

June 1, 1796

Tennessee Becomes a State

The state of Tennessee had a difficult time during the Civil War. People in the western and middle parts of Tennessee lived a life that was very much part of the deep South. The people living in the eastern part of Tennessee lived a life that was very much like that lived in the North. There were more battles fought in Tennessee during the Civil War than in any state other than Virginia. Fighting in Tennessee during the Civil War was fierce, and General Sherman marched his troops from Chattanooga to Georgia to take Atlanta. Even though President Lincoln's vice president for his second term was from Tennessee, it did not settle the differences between the Confederate and Union positions. Tennessee was the last state to secede from the Union during the Civil War and the first state to return to the Union after the war was over. The Reconstruction period was very difficult for Tennessee. In addition to those troubles, much disease hit the state in the 1870s. One of the worst yellow fever plagues in U.S. history occurred in Memphis during this time and killed more than one-fourth of its citizens.

Tennessee has recovered from much hardship to become a state that encourages industry. It is working to bring in more jobs and improve life for its citizens. Some famous people from Tennessee include Wilma Rudolph, Davy Crockett, Nathan Bedford Forest, Bill Belichick, Alvin C. York, Mary Styles Harris, Herman Cain, Steve Fossett, Sarah Polk, Eliza Johnson, Mark Dean, Representative John Bell, and Hattie Ophelia Caraway.

Look at the map of Tennessee below. Label the capital of Tennessee. Locate the cities of Memphis, Knoxville, Chattanooga, Clarksville, Murfreesboro, Jackson, Johnson City, Kingsport, and Hendersonville, and label them on the map. Now label the Appalachian Mountains and the Great Smoky Mountains, along with Clingmans Dome, Mount Collins, Pine Mountain and Lookout Mountain. Also, locate the Tennessee River, Mississippi River, Holston River, Cumberland River, Sequatchie River, Kentucky Lake, Watauga Lake, Cherokee Lake, and Chickamauga Lake, and label them. Lastly, label the states or bodies of water that border Tennessee. When you have finished, move on to the timeline of Tennessee history on the next page and the research prompts that follow.



Timeline of Tennessee History

1540

1714

1763

1772

1796

1826

1845

1861

1866

1878

1887

1905

1925

1933

1942

1982

1983

1985

1990

1996

1. The Tennessee Valley Authority is formed by Congress
2. Tennessee becomes the 16th state of the Union
3. Completion of the Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway project accomplishes the connection of the Tennessee River and the Gulf of Mexico
4. The first European explorers come to the area of present-day Tennessee under Hernando de Soto
5. Tennessee becomes the last state to secede from the Union at the beginning of the Civil War
6. Building of an atomic energy center by the U.S. government begins at Oak Ridge, Tennessee
7. One of the first written constitutions in North America is drawn up by the Watauga Association
8. Tennessee adopts its state flag
9. Tennessee's School for the Deaf begins operations
10. Britain receives all lands east of the Mississippi River from France after the French and Indian War
11. A French trading post is set up near the site of present-day Nashville by Charles Charleville
12. Alvin C. York, World War I hero, is born
13. A new automobile plant is opened in Spring Hill by General Motors
14. One of the worst yellow fever plagues in U.S. history hits Memphis, killing more than one-fourth of its population
15. Knoxville, Tennessee hosts the world's fair
16. Tennessee becomes the first state to be readmitted to the Union after the Civil War
17. The bicentennial of Tennessee's statehood is celebrated
18. John Scopes is convicted of teaching evolution in a public school in Tennessee
19. Nissan opens a new truck assembly plant in Smyrna
20. Nashville becomes the permanent capital of Tennessee

Research Prompt #1

When the area of present-day Tennessee was obtained by the British, it was made part of the colony of North Carolina, which joined it to the original 13 colonies. However, it was separated from the main part of North Carolina by mountains. The pioneers of Tennessee established their own government, with their own constitution, separate from the colonies. However, when the Revolutionary War was being fought, John Sevier led a group of volunteers across the Great Smoky Mountains into South Carolina to join the colonies' fight. They are known for helping defeat the British at the Battle of Kings Mountain. Why do you think a group from an area that had already established its own independent government was so eager to help the American cause in the Revolutionary War?

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Research Prompt #2

Describe the impact the Great Smoky Mountains had in the westward expansion of our nation and explain how you think history would have been different had they not been present.

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Research Prompt #3

Research the Tennessee Valley Authority and give your thoughts as to the impact it has had on Tennessee. What are your thoughts concerning the fact that it was designated by the Federal government to handle all types of conservation and development of resources in the Tennessee Valley area, instead of this being done by private enterprise? Do you think the Tennessee Valley Authority has been a good thing for the area or not? Why or why not?

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Timeline of Tennessee History

Answer Key

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	1763	One of the first written constitutions in North America is drawn up by the Watauga Association
	1772	
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