What’s in a name?

Rutherford County’s communities are identified by distinctive landscapes and transportation routes as well as historic sites, buildings, and structures. These familiar and unique landmarks, recognizable to longtime residents and newcomers alike, are symbols of the county’s history, land, and people. This brochure invites you to learn about the names and to visit the places.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Map produced by Jolene Keen, MTSU Geosciences Department and Rutherford County GIS.

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Rockvale

Take W. Main, right on Broad Street, left on Old Fort Parkway (TN-96), left on New Salem Pike; continue west on TN-99; turn left at Rockvale Road (11.27 miles)

Rockvale, at the headwaters of the Little Harpeth River, was awarded its first post office in 1879. According to tradition, the town was named by Mrs. Tabitha Carlton in “recognition of her valley of rocks.”

Eagleville

Take W. Main, right on Broad Street, left on Old Fort Parkway (TN-96), left on New Salem Pike; continue west on TN-99; town is at intersection of TN-99 and US41A (18.56 miles)

Eagleville was named in 1836, and until 1877 the crossroads village was within the borders of Williamson County. According to legend, an eagle was killed on the proposed site of the post office by Chesley William, a pioneer merchant.

NOTE: DIRECTIONS/MILEAGE ARE CALCULATED FROM THE HISTORIC COURTHOUSE SQUARE.
Rutherford County’s name honors Griffith Rutherford, an Irish immigrant who was a brigadier general in the Revolutionary War, a land grant commissioner, and a member of the Southwest Territory council. The state legislature established Rutherford County on October 25, 1803. Murfreesboro was named for Colonel Hardcy Murfey, a Revolutionary War soldier from North Carolina who acquired area land grants. The state legislature chartered the town in 1811 and county magistrates designated it as the county seat. From 1818 to 1826, Murfreesboro was the capital of Tennessee.

MURFREESBORO SPRINGS derives its name from Colonel Hardcy Murfey. The site was used as early as 1812 by the Murfrees Spring Presbyterian Church congregation, which held services in a nearby log house. A 25-acre city park encompasses the springs’ wetlands, which are near the Discover Center, and includes the Bart Gerdon Nature Trail, History Wall, and Waterworks.

STONES RIVER AT THOMPSON LANE TRAILHEAD Take W. Main, then right on Broad Street (US 41/70S); turn right on North Thompson Lane/ TN-268 (3.70 miles) Stones River is a major tributary of the Cumberland River and was named for explorer Uriah Stone in 1765. The river is the county’s primary water source and was the main route for early settlement. Mills were built on the Stones River by the Tennessee Electric Power Company in the 1910s. Turn right before the bridge to enter a park by the dam overspill.

BLACKMAN Take W. Main, then right on Broad Street (US 41/70S), left on Medical Center Parkway/ Manson Pike, right on Blackman Road (7.10 miles) In 1885, five men who carried the name of Blackman petitioned to have a post office in their community, which had previously been called Wilson’s Crossroads. With establishment of the post office, the community became known as Blackman. A school, neighborhoods, churches, and a road all carry the name.

CEMETERY Take W. Main, then right on Broad Street (US 41/70S), left on Medical Center Parkway, immediate right on West College Street/Old Nashville Highway; churches located north of entrance to Stones River National Battlefield (4.64 miles) Cemetery is a rural African American settlement named for the Stones River National Cemetery. Newly freed African Americans settled here shortly after the war and the first school and churches were established in the late 1860s and early 1870s. The Cemetery School operated from 1874 to 1902. Stones River Methodist Church and Toneybee Primitive Baptist Church remain today.

WALTER HILL Take W. Main, right on Broad Street, right US231 North, right on TN-266 to the village (6.41 miles) Walter Hill, once called Bickses Cross Roads, was named for storekeeper and postmaster Walter Hill in 1820. He simply gave his name as the postmark. Earning its place in 20th-century technology, Walter Hill became the site of the county’s first hydroelectric plant, built on the Stones River by the Tennessee Electric Power Company in the 1910s. Turn right before the bridge to enter a park by the dam overspill.

LASCASSAS Take E. Main, left on Middle Tennessee Blvd., right on Lascassas Pike/ TN-96 North (9.17 miles) Lascassas is northeast of Murfreesboro. Although the name may have been Las Casa or “the house” in Spanish, the exact origin remains a mystery.

MILTON Take E. Main, left on Broad Street, and continue south US 41/ Manchester Pike (10.63 miles) The community of Christiana dates from the arrival of the Nashville and Chattanooga Railroad in the 1860s. Col. James M. Grant, a railroad engineer, established a farm here and is credited with naming the village. An abolitionist, Grant may have wanted to honor the Pennsylvanians African Americans who stopped slave catchers from capturing runaways on the Federal Underground Railroad during the controversial “Christiana Riot” of 1851.

KITTREL Take E. Main and continue east on Woodbury Pike (9.56 miles) Kittrell was named for Major Marion Kittrell, a Confederate. His most famous resident was legendary country music star Uncle Dave Macon. Uncle Dave Macon Days are held annually at Cannonsburgh Village, drawing “old-time” musicians and music lovers from around the country.

PILOT KNOT Take E. Main, right on S Rutherford Blvd., left on John Bragg Highway/TN-70S, left on Pilot Knob Road (10.53 miles) Looking at over 1,100 feet, Pilot Knob, located along the Woodbury Highway near Readyville, is one of the highest hills in the county. A natural landmark, Pilot Knob was reportedly used by Native Americans to spot wild game. During the Civil War, federal troops operated a signal station and outpost from this strategic vantage point.

HOOPER’S GAP Take W. Main, left on Broad Street, and continue south US 41/Manscher Pike (10.81 miles) The Hooper family, who settled much of the area, gave their name to this gap in the hills. The Battle of Hooper’s Gap was an important turning point in the Tullahoma Campaign of 1863.

CHRISTIANA Take Maple Street off square; turn left on W. Vine Street; turn right on S. Church Street; continue south US 231; turn left on Christiana Road (10.63 miles) The community of Christiana dates from the arrival of the Nashville and Chattanooga Railroad in the 1860s. Col. James M. Grant, a railroad engineer, established a farm here and is credited with naming the village. An abolitionist, Grant may have wanted to honor the Pennsylvanians African Americans who stopped slave catchers from capturing runaways on the Federal Underground Railroad during the controversial “Christiana Riot” of 1851.

Pilot Knob Road (10.53 miles) Looking at over 1,100 feet, Pilot Knob, located along the Woodbury Highway near Readyville, is one of the highest hills in the county. A natural landmark, Pilot Knob was reportedly used by Native Americans to spot wild game. During the Civil War, federal troops operated a signal station and outpost from this strategic vantage point.

STUTTENBURG Take W. Main, then left on Broad Street; turn right on Front Street (1.46 miles) Cannonsburgh, the first name given to Murfreesboro, is now better recognized as the outdoor museum established during the American Bicentennial. Newton Cannons was a state representative who would later become governor. After county magistrates selected six acres belonging to Captain William Lytle as the new county seat in 1811, state legislators named the new town Cannonsburgh. The name was changed, however, to Murfreesboro one month later in honor of Lytle’s friend, Colonel Hardcy Murfey.

MONEY SPRINGS Take E. Main, then left on W. Main, then left on Broad Street to Discovery Center (1.61 miles) Money Springs is named after the Money family and is located on what was Oldaaks Avenue. Sallie Murfey was the daughter of Colonel Hardcree Murfey, and her husband, Dr. James Money, lived in the nearby house that is Oaklands Historic House Museum. Money Springs was a gathering place for family and community events and was used by troops during the Civil War.

Black Fox (on front) Take W. Main, then left on Broad Street (US 41), then left at R. Sutherland Blvd. (3.77 miles) Black Fox was a legendary Cherokee who, by the 1780s, had established a camp and trading post at the spring that bears his name. The place became known as the Black Fox Camp and later became an antebellum crossroads village. Ironically, it was a stopping place on the forced march of the Cherokees on the Trail of Tears. From 1914 to 1940, the City of Murfreesboro operated a municipal water source at the spring. Today, the wetlands and a school are named for Black Fox.

JEFFERSON (on front) Take W. Main, right on Broad Street heading north on US 41/70S to Smyrna; turn on Sam Ridley Parkway East; continue on Jefferson Pike (TN-266) to Jefferson Springs Recreation Area (1.32 miles) Jefferson, established in 1804, was the first county seat. Named for President Thomas Jefferson, who was beginning his second term that year, the busy trading center at forks of the Stones River in the county’s northwest corner produced floats that plied the the Cumberland River and beyond, carrying goods to and from the county. Between World War I and World War II, Jefferson Springs was a summer resort. By the 1960s, the waters of Percy Priest Lake covered most of the village. The Old Jefferson Pike, Esper, and Sewart Trailheads of the Smyrna Greenway System highlight this historic area.

JOHN HILL (on front) Take W. Main, right on Broad Street heading north on US 41/70S through Smyrna (18.47 miles) “LaVerge,” translated from the French, means “the Arbor.” Francis Leonard Gregoise de Rouhlac, an early settler, thought this name was perfect for the area’s lush, open landscape. John Hill, Rouhlac’s son-in-law, laid out the original town in 1832, and it soon became a stopping place on the Nashville and Chattanooga Railroad. Incorporated in 1972, LaVerge is the county’s third largest town.

BOMBER CREW (on front) Take E. Main, left on W. Main, then right on Broad Street (US 41/70S); turn right US231; turn left on US119; turn right on S. Rutherford Blvd. (3.77 miles) Smyrna has been the home of Nissan Motor Company since 1984. Bomber crews continued stopping place on the forced march of the Cherokees on the Trail of Tears. From 1914 to 1940, the City of Murfreesboro operated a municipal water source at the spring. Today, the wetlands and a school are named for Black Fox.

ALEXANDER BANNERS (on front) Take W. Main, then left on Broad Street (US 41/70S); turn right on North Thompson Lane/TN-268 (3.70 miles) Stones River is a major tributary of the Cumberland River and was named for explorer Uriah Stone in 1765. The river is the county’s primary water source and was the main route for early settlement. Mills were built on the Stones River by the Tennessee Electric Power Company in the 1910s. Turn right before the bridge to enter a park by the dam overspill.

STONY SOUND (on front) Take W. Main, then right on Broad Street (US 41/70S), left on Medical Center Parkway/ Manson Pike, right on Blackman Road (7.10 miles) In 1885, five men who carried the name of Blackman petitioned to have a post office in their community, which had previously been called Wilson’s Crossroads. With establishment of the post office, the community became known as Blackman. A school, neighborhoods, churches, and a road all carry the name.

JAMES R. FOSTER (on front) Take W. Main, then right on Broad Street (US 41/70S), left on Middle Tennessee Blvd. (or 18.47 miles) Smyrna (18.47 miles) Smyrna is the county’s third largest town.

EGREMONT (on front) Take E. Main, then left on W. Main, then left on Broad Street to Discovery Center (1.61 miles) Money Springs is named after the Money family and is located on what was Oldaaks Avenue. Sallie Murfey was the daughter of Colonel Hardcree Murfey, and her husband, Dr. James Money, lived in the nearby house that is Oaklands Historic House Museum. Money Springs was a gathering place for family and community events and was used by troops during the Civil War.