

Southeast Tennessee



Paddler's Guide to Civil War Sites on the Water



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If Rivers Could Speak...



The Tennessee River – one of North America’s great rivers – winds for miles through Southeast Tennessee, its volume fortified by gushing creeks that tumble down the mountains into the Tennessee Valley. Throughout time, this river has witnessed humanity at its best and worst.

The name “Tennessee” comes from the Native American word “Tanasi,” and native people paddled the Tennessee River and its tributaries in dugout canoes for thousands of years. They fished, bathed, drank and traveled these waters, which held dangers like whirlpools, rapids and eddies. Later, the river was a thrilling danger for early settlers who launched out for a fresh start in flatboats. As both cultures struggled for dominion, the river often became their watery grave.

In the 1700s, as plantations grew across the South, so did the soul-crushing hands of slavery. It was then that the Tennessee River became a passage to freedom for many brave souls who slipped away into the night to escape to the North and Canada. So much about this time period is unknown because of the secrecy required... but the river knows.

During the Civil War, victory came to troops whose leaders mapped out the best travel routes and attacks by water, and those who found water to refresh their troops. Anxious soldiers paddled these waters in the dark of night or early fog-laden mornings – and too often, the rivers ran red with their blood after battle.

Today, the once-wild Tennessee River has been tamed by dams, and most traces of the river’s long history have been erased by time, neglect and development. However, many stories haunt its riverbanks. We hope you’ll hear some whispers from the past as you paddle by (and perhaps over) historic sites – and that you’ll be inspired to learn more about the lives and actions that made Southeast Tennessee what it is today.

- Jenni Veal, Southeast Tennessee Tourism Association

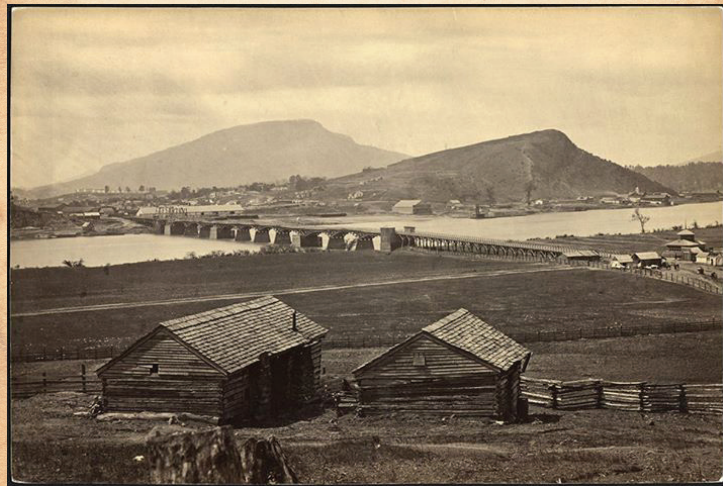


Chattanooga: Gateway to the Deep South

Union and Confederate troops moved into Southeast Tennessee and North Georgia in the fall of 1863 after the inconclusive Battle of Stones River in Murfreesboro, Tenn. Both armies sought to capture Chattanooga, a city known as “The Gateway to the Deep South” due to its location along the Tennessee River and its railroad access. President Abraham Lincoln compared the importance of a Union victory in Chattanooga to Richmond, Virginia - the capital of the Confederacy - because of its strategic location on the banks of the river.

There was a serious drought taking place in Southeast Tennessee in 1863, so water was a precious resource for soldiers. As troops strategized and moved through the region, the Tennessee River and its tributaries served critical roles as both protective barriers and transportation routes for attacks.

The two most notorious battles that took place in the region were The Battle of Chickamauga (Sept. 18-20, 1863) followed by the Battle of Chattanooga (Nov. 23-25, 1863). However, numerous other skirmishes and attacks took place as Union and Confederate troops moved through the mountains and valleys of the region to capture Chattanooga.



The Union Army built this military bridge across the Tennessee River in Chattanooga in 1864. (Undated AP Photo/George Barnard)



Tennessee River:

- 1 Cotton Port Ferry**
Cotton Port Boat Ramp
Cotton Port WMA or
Cottonport Marina
- 2 Blythe Ferry**
Blythe Ferry Boat Ramp, TN-60 at TN River,
Birchwood, TN
- 3 Artillery Works at Harrison at John Patten Island**
Harrison Bay State Park, Harrison, TN
- 4 Brown's Ferry**
Brown's Ferry Rd., Chattanooga, TN
- 5 Attack at Suck Creek**
Suck Creek Public Boat Ramp, Suck Creek Rd.,
Chattanooga, TN
- 6 Kelly's Ferry**
Historic site is on private property, halfway between
the TVA boat ramp at Raccoon Mtn. and Sullivan's
Landing boat ramp.
- 7 Nickajack Cave**
Mapleview Day Use Area & Boat Ramp, South
Pittsburg, TN
- 8 Love's Ferry (aka Shellmound Ferry)**
Shellmound Campground & Boat Ramp, Jasper, TN
- 9 Fort McCook**
South Pittsburg Municipal Park, South Pittsburg, TN

Chattanooga Creek:

- 10 Chattanooga Creek Truce Lines**
Historic Marker: 3085 Broad St.,
Chattanooga, TN

Lookout Creek:

- 11 Light's Mill Crossing - Battle of Lookout Mtn.**
Access from bridge on Hwy. 41 crossing
Lookout Creek, Lookout Valley, TN

North Chickamauga Creek:

- 12 Sherman's Crossing**
Launch from Greenway Farm, Hixson, TN

West Chickamauga Creek:

- 13 Crawfish Springs**
Historic Downtown Chickamauga, GA
- 14 Lee & Gordon's Mills**
71 Red Belt Rd., Chickamauga, GA

Hiwassee River:

- 15 Railroad Bridge Burnings**
Access from Hiwassee River Boat Ramp on Water St.
in Charleston, TN

Chickamauga & Chattanooga

Your stop for an in-depth



Chickamauga & Chattanooga National Military Park, located in North Georgia and Southeast Tennessee, preserves the sites of two major battles of the American Civil War: The Battle of Chickamauga and The Battles for Chattanooga. Established in 1895 through the efforts of Civil War veterans from both the North and South, the park is the oldest and largest military park in the nation. The military park consists of four main areas: **Chickamauga Battlefield, Missionary Ridge, Lookout Mountain Battlefield / Point Park, and Moccasin Bend.**

Chickamauga Battlefield

3370 Lafayette Rd., Fort Oglethorpe, GA

Chickamauga Battlefield preserves much of the site of the Battle of Chickamauga, which took place September 18-20, 1863. At the start, the Confederate Army numbered 66,000 men and Union forces totaled 58,000 men. Fighting began along the banks of West Chickamauga Creek and extended from Lee and Gordon's Mills on the south, close to the settlement of Rossville on the north, and within two miles on either side of Lafayette Road. The battle caused the second-highest number of casualties in the Civil War: 34,000 total Union and Confederate casualties. Although the Confederate Army was technically the victor, they did not achieve their objective of restoring Confederate control of East Tennessee. Union forces withdrew and headed to Chattanooga, while Confederate forces occupied areas surrounding the city.

Today, the 5,200-acre historic park contains hundreds of monuments, interpretative tablets, a visitor center, and hiking and biking trails. The park's visitor center features interpretive exhibits, a book store, an artillery display, and a multi-media program about the battle.

National Military Park:

Civil War experience

Lookout Mountain Battlefield

110 Point Park Rd., Lookout Mtn., TN

After the Confederate victory at Chickamauga, troops occupied Lookout Mountain, where they could peer down upon and watch Union activities in Chattanooga. On November 24, 1863, Union troops attacked the Confederates and drove them from the mountain during the "Battle Above the Clouds." The following morning, the American flag flew from the mountain's pinnacle. For the rest of the Civil War, Lookout Mountain was a tourist destination for Union soldiers and civilians. A visitor center is located outside Point Park and features exhibits about the Civil War campaign for Chattanooga, including a large painting "The Battle of Lookout Mountain."

Photographer Royan Linn posing at Umbrella Rock at Point Park near his photography shack



Point Park

110 Point Park Rd., Lookout Mountain, TN

(Admission fee at entrance)

Point Park is a 10-acre memorial park that overlooks the Lookout Mountain Battlefield and Chattanooga. In December 1863, a photographer from Ohio, Robert "Royan" M. Linn, established a photo studio at Point Lookout, naming it Gallery Point Lookout. He and his brother, J. Birney Linn, took hundreds of photos of Union officers, soldiers and civilians posing at Point Lookout and nearby Umbrella Rock.

Point Park features a paved walking trail that highlights historic tablets, monuments and scenic overlooks. The largest monument in Point Park is the New York Peace Memorial, which was erected by the state of New York as a tribute to peace and reconciliation between Union and Confederate veterans after the war. The Ochs Memorial Observatory features exhibits, overlooks of Chattanooga and the Tennessee River.



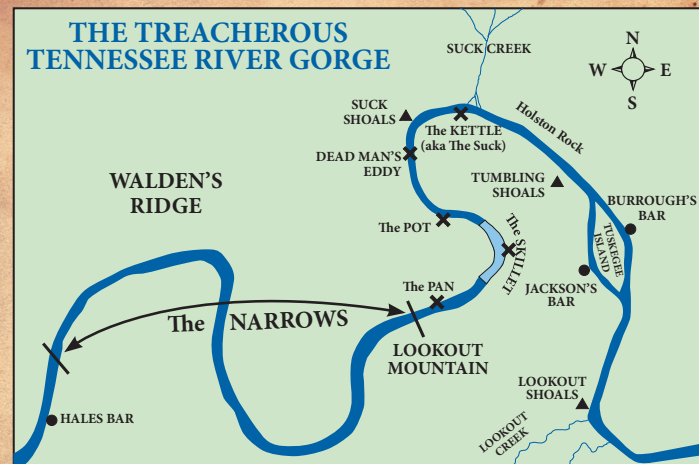
Chattanooga's Waterfront on the Tennessee River

Chattanooga's waterfront underwent major changes during the Civil War. Confederate troops occupied the town in the spring of 1862 and constructed forts and batteries near the river. Three forts lined the riverfront near the present-day Hunter Museum of Art and Cameron Hill.

Union General William S. Rosecrans' efforts to capture the strategic rail center of Chattanooga met with success at Ross's Landing in August 1863. Following a series of dramatic marches and feints, Gen. Rosecrans's Army appeared across the river on Stringer's Ridge on August 23, 1863. Union shells whizzed into the Confederate fortification within the city. The shelling was intended to convince Confederate commanders that Union forces intended to cross the Tennessee River north of Chattanooga. Their actual intention was to cross the Tennessee River south of Chattanooga and then approach from Sand Mountain and Lookout Mountain. By September 7, the Confederates figured out the plan and evacuated the city.

During the Union Army's occupation of Chattanooga (Sept. 9, 1863 – Summer 1865), the appearance of the riverfront changed again. Extensive logging operations stripped trees from the hills along the riverbank. A large sawmill at the base of Cameron Hill turned felled timber into planks and framing for warehouses and other military structures. The Army constructed a naval yard at Ross's Landing to repair and maintain boats that brought supplies into Chattanooga. Soldiers also built a wooden bridge – the first to span the Tennessee River at Chattanooga – which washed away in a massive flood in 1867.

Quartermaster's landing and storehouses, Chattanooga, TN



Tennessee River

One of North America's great rivers, the Tennessee River forms at the confluence of the Holston and French Broad rivers in Knoxville, TN, and flows 652 miles before emptying into the Ohio River at Paducah, KY. Early Native Americans thrived along the river, which was named after a Cherokee village, Tanasi. In 1816, Cherokee brothers John and Lewis Ross established a trading post and ferry on the banks in the river, called Ross's Landing. Early residents voted to change the name to Chattanooga in 1838, following the Cherokee Removal.

The historically free-flowing Tennessee River was wild and treacherous for early travelers. Within the Tennessee River Gorge (historically known as Cash Canyon) west of Chattanooga, dangerous whirlpools, shoals and eddies had names: The Pot, The Skillet, The Pan and The Kettle (aka The Suck). During the Civil War, these navigational hazards restricted upstream travel and made downstream travel dangerous. In 1913, a hydroelectric dam, Hales Bar Dam, was built downstream of the hazards, calming the river's rapids and limiting flooding issues.

Today, the Tennessee River is part of a 652-mile network of paddling, biking and hiking experiences, known as the Tennessee Riverline. Learn more at TNRiverLine.org

An interactive map of access points for the Tennessee River and its tributaries can be found on the Tennessee Valley Canoe Club website at TVCCpaddler.com.



Tennessee River:

1. Cotton Port Ferry

GPS: 35.489170, -84.881978

Cotton Port Boat Ramp at Cotton Port Wildlife Management Area or Cottonport Marina & RV Resort

In the fall of 1863, Confederate possession of Lookout Mountain and Raccoon Mountain prevented the Union army from utilizing the railroad, the Tennessee River, or the shortest wagon routes into Chattanooga to replenish food and supplies. On the verge of starvation, Union troops had only one supply route: a long and arduous haul from Bridgeport, Ala., to Jasper, Tenn., and then north through the Sequatchie Valley and over Walden's Ridge on mountainous terrain.

On September 27, 1863, Confederate Gen. Braxton Bragg ordered Maj. Gen. Joseph "Fighting Joe" Wheeler to isolate the Union army in Chattanooga by destroying their only supply corridor through the Sequatchie Valley and over Walden's Ridge into Chattanooga.

Wheeler's calvary had spent almost four months in constant action with the enemy and was fatigued, with worn down horses and supplies. Bragg ordered Gen. Nathan Bedford Forrest to send three brigades from his command to go along with Wheeler. Forrest's brigades were also in no condition for the long march. Despite this, the troops met on September 30 on the south side of the Tennessee River at Cottonport, 35 miles northeast of Chattanooga.

Wheeler later reported, "The three brigades from General Forrest were mere skeletons, scarcely averaging 500 effective men each. They were badly armed, and had but a small supply of ammunition, and their horses were in horrible condition, having been marched continuously for three days and nights without removing saddles. The men were worn out, and without rations."

That evening, Wheeler's 4,000 troops crossed the Tennessee River with six artillery pieces. A short fight broke out with a Union picket on the north bank of the river, with only a few losses. Wheeler spent the next day making plans for his attack on the Union supply route in the Sequatchie Valley, which became famously known as Wheeler's Raid. The historic marker for Wheeler's Raid is located along Hwy. 127 heading up Walden's Ridge from Dunlap, TN.

2. Blythe Ferry

GPS: 35.409376, -85.008394

Blythe Ferry Boat Ramp, TN-60 at the Tennessee River, Birchwood, TN.

★ *National Register of Historic Places* ★

Blythe Ferry was established in 1809 at the confluence of the Hiwassee River and Tennessee River by William Blythe and his Cherokee wife Nancy Fields. The ferry was an important river crossing along the "Great Road" (aka Kiuka War Trace) between present-day Chattanooga and Knoxville.

During the Trail of Tears, nine of 13 detachments of Cherokee and Creek people traveled to Blythe Ferry from Fort Cass (present-day Charleston, Tenn.), which served as the military operational headquarters for the entire Cherokee Removal. Water levels in the river were very low due to a severe drought, so approx. 9,000 people camped at the ferry site for up to six weeks waiting to cross the Tennessee River. William Blythe went west with his Cherokee wife. Blythe Ferry operated at the site until 1994 when the TN-60 bridge was built.

Early Native American cultures occupied nearby Hiwassee Island (aka Jolly's Island) for thousands of years. Located near Blythe Ferry, the island was once the site of a large Mississippian Period town. The Cherokees later occupied the island until it was ceded to Tennessee in the early 1800s. In the 1940s, TVA sponsored archaeological investigations of the island before flooding half of the island with Chickamauga Reservoir. Many of those artifacts are housed at the McClung Museum at UT Knoxville. Today, Hiwassee Island is a Wildlife Refuge, visited each winter by migrating Sandhill Cranes.

During the Civil War, Union troops were stationed at Blythe Ferry for more than a year to guard the mouth of the Hiwassee River and grain supplies stored on Hiwassee Island.

The Cherokee Removal Memorial Park at Blythe Ferry interprets the Cherokee Removal and history of the area. The park includes a visitor center, interpretive wall, walking trail and overlook of Hiwassee Island and the rivers.

Blythe Ferry (1926)





CHK-1015-D
A street scene in the town of Harrison, TN, in 1937. Much of the city was flooded by TVA in 1940 to create Chickamauga Reservoir, as portrayed in the 1960 movie *Wild River*.

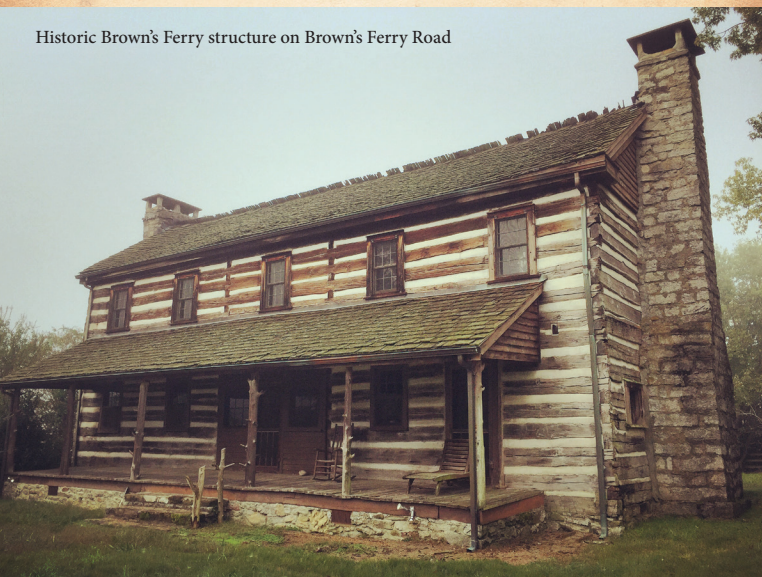
3. Artillery Works at Harrison Bay

Harrison Bay State Park, Harrison, TN

GPS: 35.156110, -85.132878

Harrison Bay State Park - Tennessee's oldest state park - has approximately 40 miles of Chickamauga Lake shoreline. It is named after the large bay at the main channel of the Tennessee River that covers the old town of Harrison and a former Cherokee village, Vann Town. Some parts of old Harrison can still be seen during low water levels, such as old building foundations, roads, and guard rails, especially in and around Harrison Bay.

John Patten Island, which is in the middle of Harrison Bay and part of Harrison Bay State Park, has well-preserved Confederate artillery works on the northwest corner of the island. These cannons engaged in an artillery duel with forces from Col. John Wilder's Lightning Brigade in August 1863 at Harrison Ferry (formerly Vann's Ferry). Take a short one-mile paddle from Harrison Bay State Park to the island to see the artillery position.



Historic Brown's Ferry structure on Brown's Ferry Road

4. Brown's Ferry

GPS: 35.055965, -85.343926

The Brown's Ferry site can be viewed from the west bank of the Tennessee River. The historic Brown's Ferry structure is located at 703 Brown's Ferry Rd., Chattanooga, TN

★ National Register of Historic Places ★

The historic Brown's Ferry structure is presumed to have been built in 1803 by John Brown, a Cherokee Leader. Brown also operated a ferry along an ancient trading path that began in Augusta, Savannah and Charleston and joined the Great Indian Warpath and the Federal Road to provide access into this region. One branch went along Lookout Creek and the other went directly by Brown's Ferry. Brown maintained a farm and a mill on his 640 acres, as well as a two-story house, a smokehouse, barn, hen house and orchard with pear, apple and peach trees.

The structure is significant because of its role in Chattanooga's Civil War history. In October 1863, the Union Army was besieged in Chattanooga, dependent on a single supply line for food and supplies. Desperate to open a more direct route for food and reinforcements, they used bridge pontoons to float past Confederate guards on Lookout Mountain and establish a bridgehead at Brown's Ferry on October 27. The resulting "Cracker Line" facilitated the men, food and supplies necessary for Union assaults on Lookout Mountain and Missionary Ridge in November. It is said that the Union Army used the building as a commissary depot following the seizure of Lookout Valley in October 1863.

One soldier remembered:

"The night was clear. A bright moon hung in the west and we could see rebel pickets standing on the bank of the river. They could not see us. The vapor that rises from the river on clear autumn nights effectively hid us from their sight. When we rounded Moccasin Point, the current threw the boats toward them, but by quietly rowing, all regained the north bank without alarm."

During the tragic Cherokee Removal in 1838, thousands of Cherokee people crossed the Tennessee River at Brown's Ferry. Records indicate the Whiteley, Bell and Drane detachments traveled this route West.

The Brown's Ferry structure and property were acquired in 2020 by the American Battlefield Trust, which is transferring the property to National Park Partners for permanent protection and preservation.



Cracker Line:

A Cracker Line is a supply line, named after the hardtack cracker, a simple type of cracker made from flour, water and sometimes salt. It was used during the Civil War for sustenance in the absence of perishable foods.

5. Attack at Suck Creek

GPS: 35.109605, -85.365128

Historic marker and access at Suck Creek Public Boat Ramp, Suck Creek Rd., Chattanooga, TN

Union troops had only one supply route to Chattanooga - a long and difficult road that ran from Bridgeport, AL, north up the Sequatchie Valley, and then east over Walden's Ridge along Anderson Pike. The road descended Walden's Ridge and then followed the Tennessee River along what is known today as Suck Creek Road.

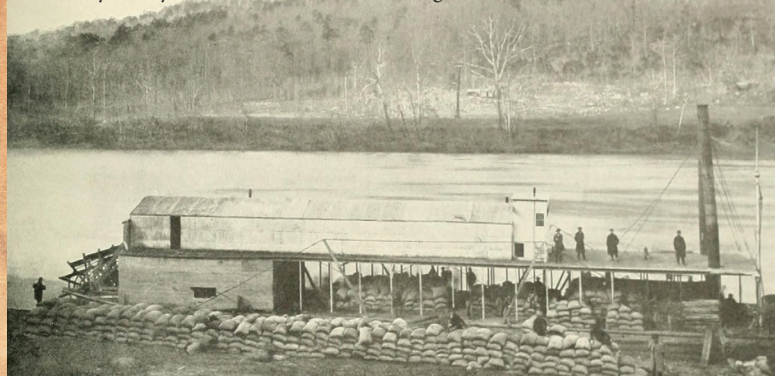
On Oct. 8, 1863, Confederate General James Longstreet ordered his sharpshooters to position themselves along the overhanging bluffs of the Tennessee River on Raccoon Mountain to stop the Union supply routes on the opposite side of the river. The soldiers were ordered "to shoot down the mules of the wagon trains of the enemy which were compelled to pass along the narrow road between the bluff and the river on the opposite side. Due to the attack, Union wagon trains were forced to detour. A Union officer wrote that the detour route "was a rickety, insecure, makeshift of a road and was so narrow that only in places could two teams pass each other."

Later that month, Union forces seized Brown's Ferry and opened a safer supply route, dubbed the "Cracker Line" for the wagon loads of hardtack that were transported to troops. The Union supply situation in Chattanooga became less dire.



The W Road on Signal Mountain was an important Union supply route during the Civil War.

The USS Chattanooga riverboat delivered critical rations and supplies to Kelly's Ferry for Union forces in Chattanooga.



6. Kelly's Ferry

GPS: 35.032099, -85.43168800

Historic site is on private property, halfway between the TVA boat ramp at Raccoon Mtn. and Sullivan's Landing boat ramp.

★ *National Register of Historic Places* ★

Kelly's Ferry was established on the Tennessee River in the 1830s by John Kelly. The ferry served as an important stopping point for riverboats to unload goods to be transported by land to Chattanooga, thereby avoiding a treacherous stretch of the river called "The Suck." Kelly's Ferry Road and the ferry itself were one of the few routes suitable to transport large groups of people and supplies. In 1838, several Cherokee detachments camped or traveled through Kelly's Ferry during the Cherokee Removal.

During the Civil War, the ferry served as a critical transportation route. Confederate soldiers were stationed at Kelly's Ferry during the siege of Chattanooga to secure the crossing. Union seizure of Brown's Ferry and Lookout Valley in the final days of October 1863 facilitated the "Cracker Line," a supply route that brought much-needed rations to Union troops in Chattanooga. Steamboats would depart from a supply depot in Bridgeport, Ala., and head upriver toward Chattanooga, many of them unloading at Kelly's Ferry. From Kelly's Ferry, loaded wagon trains traveled to Brown's Ferry. The wagons crossed the pontoon bridge at Brown's Ferry and traversed Moccasin Bend to Chattanooga.

Kelly's Ferry Cemetery, located in the woods behind Kelly's Ferry Church of God, contains the graves of many early settlers and members of the Kelly family, including John Kelly (d. 1845). The cemetery and its associated road trace (to the east of the cemetery on private property) are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Kelly's Ferry closed in 1952.

7. Nickajack Cave

GPS: 34.989833, -85.610605

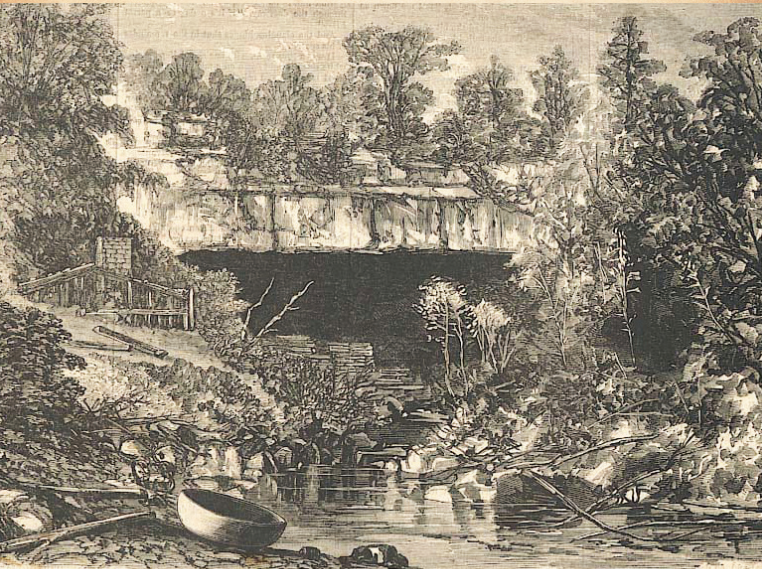
Access at Mapleview Day Use Area & Boat Ramp,
Old Ladds Rd., South Pittsburg, TN

Used by Native Americans for hundreds of years, this historic cave was a source for saltpeter, used in making gun powder, in both the War of 1812 and the Civil War.

In 1967, the Tennessee Valley Authority completed the construction of Nickajack Dam, which raised the Tennessee River to a level that submerged many rooms in the cave. Today, the cave is home to the federally endangered gray bat and is closed to public access.

Nickajack Cave was visited by more soldiers than any other cave in the United States. One of the Union soldiers who visited the cave during the war said it was about 15 miles long and had a large stream running through it. "Some distance, after crossing the river, you come to a small chamber, which is very pretty," David Lathrop from Illinois wrote. "The ceiling is ornamented with stalactites, resembling icicles, and the walls are perpendicular and smooth. The corners and edges of the ceiling are as though they had been ornamented by some master workman."

- Journal of Spelean History (1974)



SALTPETER CAVE NEAR CHATTANOOGA.

Union and Confederate armies mined Nickajack Cave for saltpeter to manufacture gunpowder.

8. Love's Ferry (aka Shellmound Ferry)

Shellmound Campground & Boat Ramp, Jasper, TN

GPS: 35.007681, -85.605622

Samuel Love owned a farm on the Tennessee River and operated a ferry that was an important transportation artery, linking Jasper and the rest of Marion County with the railroad at Shellmound. The ferry site was a major crossing point used by the Union Army during the Chickamauga Campaign.

In late August 1863, Colonel Edward King and his Union troops occupied Love's Farm. They planned an attack to break the Confederate's railroad communication at nearby Shellmound. Troops shelled the enemy out after dark, burned the Nickajack bridge and captured a ferry boat. King then led a reconnaissance patrol over the river and drove the Confederates back beyond Whiteside. While camped beside the Tennessee River on Love's Farm, the soldiers built a fleet of flatboats to carry troops and a herd of cattle across the river.

9. Fort McCook

GPS: 35.017990, -85.694643

Historic Marker at South Pittsburg Municipal Park,
South Pittsburg, TN

A Union fort was built in 1862 at the confluence of Battle Creek and the Tennessee River in South Pittsburg, Tenn. It was named for Gen. Alexander McCook and served as a key post during the Union occupation of the Sequatchie Valley. On Aug. 27, 1862, soldiers at the fort faced a 12-hour Confederate bombardment from positions across the river before abandoning South Pittsburg and allowing the Confederates to control Marion County for the next year.



Union Camp by the Tennessee River in Chattanooga (1864)



Refugees at a Contraband Camp during or after the Civil War (unknown location).
Source: Chattanooga: Tennessee's Gateway to the Underground Railroad by E. Raymond Evans (2005)

Camp Contraband/Hill City

Historic community established in what is now the NorthShore area of Chattanooga

Once the Union Army took control of Chattanooga in late 1863, thousands of formerly enslaved people fled plantations and farms for Union Army camps. To protect and care for these emancipated individuals, the Army established freedmen or "contraband" camps.

In November of 1862, General Ulysses S. Grant appointed Chaplain John Eaton, Jr. to oversee the first contraband camp at Grand Junction, TN. Soon thereafter, the Army established contraband camps in Memphis, Chattanooga, Nashville, Knoxville and smaller Tennessee communities.

In Chattanooga, newly freed African Americans settled on farmland along the north shore of the Tennessee River. This was also where black troops were quartered. The settlement was known initially as Camp Contraband, but eventually evolved into the community of Hill City.

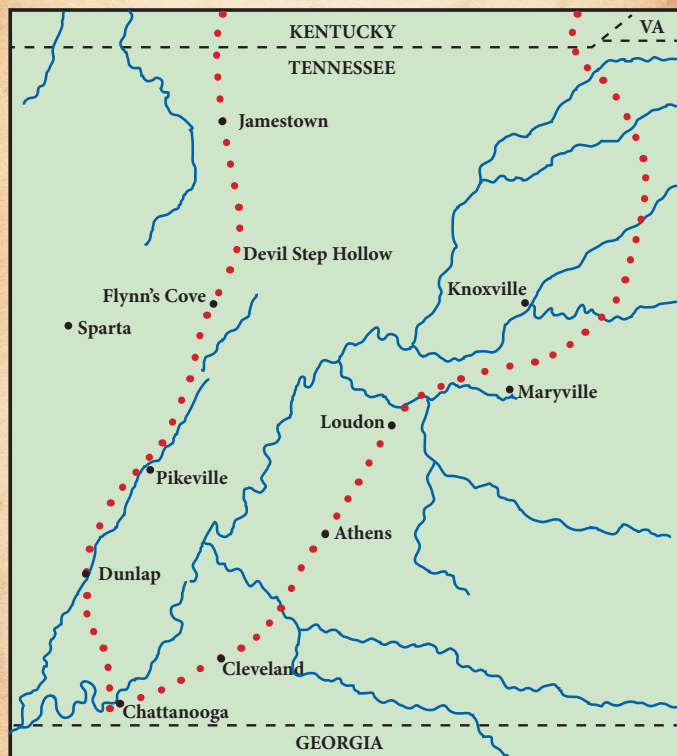
At the start of the war, the camp's population was approx. 2,500 people - by the end of the war the number of refugees had more than doubled.



The Underground Railroad in Southeast Tennessee

The term Underground Railroad is a metaphor first used about 1834 to describe the secret escape of enslaved people of the South to the free states of the North and Canada. For about 50 years prior to the end of the Civil War, the Tennessee River, as well as the Cumberland and Mississippi rivers, were major routes for the Underground Railroad in Tennessee. Surrounding mountainous trails also served as important escape routes in the region.

According to former Tennessee Historian Walter T. Durham in his report "The Underground Railroad in Tennessee to 1865", most of the routes in Southeast Tennessee started at or near Chattanooga. One passage led from Chattanooga to natural and man-made caves in Bradley County, across the Hiwassee River into McMinn County, on to Quaker Villages in Loudon County, and north to Greene County. A second passage left Chattanooga, crossed the Tennessee River, traveled up Walden's Ridge and down into the Sequatchie Valley. From there, the route headed to Big Laurel Creek in Cumberland County to Richard Flynn's safe house in Flynn's Cove, passed into Fentress County and crossed the Kentucky border at Possum Creek.



Source: Chattanooga: Tennessee's Gateway to the Underground Railroad by E. Raymond Evans (2005)

Chattanooga Creek:

Chattanooga Creek begins in North Georgia and winds 23.5 miles north into Chattanooga before emptying into the Tennessee River. The creek was polluted with coal tar waste and other contaminants throughout most of the 20th Century. In 1995, the creek was named a Superfund site and cleaned up over two decades. Several conservation organizations are working to clean up litter and bring this historic river back into the life of the city. The creek can be accessed at its mouth along the Tennessee River.

10. General Grant at Chattanooga Creek

Historic Marker along creek: 3085 Broad St.,
Chattanooga, TN

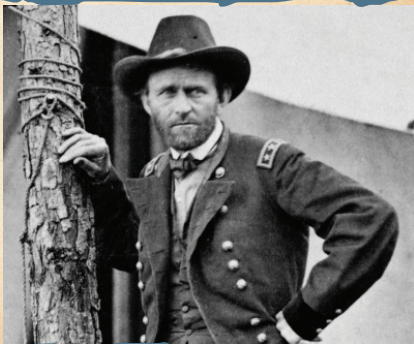
GPS: 35.022990, -85.319791

After the Confederate victory at Chickamauga in North Georgia in September 1863, the Union Army retreated to Chattanooga, Tenn. Confederate Gen. Braxton Bragg laid siege to the city, cutting off access to Union supplies. In response, President Abraham Lincoln ordered Major General Ulysses S. Grant to Chattanooga. Grant arrived in October and opened up a desperately needed food and supply line and staged maneuvers to lift the siege. Before and during the series of Battles for Chattanooga, Union and Confederate soldiers were stationed across from one another along Chattanooga Creek, which winds through Chattanooga between Lookout Mountain and Missionary Ridge.

One day, Union Gen. Ulysses S. Grant decided to wander down to the picket lines along Chattanooga Creek to check on the disposition of his soldiers. Horace Porter, one of Grant's staff aides, reported that the soldiers on both sides of the creek had declared an "informal truce." Men from both armies could go to the creek for water without being fired on by the other side. Grant later said: "The most-friendly relations seemed to exist between the pickets of the two armies."

When Grant was within yards of Confederate soldiers down by the creek, instead of shooting him, they lined up and saluted him. Grant recorded the incident in his memoirs.

Ulysses S. Grant was an American soldier and politician who led the Union Army as Commanding General of the United States Army in winning the American Civil War.



Lookout Creek:

Lookout Creek begins in Rising Fawn, Ga., and meanders north toward Chattanooga where it empties into the Tennessee River below Lookout Mountain near Moccasin Bend. In Tennessee, the creek is accessible from the Tennessee River, the Hwy. 41 boat ramp and Reflection Riding Arboretum & Nature Center (access fee).

11. Light's Mill Crossing: Battle of Lookout Mountain

Access from bridge on Hwy. 41, crossing Lookout
Creek, Lookout Valley, TN

Historic Site: (GPS) 34.99774, -85.37465

On the foggy morning of November 24, 1863, Union Gen. John W. Geary's division gathered at Light's Mill to cross Lookout Creek in an assault on Confederate troops stationed on Lookout Mountain.

Geary's men crossed the creek on a wooden bridge they built across the dam at Light's Mill, about 4 miles upstream from the mouth of the creek at the Tennessee River. High water and a fast current delayed the crossing until 8:30 a.m. Approximately 3,800 men crossed Lookout Creek and charged north along the mountainside as part of the Battle Above the Clouds. The dramatic but relatively bloodless "Battle Above the Clouds" on Lookout Mountain resulted in the seizure of Lookout Mountain by Union forces. During and after the fighting on Lookout Mountain, the Light residence served as a Union hospital.

The foundation of the Light house and mill no longer exist, but the dam remnants at Light's Mill can be seen in the creek when the Chickamauga Dam release level is low. Light's residence was away from the Creek, on the west side of the hills. The old road trace to the Light's Mill dam can easily be followed on the west side of Lookout Creek after a boat landing.

Railroad bridge across Chattanooga Creek (1861)



North Chickamauga Creek:

North Chickamauga Creek forms on Walden's Ridge in Sequatchie County, spilling Class IV/V whitewater down the ridge until it flattens in the Tennessee River Valley. The creek becomes an easy paddle for beginners and families once it reaches Greenway Farm, which features two boat ramps along a 2.5-mile stretch of the creek. The construction of TVA Chickamauga Dam changed the historic course of North Chickamauga Creek, which now enters the Tennessee River downstream of the dam. The lock at Chickamauga Dam presents an obstacle for paddlers to access North Chickamauga Creek traveling upstream on the Tennessee River.

Union General
William Tecumseh Sherman



12. Sherman's Crossing

Launch from Greenway Farms, Hixson, TN

GPS: 35.114517, -85.229167

Around midnight on November 23, 1863, 3,000 Union troops boarded 116 pontoon boats near the confluence of the creek with the Tennessee River. After launching into the Tennessee River, the flotilla, under the direction of Gen. William T. Sherman, moved silently downstream to the mouth of South Chickamauga Creek. When they landed, the soldiers piled onto the riverbank, surprising and overtaking Confederate troops. The pontoon boats were then used to form a bridge across the Tennessee River. Around noon the next day, Sherman's men were able to cross the Tennessee River to aid in the attack at Missionary Ridge.

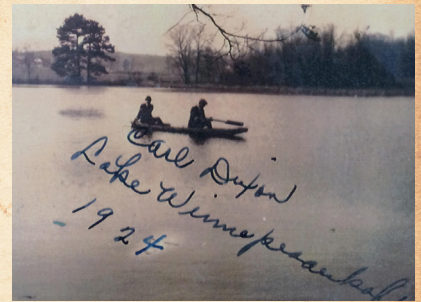
To see the location on North Chickamauga Creek where Sherman's troops gathered, launch from Greenway Farms in Hixson, Tenn. There are two access points along a 2.5 mile stretch of the creek. About $\frac{3}{4}$ mile after the lower boat launch, there is a small drainage area on river right. The creek makes a sharp turn to the left and there are limestone cliffs just downstream on river right where the 116 pontoon boats launched. Depending upon the water level and trees, a paddle up into the drainage may be possible.

The Spring at Lake Winnepesaukah Amusement Park

The natural spring in the center of Lake Winnepesaukah Amusement Park in Rossville, Ga., has a history that spans way beyond its legacy of fun. Located on Lakeview Drive, which was part of the historic Old Federal Road, the spring and surrounding landscape have played a role in many historic events, including early Native American settlement, the Cherokee Removal and the Civil War.

The spring at Lake Winnie served as an important water source for people and animals throughout time. Prior to the Civil War, the spring was called Newnan Springs, named for General David Newnan (1780-1851),

a veteran of the War of 1812 who served as secretary of state and as a member of Congress. Newnan lived near the spring and his grave is located at Newnan Springs United Methodist Church Cemetery on Page Road in Rossville, Ga.



During the Civil War, McAfee Church was located on the property and the spring was known as McAfee's Spring. According to a Civil War sites assessment by Chickamauga & Chattanooga National Military Park, Union troops occupied McAfee Church and its vicinity in September 1863. Several skirmishes took place nearby, and a field hospital was established at the church. Soldiers later wrote about filling their canteens with water from the spring.

Early photo of the spring at Lake Winnepesaukah.



West Chickamauga Creek:

West Chickamauga Creek weaves through Chickamauga-Chattanooga National Military Park in North Georgia and then north into the Chattanooga area. Most of the struggles that took place during the Battle of Chickamauga - the second-bloodiest battle of the Civil War - took place along its riverbanks. Today, West Chickamauga Creek can be explored by canoe or kayak, and provides a unique way to experience the waterway that gave the battle its name. To learn more, visit CatoosaRec.com.

13. Crawfish Springs GPS: 34.87028, -85.29238

Historic downtown Chickamauga, GA

Crawfish Springs is a beautiful natural spring in the center of Chickamauga, Ga., that empties into West Chickamauga Creek. The spring belonged to the Cherokee Nation until the 1830s, when Georgia began land lotteries and the Cherokee people were forcibly moved to the West. A Cherokee Nation courthouse was built in 1820 across from the spring. The courthouse was replaced by the Gordon-Lee Mansion, which was built between 1840-47.

During the Battle of Chickamauga, Union and Confederate soldiers used Crawfish Springs as a primary water supply. Wounded and injured soldiers were cared for nearby at the Gordon-Lee Mansion.

After the war, Crawfish Springs was the site of a historic reunion of veteran soldiers from both the North and South who had fought in the Battle of Chickamauga. Called the Blue and Gray Barbecue, 14,000 veterans gathered at Crawfish Springs on September 20, 1889. Military bands were present to provide entertainment, and 30 tables were set up to hold the food. A ceremonial "smoking for peace" took place following the meal, with pipes made from wood taken from Snodgrass Hill and stems made from river cane cut from the banks of West Chickamauga Creek. Plans to create the nation's first national military park came into being at the Blue and Gray Barbecue at Crawfish Springs.

Watercraft are not allowed to launch from Crawfish Springs. The outflow of Crawfish Springs can be accessed 2.5 miles upstream on West Chickamauga Creek from Lee & Gordon Mill.

Blue & Gray BBQ - September 20, 1889



Lee and Gordon's Mills (1863)



14. Lee and Gordon's Mills GPS: 34.88357, -85.26652

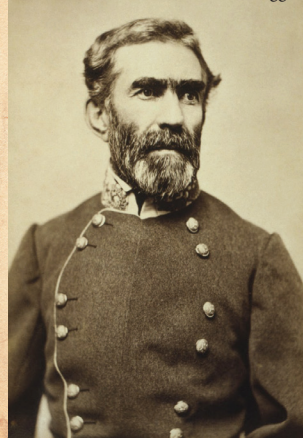
The mill is located on West Chickamauga Creek at 71 Red Belt Rd., Chickamauga, GA

Lee and Gordon's Mill was built by James Gordon in 1836 and served as the first general store in Walker County, Ga. Located on West Chickamauga Creek, the mill is one of the best-known and most important landmarks of the 1863 Chickamauga Campaign. The mill served as headquarters for Confederate General Braxton Bragg's troops from Sept. 7-10, 1863 and then for Union Army troops from Sept. 10-20, 1863. Both armies extended along West Chickamauga Creek, with the mill at the center, during the Battle of Chickamauga.

The wartime Lee and Gordon's Mill burned in 1867. Shortly thereafter, the owner erected another mill on the same site. Today, the mill serves as an event and wedding venue.

There is a kayak launch site at the mill. **Warning: there is a low-head dam at the mill – do not play in or around the dam or attempt to go over the dam in a boat or tube. Low-head dams may not look dangerous, but they are dangerous drowning hazards.**

Confederate General Braxton Bragg



For nearly two months following the Battle of Chickamauga, the Confederates, commanded by Gen. Braxton Bragg, occupied Lookout Mountain and Missionary Ridge, thereby pinning the Union army inside Chattanooga. Union troops were on the brink of starvation and lacked supplies as the Confederates blocked their supply routes. In November 1863, Union troops attacked the Confederate forces and broke their siege on the city.



Central House Hotel (1863),
formerly at Market and Fifth Streets.

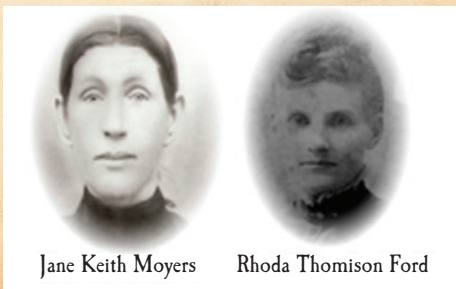
The Sidesaddle Soldiers of Rhea County, TN

During the Civil War, a group of young women in their teens and early twenties in Rhea County, Tenn., formed a cavalry company to deliver food, clothing and supplies to their boyfriends, husbands, fathers and brothers who were stationed nearby. This Confederate aid society on horseback formed in 1862 and was called the Rhea County Spartans.

At first, the Rhea County Spartans visited soldiers and relatives among the three Confederate companies stationed in the area. However, when Union forces entered the area in mid-1863, their activities became more circumspect. In the spring of 1865, a Tennessee Unionist in Rhea County decided that the Rhea County Spartans were spies and 16 of the girls were arrested and forced to march in the rain at night to Bell's Landing on the Tennessee River. They were transported to Chattanooga aboard the USS Chattanooga.

Once in Chattanooga, their captor - John P. Walker - was surprised to be reprimanded by Union officers for what he had done. The Spartans were escorted to the Central House hotel, where they were fed and able to clean themselves up after the ordeal. Union Commander Gen. James Blair Steedman sent the women back home, but only after requiring them to take an oath of allegiance to the Union.

Many of the Spartans are buried at historic Buttram Cemetery in Dayton, Tenn. Learn more about the Rhea County Spartans at the Spring City History Museum in Spring City, TN.

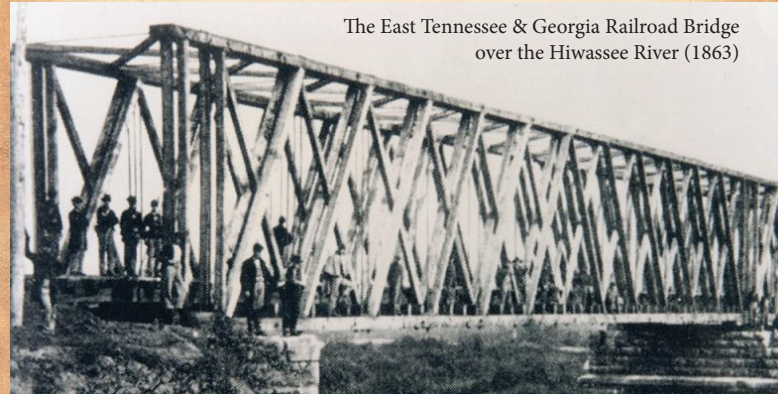


Jane Keith Moyers

Rhoda Thomison Ford

Hiwassee River:

The Hiwassee River played a significant role in American history, including time periods that witnessed the Cherokee Removal in 1838 and the War Between the States in the 1860s. Present-day Charleston, Tenn., was once the site of the Federal Indian Agency, as well as the U.S. military headquarters for the entire Cherokee Removal, known as Fort Cass. During the Civil War, the East Tennessee & Georgia Railroad Bridge crossing the river between Charleston and Calhoun was a pivotal crossing for troops. At various times, the Henegar House (Cass St. in Charleston) housed two Union Generals (William T. Sherman and Oliver O. Howard) and two Confederate Generals (Marcus J. Wright and Simon Bolivar Buckner). The nearby Charleston Cumberland Presbyterian Church was used as a hospital by Union forces. Soldiers tethered their horses to the corner boards and windowsills, which still to this day show the deep marks made by their teeth. Learn more about history in this area at the Hiwassee River Heritage Center in Charleston, TN.



The East Tennessee & Georgia Railroad Bridge
over the Hiwassee River (1863)

17. Railroad Bridge Burnings GPS: 34.906814, -85.229642

Access from the Hiwassee River boat ramp on Water St. in Charleston, TN and paddle downstream to the bridge

Built in 1842, the East Tennessee & Georgia Railroad bridge in Charleston was the line's only crossing on the Hiwassee River. It served as a strategic link connecting the Southern industrial belt with Confederate armies in Tennessee and Virginia. Union loyalists burned the bridge, which was originally a covered bridge, on November 8, 1861, and Union and Confederate forces damaged it numerous times after it was rebuilt. When retreating Confederate troops damaged the bridge again in November 1863, Union Gen. William T. Sherman decided to spend the evening of November 30 in Charleston at the Henegar House. The current railroad bridge still rests on its original pre-Civil War piers.

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Learn More:

Chattanooga Area Water Trails Map

Tennessee Valley Canoe Club

Info@tvccpaddler.com

Tvccpaddler.com/tennessee-river-valley-access-points

Tennessee Riverline

TNRiverLine.org

Outdoor Chattanooga

200 River St., Chattanooga, TN | 423-643-6888

OutdoorChattanooga.com

Chickamauga Battlefield Visitor Center

3370 Lafayette Rd., Fort Oglethorpe, GA | 706-866-1159

NPS.gov/chch

Lookout Mountain Battlefield

110 Point Park Rd., Lookout Mtn., TN | 423-821-7786

NPS.gov/chch

Battles for Chattanooga Museum

1110 E. Brow Rd., Lookout Mtn., TN | 423-821-2812

Battlesforchattanooga.com

National Medal of Honor Heritage Center

2 W. Aquarium Way, Chattanooga, TN | 423-877-2525

Mohhc.org

Hiwassee River Heritage Center

8746 Hiwassee St., Charleston, TN | 423-665-3373

HiwasseeHeritage.com

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