



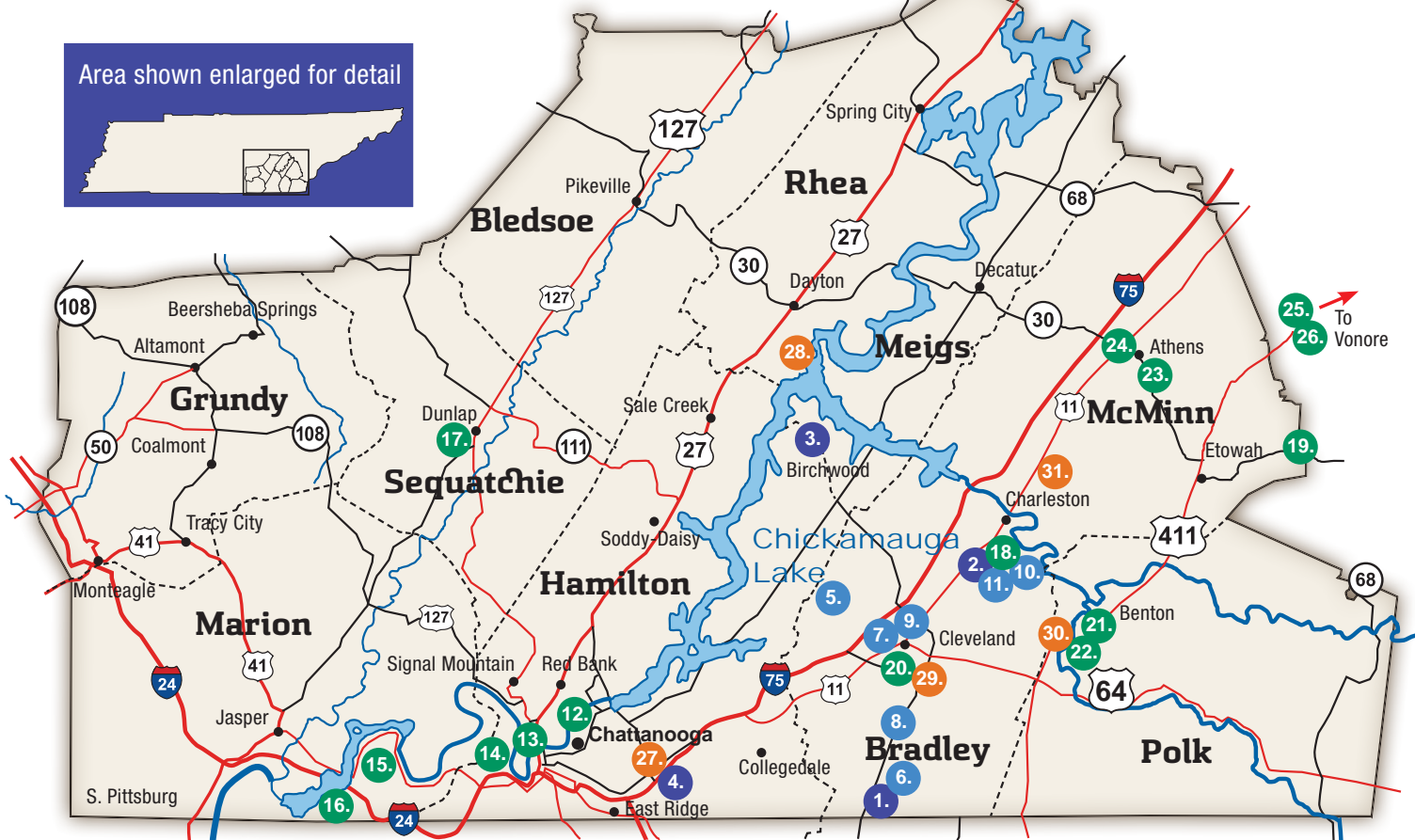
# Travel

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## Exploring Cherokee Heritage



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# Cherokee Heritage Sites in Southeast Tennessee

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# Nunahi-Duna-Dlo-Hilu-I: Trail Where They Cried

Native American towns and villages thrived for thousands of years along the rivers and within the valleys of Southeast Tennessee. One of the tribes that inhabited the region was the Cherokee, who by 1700 claimed land that included parts of Southeast Tennessee, Alabama, Georgia, South Carolina and North Carolina.



Ross's Landing

In the 1700s, the Cherokee fur and hide trade opened the southeastern mountains to the world market. By the mid-1800s the abundant water, timber, and minerals were drawing industrialists from around the world, and the Cherokee Nation was feeling the full impact of European settlers in their territory.

The purchase of the Louisiana Territory from France in 1803 gave President Thomas Jefferson an opportunity to implement an idea he had contemplated for many years - the relocation of eastern tribes beyond the Mississippi River. By the early 19th century, more than 40 treaties had divested tribes - including the Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Creek and Seminole - of much of their eastern homelands in exchange for lands in the West.

The discovery of gold in Dahlonega, Ga., in 1828 brought tensions to a head between the Cherokees and white settlers. The influx of gold speculators and settlers into the Cherokee Nation became known as the Great Intrusion.

That same year, Andrew Jackson was elected president of the United States, and he immediately declared the removal of eastern tribes a national objective. On May 28, 1830, Jackson signed the controversial Indian Removal Act, authorizing the president to grant unsettled lands west of the Mississippi River in exchange for Indian lands within existing state borders.

On December 29, 1835, a group of unauthorized representatives of the Cherokee Nation and two federal officials signed the Treaty of New Echota in New Echota, Ga. The treaty exchanged title to all Cherokee lands east of the Mississippi River for \$5 million and a large tract in Oklahoma. The U.S. Senate ratified the treaty in May of 1836, giving the Cherokee people two years to move to Indian Territory.

Cherokee Principal Chief John Ross and the majority of the Cherokee people opposed the Treaty of New Echota. More than 15,000 Cherokee people signed a petition in protest.

Cherokee leaders filed suit in the U.S. Supreme Court in two separate cases and the Court ruled in their favor. However, without federal enforcement the court victories were useless.

The majority of the Cherokee people believed that Cherokee Principal Chief John Ross could reverse their fate and did not prepare for removal. By 1838, only 2,000 had migrated; 16,000 remained on their land.

Beginning in late May 1838, President Martin Van Buren, Jackson's successor, sent in troops to round up Cherokee families and move them to forts that had been constructed near Cherokee towns. The Cherokees were then transferred from the removal forts to emigrating depots that were more centrally located (10 in Tennessee and one in Alabama).

During the removal, Fort Cass (located in present-day Charleston, Tenn.), served as the largest emigrating depot and as the headquarters for the entire Cherokee Removal. Camps in this area spread out over a 12 x 4-mile area, extending from Charleston southward.

Between June 6 and December 5, 1838, approximately 15,000 Cherokees were forced westward to Oklahoma and Arkansas during what became known as the "Trail of Tears." Their journeys took place over various land and water routes, each averaging more than 1,000 miles.

The first three detachments left from Ross's Landing in Chattanooga in August 1838. After reports of mismanagement and many deaths, the Cherokee Nation Council petitioned the U.S. government to allow the Cherokee to control the remainder of their removal and delay travel until fall. Permission was granted, and most Cherokee people spent the summer of 1838 in captivity at



three encampments: Fort Cass (present-day Charleston, Tenn.); Ross's Landing (present-day Chattanooga); and Gunter's Landing (present-day Guntersville, Ala).

Great suffering and death became commonplace for the Cherokee people during the summer of encampment due to severe drought, overcrowding and disease, as well as the trauma and shock caused by their removal.



Cherokee Removal Memorial

Between October and December of 1838, 12 detachments of Cherokee people departed for Indian Territory to the West under the command of Chief Ross. The last detachment to leave was a group of elderly and infirm individuals who departed from Fort Cass on December 5, 1838. It is reported that as many as 4,000 died as a result of the Cherokee Removal.

By 1837, 46,000 Native Americans had been forcibly removed from their lands East of the Mississippi River. Farms that had belonged to Cherokee families for generations were distributed to white settlers through various land lotteries.

The removal of American Indians from their ancestral lands in the Southeast is a complex and heart-wrenching tragedy that not only wreaked havoc on the lives of the Cherokee and other tribes, but eradicated a cultural landscape that had existed for untold centuries.

Despite this tragic chapter in American history, the Cherokee people today live on as a renewed, invigorated nation. Their legacy continues in this region through the natural, historical and cultural landscape. Historically significant sites continue to emerge, offering a deeper understanding of the cultural heritage of the people who lived in Southeast Tennessee prior to European settlement.

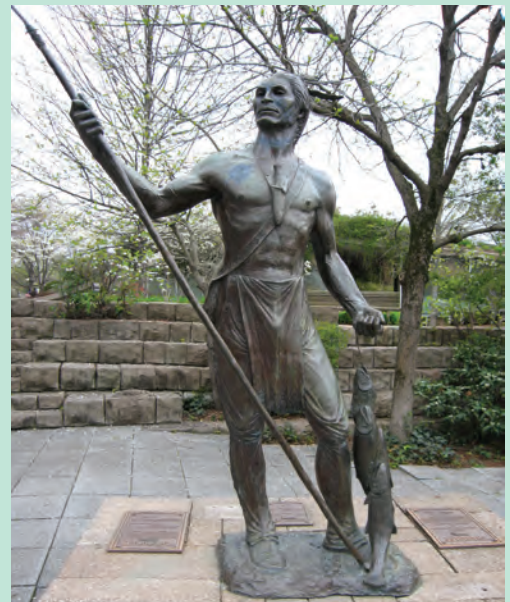
## Early Native American History in Southeast Tennessee

Cherokee leaders such as Sequoyah, Little Carpenter, Dragging Canoe and others played prominent roles in Tennessee's history. Important Cherokee villages, including Citico, Chota, Tanasi, Chatuga and Hiwassee Old Town, were centers of activity in Southeast Tennessee. However, much of the evidence of Cherokee culture in the region was virtually erased during the Cherokee Removal in 1838.

When the Tennessee Valley Authority was formed in 1933, concerns arose for the loss of Tennessee's prehistoric heritage and historic Cherokee settlements as plans developed to construct reservoirs along the Tennessee River and its tributaries. Many former Cherokee villages were slated to be flooded by TVA reservoir projects.

In an effort to record these important heritage sites, more than 230 archaeological sites were excavated between 1934 and 1985 by TVA and the universities of Tennessee and Alabama. Today, these massive archaeological investigations are housed at the Frank H. McClung Museum of Natural History & Culture at the University of Tennessee at Knoxville. The museum showcases this history as part of its permanent exhibit, "Archaeology and the Native Peoples of Tennessee."

The McClung Museum is open to the public and admission is free. To learn more, visit: [Mcclungmuseum.utk.edu](http://Mcclungmuseum.utk.edu).





## Featured Sites



### Red Clay State Historic Park



1140 Red Clay Park Road SW  
Cleveland, TN 37311  
423-478-0339  
[tnstateparks.com/parks/about/red-clay](http://tnstateparks.com/parks/about/red-clay)

The Cherokee Nation moved its capital from New Echota, Ga., to Red Clay in 1832. After the Cherokee Removal in 1838, all the structures that had been built at Red Clay were torn down and the land became part of a privately owned farm. In 1979, Col. James Corn sold the land to the state of Tennessee to be used as a historic park. Today, the park features replicas of a Cherokee farmhouse, sleeping huts and a council house, as well as an interpretive center with exhibits and artifacts. A 1.7-mile loop trail leads from the park's amphitheatre to an overlook tower.

The Blue Hole Spring at the site was used by the Cherokee people for their water supply during council meetings. The Eternal Flame, housed at Red Clay since 1984, bears witness to the survival and hope of the Cherokee people. When they were forced to leave their land, designated fire keepers carried pots of hot coals from the council fire at Red Clay because they did not have matches. Remarkably, many of the original fires survived to combine and form the new council fire in the West. In the 1950s, coals from those fires were delivered to the Eastern Band of the Cherokee.



### Hiwassee River Heritage Center



8746 Hiwassee Street  
Charleston, TN 37310  
423-665-3373  
[hiwasseeheritage.com](http://hiwasseeheritage.com)

Present-day Charleston, Tenn., is one of the most significant Trail of Tears sites in the eastern United States. Charleston was the site of the Cherokee Indian Agency and later Fort Cass, the U.S. military operational headquarters for the Cherokee Removal and the largest Cherokee emigrating depot. Camps in this area spread out over a 12- by 4-mile area, extending from Charleston southward.

Today, nothing remains of the Indian Agency or Fort Cass. However, the heritage center is able to bring this historical landscape to life by providing information and guided tours that identify where these activities took place. The Hiwassee River Heritage Center was recently designated as a certified interpretive site on the Trail of Tears National Historic Trail. Guided tours available by appointment.



## Featured Sites



### Cherokee Removal Memorial Park



6800 Blythe Ferry Lane  
Birchwood, TN 37308  
423-339-2769

 Cherokee Removal Memorial Park

This 29-acre park, located at the convergence of the Tennessee and Hiwassee rivers at historic Blythe Ferry, was built as a memorial to the Cherokee people who were removed from their homeland in the Southeast during the Cherokee Removal of 1838.

A Cherokee Removal Memorial, located outside the visitor center, features the names of 2,535 Heads of Households and the number of persons in each household based on an 1835 Census of Cherokee people living east of the Mississippi River. A history plaza describes Cherokee life in Southeast Tennessee and events that took place leading up to the Cherokee Removal.

It's a short walk to an overlook of the rivers and Hiwassee Island (known as Jolly Island in the 1800s), which has a long history of Native American habitation. Today, the area is managed as Hiwassee Island Wildlife Refuge and is frequented by migrating sandhill cranes.

Just down the street from the park is the former launching site for Blythe Ferry, which in 1838 transported nine Cherokee detachments, totally about 10,000 people, across the river as part of the northern route of the Trail of Tears. The ferry continued to operate until 1994, and today the ramp is used for boat launching and fishing.



### Audubon Acres



900 North Sanctuary Rd.  
Chattanooga, TN 37421  
423-892-1499  
[chattanoogaaudubon.org](http://chattanoogaaudubon.org)

The 132-acre Elise Chapin Sanctuary at Audubon Acres marks the passage of time from the Mississippian era to today. A swinging bridge over South Chickamauga Creek offers access to one of the most archaeologically significant portions of the property, Little Owl Village, which was settled by the brother of the infamous Cherokee Chief Dragging Canoe.

A reconstructed cabin on the property is said to have once belonged to a prominent Cherokee who lived in the area, Tooan Tuh or Spring Frog (1754-1859). Twenty-four poplar logs from the former structure were used in the reconstruction of what is today called Spring Frog Cabin. Five miles of trails weave through the historically rich landscape and a small museum offers historical perspective on the site, featuring artifacts from the property and surrounding areas that include American Indian arrowheads, sewing awls, grinding stones, gaming pieces and pottery, as well as early settler artifacts.





Red Clay State Historic Park

At the time the Treaty of New Echota was signed, Southeast Tennessee was not only the location of the seat of the Cherokee government at Red Clay, but also home to about 2,500 Cherokee. Many prominent Cherokee leaders had homes located within the hills and valleys and along the rivers and creeks of Southeast Tennessee.



### James Brown Cherokee Plantation

9521 Ooltewah-Georgetown Road  
Ooltewah, TN 37363

Privately owned. View from street.

James Brown was a Cherokee Supreme Court judge who signed the 1839 Cherokee Constitution. Brown led a detachment of 850 Cherokees to Indian Territory, including 350 members of the Creek Nation who took refuge with the Cherokees after being forcibly removed from Georgia and Alabama. Brown's detachment spent the summer of 1838 near Ross's Landing and the last few weeks before the Removal near Vann's Plantation by Ooltewah Creek. In October 1838, they crossed the Tennessee River, ascended Walden's Ridge, and crossed the Cumberland Plateau. The James Brown house, a Federal-style brick farmhouse, was built sometime between 1826 and 1830. Located nearby are the remains of a storehouse and springhouse historically associated with Brown. Some of Brown's relatives are buried in a graveyard on the adjoining property.



### Chief John Ross Farm Site

Red Hill Valley Road  
Cleveland, TN 37323

Privately owned. View from street.

The last home place of Principal Chief John Ross east of the Mississippi River was a large farm with more than 200 fruit trees located in the Flint Springs Community. Ross and his family lived here until their removal to present-day Oklahoma. The farm is located four miles from the Red Clay Council Grounds and less than a half mile from where the Red Clay Mission was located.



Judge John Martin House



### Hair Conrad Cabin

433 Blythewood Rd SW  
Cleveland, TN 37311

Privately owned.  
View from street.

Hair Conrad was a prominent Cherokee leader who helped write the Cherokee Constitution in 1827. Conrad also led the first Cherokee Removal detachment under Chief John Ross, consisting of about 700 people traveling in 36 wagons departing on Aug. 23, 1838. Conrad became ill and his neighbor Daniel Colston of Gunstocker Creek replaced him as leader. Conrad's two-story cabin, "Tekahsheh," was built about 1804 and is the oldest residential structure in Bradley Co., Tenn. The Conrad farm is now part of the 350-acre Blythewood Farm off Harrison Pike. The log structure was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1976.



### Judge John Martin House

5640 Dalton Pike SE  
Cleveland, TN 37312

Privately owned.  
View from street.

Judge John Martin served as Treasurer and Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the Cherokee Nation. Originally, Martin lived at what became known as the Byrd Hambright Place in Red Hill Valley in Bradley County. The house was moved across Dalton Pike to make way for a new house constructed on its original site.



### John "Chief Jack" Walker Jr. Home Site

Marker located near merge of  
Ocoee and Eighth streets  
Cleveland, TN 37312

John "Chief Jack" Walker Jr. was one of the leaders of the Treaty Party. He was ambushed and shot on Aug. 23, 1834, on his way home from a session of the National Council of the Eastern Cherokees at Red Clay. He died three weeks later. Walker's two-story log home was located near the merge of Hwy. 11 and Ocoee Street. There is a historical marker designating the location of the farm.



## Historical Homes



Henegar House



### Henegar House

428 Market Street  
Charleston, TN 37310

Privately owned. View from street.

Henry Benton Henegar served as a wagon master and secretary under Cherokee Chief John Ross and accompanied the Cherokee during the Removal. Henegar returned to Charleston and constructed his brick Federal-style home in 1849 on the former grounds of the military barracks of Fort Cass. An interpretive sign to the left of the house provides information about the history of the house during the Civil War. Henegar and his wife Margaret are buried with their family at Historic Ft. Hill Cemetery in Cleveland, Tenn.



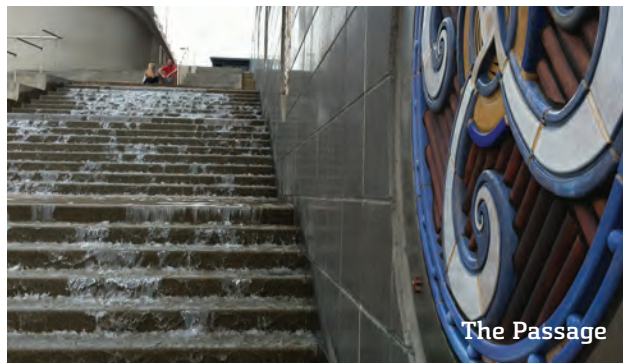
### Lewis Ross House Site / Barrett Hotel

373 Market Street  
Charleston, TN 37310

Privately owned. View from street

Lewis Ross, brother of Cherokee Principal Chief John Ross, built a home on this site in 1820. Ross was a wealthy businessman who operated a trading post and ferry in the Indian Agency area which is now present-day Charleston, Tenn. After the Cherokee Removal, the house was owned by S.S. Barrett and served as a hotel. Fires in the 1880s and many house alterations have significantly altered the original appearance of the house.

## Historic Sites and Museums



The Passage

Prior to their forced removal in 1838, the Cherokee Nation claimed land that included parts of Southeast Tennessee, Alabama, Georgia, South Carolina and North Carolina. Today, their legacy continues in this region through the natural, historical and cultural landscape. These historically significant sites offer a deeper understanding of Cherokee heritage in Southeast Tennessee.



### Ross's Landing / The Passage

100 Riverfront Parkway  
Chattanooga, TN 37402  
423-757-5196

[chattanoogaafun.com](http://chattanoogaafun.com)

In 1815, Cherokee Principal Chief John Ross established a landing, ferry and warehouse at Ross's Landing with Timothy Meigs, and later his younger brother, Lewis Ross. The area served as a center of trade for both Cherokee and white settlers for many years. During the Cherokee Removal, two internment camps were built at Ross's Landing. Numerous Cherokees departed their homelands from this settlement, which was renamed Chattanooga in 1838.

Located in downtown Chattanooga at the base of the Market Street Bridge, The Passage is a permanent outdoor water feature that memorializes American Indians native to the Southeast. Sculptures and artwork grace the walls of The Passage, educating visitors about Cherokee culture. Water flowing down The Passage to the Tennessee River symbolizes the tears shed as the Cherokee were driven from their homes.





## Historic Sites and Museums



Brown's Ferry Tavern



**Moccasin Bend National  
Archeological District**  
381 Moccasin Bend Road  
Chattanooga, TN 37405  
706-866-9241  
[moccasinbendpark.org](http://moccasinbendpark.org)

Located along the Tennessee River just across from downtown Chattanooga, this 750-acre park chronicles more than 12,000 years of human history, with evidence of early American Indian villages and Civil War earthworks. Visitors can hike the Blue Blazes Trail, a three-mile loop trail that offers views of Lookout Mountain and the Tennessee River, and a short trail along historic Brown's Ferry Federal Road, which served as a route along the Trail of Tears and as a supply line during the Civil War.



**Brown's Ferry Tavern**  
703 Brown's Ferry Road  
Chattanooga, TN 37419

Built in 1803, Brown's Ferry Tavern was originally part of a 640-acre reservation owned by prominent Cherokee leader John Brown. Brown operated a ferry crossing on the Tennessee River, and travelers often stopped at the cabin, which was located along an ancient trading path. Brown is said to have gone West at the time of the Cherokee Removal in the 1830s. He returned to his home in the 1840s and was apparently buried on his farm. The structure is listed on the Trail of Tears National Historic Trail and National Register of Historic Places.



Dunlap Coke Ovens Park



**Kelly's Ferry Road & Cemetery**  
U.S. Hwy. 41 / Kelly's Ferry Church of God  
Guild, TN 37340

Prior to the Cherokee Removal, the Kelly's Ferry area marked the western boundary of the Cherokee Nation and served as an important communication link between white settlements and Cherokee settlements. The small community at Kelly's Ferry developed after the construction of the Federal Road in 1835. Kelly's Ferry played a significant role in the Cherokee Removal in the summer of 1838. Three detachments of 2,600 Cherokee crossed or camped here.



**Nickajack Cave**  
TVA Maple View Recreation Area  
Viewing Platform  
South Pittsburg, TN 37380  
800-882-5263

The Cherokee town of Nickajack, one of the Five Lower Towns established by Cherokee Chief Dragging Canoe in the late 1700s, was located near Nickajack Cave. It was partially flooded in 1967 to form Nickajack Reservoir. Today, Nickajack Cave serves as a critical maternity roost for the endangered gray bat. A viewing platform is located adjacent to the cave at the TVA Maple View Recreation Area.



**Dunlap Coke Ovens Park & Museum**  
350 Mountain View Drive  
Dunlap, TN 37327  
423-949-3483  
[cokeovens.com](http://cokeovens.com)

In November 1838, a detachment of approximately 1,000 Cherokees traveling as part of the Cherokee Removal camped and traveled through a section of the Sequatchie Valley that is today known as the Dunlap Coke Ovens Park and Museum. Led by Richard Taylor, the group traveled with about 60 wagons pulled by mules and oxen to Indian Territory on Hill Road up Fredonia Mountain.



## Historic Sites and Museums



Former Site of Fort Cass



### Fort Cass Cherokee Agency and Emigration Depot

Interpreted at the Hiwassee River Heritage Center  
8746 Hiwassee Street, Charleston, TN 37310

Charleston, Tenn., was once the site of the federal Indian Agency, which served as the gateway into the Cherokee Nation. In May 1838, approximately 7,000 military personnel forcibly gathered the Cherokee people who remained in the region and held them at three “emigrating depots” to await their departure. Fort Cass was located in present-day Charleston and was the largest depot and headquarters for General Winfield Scott, who oversaw the Cherokee Removal. In total, ten detachments of over 9,000 Cherokee left from Fort Cass between August and December 1838.



### Unicoi Turnpike

Vonore, TN to Murphy, NC  
[tennesseeverhill.com](http://tennesseeverhill.com)

This old trade and war path predates written history. Covering approximately 67 miles from Vonore, Tenn., to Murphy, N.C., the Unicoi Turnpike Trail allows modern travelers to follow the footsteps of Indians, fur traders, explorers, British soldiers, and others who used this path for centuries. Along the way, historic sites and museums illustrate the role this ancient path played in our history.



### Museum Center at Five Points

200 Inman Street East, Cleveland, TN 37311  
423-339-5745  
[museumcenter.org](http://museumcenter.org)

The Museum Center at Five Points features a collection of artifacts that document the history of the Ocoee Region. The museum's permanent exhibit features prehistoric native people who inhabited the region prior to the Cherokee, as well as an exhibit about the Trail of Tears. The Cherokee Chieftain, one of Peter Toth's famous Trail of the Whispering Giants carvings, is located on the grounds of the museum.



Fort Morrow



### Fort Morrow

Hiwassee / Ocoee River State Park  
Gee Creek Ranger Station  
404 Spring Creek Road  
Delano, TN 37325  
423-263-0050  
[tn.gov/environment/parks/Hiwassee](http://tn.gov/environment/parks/Hiwassee)

The remaining section of Fort Morrow (locally known as Fort Marr) blockhouse represents just one corner of the original fort, which was constructed in 1814 in Old Fort, Tenn., as a supply depot for troops during Andrew Jackson's campaigns against the Creek Indians. The fort, named for Captain John Morrow, was re-garrisoned in 1837 for troops managing the Cherokee Removal. Troops stationed at the fort were tasked with collecting Cherokee people from their homes in Tennessee and transporting them to internment camps at Fort Cass (present-day Charleston, Tenn.) After the 1838 removal, the fort passed into private ownership and gradually deteriorated until only the single blockhouse remained. In 1922, the owners donated the old blockhouse to Polk County.



### Polk County Historical & Genealogical Society Library

140 Commerce Street  
Benton, TN 37307  
423-338-4506  
[pchgs.com](http://pchgs.com)

The Polk County Historical and Genealogical Society Library houses a wealth of resources related to Nancy Ward, Chota (a historic Cherokee site in Monroe County, Tenn.) and the Trail of Tears, as well as several Cherokee enrollments and other genealogy records. The library is open from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Mon., Wed., Fri. and Sat.



## Historic Sites and Museums



Athens, Tennessee



**McMinn Co. Living Heritage Museum**  
522 West Madison Avenue  
Athens, TN 37303  
423-745-0329  
[livingheritagemuseum.com](http://livingheritagemuseum.com)

The Native American exhibit at the McMinn County Living Heritage Museum contains over 100 artifacts spanning the Paleo-Indian period through the Archaic, Woodland and Mississippian eras to the Cherokee Removal. Artifacts include stone and bone tools, bone jewelry and pottery. Also included are modern Cherokee artifacts and models of traditional Cherokee dwellings.



**McMinn County Courthouse Square**  
6 East Madison Avenue  
Athens, TN 37303

The McMinn County Courthouse stands in Athens on the square where the original brick courthouse stood in 1834, the site of the trial of Cherokees James Foreman and Addison Springston, accused of the murder of Cherokee leader "Chief Jack" Walker Jr. The jail where the two were held and escaped from was located at the north end of Knight Park on Jackson Street. The trial, ultimately heard by the Tennessee Supreme Court the following summer, held that the Cherokee were not a sovereign nation and set the stage for the Cherokee Removal. The North Carolina route for the Trail of Tears from Fort Butler, N.C., to Fort Cass, Tenn., came up Jackson Street and turned west (left) onto Madison Avenue and then out of town. Six contingents totaling 3,000 Cherokees and their slaves walked this route in June and July 1838 to present-day Charleston, Tenn., in preparation for their removal west of the Mississippi which began in November 1838. General John E. Wool arrived in Athens in 1836 to help coordinate the Cherokee Removal. His headquarters was located at the James Bridge Hotel at the corner of Jackson St. and E. Madison Ave., until General Winfield Scott took command of the operation.



Fort Loudoun State Historic Park



**Sequoyah Birthplace Museum**  
576 State Hwy. 360  
Vonore, TN 37885  
423-884-6246  
[sequoyahmuseum.org](http://sequoyahmuseum.org)

Sequoyah was born circa 1776 in the Cherokee village of Tuskegee. He is credited with creating a writing system for the Cherokees, a syllabary of 87 original symbols representing sounds, which was introduced to the Cherokee people in 1821. The Sequoyah Birthplace Museum traces American Indian history in the region, beginning with the Paleo-Indian period. A video presentation, map and pictorial display tell the story of the Cherokee Removal. Artifacts related to the Trail of Tears, Cherokee history and southeastern American Indian history are displayed. The Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians own and operate the museum and surrounding grounds.



**Fort Loudoun State Historic Park**  
338 Fort Loudoun Road  
Vonore, TN 37885  
423-884-6217  
[fortloudoun.com](http://fortloudoun.com)

Fort Loudoun State Historic Park is one of the earliest British fortifications on the western frontier, built in 1756. The Cherokee captured Fort Loudoun and its garrison in August 1760, and it is believed they destroyed the fort sometime shortly thereafter.

Today, a reconstructed fort and the ruins of the 1794 Tellico Blockhouse overlook TVA's Tellico Reservoir. The park's interpretative center offers information on the region's history and artifacts from the French and Indian War (1754-1763).





## Cemeteries



Brainerd Cemetery

Some of the only visible remnants of Cherokee heritage in Southeast Tennessee today are cemeteries bearing the names of those who endured the many forces of change prior to the Cherokee Removal. These cemeteries document the history and lives of Cherokee people during this tragic time in history.



### Brainerd Mission

Adjacent to the 5700 block of Brainerd Rd.  
Chattanooga, TN 37411

Founded in 1817 by the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, Brainerd Mission (formerly the Chickamauga Mission) was a Christian mission and school for Cherokee citizens featuring nearly 40 buildings, including a church, dormitories, two mills, and a large garden. Much of the mission was destroyed by a fire in 1830, but it continued to prosper until the Cherokee Removal in 1838. Today, all that remains at the mission site is Brainerd Cemetery. Only one gravestone, created in the 1950s, marks the burial of a Cherokee student, John Arch (d. 1825); however, historical records suggest other Cherokee students are buried at the site. A major early roadway (now Brainerd Road/Lee Highway) passed on the north side of the mission. More than 600 Cherokee from John Bell's detachment passed over this road during the Cherokee Removal in 1838. The one-acre site remains preserved today with several large Southern red oaks dating to the 1830s and interpretive plaques telling the story of this significant time in American history.



### Return Jonathan Meigs Gravesite

Old Garrison Cemetery  
356 Garrison Cemetery Rd., Dayton, TN 37321

Return Jonathan Meigs was a Revolutionary War soldier who moved to Tennessee in 1801 to fill the combined position of Indian Agent to the Cherokee Nation and military agent for the United States War Department. Meigs served as Indian Agent from May 1801 until his death in January 1823.



Nancy Ward Gravesite



### Emily Meigs Walker Gravesite

Fort Hill Cemetery  
Worth Street, Cleveland, TN 37311

Emily Stanfield Meigs Walker (1808-1888) was the granddaughter of Col. Return Jonathan Meigs, Indian Agent to the Cherokee people from 1801-23. The Meigs family had a close relationship with the Cherokee people, which led to Emily's marriage to John "Jack" Walker Jr. in 1824. They lived in the Amohee District of the Cherokee Nation in a two-story log home, which was located at the site of Northside Presbyterian Church at the intersection of US-11 and Paul Huff Pkwy. in Cleveland, Tenn.



### Nancy Ward Gravesite

US 411 and Old Federal Road  
Benton, TN 37307

Nancy Ward was born around 1738 in the former Cherokee capital of Chota in Monroe County, Tenn. Ward sat in Cherokee Councils and was a significant voice in negotiating relationships between the Cherokee people and white settlers. In later life, Ward reportedly opened an inn at Womankiller Ford on what was then called the Ocoee River (present-day Ocoee River). She died in 1822 or 1824, before the Cherokee Removal. She is buried beside the graves of her son, Five Killer, and brother, Long Fellow.



### Gov. Joseph McMinn Gravesite

Shiloh Presbyterian Cemetery  
120 Main St., Calhoun, TN 37309

Joseph McMinn (1758-1824) served as Governor of Tennessee from 1815-21. McMinn moved to a farm along the Hiwassee River in Calhoun, Tenn., in 1823 and served as an agent for the U.S. government at the nearby Cherokee Agency in Charleston. McMinn played a role in organizing several land treaties with the Cherokee, including the 1819 Calhoun Treaty, which purchased land between the Little Tennessee and Hiwassee Rivers.

# Retracing the Trail of Tears through Southeast Tennessee

The Trail of Tears National Historic Trail includes more than 5,000 miles of trail across nine states (TN, NC, GA, IL, MO, AL, KY, AK and OK) and marks the forced removal of the Cherokee and other tribes from their homelands in the southeastern United States in 1838 and 1839. The Cherokee traveled multiple routes to Indian Territory (present-day Oklahoma), but most started in Tennessee. Detachments left from Fort Cass in present-day Charleston, Tenn., which served as the military headquarters for the Trail of Tears, and Ross's Landing in Chattanooga. The difficult 800-mile journey to Indian Territory took up to six and a half months to travel, and many lives were lost along the way.



**Original Route** signs tell you that you are on roads well-documented as being the original trail.

The National Park Service has installed Trail of Tears wayfinding signs along the trail as part of an effort to better preserve and commemorate the route of the Trail of Tears National Historic Trail. The signs, which follow the various routes of the Cherokee Removal from the Southeast to Oklahoma, help visitors travel the same path that the Cherokee travelled in 1838-1839.

To learn more, visit the Trail of Tears National Historic Trail website at: [nps.gov/trte/planyourvisit/sign-standards.htm](https://nps.gov/trte/planyourvisit/sign-standards.htm).

A special thanks to Chatype for its Cherokee-inspired font. [www.chatype.com](http://www.chatype.com)



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