians coined the term “guerrilla” warfare.

We connect that past to later people and events, many tied to the New South effort to transform the region during Reconstruction, which also placed a heavy hand on the countryside. The story continues through the New Deal era of the 1930s when a second group of federal officials again intervened in the landscape, moving villages and removing families, to build new opportunities for economic growth, recreation and tourism.

Through it all the people of the Upper Cumberland adapted to new ideas while they held tight to the traditions and ways of long ago. Their story of survival, of building vibrant communities, and of melding their culture into the landscape itself is still there to explore, to experience, and to celebrate.

The properties detailed below are back roads highlights—many more significant places are worth exploring—and they are normally open to the public or viewable from public right-of-ways. Back roads driving allows you to experience heritage up close, but don’t get too close and invade someone’s private property. Be respectful of the current residents who make the Upper Cumberland a living heritage region for all of Tennessee and Kentucky.

The tour route begins at Byrdstown and continues southwest on Tennessee 111 to Livingston. It then takes Tennessee 52 west to Celina and Free Hill, drops south on Tennessee 53 to the junction with Tennessee 292 to the town of Hilham. From Hilham, the route cuts across Overton County via Tennessee 136 to the Putnam County courthouse square at Cookeville. Then the tour veers ever so slightly to the west and uses Tennessee 135 to go by spectacular Burgess Falls, winding its way to Sparta, the seat of White County. The drive on Tennessee 84 northeast along the Calfkiller River to Monterey follows closely paths from hundreds of years ago. There the road connects to the historic Walton Road, US Highway 70N, and heads east into Cumberland County courthouse square at Crossville and the junction with US Highway 127.

The “127 Corridor” is a famous route throughout the Cumberland Plateau and the tour heads north to Jamestown and finally to return to Byrdstown. Along the 127 Corridor are side trips, via Tennessee 52 to the historic villages of Allardt and Rugby, Tennessee 297 to Big South Fork National River, and Tennessee 154 to Pickett State Park. All three side trips take visitors to accommodations, recreational areas, and fascinating views of the Upper Cumberland landscape.

1. Pickett County Courthouse (1935)
   Town Square, Byrdstown

   Listed in the National Register, this Colonial Revival-styled courthouse was built with native Crab Orchard Stone and was designed by the Nashville firm of Marr and Holman, which chose a traditional style that reflected the region’s values and landscape. Pickett County, established in 1879, was one of the state’s last Reconstruction-era counties.

   The courthouse dominates Byrdstown’s historic, quaint town square. Byrdstown was named in honor of Colonel Richard Byrd, who served with the 1st Tennessee, USA, during the Civil War. Its Town Hall contains an exhibit on “The Borderlands,” which explains the nature of the real Civil War between Confederates and Federals along the Tennessee-Kentucky state line.

2. Cordell Hull Birthplace State Park (c. 1870, 1952, 1995)
   1300 Cordell Hull Memorial Drive, Byrdstown

   This state-owned memorial to New Deal-era Secretary of State Cordell Hull, recognized as a founder of
the United Nations and a recipient of a Nobel Peace Prize, centers around a single-pen log cabin, built by his father William Hull, where Cordell Hull was born in 1871. The cabin is similar to those of many Upper Cumberland residents at the time of the Civil War and demonstrates the humble origins of this nationally important diplomat of the twentieth century. The park also includes a museum about Hull's career and the surrounding community as well as a hiking trail to Bunkum Cave.

3. Dale Hollow Lake (1943)
Tennessee 111, Byrdstown vicinity

Constructed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers during World War II, Dale Hollow Dam impounded waters of the Obey River, creating a huge reservoir that eliminated much good farm land in the river valley and forced hundreds of residents to take new homes, forever changing the region's landscape. In the last 20 years the lake has become a significant tourism attraction. Recreational and sportsman opportunities have replaced farming. Near this crossing of the lake is its confluence with Eagle Creek, used by both Confederates and Federals as a river crossing in the Civil War. The lake's dam and powerhouse is located at Celina in Clay County near the confluence of the Obey and Cumberland rivers.

4. Overton County Courthouse (c. 1866, 1934)
Town Square, Livingston

Overton County, established in 1806, was a large, prosperous agricultural community at the time of the Civil War, with 248 residents owning some 1,087 slaves. Wartime violence and occupation, however, soon freed those slaves and wrecked many farms. Then in 1865 Confederates commanded by Colonel John Francis burned the original courthouse. Residents soon rebuilt the small stone building in 1868, doubling the size. Later renovations came in 1933-34 from the federal Civil Works Administration and the Tennessee Emergency Relief Administration. The New Deal transformed the look of the town square, also adding a new Colonial Revival-styled post office and constructing the Art Deco-influenced Bohannon Building for county office space during the 1930s. The post office features a mural by Margaret Covey titled "The Newcomers," reflecting the frontier days of settlement in the county.

5. Overton County Heritage Museum
318 W. Broad Street, Livingston

Less than one-half mile south of the courthouse, housed in the renovated former county jail, is this recently established local museum, which features exhibits about the Civil War era as well as the county's settlement history and its New Deal era. The first U.S. soldier to lose his life in the Vietnam War was James T. Davis, a native of Livingston, and his story is told here as well.

6. Standing Stone State Park
Tennessee 52 at Tennessee 136, Hilham vicinity

New Deal agencies such as the Works Progress Administration and the U.S. Department of Agriculture developed Standing Stone State Park in the 1930s as both a recreational and land reclamation project. Replacing the original pioneers of this demanding landscape was a significant collection of rustic-styled stone and log buildings that make up a historic district that listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The park is also associated with an annual Rolley Hole marbles competition.

7. Clay County Courthouse (1872-1873)
Town Square, Celina

Listed in the National Register, the Clay County Courthouse was built by local craftsman D. L. Dow two years after the creation of the county during Reconstruction. Located along on the Cumberland River, Celina experienced periodic raids throughout the war and the federal army demolished many local boats. After the war, Celina recovered as a key stop for both the post-war logging and steamboat trade along the Cumberland River. One of the best regarded raft pilots was Cal Hamilton, an African American resident of Celina. On Highway 53 east of the square, at 805 Brown Street, is the Clay County Museum and Visitor Center, which contains exhibits on the region's violent Civil War history and its steamboat trade era.

8. Free Hill(s) (c. 1817)
Tennessee 53 at Neeley's Creek Road, then left at Free Hill Road Celina vicinity
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8. Free Hill(s) (c. 1817)
Tennessee 53 at Neely’s Creek Road, then left at Free Hill Road Celina vicinity
Free Hill(s) is a unique enclave of African Americans, who first moved as free blacks to the hills overlooking Celina and the Cumberland River in the antebellum era. The Free Hills Church of Christ dates its origins to 1816. After the Civil War, the community grew into the hundreds. The Free Hills Church of Christ dates its origins to 1816. After the Civil War, the community grew into the hundreds. The community grew into the hundreds. The community grew into the hundreds. The community grew into the hundreds. The community grew into the hundreds. The community grew into the hundreds. The community grew into the hundreds. The community grew into the hundreds. The community grew into the hundreds. The community grew into the hundreds. The community grew into the hundreds. The community grew into the hundreds.

9. Fisk Cemetery
Tennessee 136 at Fisk Cemetery Road, Hilham
Moses Fisk (1760-1840) played a pivotal role in the region’s settlement and education history. A native of Massachusetts, trained at Dartmouth and Yale, Fisk established Hilham, the first town in Overton County, in 1805 and in the following year he opened the Fisk Female Academy, one of the first girls schools in the South. He and his wife Nancy Shults Fisk are buried beside each other in this rural cemetery, which has an excellent collection of headstones and markers influenced by local folk art traditions from the antebellum era through the twentieth century. In the late 20th century, Fisk’s home was moved to the grounds of the Standing Stone State Park north of the cemetery site.

10. Camp Zollicoffer (1861)
Tennessee 292 Hilham vicinity
This Confederate training camp was established in the summer of 1861 and served thousands of Tennesseans and Kentuckians who wanted to fight and join the Confederate army. The camp was named in honor of Brig. Gen. Felix K. Zollicoffer, a former Tennessee legislator and Whig Party newspaper editor, who commanded the Confederate force at the Battle of Mill Springs, just across the border in Kentucky. Zollicoffer died in the battle, becoming the first Tennessee Confederate general to die in combat.

11. Putnam County Courthouse (1900) and Town Square
Tennessee 136 at US 70N Cookeville
Named county seat in 1854, Cookeville was a small crossroads town at the time of the Civil War. Its boom began in the 1890s with railroad development and then accelerated with the founding of Tennessee Technological University...
University in the early 20th century. The approach into the town square on Tennessee 136 shows many impressive examples of American domestic architecture from the early twentieth century. The square has an interesting collection of late 19th and 20th century commercial architecture, including the National Register-listed Arcade (1913).

12. Tennessee Central Railroad Depot Museum (1909)  
116 W. Broad Street, Cookeville

The Tennessee Central railroad, led by Nashville capitalist Jere Baxter at the turn-of-the-century, shaped the Cumberland Plateau like few other 20th century institutions. The Victorian-styled depot contains an excellent exhibit on the TC's regional impact as well as early Cookeville history.

13. Burgess Falls State Natural Area  
Tennessee 135 at Burgess Falls Road

On the Falling Water River, between Putnam and White counties, is Burgess Falls, where Tom Burgess and generations of his family used the roaring waters to operate a grist mill and store for over 100 years, even staying in business during the Civil War. This beautiful location is one of many on the plateau where families once ran mills providing a small industrial base to the region well into the 20th century. In 1924, the city of Cookeville developed the site for its electrical power plant. It became a state natural area in 1971.

14. Sparta Town Square  
Tennessee 84 at US 70S

In 1862 Gen. Braxton Bragg brought his army through the town square as he moved north to invade Kentucky. Sparta later became a major battleground between Confederate and Federal partisans. Amanda McDowell, a young girl in Sparta, remembered how both sides threatened her family. To quell the violence, the federal army turned Sparta into a major base of operations. In 1864 a federal commander, frustrated by his lack of success against Champ Ferguson and other Confederate guerillas, ordered his troops to plunder every home. The constant fighting in the area was among the most vicious of Tennessee's occupation years.

Many of Sparta's late 19th and early 20th century properties are listed in the National Register, including the Victorian architecture of the Cheek House (1880s), the Art Deco-styled Oldham Theater (1935), and the College-Main streets neighborhood (c. 1880-1940), which features while a sixth, according to eyewitness testimony from Abraham H. Officer, a former slave on the property, was executed in the front yard. The Officer family buried the dead Confederates in the family cemetery, which is open to the public. The farmstead also contains a log cantilever barn, which is a rarity for Middle Tennessee. This type of double log crib barn, with extended (or cantilevered) logs used to support the hay loft, is most often located in the Great Smoky Mountains region.

19. Wilder-Woolbright House (1902)  
208 Holly Street, Monterey

Union General John T. Wilder of the 17th Indiana Infantry served with distinction with the Army of the Cumberland, especially at the battle of Chickamauga, as the leader of the "Lightning Brigade." When the war ended, Wilder stayed in Tennessee and made investments throughout the Cumberland Plateau and East Tennessee. In 1902 his Fentress Coal Company built a railroad spur from Monterey to a coal town (a route now covered by Tennessee 164) named Wilder in Fentress County. In Monterey, Wilder lived at 208 Holly Street from 1902 to 1909. He also built Monterey's Imperial Hotel at 106 Holly Street. The two-story brick building is one of the region's few railroad hotels.

20. Walton Road (c. 1802) Monterey

Between Monterey and Crossville US Highway 70N basically parallels the route of Walton Road, one of the early east-west roads in Tennessee and the first overland route in the Upper Cumberland. The road, used extensively by both armies during the Civil War, linked Kingston on the Clinch River to Carthage on the Cumberland River.
15. Old City Cemetery
Wall and S. Church Streets, Sparta

The Old City Cemetery, which has a commanding view of the Calfkiller River, the town square, and the city's riverfront recreational area, was the final resting place of George Dibrell (1822-1888). Dibrell was a state legislator who in 1861 organized the “White County Partisan Rangers,” which later joined the command of Gen. Nathan B. Forrest. Dibrell received a brigade command in 1863 and was a brigadier general by war's end. A successful New South industrialist, he served in Congress from 1875 to 1885 and established the first coal mine at nearby Bon Air in 1882.

16. France Cemetery (1858) Tennessee 84

The France Cemetery is the final resting place of famous Confederate partisan Champ Ferguson, who harassed Federal soldiers and Unionist supporters throughout the Upper Cumberland from 1862 to 1865. Historian Noel Fisher counts Ferguson as "perhaps the most successful partisan leader in the East Tennessee war." Union officials executed Ferguson for his wartime record in October 1865.

The cemetery also has many excellent examples of "comb" graves, a distinctive mid-19th century to early 20th century folk art traditions that is concentrated in White and Overton counties. Comb graves are made of sandstone, with gothic-inspired headstones and footnotes; the actual grave is covered by two rectangular sandstone slabs laid in tent-fashion, creating a "gable roof" over the grave. Among the most interesting examples of material culture in the region, the comb graves give this cemetery added historical significance.

17. Johnson Baptist Church Cemetery (c. 1835) Tennessee 84 at Bethel Road

The Johnson Baptist Church dates to 1835 and is one of the oldest in the Calfkiller River Valley. The church cemetery also has many excellent examples of comb graves. The carving on many of the stones is probably the handwork of Eli Robinson, or his sons, who operated from Sparta and made hundreds of grave markers in the region during the late 19th century.

18. Officer Farm and Cemetery (c. 1800, 1864) Tennessee 84 at Rock Springs Church Road, Monterey vicinity

This National Register-listed property was the antebellum plantation of William Officer, who was an active Confederate supporter. During the Civil War, much of the plantation was confiscated and destroyed by federal troops. In 1864, federal forces based in Sparta traveled throughout the Calfkiller River region, searching for Confederates. A firefight at the Officer farm ended with five Confederates of Col. John Hughes’ command dead...
21. Cumberland County Courthouse (1905) and Military Memorial Museum of the Upper Cumberland (1886-87)
   Town Square, Crossville

Cumberland County, established 1856, was not much more than a crossroads during the Civil War, but residents were equally split between North and South. In March 1889, Union veterans established the John R. Swan Post No. 55 of the Grand Army of the Republic in Crossville. Few Tennessee towns, especially in Middle Tennessee, established GAR posts.

After the war, the town became noted for its use of Crab Orchard sandstone, a bright light-brown and rose-colored material mined locally, in many buildings. The 1905 Victorian-styled courthouse dominates the square; on the grounds is the county's first steam engine, brought from Indiana in 1872 by Samuel Cline, which marks the beginning of the region's New South era.

Across the street is the county's original courthouse (1886-87), which is now home to the Military Memorial Museum of the Upper Cumberland. It has exhibits about the county's Civil War years and its continuing contributions to the nation's military history.

22. Palace Theater (1936-37)
   72 S. Main Street, Crossville

Once abandoned and decaying, the Palace Theater has been restored to its Art Deco luster and holds a prominent place in the community's cultural life. Designed by architect Eston Smith and executed in Crab Orchard stone, the building is listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

23. Cumberland Mountains State Park (1930s)
   US Highway 127 S at Tennessee Highway 68, Crossville

Nestled within the boundaries of Cumberland Homesteads, one of the nation's most ambitious resettlement programs of the Great Depression, is this jewel of a state park, first built to serve local
in the 20th century. Next door to the museum is a rare Crab Orchard stone post office, built by the WPA in 1937 in Colonial Revival style. Also on the square is the innovative Crab Orchard stone station for the highway patrol, built during the 1930s.

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24. Allardt (1881)
Tennessee Highway 52

Established at the end of Reconstruction by land agent Bruno Gernt in 1881, Allardt was envisioned as a German colony for the “New South.” Several buildings associated with the community’s settlement and development, such as Gernt’s office and the Allardt School, are listed in the National Register.

25. Rugby (1880)
Tennessee Highway 52

Rugby (1880) also was created in the years immediately after Reconstruction by English writer and reformer Thomas Hughes. Hughes envisioned a place where immigrants and residents would be culturally invigorated through living an arts-and-crafts philosophy on the Cumberland highlands. Hughes saw his colony not only as giving the English gentry new opportunities but also reforming the depressed regional economy through new industries and education. Key landmarks include the Rugby Free Library, Christ Church Episcopal, the restored school building, and various private homes and shops, which are all included in a National Register historic district.

Continued on outside...
26. Jamestown Town Square  
Tennessee Highway 52 at old US Highway 127

Camp McGinnis (1861-1862) was an early Confederate training camp and base near Jamestown from which troops launched raids into the strongly Unionist counties of Morgan and Scott. In retaliation, the 7th Tennessee U.S.A. raided Jamestown, the seat of Fentress County in October 1862, bringing the war to the front doors of local residents. The county courthouse as well as several other buildings and businesses suffered damage during the war years. The present Fentress County Courthouse, an Romanesque-influenced stone building, dates to 1906. Surrounding the courthouse are several impressive stone buildings from the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Also on the square is the historic Fentress County Jail, which is listed in the National Register, where there are exhibits about the county's history. From his home in Fentress County, David "Tinker Dave" Beaty led a federally-recognized command that protected Unionists and conducted raids against Confederates in Fentress and surrounding Upper Cumberland counties throughout the Civil War.

27. Big South Fork National River and Recreational Area  
Tennessee 297

Established by Congress in 1974, Big South Fork contains an amazing array of natural and recreational resources. Whether by hiking, riding, and driving, visitors can experience the geography that shaped the Civil War and Reconstruction era in the Upper Cumberland. During the Civil War, those who resided in this rugged, demanding landscape were strongly Unionist. Indeed, residents of Scott County even voted to secede from Tennessee once the state joined the Confederacy in 1861.

28. Pickett State Park  
Tennessee 154

Developed by New Deal agencies in the 1930s, Pickett State Park provides another recreational venue for Upper Cumberland visitors. The park’s National Register historic district contains the state’s best concentration of Rustic-style buildings constructed by the Civilian Conservation Corps. The CCC even constructed a “beach,” which is a popular summer spot for residents and visitors. Hiking trails go by several spectacular rock shelters and caves.

29. Sergeant York State Historic Area  
U.S. Highway 127  
Pall Mall

Fentress County native Alvin C. York became world-famous in World War I when he captured 132 German soldiers during the Battle of Argonne. Returning home, York worked to improve educational opportunities for this county, using his fame and state funds to establish the York Institute in Jamestown. York lived at Pall Mall and operated a gristmill there from 1943 to 1950. The mill dates to 1880, documenting the region’s recovery from the ravages of the Civil War and Reconstruction years. His two-story Craftsman-styled Four-Square house (1922) is open for tours.

30. Travisville Skirmish Site (1861)  
U.S. Highway 127

The first recorded Civil War skirmish in Tennessee took place at Travisville on September 29, 1861. The firefight involved federal troops from the 1st Kentucky Calvary and Home Guards of the Houstonville Calvary and about 100 Confederate soldiers camped here. The Confederates returned fire, lost four men, and retreated to safety. One of the Confederate dead, James M. Saufley, is buried in the nearby Travisville Cemetery. His tombstone notes that he was “killed by James Ferguson of 1st KY Cav. U.S.A. Sept. 29, 1861.” James Ferguson was the brother of the notorious Confederate partisan Champ Ferguson.
FOR MORE INFORMATION CONSULT THESE LOCAL CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE

Byrdstown Pickett County Chamber of Commerce
P.O. Box 447 • 109 W. Main St.
Byrdstown, TN 38549 • Toll-free: 1-888-406-4704
www.dalehollow.com

Clay County Partnership Chamber of Commerce
424 Brown St. • Celina, TN 38551
www.dalehollowlake.org

Cumberland County Chamber of Commerce
34 South Main Street • Crossville, TN 38555
931-404-8444
www.crossville-chamber.com

Cookeville Area - Putnam County Chamber of Commerce.
Town Centre, 1 West 1st Street, Cookeville TN 38501
931-526-2211, Toll Free 800-264-5541
www.cookevillechamber.com

Fentress County Chamber of Commerce
114 Central Avenue West
Jamestown, TN 38556 • 931-879-9948
www.jamestowntn.org

Livingston Overton County Chamber of Commerce
222 East Main St. • Livingston, TN 38570
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Sparta-White County Chamber of Commerce
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For more detailed information, reference sources, and events, please visit our website:
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