

# The National Heritage Area Program and Blount County, Tennessee: A Feasibility Study



Prepared by the Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area

At the request of U.S. Senator Lamar Alexander, U.S. Congressman John Duncan Jr., and the Great Smoky Mountains Convention and Visitors Bureau of the Blount County Chamber of Commerce



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## **Project Background**

In 2004-2005 residents of Maryville, the county seat of Blount County, participated in a wide ranging community forum for the city's and county's future Urban Growth Strategy as part of a local response to the more regional planning process known as "Nine-County, One Vision." The consulting firm of Hunter Interests carried out the community forums and prepared the final draft plan. Its first recommended action called for the city and county to "expand the green infrastructure system to preserve existing opening space, and add elements that will benefit water quality, soil conservation, and the overall quality of life." The consultants also emphasized at several places the option of the community creating a federally-designated National Heritage Area.

The Urban Growth Strategy calling for partnerships to enhance the community through quality growth was seconded by the May 2005 release of a Sustainable Tourism Strategic Plan, prepared by the Great Smoky Mountains Convention and Visitors Bureau and the Blount County Chamber of Commerce. This strategic plan set the goal of creating "high-quality, geo-tourism experiences tied to our heritage and culture." It also called for the development of "a consistent & authentic/accurate destination story" and to "work to ensure a quality trip experience on the way to the destination."

Shortly thereafter, local officials began to talk with the Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area (Tennessee Civil War NHA) on how it could help the community. The Tennessee Civil War NHA covers the entire state of Tennessee and is a recognized national leader in best practices for heritage area development. It is also the headquarters for the Heritage Development Institute, a program of the Alliance of National Heritage Areas. The Tennessee Civil War NHA is administered through the MTSU Center for Historic Preservation (Center), one of the state's 16 Centers of Excellence, a program established by Governor Lamar Alexander and the Tennessee General Assembly in 1984. On June 30, 2005, Dr. Van West, Center Director, and Laura Holder, Manager of the Tennessee Civil War NHA, met with community representatives from Blount County at the request of Darrell Akins and Herb Handly, as well as Bill Sullivan from Senator Alexander's D.C. office, to provide an overview for creating a National Heritage Area. As a result of this meeting, community representatives requested a proposal from the Tennessee Civil War NHA for the creation of a feasibility study to evaluate Blount County's potential for heritage area designation.

The feasibility study is a joint venture between the Smoky Mountain Convention and Visitors Bureau, Blount County partners and the Tennessee Civil War NHA to document and evaluate Blount County's nationally significant historic, natural and cultural resources within the context of public, financial and managerial support at the local and state levels for a National Heritage Area or similar federal program option.

Blount County, with its wealth of rural landscapes, historic resources, and proximity to the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, has been one of the fastest growing counties in Tennessee during the last ten years. The goal of the feasibility study is to provide options for Blount County that will enable the region to sustain economic development

while conserving the cultural heritage, rural character, natural resources and living landscapes that make the area unique.

Preliminary discussions with community stakeholders, residents and elected officials have demonstrated support across multi-disciplinary fields, including tourism, economic development, planning, preservation, and recreation, as well as residents and property owners. Interested partners to date include the Smoky Mountains Convention and Visitors Bureau, the Hunter Interests Group, the Townsend Planning Commission, the Foothills Conservancy, Tuckaleechee Cove, the Great Smoky Mountains Heritage Center, the Blount County Historical Society, the Blount County Chamber of Commerce, Blount County Commission, and Maryville College. Senator Lamar Alexander and Congressman John Duncan have also expressed interest and support for the project.

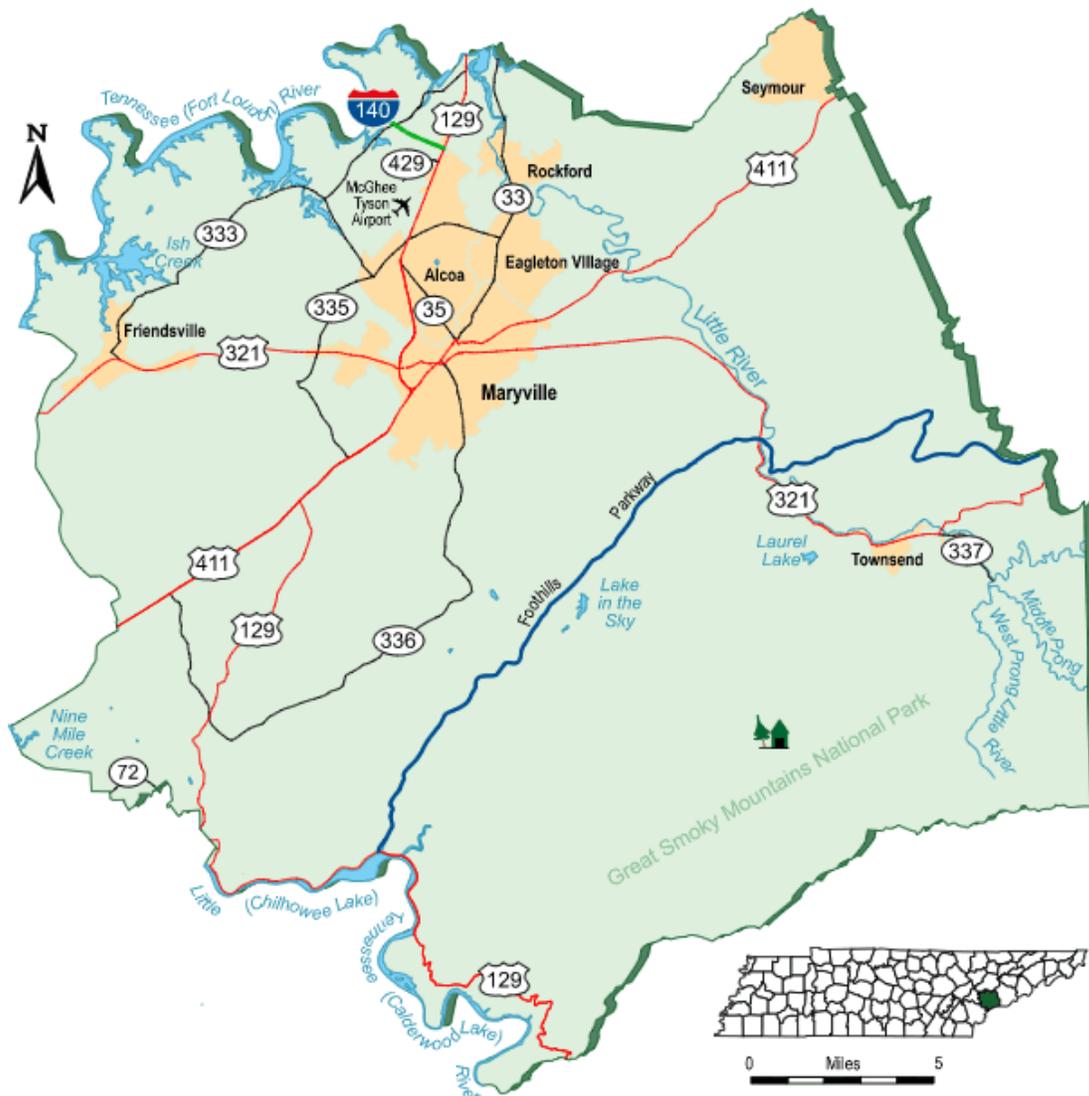
## **Introduction to Blount County**

Blount County, one of the oldest counties in Tennessee, was established in 1795 when the territorial legislature separated from Knox County. The county was named for William Blount, governor of the territory of the United States south of the Ohio River. It is situated in East Tennessee and borders the Great Smoky Mountain National Park. Blount County is home to six incorporated cities -- Alcoa, Friendsville, Louisville, Maryville, Rockford, and Townsend. The county has more than 100,000 citizens.

- Blount County has had an approximately 25% growth rate in the last 10 years.
- Blount County is governed by a county commission/county mayor form of government.
- There are three public school systems in Blount County. Several higher education facilities are in the area as well. Maryville College is a small liberal arts college located on 370 acres in Maryville. Pellissippi State is a community college that supports continuing education for Knox and Blount Counties. The University of Tennessee at Knoxville is located just 14 miles from Maryville.
- Knoxville's metropolitan airport, McGhee-Tyson, is located in Blount County.
- Blount County has 24 major industrial employers with 50 or more employees. Two of its largest employers are the Aluminum Company of America and Denso Manufacturing Tennessee, Inc.
- The county has an average temperature of 59 degrees.
- More than 30 hotels and motels are available within the county. It also has approximately five bed and breakfasts, eight campgrounds, and nearly 60 businesses that rent cabins and cottages.
- Blount County offers many recreational activities. Structured activities are offered through the Maryville-Alcoa-Blount County Recreation and Parks Commission. Other opportunities include six public golf courses, 18 public tennis courts, three public swimming pools, seven playgrounds, and five riding stables.
- Townsend is a gateway to the Great Smoky Mountain National Park.
- Tourism in Blount County has increased 84 percent over the last 10 years.
- The current economic impact of tourism for Blount County is \$210 million.
- It is estimated that nearly 10 million people visit the Smoky Mountains each year.

- Tourists from the top 10 cities that visited Townsend and the Smoky Mountains in 2004, in addition to Tennessee, include: Chicago, Illinois; Cincinnati and Columbus, Ohio; Houston, Texas; Indianapolis, Indiana; Louisville, Kentucky; Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; St. Louis, Missouri; Jacksonville and Miami, Florida. Blount County's tourism growth rate is more than double the national average. Other top cities in the past five years include: Atlanta, Georgia; Cleveland, Ohio; Tampa and Orlando, Florida; Detroit, Michigan; Charlotte and Asheville, North Carolina.
- Blount County is located 15 minutes from Knoxville, has the Pellissippi Parkway access to I-40 and I-75, and is 30 minutes from I-81.

*Map of Blount County, indicating major transportation routes, towns, and cities.*



## Resource Survey

### **Great Smoky Mountains National Park and Surrounding Areas**

- **Great Smoky Mountains National Park** (<http://www.nps.gov/grsm/>): Dedicated in 1940, the Great Smoky Mountains National Park encompasses over 500,000 acres of continuous ridges of forest on the border of Tennessee and North Carolina. The park is noted for its biodiversity, housing more than 5,000 species of plant life and over 200 different kinds of birds, fish, and other animals. It also has many recreational opportunities with over 850 miles of hiking trails, 2,115 miles of fishing streams, and 10 campgrounds. Around 10 million people visit the park each year making it the most visited national park in the country.

Some of the land in the national park was donated by individuals, while other land had to be purchased. The largest property owners were the Little River Lumber Company and the Champion Fiber Company. Both companies negotiated the highest prices for their land, and the Little River Lumber Company was allowed to continue logging the area until 1932.

- **Great Smoky Mountains Institute at Tremont** (<http://www.gsmit.org/>): The mission of the Great Smoky Mountains Institute is to “provide in-depth experiences through educational programs designed to nurture appreciation of Great Smoky Mountains National Park, celebrate diversity, and foster stewardship.” Located in Walker Valley at the heart of the national park, the Institute is a private, non-profit organization that works closely with the National Park service to provide educational programs for children and adults. Tremont began as a lumber camp for the Little River Lumber Company in the early twentieth century.
- **Cades Cove** (<http://www.nps.gov/grsm/gsmsite/cadescove.html>): Cades Cove, a 6,800-acre valley section of the national park near Townsend, provides more than two million visitors a year with opportunities for recreation, as well as opportunities to learn about the natural and cultural history of the state park.

The valley floor has approximately 2,400 acres of largely open fields surrounded by forests and drained by Abrams Creek. The Cove hosts a wide variety of plants and animals, including deer, black bear, and wild turkey. River otters and barn owls have been reintroduced to the Cove. The Cove also contains a nineteenth century grist mill, homes, and churches that begin to tell the story of the area’s cultural history.

According to historian Durwood Dunn in his entry on Cades Cove in the *Tennessee Encyclopedia of History and Culture*, Cades Cove

had already been long inhabited by the Cherokees, who called it Tsiyahi, or ‘otter place,’ when John Oliver, his wife, and young child arrived there in the fall of

1818. By 1821 other neighbors had joined the Olivers from Carter County, and the expansion of farms, homes, and gardens proceeded rapidly in a pattern identical to frontier development throughout the United States. As early as 1827 a bloomery forge had been constructed in the cove; by the 1830s roads for marketing agricultural surplus connected the cove to Maryville and Knoxville. In the 1840s and 1850s new waves of immigrants from other states and many foreign countries entered the cove, enriching the community with their diverse talents. Although many migrants used the cove only as a temporary way station in their travel west, entrepreneurs like Daniel D. Foute and abolitionist, mineralogist, and physician Dr. Calvin Post surveyed the surrounding mountains for prospective gold and copper mines in a fever of capitalist activity. Because of its unique location, Cades Cove remained a community of farms surrounded by large stretches of mountain wilderness, an environment which provided plentiful opportunities for hunting deer and bear and fur trapping.

The Civil War brought bitter division to the largely Unionist community. Outlaw guerrilla bands from North Carolina periodically raided the cove, stripping the area of food and other valuables. The postwar period brought regression--fewer new families moved into the cove; most remaining families were interrelated through an extended kinship structure. By 1900 some degree of prosperity had returned, and during the next two decades cove farmers became caught up in the progressive agricultural movement manifested throughout the rest of the country. During the 1920s, when farm prices slumped, bitter divisions erupted within the community over moonshining, and many cove citizens sought new jobs in other parts of the country.

For those who remained, however, the final challenge to their life as a community came with the movement to establish the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Initially promised that they would be left unmolested in their homes, many cove residents felt betrayed by subsequent inclusion of the entire cove within the boundaries of the new park. Cades Cove's leading citizen, John W. Oliver, grandson of the original settler, led a lonely and protracted court battle against eminent domain, but lost finally after appealing his case three times before the Tennessee Supreme Court. The birth of what would become the most popular national park in the East thus marked the death of this historic community.

The outward migration from the Cove ended in 1999 when the last resident, Kermit Caughron, died.



- **Cooper Road Trail**

Cooper Road Trail was a major 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century transportation artery for the residents of Cades Cove. The road passes by the site of the James Carson Iron Works, spur roads to Montvale Springs in Maryville, old postal service routes, and a primary way that both Federal and Confederate soldiers moved through this part of Blount County during the Civil War. Historian Michael Strutin notes: “When Cooper Road was built, in the first half of the 1800s, it improved the lives of those who lived in Cades Cove, giving them critical connections with outside markets. As the years passed, the need to reach outside markets became more important. Improvement to Cooper Road, however, did not keep up with the times.” (p. 185)

- **Little River Road** (Tennessee 73)

The Little River Road is an approximately 20-mile paved road, which connects Townsend to the national park visitor center at Sugarlands and the nearby town of Gatlinburg. It is a popular road connecting these two gateways; the road hugs the banks of the Little River, providing outstanding river views and an appreciation of the deep river gorge formed by the river. The Maloney Point overlook honors General Frank Maloney, one of the national park founders and the guiding spirit behind the creation of Foothills Parkway.

## **Foothills Parkway**

Southern historian Bren Martin, in his entry in the *Tennessee Encyclopedia of History and Culture*, noted the long history of federal involvement in creating the scenic and historic Foothills Parkway:

The origins of the parkway stemmed from the federal government's decision not to build the Blue Ridge Parkway through any part of Tennessee. Disappointed by this decision, Frank Maloney, vice-president of the Great Smoky Mountains Conservation Association, conceived the idea of the Foothills Parkway as a way to spur economic growth and link recreational areas on the Tennessee side of the national park.

After years of lobbying, Congress in 1944 passed an act that enabled the parkway project to proceed. The State of Tennessee received the authority to purchase rights of way, and the federal government promised to provide funds for construction and maintenance of the parkway. The Tennessee Highway Department (later the Tennessee Department of Transportation) purchased 8,835 acres in Cocke, Sevier, and Blount Counties in the 1950s, but construction did not begin until 1960.

Due primarily to a shortage of federal funds, the construction of the Foothills Parkway proceeded very slowly. Sections of the parkway opened as early as 1965, but in 1978, nearly thirty-five years after the passage of the initial enabling act, less than one-third of the parkway had been completed. Although earth slides and soaring costs continued to plague the project, Representative James Quillen provided a strong legislative push for

completion of the parkway, and by late 1996, only 1.6 miles remained unfinished. The parkway now provides millions of tourists with breathtaking vistas of the mountains.

In late May 2005, the Federal Highway Administration let a contract to build bridge number 8, the third of ten bridges on a 1.6-mile or 2.6-kilometer section straddling the Blount and Sevier county line. That bridge will be 220 feet or 67 meters, and the work will also include finishing work on and between the two bridges completed in June 2001. Work should begin in mid-July 2005 and take about 14 months to complete. Construction techniques will be environmentally-friendly, as they were with the Linn Cove Viaduct that completed the Blue Ridge Parkway in 1982. When the other seven bridges are eventually constructed, that "missing link" will open up a stretch of road 16.1 miles or 25.9 kilometers long. This project is controversial in that many wish to see further automobile usage in the Smokies region discouraged rather than encouraged; the area is already considered to be the most-used and most polluted national park.

### **Calderwood Dam, Chilhowee Dam, and Alcoa**

The industrialization of the South, and the introduction of cutting-edge technology into Southern Appalachia, are key historical themes associated with the various properties of the Aluminum Corporation of America (ALCOA) in Blount County.

The most imposing resources are the companies' hydroelectric plants on the Little Tennessee River. Calderwood Dam (1929-1930) is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Pre-dating the massive projects of the Tennessee Valley Authority, Calderwood was more than a dam and powerhouse complex; originally an entire company town operated at the site. The National Register nomination encompasses all of the extant properties. According to a recent thematic National Register nomination prepared by Thomason and Associates of Nashville, the Calderwood "facility consists of a dam, powerhouse, and pipeline. The Calderwood Dam is 232 feet in height and contains the 536-acre Calderwood Reservoir, which has a normal elevation of 1087.8 feet and a drainage area of 1,856 square miles. The Calderwood Reservoir straddles the Tennessee-North Carolina border with about half of its area in each state. [It thus crosses into the Blue Ridge National Heritage Area boundary.]"

"Approximately one mile downstream from the dam is the Calderwood powerhouse, which contains three vertical Francis turbine units and generators. Water passes from the dam to the powerhouse via a 2,150-foot long concrete lined tunnel."

The Chilhowee Plant is located on the Blount/Monroe county line, with access provided by US 129 in Blount County. Built from 1955 to 1957, "the Chilhowee powerhouse is integral with the dam. It is located downstream of the intake between the gate controlled spillway and the left non-overflow section. The associated reservoir contains approximately 1,747 acres and has an elevation of 874 feet. Its drainage area is 1.977 square miles. The Chilhowee powerhouse has three Kaplan turbine units."



ALCOA built and still operates both plants. This company, according Tara Mielnik in her entry in the *Tennessee Encyclopedia of History and Culture*, was

organized as the Pittsburgh Reduction Company in 1888, [and] the company changed its name in 1907 to the Aluminum Company of America and began using the acronym ALCOA in the early 1900s after applying the acronym to company-owned sites in Tennessee. The company officially changed its name to ALCOA, Inc., in January 1999.

In 1909 ALCOA began purchasing riparian rights along the Little Tennessee River in a search for cheap power. Building a network of dams, ALCOA chose North Maryville as a plant site in 1913. It reincorporated the community as the town of Alcoa in 1914, purchased 750 acres of land, and built a smelting plant. Thus, Alcoa joined other planned industrial communities in Tennessee.

In 1919 ALCOA purchased the Knoxville Power Company, which held the rights to the power potential of dams on the Little Tennessee River. After World War I ALCOA expanded its facilities with a rolling mill, a sheet mill, and plans for a 7,500-acre city. These plans included workers' housing and schools, which, like the facilities of most company towns in Tennessee, were racially segregated.

City government was tied directly to company management, with Victor Hultquist, ALCOA's construction superintendent, serving as city manager until the 1950s. Alcoa recruited no other outside investment, nor were others interested in coming to a one-

company town. The lack of economic diversification bound the fortunes of Alcoa's citizens to those of the company.

During the depression, ALCOA kept production at 1920s levels, cutting workers' hours to thirty per week to maintain employment. The company also reduced rents in company housing. Nevertheless, a wave of violent strikes erupted in Alcoa in the late 1930s in response to collective bargaining legislation. Hultquist hired a police force to suppress the strikers, and Governor Gordon Browning sent in the National Guard in July 1937. The strike ended quickly, and workers returned to the factory.

World War II brought prosperity to ALCOA, and the Tennessee operations expanded accordingly. The North Plant, constructed in 1940-41, covered sixty-five acres and employed twelve thousand workers, making it one of the largest plants in the world. In the postwar years, the company initially prospered due to strong demand for aluminum and related products. ALCOA's national image, however, suffered in the late 1940s and 1950s as a result of the hard-line stance taken toward labor unions. In addition, ALCOA no longer dominated the aluminum market, and the Tennessee Valley Authority challenged ALCOA's hydroelectric power business.

In response, the company released its paternalistic grip on the town of Alcoa. The company continued and expanded its practice of donating land for parks, schools, churches, and municipal buildings. The company also provided funds for the development of an airport in Blount County and continued to sell property in the public's interest, including additional land to the City of Knoxville for airport expansions. In order to improve company-town relations, ALCOA also provided Alcoa residents with recreational facilities, a retirement club, and tuition support at local universities.

By the 1950s the company had dispensed with company housing, selling houses to renters and Alcoa workers. ALCOA also transferred its electric and water utilities to the city in 1955 and 1960 respectively, thereby placing ALCOA's former power monopoly under the control of the Tennessee Valley Authority.

Over the last thirty years the evolving world market for aluminum, the demands of labor, modern transportation, and the environmental movement have worked together to reshape the policies and products of the corporation. In 1997 ALCOA was Blount County's largest manufacturing employer with 2,050 workers.

The historic African American section of town remains an integral part of the community and lines both sides of the highway north of the factory. Historic potential National Register churches still serve the community and a historic school building has been converted into a new community facility. Alcoa, like neighboring Maryville, also has established a system of greenway trails that provide excellent recreational opportunities.

## Maryville College



Maryville College's statewide and national significance lies in its pioneering role in providing higher education opportunities for all Americans. It was among the first colleges in the country to open its doors to African Americans, Native Americans, as well as whites and admitted women students as early as 1869. The college dates from 1819 and the efforts of Dr. Isaac Anderson (1780-1857) to build the Southern and Western Theological Seminary to train men for leadership in the Presbyterian Church. Anderson's goal later broadened to reach out to local whites, blacks, and Cherokees who could benefit from higher education. The seminary was known as a center for southern abolitionist thought and a supporter of the underground railroad. But divisions within the Presbyterian Church and the lack of financial support led Anderson to broaden the school's audience from being just a seminary to a literary college, and in 1842 Maryville College was chartered. As part of its education program, Maryville College established a preparatory school, which remained in operation until 1925. In the late nineteenth century, the college was notable for its policy to have blacks and whites attend together; its doors remained opened to African Americans until Jim Crow legislation in the early twentieth century forbade blacks to attend the college. Once the U.S. Supreme Court announced its decision outlawing public segregation in *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954), Maryville College immediately ended segregation policies and welcomed back African Americans. It was the first college in Tennessee to do so and among the first in the South.

The first campus was located in downtown Maryville, but Civil War activity destroyed or damaged these buildings. The college was closed from 1861 to 1866. In 1869 Maryville College staked its claim as one of Appalachia's new and promising Reconstruction institutions by moving to a new sixty-acre location on the outskirts of town, where the school constructed an impressive array of buildings, many financed by leading reform

institutions or philanthropists, over the next fifty years. For example, the Freedmen's Bureau, industrialist William Thaw of Pittsburgh, and John C. Baldwin of New York provided funds for the construction of Anderson Hall, named in honor of the school's founder, in 1869. Benjamin Fahnestock designed this impressive Second Empire-style building, and Daniel B. Fayerweather of New York funded the construction of Fayerweather Science Hall, designed by Baumann Brothers of Knoxville, in 1898. Philanthropist Nelle McCormick of Chicago, the YMCA, and the students themselves provided the money and labor for Bartlett Hall, designed by George F. Barber of Knoxville in 1901. In the 1910s capitalist Andrew Carnegie provided funds for the five-story Carnegie Hall, which was designed by R. F. Graf and Sons of Knoxville and completed in 1917. Thaw Hall (1923) was built with donations from Mary C. Thaw of Pittsburgh. Much of the campus's expansion came during the presidency of Samuel T. Wilson, who also had graduated from the college. All of these buildings, along with other historic structures, comprise the Maryville College Historic District, listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The beautiful campus and rich institutional history of Maryville College are sources of pride for the college's thousands of graduates.

## **Townsend Archaeological Project**

The Townsend Archaeological Project was the largest archaeological field project ever carried out for the Tennessee Department of Transportation. The project area was 7.9 km (4.9 miles) in length and the right-of-way width was 100 m (305 feet), 20% of which came from the former two lane highway and adjacent drainage ditches.

According to the “Access Genealogy: Indian Tribal Records” website, the following areas had Cherokee villages:

- Ellejoy Creek of Little River near Maryville in Blount County, Tenn.
- Little Tennessee River about Talassee Ford in Blount County, Tenn.
- Cades Cove, on Cover Creek, Blount County, Tenn.

The Townsend Archaeological Project, and the exhibits at the new Smoky Mountains Heritage Center, are very important recent developments to document and tell the extensive Native American story of this Appalachian region.

Tuckaleechee Cove is located adjacent to the Great Smoky Mountains National Park and is approximately 33 miles southeast of Knoxville. The Little River flows through Tuckaleechee Cove and has formed flat bottomlands and terraces used by Native Americans for camp sites and villages over thousands of years until the mid-1700s. The archaeological remains of these habitations, as evidenced in the Townsend Archaeological Project, included thousands of cooking and storage pits, dozens of dwellings, and palisaded or fortified village areas.

Three stages of archaeological investigations were conducted in the project area for nearly three years. Three stages included Phase I survey involving initial identification of archaeological sites in the right-of-way. Seven sites were identified using shovel tests and

surface collections. Five of the sites were investigated during Phase II testing. A backhoe was used to remove 10-20% of the plow disturbed soils to expose cooking and storage pits and the remains of dwellings. The purpose of the testing was to determine if the sites are significant based on National Registry criteria. Finally, Phase III data recovery involved exposure of site areas within the right-of-way through the excavation of large block areas.

Data recovery was conducted on four sites:

- Kinzel Springs Site (40BT89), a multi-component Archaic through Historic Cherokee site
- Apple Barn Site (40BT90), a multi-component Terminal Archaic through Historic Cherokee and Euro American Farmstead
- Pony Ride Site (40BT91), a multi-component Middle Woodland through Euro American Homestead
- Gas Company Site (40BT94), a Middle Woodland open habitation site

## **Sam Houston Schoolhouse**



This log building near Maryville documents the “middle ground” era of Appalachian history when Cherokees and the newly arrived white settlers lived and worked in adjacent communities throughout the county. This state historic site has long been recognized as a significant article of the old southwest frontier. According to her entry in the *Tennessee Encyclopedia of History and Culture*, historian Marlene Jones notes that the building is one of the few 18<sup>th</sup> century structures left in the region:

In 1792, according to tradition, a North Carolina Revolutionary War veteran named Andrew Kennedy settled with his family on a parcel of land along Little River near

Maryville in Blount County. Sometime after his arrival in Tennessee, probably in 1794, Kennedy and Henry McCulloch joined with some neighbors to construct a small log schoolhouse in a clearing less than a mile from the Kennedy home. No definitive explanation can now be given for the decision to locate the schoolhouse at the somewhat unusual site more than a half-mile from Little River. Presumably its proximity to the refreshing spring which flows nearby and perhaps its central position in relation to the original builders' homes were factors in the selection of the site. The school's first teacher was Henry McCulloch, but beyond this nothing is really known of the history of the building until the arrival of the colorful character with whose name it is now inseparably linked.

Born in 1793, and thus hardly older than the little schoolhouse, Sam Houston was one of nine children of a moderately prosperous militia officer in Virginia's Shenandoah Valley. Reverses in the family's fortunes around 1807 brought the recently widowed Elizabeth Houston and her youngsters to seek a new start in Blount County, where they settled on a farm some miles from Maryville. Young Sam, however, could not for long be kept tied to family concerns. Restless and romantic, he tried farm work, school, and storekeeping in quick succession and found none of them to his liking. His spirit of adventure led him to seek out the companionship of the nearby Cherokees, with whom he lived at intervals for several years. His purchases of trinkets and supplies from local merchants eventually put him in debt and forced him to seek employment. That he chose teaching was typical of his brazen self-confidence, for his own formal education hardly totaled six months. He did have a bright mind, however, and a taste for literature.

At the age of eighteen, Sam left his Indian friends and began conducting classes in the log schoolhouse of Andrew Kennedy and Henry McCulloch. Since his family's homestead was nearly fifteen miles away he undoubtedly took quarters somewhere in the school neighborhood. Local tradition says that Sam boarded in his pupils' homes until his mother moved to the area to care for him while he taught. Though initially he had some difficulty recruiting students, he soon had a surfeit of them. Among his pupils were all nine children of Andrew Kennedy and, according to tradition, even some men of age forty or fifty. In order to more quickly repay his creditors, Houston set the tuition rate at eight dollars per year, well above the standard six-dollar fee. As hard currency was difficult to obtain, he allowed one-third to be paid in corn, one-third in cotton cloth, and the remainder in cash.

Houston did not envision teaching as a permanent career, however, and as soon as he had earned enough to cover his debts, he closed the school and returned to a local academy for more schooling of his own. An unsuccessful bout with geometry ended that endeavor and in March 1813 he enlisted in the U.S. Army to begin the first chapter of a long, successful, and dramatic career in politics and war. But his experience in the little schoolhouse did not leave him unaffected, for he retained a lifelong commitment to popular education as well as some fond memories of his teaching days. Years later, when asked which of the prominent positions he had held had given him the greatest satisfaction, he replied: "When a young man in Tennessee, I kept a county school. . . . I experienced a higher feeling of dignity and self-satisfaction than from any office or honor which I have since held.'

## **Additional Important Historical and Natural Resources**



The properties above are key resources underlining the region's national importance. In addition, the county has several contributing National Register properties, Century Farms, historic African-American Churches, historic sites, and parks.

### **National Register Listings in Blount County**

- **Alcoa South Plant Office**  
Hall Road  
Alcoa, TN  
Listed: 1989-08-18  
Blount County MPS
- **Alcoa West Plant Office**  
Lodge Street  
Alcoa, TN  
Listed: 1989-07-25  
Blount County MPS
- **John Alexander House**  
714 Hillside Avenue  
Maryville, TN  
Listed: 1989-07-25  
Blount County MPS

- **Alumni Gym**  
Maryville College Campus  
Maryville, TN  
Listed: 1989-07-25  
Blount County MPS
- **Anderson Hall**  
Maryville College Campus  
Maryville, TN  
Listed: 1975-02-20
- **Peter Bartlett House**  
315 High Street  
Maryville, TN  
Listed: 1989-07-25  
Blount County MPS
- **Bethlehem Methodist Church**  
Bethlehem Road, 0.5 miles South of Ellejoy Road  
Wildwood, TN  
Listed: 1989-07-25  
Blount County MPS
- **Brick Mill Site**  
Brick Mill Road  
Maryville, TN  
Listed: 1989-07-25  
Blount County MPS
- **Peter Brickey House**  
Wears Valley Road, 0.1 miles west of Bonner Hollow Road  
Townsend, TN  
Listed: 1989-07-25  
Blount County MPS
- **Cades Cove Historic District**  
10 miles southwest of Townsend in Great Smoky Mountains National Park  
Townsend, TN  
Listed: 1977-07-13
- **James R. Davis House**  
Junction of River Rd. and Davis Ford Rd.  
Walland, TN  
Listed: 1989-07-25  
Blount County MPS

- **Calderwood Dam (boundary increase)**  
 Tennessee R. at the end of Calderwood Rd.  
 Calderwood, TN  
 Listed: 1990-07-03  
 Pre-TVA Hydroelectric Power in Tennessee MPS
- **Calderwood Hydroelectric Development**  
 314 Growdon Blvd.  
 Calderwood, TN  
 Listed: 2004-05-24  
 Tapoco Hydroelectric Project MPS
- **Chilhowee Hydroelectric Development**  
 6120 TN 129  
 Tallassee, TN  
 Listed: 2004-05-27  
 Tapoco Hydroelectric Project MPS
- **Langston Clark Barn**  
 Sixmile Rd., 0.4 mi. E of Knob Creek Rd.  
 Maryville, TN  
 Listed: 1989-07-25  
 Blount County MPS
- **Clover Hill Mill**  
 Junction of Mill Rd. and Clover Hill Rd.  
 Maryville, TN  
 Listed 1989-07-25  
 Blount County MPS
- **Cloyd's Creek Presbyterian Church**  
 Junction of Buzzard's Roost Rd. and Kirk Rd.  
 Friendsville, TN  
 Listed: 1989-07-25  
 Blount County MPS
- **Mary Cochrane Barn**  
 Binfield Rd., 0.2 mi. N of Clover Hill Road  
 Maryville, TN  
 Listed: 1989-07-25  
 Blount County MPS
- **John J. Craig Quarry Historic District**  
 Marmor Rd., 0.5 mi. S. of Miser Station Road  
 Friendsville, TN  
 Listed: 1989-07-25, Blount County MPS

- **Gideon Crawford House**  
Maryville College Campus  
Maryville, TN  
Listed: 1989-07-25  
Blount County MPS
  
- **Federal Building**  
201 E. Broadway  
Maryville, TN  
Listed: 1989-07-25  
Blount County MPS
  
- **A.J. Fisher House**  
Old Walland Hwy.  
Walland, TN  
Listed: 1989-07-25  
Blount County MPS
  
- **Samuel Frazier House**  
Junction of Marble Hill Rd. and Big Springs Rd.  
Friendsville, TN  
Listed: 1989-07-25  
Blount County MPS
  
- **Friends Church**  
314 W. Broadway  
Maryville, TN  
Listed: 1989-07-25  
Blount County MPS
  
- **Samuel George House**  
NE of Louisville on Topside Rd.  
Louisville, TN  
Listed: 1982-01-27
  
- **James Gillespie House**  
Loves Ferry Rd., 1 mi. N of Louisville  
Louisville, TN  
Listed: 1989-07-25  
Blount County MPS
  
- **John Hackney House**  
Front and Main Sts.  
Friendsville, TN  
Listed: 1989-07-25  
Blount County MPS

- **John Hackney Mill Site**  
Main St. near Front St.  
Friendsville, TN  
Listed: 1989-07-25  
Blount County MPS
  
- **Alexander Hamil House**  
Morganton Rd., 0.5 mi. E. of Clover Hill Road  
Maryville, TN  
Listed: 1989-07-25  
Blount County MPS
  
- **Happy Valley School**  
Happy Valley Rd.  
Maryville, TN  
Listed: 1989-07-25  
Blount County MPS
  
- **Harper Memorial Library**  
300 E. Church St.  
Maryville, TN  
Listed: 1989-07-25  
Blount County MPS
  
- **William Henderson House**  
Louisville Rd., 0.75 mi. S of Lowes Ferry Rd.  
Louisville, TN  
Listed: 1989-07-25  
Blount County MPS
  
- **Henry House**  
SE of Binfield on Henry Lane  
Binfield, TN  
Listed: 1974-11-01
  
- **John Hitch House**  
Lee Lambert Rd., 0.5 mi. S of Old Walland Hwy.  
Maryville, TN  
Listed: 1989-07-25  
Blount County MPS
  
- **Pete Hood House**  
827 Broadway  
Maryville, TN  
1989-07-25  
Blount County MPS

- **Indiana Avenue Historic District**  
Roughly bounded by Goddard St., Court St., Indiana Ave., and Cates St.  
Maryville, TN  
Listed: 1989-08-21  
Blount County MPS
  
- **David Jones House**  
720 Tuckaleechee Pike  
Maryville, TN  
Listed: 1982-08-26
  
- **David Jones House**  
404 High St.  
Maryville, TN  
Listed: 1989-07-25  
Blount County MPS
  
- **Macklin Kerr House**  
Big Gully Rd., 0.3 mi. N. of Kyker Rd.  
Maryville, TN  
Listed: 1989-07-25  
Blount County MPS
  
- **Hezekiah Kizer House**  
0.5 mi., S of jct. Of Marble Hill Rd. and Dunlap Hollow Rd.  
Maryville, TN  
1989-07-25  
Blount County MPS
  
- **Louisville Historic District**  
Between RR tracks and Tennessee River  
Louisville, TN  
Listed: 1974-12-23
  
- **James Martin House**  
Martin Rd., 1 mi. E. of E. Millers Cove Rd.  
Waland, TN  
Listed: 1989-07-25  
Blount County MPS
  
- **John Martin Mill**  
Mill Rd., 0.3 mi. S. of W. Millers Cove Rd.  
Waland, TN  
Listed: 1989-07-25  
Blount County MPS

- **Warner Martin House**  
Central Point Rd. at Old Nails Creek  
Rockford, TN  
Listed: 1989-07-25  
Blount County MPS
- **Maryville College Historic District**  
Washington St.  
Maryville, TN  
Listed: 1982-09-09
- **James McCampbell Barn**  
Old Cades Cove Rd., 0.1 mi. S. of Dry Valley Road  
Townsend, TN  
Listed: 1989-07-25  
Blount County MPS
- **Minnis McCampbell Barn**  
Old Cades Cove Rd., 0.1 mi. S. of Dry Valley Rd.  
Townsend, TN  
Listed: 1989-07-25  
Blount County MPS
- **John McConnell House**  
McConnell Rd., 0.5 mi. W. of Maple Lane Rd.  
Maryville, TN  
Listed: 1989-07-25  
Blount County MPS
- **Thomas McCulloch House**  
Junction of Martin Mille Pike and TN 33  
Rockford, TN  
Listed: 1989-07-25  
Blount County MPS
- **McNutt-Howard House**  
825 W. Broadway Ave.  
Maryville, TN  
Listed: 1989-07-25  
Blount County MPS
- **McNutt-McReynolds House**  
803 W. Broadway Ave.  
Maryville, TN  
Listed: 1989-07-25  
Blount County MPS

- **Miser Station Store**  
Junction of Union Grove Rd. and Chestnut Hill Rd.  
Friendsville, TN  
Listed: 1989-07-25  
Blount County MPS
  
- **Morningside**  
Maryville College Campus  
Maryville, TN  
Listed: 1989-07-25  
Blount County MPS
  
- **Samuel A. Patton Building**  
114 E. Broadway Ave.  
Maryville, TN  
Listed: 1989-07-25  
Blount County MPS
  
- **Peery Mill Site**  
Old Walland Hwy. 0.1 mi. N of Cold Springs Rd.  
Walland, TN  
Listed: 1989-07-25  
Blount County MPS
  
- **People's Bank of Friendsville**  
College St.  
Friendsville, TN  
1989-07-25  
Blount County MPS
  
- **Pistol Creek Dam and Mill Race**  
Pistol Creek between Church Ave. and Ellis St.  
Maryville, TN  
Listed: 1989-07-25  
Blount County MPS
  
- **Stephen Porter House**  
Martin Mill Pike, 0.2 mi., W. of Glover Rd.  
Rockford, TN  
Listed: 1989-07-25  
Blount County MPS
  
- **John M. Rorex House**  
Junction of Brick Mill Rd. and Old Niles Ferry Rd.  
Maryville, TN  
Listed: 1989-07-25, Blount County MPS

- **Russell- Lackey- Prater House**  
Prater Rd. off Old Lowes Ferry Rd. at Poland Creek  
Louisville, TN  
Listed: 1989-11-20  
Blount County MPS
  
- **Sam Houston Schoolhouse**  
NE of Maryville on TN 8  
Maryville, TN  
Listed: 1972-06-13
  
- **Shaddon Mill Site**  
Ninemile Creek at junction of Big Elm and Trigonía Rds.  
Maryville, TN  
Listed: 1989-08-21  
Blount County MPS
  
- **John F. Shea House**  
Old Walland Hwy.  
Townsend, TN  
Listed: 1989-07-25  
Blount County MPS
  
- **Southern Railroad Bridge**  
Southern RR right-of-way over Little River  
Rockford, TN  
Listed: 1989-07-25  
Blount County MPS
  
- **Southern Railroad Freight Depot**  
Southern RR right-of-way between Sevierville Rd. and Washington Ave.  
Maryville, TN  
Listed: 1989-07-25  
Blount County MPS
  
- **Dr. William P. Stevenson House**  
Maryville College campus  
Maryville, TN  
Listed: 1989-07-25  
Blount County MPS
  
- **Thompson-Brown House**  
1005 Tuckleechee Pike  
Maryville, TN  
Listed: 1978-11-02

- **Carl Trundle Barn**  
Junction Wildwood Rd. and US 411  
Wildwood, TN  
Listed: 1989-07-25  
Blount County MPS
- **Tobler Vineyard House**  
Hollybrook Rd., 1 mi. N of Martin Mill Pike  
Rockford, TN  
Listed: 1989-07-25  
Blount County MPS
- **Walland Bridge**  
Old Walland Rd. over Little River  
Walland, TN  
Listed: 1989-07-25  
Blount County MPS
- **Walland Power Plant**  
Old Walland Hwy., 0.75 mi. N of Walland  
Walland, TN  
Listed: 1989-07-25  
Blount County MPS
- **Marcus Warren House**  
Miser Station Rd., 0.2 mi., S. of Middle Settlement Rd.  
Louisville, TN  
Listed: 1989-07-25  
Blount County MPS
- **White's Mill**  
Old White's Mill Rd.  
Maryville, TN  
Listed: 1989-07-25  
Blount County MPS
- **Willard-Clark House**  
1125 Broadway  
Maryville, TN  
Listed: 1989-07-25  
Blount County MPS
- **Isaac Yearout House**  
Big Springs Rd., 0.3 mi. N of Morganton Rd.  
Alcoa, TN  
Listed: 1989-07-25, Blount County MPS

## Tennessee Century Farms in Blount County

The Tennessee Century Farms Program is a public program that honors family farmers who have kept continuously owned family land in agricultural production for at least the last one hundred years. Established by the Tennessee Department of Agriculture in 1975-76 as a special bicentennial project, the initial survey identified approximately six hundred Tennessee farm families who joined the program and submitted the required farm history, certification by a county historian and/or extension agent, and photographs. In 1985, during the administration of Governor Lamar Alexander, the Oscar Farris Agricultural Museum at the Tennessee Department of Agriculture asked the Center for Historic Preservation at Middle Tennessee State University to assist in updating the histories of eligible farms and to prepare a history book about the state's Century Farms. When its survey was completed in 1986, 783 eligible Tennessee Century Farms had been identified and were included in the subsequent book, *Tennessee Agriculture: A Century Farms Perspective*, by the Center's Carroll Van West.

The MTSU Center for Historic Preservation, working with the Tennessee Department of Agriculture, the Tennessee Farm Bureau, county historians, and the UT Extension Service, accepts and processes the applications of eligible farms. As part of its rural history and preservation program, the center extended the initial book project into a traveling exhibit about Tennessee's family farm history curated by Caneta S. Hankins which toured the state in 1988-89; developed heritage education curricula centered on a family farm as a teaching laboratory; and established a program of historic preservation assistance, through which eligible farm families may request that the center prepare a nomination for their farm to the National Register of Historic Places. The center has also prepared a National Register multiple property nomination for historic family farms in Middle Tennessee as well as rural preservation toolbox titled, *Holding on to the Homestead*, by Caneta Hankins and Nancy Adgent. Due to these joint partnership efforts, Tennessee has one of the most comprehensive history and conservation projects pertaining to family farms in the country.

- **Baldwin Farm**  
Founded: 1886  
Owner: Calvin Baldwin  
Address: 3139 W. Lamar Alexander Parkway, Friendsville, TN 37737
  
- **Best Farm**  
Founded: 1809  
Owner: Mrs. Cora F. Best  
Address: Route 6, Maryville, TN 37801
  
- **Brickey Farm**  
Founded: 1808  
Owner: Jackson C. Brickey  
Address: 803 Wears Valley Rd., Townsend, TN 37882

- **Burns-Helton Farm**  
 Founded: 1852  
 Owner: Rocky King  
 Address: 931 East Miller Cove Rd., Walland, TN
  
- **Callahan Farm**  
 Founded: 1871  
 Owner: Mrs. Richard Daugherty  
 Address: 2137 Callahan Rd., Louisville, TN 37777
  
- **George Davis Farm**  
 Founded: 1871  
 Owner: George Joseph Davis  
 Address: 1609 East Broadway, Maryville, TN 37801
  
- **H. F. Anderson Farm**  
 Founded: 1873  
 Owner: John A. Kerr  
 Address: 1620 Leconte Dr., Maryville, TN 37801
  
- **H. V. Burns Farm**  
 Founded: 1808  
 Owner: Herbert Victor Burns  
 Address: 736 Wears Valley Rd., Townsend, TN 37882
  
- **Henry Farm**  
 Founded: 1808  
 Owner: Margaret McCall Henry  
 Address: Route 2, Greenback, TN 37742
  
- **Henry Hereford Farm**  
 Founded: 1824  
 Owner: Zurma Caldwell  
 Address: 8020 Bennington Drive, Knoxville, TN 37909
  
- **Hitch Farm**  
 Founded: 1895  
 Owner: Jan H. Driver  
 Address: 804 Chilhowee View Rd., Maryville, TN 37803
  
- **J. L. Burns Farm**  
 Founded: 1849  
 Owner: James Luther Burns  
 Address: 131 Bethel Church Rd., Townsend, TN 37882

- **J. Lloyd Garner Farm**  
 Founded: 1807  
 Owner: J. Lloyd Garner  
 Address: 6350 Lanier Rd., Maryville, TN 37801
  
- **J. R. Gamble Farm**  
 Founded: 1859  
 Owner: J. R. Gamble, Jr.  
 Address: 3950 Davis Ford Rd., Maryville, TN 37804
  
- **Lane Farm**  
 Founded: 1898  
 Owner: Edward Nolan Lane  
 Address: 991 Lane Dr. Friendsville, TN 37737
  
- **Laverne Farmer Farm**  
 Founded: 1824  
 Owner: Laverne Farmer  
 Address: 475 Bethel Church Rd., Townsend, TN 37882
  
- **McConnell Farm**  
 Founded: 1807  
 Owner: G. McConnell  
 Address: 1435 McConnell Lane, Greenback, TN 37782
  
- **McDonald Farm**  
 Founded: 1859  
 Owner: Ira Thomas McDonald  
 Address: 1235 Maple Lane, Greenback, TN 37742
  
- **McMurry Farm**  
 Founded: 1874  
 Owner: Joe Drinnen McMurry  
 Address: 1416 Montvale Rd., Maryville, TN 37803
  
- **Nora Davis Farm**  
 Founded: 1867  
 Owner: Rowena D. Wyrick  
 Address: 2012 Tuckaleechee Pike, Maryville, TN 37801
  
- **Ralph Kidd Farm**  
 Founded: 1860  
 Owner: Ralph Kidd  
 Address: Route 4, Maryville, TN 37801

- **Raulston Acres**  
 Founded: 1834  
 Owner: Edward Lee Raulston  
 Address: Route 6, Maryville, TN 37801
  
- **Reese Tip Davis Farm**  
 Founded: 1867  
 Owner: Margaret Davis Coulter  
 Address: 3838 Davis Ford Rd., Maryville, TN 37804
  
- **Rex Davis Farm**  
 Founded: 1835  
 Owner: Rex R. Davis  
 Address: 1510 Walter Davis Rd., Seymour, TN 37865
  
- **Russell Place Farm**  
 Founded: 1859  
 Owner: Walter Ralph Phelps  
 Address: 4264 Lowes Ferry Rd., Louisville, TN 37777
  
- **Serene Manor (Cedar Crest Farm)**  
 Founded: 1807  
 Owner: Patsy G. Cross  
 Address: Route 2, Box 410 A Maple Lane, Greenback, TN 37742
  
- **Walker Gamble Farm**  
 Founded: 1809  
 Owner: Blanche Gamble Davis  
 Address: Route 12, Box 3335, Smoky Mtn. Hwy, Maryville, TN 37801
  
- **Warren Farm**  
 Founded: 1856  
 Owner: Mary Sue Leffell  
 Address: P.O. Box 687, Louisville, TN 37777

### **Rural African American Churches in Blount County**

Tennessee is the only southern state to have surveyed and prepared a National Register Multiple Property Nomination for its rural African American churches, properties generally associated with the state's Emancipation and Reconstruction stories. In Blount County, these churches have been included in the survey:

- **Mt. Pleasant A.M.E. Zion Church**  
 3664 Grade Rd.  
 Rockford, TN 37853  
 Established 1912

- **Mt. Zion A.M.E. Zion Church**  
1542 East Old Topside Rd.  
Louisville, TN 37777  
Established 1904, Moved and rebuilt 1942
- **St. Peter Primitive Baptist Church**  
140 Howe St.  
Alcoa, TN 37701  
Established 1918
- **St. Paul A.M.E. Church**  
810 N. Hall Rd.  
Alcoa, TN 37701  
Established 1921

## Cultural and Historical Institutions, Museums

- **Palace Theater** (<http://www.palacetheater.com/>): The building that houses Maryville's Palace Theater was originally constructed in 1868 by Carl Pflanze as a furniture and casket factory. The furniture store remained until 1927 when it became the first site of McCammon-Ammons Funeral Parlor. Since then, many businesses have operated out of the building, including Cole's Drug store, Wright's Five and Dime store, the Dollar Store, and Roy's Record Shop. In 1975 brothers Walter and Walker Harrell re-opened the building as the Palace Theater. However, they had to close the doors in the early 1980s because of changing city codes. The Palace Theater has been restored to its appearance in 1934. The theater showcases concerts, children's programs, and vintage film, and hosts community events.
- **Tuckaleechee Caverns** (<http://www.tuckaleecheecaverns.com/>): Noted for onyx formations, high waterfalls and large passageways, these caverns draw between 50,000 and 100,000 visitors a year.

Written reports from the mid-nineteenth century tell of the caverns' discovery by sawmill workers who watched water from a heavy rain pour into a sink hole in the area. However, it is likely that Cherokee Indians knew of the Caverns prior to 1850.

- **Little River Railroad and Lumber Company Museum** (<http://www.littleriverrailroad.org/>): This museum, located in Townsend, collects, preserves, and exhibits the history of the Little River Railroad and Lumber Company and of the people in the region. The museum is operated by the Little River Railroad and Lumber Company, which is a non-profit corporation

founded in 1982 to preserve the heritage of the Little River Lumber Company and the Little River Railroad.

Townsend, named after Colonel W.B. Townsend who headed the Little River companies, was the site of the sawmill and headquarters of this operation, which logged huge portions of what is now the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, from 1901 until 1939. The Little River became famous far beyond its remote mountain origins, due in large part to its innovations in railroad motive power, which included invention of the first 2-4-4-2 articulated Mallet, and the smallest 4-6-2 Pacific ever built for North American standard gauge. This museum is a key place to tell the story of the region's lumber industry of the early twentieth century.

- **Great Smoky Mountain Heritage Center** (<http://www.smokymountains.org/attractions/heritage.html>) Opened in February 2006, the Heritage Center in Townsend is being developed to preserve, protect, and promote the unique history and rich culture of the people who once lived in what is now the Great Smoky Mountains National Park and its surrounding area.

The Center highlights the history of Native Americans and mountain life from periods 3000 B.C. (Native American) to 1930 (settlers). The center is 17,000 sq. feet on a 3-acre site and includes an additional 10 historic structures on site. The museum features displays of native artifacts showcasing the history of Native Americans and many examples of pioneer artifacts, such as tools and materials used in daily lives. The Native American gallery and a pioneer gallery will be permanent exhibits, but the Heritage Center will have additional space for temporary exhibits and genealogy research. In addition, indoor and outdoor stages will host live performances, classrooms will accommodate educational programs, and several outbuildings will present glimpses into life in the mountains of ages past. The Heritage Center is developing a 25-minute film, supported in part by the Tennessee Civil War NHA, to tell the area's compelling stories to visitors.

- **Thompson-Brown House** ([www.blountweb.com/thompsonbrownhouse](http://www.blountweb.com/thompsonbrownhouse)) Located at 1004 East Lamar Alexander Parkway in Maryville, this early nineteenth century two-story log house is listed in the National Register and visitors are encouraged to stop and visit the property. Once the offices for the Smoky Mountains Visitors Bureau, the house is owned by Blount County and is currently used by Keep Blount Beautiful. The Blount County Historic Trust also maintains an office in the house.

## Local Heritage Trails

- **“Shadows of the Past” Townsend Historical Trail:** This 10-mile walking/biking trail through Townsend begins and ends at the Townsend Visitors Center and includes 13 historic sites along the trail. The Smoky Mountain

Convention and Visitors Bureau (<http://www.smokymountains.org/>), in cooperation with the Leadership Blount Class of 2002 and Addison West, created the trail and developed a tour brochure to accompany visitors on the trail. The brochure, supplemented by informational signs posted along the trail, provides information about the region's history and culture. The trail runs parallel to US Highway 321. The 13 historic sites featured include:

- **Potleg Hill:** Potleg Hill was the site of a small grocery store and gathering place where Will "Potleg" Myers welcomed lumber and railroad workers.
- **Laughing Horse Motel:** The building was originally used as a button factory and a flower shop before Claude and Isabelle Derris remodeled it into a hotel in the 1930s. At that time, rent was just \$2.50 per person, including a bath.
- **Art Emert Store:** In the 1900s, two adjacent stores were located at the Little River Railroad switchyard. The stores provided an array of materials and food products to workers and neighboring communities.
- **Dark Island Swinging Bridge:** This swinging bridge dates back to the 1900s when workers used it to access cottages from the railroad or lumber mills on the other side of the river.
- **Little River Railroad [and Lumber Company] Museum:** The museum collects and preserves rail engines and equipment once used by loggers to haul timber out of the Great Smoky Mountains. It is also home to the Shay Engine number 2147, the last Shay to have run at the Little River Lumber Company.
- **Native American Home at Nawger Nob:** A Cherokee winter home stood on this site in the late 1600s. The home included a central hearth and was built using saplings and clay.
- **Native American Base Camp:** Across the street from the present-day Back Porch Restaurant, a middle archaic base camp was found. This camp was a seasonal home for nomadic Indians. Experts believe that this site was used 4,000 to 9,000 years ago.
- **Kinzel Springs and Sunshine area:** This is the last stop before heading back toward the visitor's center. The area was named after the German immigrant, Edward John Kinzel, who began purchasing land in the area in 1894 with money from his wife's art work. By 1935 the Kinzel Springs community had a resort, built by Kinzel, as well as a post office and a multi-purpose pavilion.
- **Campground Methodist Church:** The original church dated back to 1831 and was the destination for many circuit-riding preachers. The grounds were also used as a mustering ground for militia. The present day structure was built after the Civil War.
- **Woodland Prehistoric site:** This is the site of the first Middle Woodland structures excavated in East Tennessee. The site dates back to circa 200 BC and AD 350. The site held round homes measuring 18-19 feet in diameter with earth ovens used for cooking.
- **Indian Period Forts:** There were a series of Mississippian period palisades (forts) with bastions located here. The forts, constructed more

than 950 years ago because of group warfare between Chiefdoms, enclosed several structures that were square with rounded sheds.

- **John Smith's Cabin:** John Smith was one of the first settlers of the region and his cabin still stands as one of the oldest structures in Townsend.
- **Myers Cemetery:** Dating to the late 1700s, the cemetery is the burial ground for the region's earliest settlers. Surnames on burial stones remain common to names in the Townsend area today, such as Abbott, Lane, Myers, Scott, Tipton, and Walker.

## Arts and Crafts

- **Autumn Leaves Craft Fair:** The Autumn Leaves Craft Fair is held annually in Townsend at the Nawger Nob.
- **Local artist demonstrations:** The Smoky Mountain Convention and Visitors Bureau (<http://www.smokymountains.org/>) invites local artists to demonstrate Appalachian traditions at the Townsend Visitors Center each weekend.
- **Quilt Show in the Smokies:** The Smoky Mountain Convention and Visitors Bureau (<http://www.smokymountains.org/>) hosts an annual quilt show where visitors learn about the art of quilt making. A major part of the show is a contest in which quilts are displayed and visitors participate in the judging by selecting their favorite.
- **Wood-N-Strings Dulcimer Shop** (<http://www.clemmerdulcimer.com>): Located in Townsend, Tenn., Wood-N-Strings sells handcrafted Appalachian dulcimers and ban-jammers (a cross between a banjo and a dulcimer) made by owner, Mike Clemmer. The shop also features local crafts with a musical theme.

## Environmental Awareness and Conservation

- **Herb and Wildflower Program:** The Smoky Mountain Convention and Visitors Bureau (<http://www.smokymountains.org/>) hosts the annual Herb and Wildflower Program, where visitors can learn first-hand about East Tennessee's wildflowers and herbs. Visitors learn about medicinal uses of herbs and flowers, as well as techniques for cooking, growing, and identifying herbs and wildflowers.
- **Maryville-Alcoa Greenway** (<http://www.blountweb.com/greenwaytrails/>): The Greenway is an 8-mile trail connecting Springbook Park in Alcoa with Bicentennial Greenbelt and Sandy Springs Park in Maryville.

Springbrook Park, located in Alcoa, has a circular trail of 1.5 miles that features a pond, memorial trees, wild flowers, picnic tables, a playground, and the Alcoa

Swimming Pool. Parking and restrooms are provided next to a recreation building and pavilion with tennis courts, on Dalton Street. The Greenway starts near the swimming pool, passes Alcoa Elementary School and Alcoa High School, crosses Springbrook Road near Edison Road and continues beside Pistol Creek to Maryville.

At the city line for Alcoa and Maryville is the “zero” mile marker. From that point north through Alcoa is 5 miles and south through Maryville is 4 miles.

The Greenway joins the Bicentennial Greenbelt Park trail at the parking lot across from the present site of the Blount County Library. A circular trail of 2.5 miles features a lake and dam, fitness stations, a picnic pavilion, and restrooms. The trail passes near the old Sky City property that will be the future site of the Blount County Library. There is access from the Chamber of Commerce parking lot, 201 South Washington Street, Maryville, by turning right onto the sidewalk at the Church Street exit and taking the steps down to the trail. The Greenway continues from Bicentennial Park, starting across Lamar Alexander Parkway from behind the Blount County Courthouse.

The Greenway follows Pistol Creek, passing near Sam Houston Elementary School and Maryville Middle School to Sandy Springs Park. Sandy Springs Park features trails, tennis and basketball courts, softball fields, playground, restrooms, and picnic tables.

The Greenway starts again across from the Best Street parking lot in Sandy Springs Park, continuing beside Pistol Creek and turning to follow Montgomery Lane to Mize Lane and Foothills Elementary School.

- The annual **Foothills Fall Festival** is held at the Greenway Theatre, an outdoor theatre and waterfront park located along the Greenway.
- **Troutfest:** The Little River chapter of Trout Unlimited (<http://www.lrctu.org/>) holds the annual Troutfest as a fundraiser to protect and preserve the streams and rivers in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Held at the Townsend Visitors Center and Maple Leaf Lodge, the festival includes an auction, demonstrations about trout and live bees, photography, fly tying, a casting contest, artists, food, live music, storytelling, and workshops for volunteers. Visitors learn about trout and their environment, and about cold-water stream conservation and the water quality necessary for sustaining the lives of trout.
- **Foothills Wildlife Management Area.** Managed by the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency, this land near the Great Smokies was acquired by the Foothills Land Conservancy as a natural buffer and also to protect the wildlife in the region.

- **Association of Rural Gateway Communities:** The Smoky Mountain Convention and Visitors Bureau (<http://www.smokymountains.org/>) is in the process of establishing this organization to address issues concerning gateway communities, including topics such as historic preservation, growth and development, and sustainable tourism.
- **Cades Cove Preservation Association** (<http://cadescovepreservationtn.homestead.com/welcome.html>): The Cades Cove Preservation Association, Inc. (CCPA) has been established to preserve the heritage of the Cades Cove community, located in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park.
- **Foothills Antique Tractor and Engine Club** (<http://foothillsclub.com/>): The Foothills Antique Tractor and Engine Club provides an outlet for tractor and engine enthusiasts looking to preserve the heritage of these machines. The club hosts an annual tractor show that draws between 500 and 600 people a year.

## **What are the region's nationally important cultural traditions and folk ways?**

Appalachian arts and crafts, as the above list of various festivals and events document, are the defining cultural traditions of the region. Basket-making, quilt-making, furniture-making, and instrument-making are important traditions celebrated annually through festivals and practiced by several craftsmen and craftswomen in the county. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century Samuel Harmon of Blount County contributed several songs to the folklorists searching the mountains for traditional tunes and songs. Hunting and fishing are also featured and prized traditions in the region, as celebrated by the annual Troutfest in Townsend.

Residents view the spoken word as one of the region's most important, and most threatened, traditions. Folklorists documented the distinctive sounds of Blount County as early as 1938 when Marion E. Blair found a prevalence of older English proverbs in local speech. In 1973 folklorist Mabel Jean Jones studied "the regional English of the former inhabitants of Cades Cove in the Great Smoky Mountains," for her doctoral dissertation.

The Cades Cove area is also famous in vernacular architecture for its cantilevered barns. According to the leading scholar of this barn type, Marian Moffett of the University of Tennessee, cantilever barns are

nineteenth-century vernacular farm structures found principally in two East Tennessee counties, Sevier and Blount. Their characteristic feature is an overhang, or cantilever, which supports a large second-story loft atop one or more log cribs on the base story. In studies of mountain buildings made in the early 1960s, Henry Glassie identified these barns as characteristic of the southern highlands, indicating that they were found in North Carolina, Kentucky, and West Virginia. In the 1980s fieldwork by Marian Moffett and Lawrence Wodehouse found only six cantilever barns in Virginia and another three in North Carolina. By contrast, 316 cantilever barns were located in East Tennessee, with 183 in Sevier County, 106 in Blount County, and the remaining twenty-seven scattered from Johnson to Bradley Counties.

A cantilever barn usually has two log cribs, each measuring about twelve feet by eighteen feet and separated by a fourteen- to sixteen-foot driveway. The topmost logs of each crib extend eight to ten feet out to the barn's sides, becoming the cantilevered primary supports for a whole series of long secondary cantilevers which run from front to back across the entire length of the barn. A heavy timber frame, aligned over the corners of the cribs and the outer ends of the cantilevers, supports eave beams and heavy purlins, which are the major structural features of the loft. Most barns have a gable roof. Lofts were originally used for storing hay, loaded conveniently from wagons pulled into the driveway between the cribs. Cribs were livestock pens, while the sheltered area under the overhanging loft provided space for storing equipment and grooming animals. Barns still in active use now tend to be used for drying burley tobacco. Most have concealed their distinctive structures behind later enclosures and extensions and so are not obvious from the roadside.

Documentary evidence on these barns is very scarce. Most seem to have been built from

1870 to about 1915, by second- or third-generation settlers. Cantilever barns were constructed on self-sufficient farms, where accommodations for seed corn, feed, livestock, and equipment were basic needs. The unusual design may derive from German forebay barns in Pennsylvania, built into the hillside with an overhang along the out-facing side. Pioneer blockhouses in East Tennessee and elsewhere had modest overhangs on all four sides of the upper story, and these may have inspired the shape of later barns.

Moffett and Wodehouse have hypothesized that the barns' form was an invention, pulling together ideas from several sources into an original design that enjoyed local popularity for thirty to fifty years. Cantilever barns used readily available tools, materials, and construction techniques to meet practical needs. A rainy mountain climate with high humidity for much of the year makes protection from damp a continuing challenge, which this design meets nicely. Rain falling on a cantilever barn's roof drips off the eaves at a distance well removed from the supporting cribs; the overhang protects both structure and livestock, while the space between the cribs works with the continuous vents in the upper loft walls to encourage air circulation, drying the loft's contents.

The most publicly-accessible cantilever barns are preserved at the Cable Mill and Tipton Homeplace in Cades Cove of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

## What are the conservation needs of the resources?

One important issue is **water quality**. According to Melissa Nance-Richwine, the Executive Director of the Little River Watershed Association, Blount County's "Little River is a treasure whose importance cannot be overestimated. Only by protecting it, can the river continue to offer recreational opportunities, serve as a resource for the community both for industry and tourism, and – most importantly – continue to serve as our source of drinking water. Your donation in any amount will help ensure that the Little River Watershed Association continues to offer high quality programs to the community thereby protecting, preserving and enhancing the Little River."

The Little River Watershed Association carries out various programs and projects to address the county's conservation needs:

- "River Clean Ups- One of the goals of LRWA is to enhance the watershed. Last year over 300 community volunteers worked to remove over 9 tons of trash from our creeks & river. By removing litter from our waterways we ensure a safe recreation area for our enjoyment and we remove sometimes-deadly hazards to wildlife.
- Storm Drain Stenciling- According to the Environmental Protection Agency, over 60% of our water pollution comes from urban and agriculture storm water runoff (non-point source pollution). Whatever enters storm drains is discharged directly into a neighboring body of water without benefit of treatment. LRWA has permission to stencil storm drains with messages such as "Dump No waste, Drains to River" in Blount County, Maryville, & Alcoa. With the help of donations & volunteers we hope to stencil every storm drain within the next two years.
- River Reach- Our educational program focuses on water education through the use of civic group presentations, classroom workshops & school field trips to area waterways. Our goal is to teach citizens and children the vital importance of watersheds and what they can do to protect them. Last year over 200 children and 100 adults learned from River Reach. It is our belief that only through understanding the important role that water plays in all of our lives that each of us can become good environmental stewards.
- Community Events- During the last year LRWA provided the community with a number of free programs including: a Native Plant Workshop and plant give-away, Little River Awareness Day, and a multimedia kiosk. These programs allow us to gain public support, distribute current information to the community and encourage citizens in taking positive action." (LRWA website).

In late 2005, Congressman John J. Duncan, Jr., along with John Davis, the chairman of the Blount County Soil Conservation District and many other local, state, and national officials, announced the awarding of a \$835,000 Targeted Watershed Grant (one of 12 in the nation) to the Blount County SCD for the restoration and protection of the Little River Watershed. Part of the grant will go to the Little River Watershed Association for an education campaign to help reduce pollution from urban areas. Another part will go to

“reduce sediment and bacteria in the Little River Watershed, particularly the priority sections—18 miles of threatened waterway where there has been a documented decline in the diversity of aquatic life and another 230 stream miles now classified as impaired.” (Maryville Daily Times, December 1, 2005)

Another issue is **pollution** associated with visitors and travelers to the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. A lead institution in the community is Keep Blount Beautiful, which received national recognition in December 2005 for its best practices. According to a press release from the Keep America Beautiful program:

“Keep America Beautiful President G. Raymond Empson presented Keep Blount Beautiful with a first-place Affiliate Award at the 2005 Keep America Beautiful National Awards ceremony in Orlando, Florida. Receiving the award from Keep Blount Beautiful were Kristi Falco, Coordinator and Meredith Liemohn, Board President. “These awards are a big deal for us. It’s truly an honor to have our community’s efforts recognized on a national level. We will continue to strive to improve our community,” remarked Kristi Falco, Coordinator of Keep Blount Beautiful.

The Keep America Beautiful National Awards program was established to recognize and support outstanding Keep America Beautiful affiliates and participating organizations for successful programs that educate the public about litter prevention and “reduce, reuse, recycle” initiatives, and that organize local volunteer efforts to clean up, beautify and improve local community environments.

Keep Blount Beautiful’s 2005 initiatives include:

- Educating over 2,600 students and 600 adults about litter prevention and waste reduction
- Hosting a “Litter Hotline- 681-4809” that received 963 inquiries, 34 litter reports, 18 property complaints, and 12 dump complaints
- Had 290 volunteers remove 11,000 lbs of litter from the Little River
- Had volunteers read Dr. Seuss’s The Lorax to over 600 students in honor of Arbor Day
- Partnered with Carpenters Middle School to plant over 150 trees and shrubs
- Collected 40,600 telephone directories for recycling through the local schools

“Keep America Beautiful’s National Award winners represent the wide scope of accomplishments and many of the best practices among our national Network of Affiliates and participating organizations,” said Empson. “Through their involvement in educating and involving citizens, government and businesses in their community improvement initiatives, these award-winning programs serve as powerful catalysts in keeping America beautiful across the entire nation, one community at a time.”

In addition to the first place Affiliate Award, Keep Blount Beautiful was also honored with second place in Waste Reduction education program for its Landfill Learning Center.

A third primary need is for **open space**. The Foothills Land Conservancy addresses the needs for the conservation and preservation of open space. According to its website, “The Foothills Land Conservancy was founded in 1985 and opened an office with full-time staff in 1992. The organization is led by a volunteer Board of Directors. It has an Executive Director and offices in Maryville, Tennessee. To date, the Foothills Conservancy has protected more than 14,300 acres. These acres have been protected in 11 different projects. Protection tools used include conservation easements, donations, fee simple purchases, bequests, revocable trusts, and green developments.

In 1995 the Foothills Conservancy completed its first buffer zone project. By raising \$1.2 million, the Conservancy purchased 4,700 acres along the Park boundary which was threatened with commercial development. More than 3,500 individuals, businesses, foundations, and civic and outdoor groups from 35 states contributed to the project. The Conservancy gave 400 acres along Abrams Creek to the National Park Service. Abrams Creek is one of the largest and most productive streams in the Park and home to two endangered fish species. The remaining 4,300 acres were donated to the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency to establish the first unit of the "Foothills Wildlife Management Area."

Long range plans call for the establishment of several more units along the northern boundary of the National Park. These large tracts will provide critical fall feeding grounds for black bears and many other species of wildlife. They will also provide much needed public space for hiking, biking, bird watching, hunting, and camping.

In 1997, the Foothills Land Conservancy completed its second buffer zone project, raising more than \$500,000 to purchase an additional 1,516 acres adjoining the Foothills WMA. The Conservancy is in the process of transferring this tract to TWRA for inclusion in the Foothills WMA.

Two conservation easements, totaling 1,769 acres, have been donated to the Conservancy. Both are in Blount County. A group of private owners donated the first easement, which protects two miles of the northwestern boundary of Great Smoky Mountains National Park. The easement includes both Trunk Branch and Hurricane Creek, which in turn empty into Hesse Creek, a tributary of Little River.

According to Conservancy Executive Director, Randy Brown, “though the value of the donation has not yet been appraised, I estimate it will amount to several million dollars. It’s an incredible gift to the American people, especially those who love the mountains.” When asked why the group would donate the development rights to the scenic tract, Senator and Blount County native Lamar Alexander replied, “we have been acquiring this land for 25 years in order to protect this scenic view of the Smokies and to create a buffer zone to protect the park. We hope others will want to do the same.” According to Billy Minser, Foothills Conservancy President and University of Tennessee wildlife biologist, “this land is important for many species, particularly black bears and migratory songbirds. It’s like adding 769 acres to the Park.”

The second easement was donated by the Burkhart family. It is a conservation easement on their 1,000 acre farm in central Blount County..Located in the vicinity of Meadow, Lambert and Salem Roads, the farm produces both milk and beef cattle. “This is by far the largest donation the Conservancy has ever received,” said Conservancy Executive Director, Randy Brown. “The easement will not only protect a working farm, it will also protect some historic scenery. Last time I was out there I realized that when I looked out over the vast pastures and woodlands I was seeing the same scene as had young Sam Houston. His family homesite is close to the Burkhart Farm and the Houston clan owned much land in the area.” This easement is a gift to all Americans, but particularly the people of East Tennessee. Our thanks go out to “Mac” and Mary Burkhart and their future heirs.

With the donation of these two easements, Foothills Land Conservancy has protected 14,350 acres of forest and farm land in East Tennessee. Currently the Foothills Conservancy is working on conservation several large conservation easements in Blount County. “

## **What can Blount County’s resources teach us about national history or play a role in the national effort for conservation?**

The story of Blount County is best conveyed through the living cultural traditions of:

- Settling
- Transforming
- Reforming
- Celebrating

**Settling** refers to, first, the Native American history of the county. From the Townsend Archaeological Project, which documents the deep history of Native American occupation, to the era of the Overhill Cherokee, and early trading efforts between whites and Indians, this area is associated with the development of a “middle ground” between Native Americans, settlers, and traders that shaped lives, and the Old Southwest Frontier, until the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. A key property documenting the middle ground, as well as the early Tennessee career of the nationally significant military leader and politician Sam Houston, is the Sam Houston Schoolhouse outside of Maryville.

Settling also refers to that national story of the westward movement through the county’s historic family farms, seven of which date prior to 1810 and represent the first generation of settlement in this once-western country. The settlers brought with them older traditions, from the spoken word, to crafts, to music, and to architecture, represented by the persistence of a log-building tradition in this county long after the Civil War. The log buildings at Cades Cove are considered one of the best collections in the Southern Appalachians. The county’s Century Farms are a particularly powerful tool to tell how settlers have experienced change and continuity in the Appalachian landscape. The Thompson-Brown House is another key artifact of the log architecture traditions of the early settlers.

Another part of Blount County’s settling is told through the Quakers who came to the county in its early years and established such communities as Friendsville. The Quakers were abolitionists and their farms and properties were part of the informal Underground Railroad both before and during the Civil War. The region’s openness to opportunities for African Americans also led to many blacks moving to the county during Reconstruction and establishing such schools as the Freedmen’s Institute in Maryville.

Settling in the twentieth century also addresses the impact of the planned company towns at Alcoa and Calderwood, among the earliest designed corporate landscapes in the Southern Appalachians.

**Transforming** moves the national story to, first, the Civil War era and the related issues of slavery, emancipation, and Reconstruction. Before the war, Maryville College was a center for southern abolitionist thought. Blount County was an active area of occupation and homefront during the war itself—a real borderland between the Tennessee valley and the mountains. After the war, Maryville College was a leading Reconstruction

institution, represented by its landmark Anderson Hall, funded in part by the Freedmen's Bureau.

Transforming also refers to twin engines of change in the late nineteenth century that affected the United States in different ways across the country. First, the natural resource extraction industry, noted for digging up much of the West in its pursuit of fuel and jewels to power the industrial revolution. Comparative little attention has been given to the extraction of southern forests—and how that industry also fueled the country's growth. The story of logging and the timber industry is crucial to understanding Blount County's modern history. The Little River Railroad and Lumber Company Museum is a crucial resource for telling this story, along with trails within the national park at Tremont and neighboring Elkmont.

Transforming further brings attention to the impact of modern technology, in Blount County's case the production of aluminum, on the Appalachian South. Before there was TVA, private corporations introduced new engineered landscapes into Appalachia, bringing change to the region and new products to American consumers. There are few more powerful examples of this pattern than the story of Alcoa, Calderwood Dam, and Chilhowee Dam, in Blount County.

**Reforming** refers to the impact of the mid-twentieth century conservation movement, and the creation of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park as a national laboratory of such key New Deal institutions as the Civilian Conservation Corps. Those who created the national park had many goals, but taking the land back to nature was one that many shared, and then patiently carried out over the next decades. Taking logged-out, often devastated land, reformers restored a landscape that now attracts more visitors than any national park in the country.

**Celebrating** refers not only to the national park but more importantly to the efforts of many in the mid-twentieth century to encourage and nurture the Appalachian Arts and Crafts Revival. The national park did its part through such projects as Cades Cove; the citizens of Blount County has done most of the rest through annual festivals, concerts, and the many successful recent conservation projects throughout the county. The Foothills Parkway, and its potential for telling this broad story of conservation and heritage, is a key way visitors can literally see for themselves the great beauty of the Smokies.

**How deep and broad is public support for the project? What is the involvement of local officials, property owners, the heritage community, the business community, schools and colleges, and residents.**

From 2004 to 2006, residents, property owners, business owners, and officials have engaged in community forums and discussions about the needs of smart growth and the potential of heritage areas. The project introduction covers the early forums and newspaper articles about the meetings are attached to this study. There is strong support in Blount County for a National Heritage Area effort.

In early March 2006, three public meetings were held over two days in Maryville to provide an opportunity for comment and questions about the heritage areas strategy. The meetings centered on topics including an explanation of National Heritage Areas and the designation process, the benefits of NHAs, requirements necessary for success, as well as an overview of the National Scenic Byways program. The meetings, co-hosted and organized by the Smoky Mountains Convention and Visitors Bureau and the Tennessee Civil War NHA, attracted about 70 participants from a broad cross-section of industries, including representatives from the tourism industry, conservation organizations, governmental agencies, local colleges and universities, county planning, the arts, local businesses, the media, and local property owners.

**Meeting 1:**

**March 2, 2006**

**10:00 a.m. at Blount County Library**

This meeting had 30 attendees, making it the best attended of the three meetings. Participants primarily included local business owners.

- Several questions were raised about the difference between NHA's and Scenic Byways.
  - Clarified that national significance must be demonstrated for NHAs but not for Scenic Byways.
  - Scenic Byways focus on resource enhancement and quality visitor experiences.
- Participants cited regulating the existing trash and billboards as significant concerns, and hoped that Scenic Byways could address those issues.
  - Clarified that Scenic Byways do not regulate trash or billboards, although these initiatives can be included into the Corridor Management Plan as primary goals.
- Blount County has several significant Civil War and Reconstruction resources such as the Thompson Brown House and Maryville College; how should those be included in Blount County's national significance when pursuing NHA designation?

- If NHA designation is achieved, will coordinate Civil War and Reconstruction projects and related resources with TCWNHA.
- There is concern regarding political struggles that may impede the success of Scenic Byways and other programs. The Townsend Management Plan was referenced and participants noted that several of its initiatives were never completed.
  - Stressed the focus on local control and participation when designing Scenic Byways Corridor Management Plan creation and implementation.
- Participants expressed extensive support for connecting wildlife projects into the NHA process.
  - This could be done by tying those projects into the “Settlement” theme.
  - Reminder that you cannot divorce history from the landscape.
- Residents want to know how to best advertise and market their outstanding resources.
  - Pointed out that marketing can start now – no need to wait for an NHA or Scenic Byways designation.
  - Should focus on the “living traditions” – Blount County is a living landscape, not a region frozen in time like Cades Cove.
  - Demonstrate how Blount County shows waves of national economic development, from the frontier era to the present technology corridor
- Participants expressed support for including the dying dialect of Blount County/East Tennessee and the importance of preserving it.
  - This is an excellent topic to include in the NHA feasibility study.
  - Tie dialect into “Transforming” theme.
  - Add additional importance of oral histories – “Come hear our story” in Blount County.
- Several questions were raised about finding the best sources and resources for marketing Blount County and the potential NHA.
  - Referred to other NHAs, such as the new Dayton Aviation NHA.
- Residents questioned how to confirm political support for the NHA.
  - This is already in process with several elected officials and contact and information will continue to be disseminated to gain additional support.
- Residents asked who would be the leader for the proposed NHA.
  - The SMCVB is currently acting as leader for organizing and marketing initiatives.
- Participants expressed an overall goal – to increase the experience of Smokies visitors by making Blount County a “destination” in and of itself, focusing on:
  - Authenticity

- “Peaceful side of the Smokies”
- Culture/craft traditions
- Agree that an NHA is a good way to capitalize on Blount County’s strengths
- Maintain the county’s substance and resources in order to best market it

## **Meeting 2**

**March 2, 2006**

**1:30 p.m. at Blount County Library**

This meeting had approximately 20 attendees, which was the second largest meeting. Participants included elected officials and local residents, including staff from Senator Lamar Alexander’s office.

- A question was raised regarding the size of the NHA and whether it would incorporate just Townsend or could it incorporate the whole county so that other communities could reap the benefits.
  - A larger area does not dilute the NHA’s effectiveness.
  - Incorporating the whole county helps tell a nationally significant story.
  - Larger areas do not necessarily translate into more funding.
- Concerns were raised about the restrictions of a Scenic Byways corridor management plan.
  - The plan is a tool to use local buy-in to tell the region’s stories
  - Individual property owners maintain private property rights
  - How long would it take to incorporate a corridor management plan?
    - Approximately 18-36 months.
- Attendees asked what it takes to achieve sustainability for an NHA.
  - Building strong local partnerships.
  - Having a stable, established management entity.
  - SMCVB currently leading effort and will continue for foreseeable future.
- Residents asked about their level of participation in developing the NHA story.
  - The stories are developed by a broad group of interested citizens and residents, local agencies.
  - Focus on local variations of national themes to emphasize what makes Blount County unique.
- Several asked about the effects of an NHA on property owners, citing distrust of the federal government resulting from TVA takings and displacement.
  - Legislation prohibits property rights restrictions.
  - Best policy is to have all projects initiated by property owners.
  - Emphasized difference between NHA as a strategy and local/state/federal laws and zoning.

- Make sure to tell this part of the potential NHA's nationally significant story.

### **Meeting 3**

**March 3, 2006**

**9:00 a.m. at the Blount County Chamber of Commerce**

This meeting had 10 attendees. Participants included elected officials and non-profit agencies, including staff from the Knoxville office of Congressman John J. Duncan, Jr.

- Attendees expressed concern that this project was only for Townsend, and they hoped that the benefits could expand to the entire county.
  - Focus originally began with Townsend, but now encompasses the entire county.
  - Need the entire county to tell a nationally significant story.
- Some were concerned about another plan that would try and “tell them what to do” with their county.
  - NHA's don't override local government authority
  - Using an NHA strategy, community members need to be willing to partner together to achieve common goals for mutual benefit.
- The status of the Highway 321 Coalition was brought up, and several expressed hope for control on billboards.
  - That process along with the Scenic Byways application is moving forward.
  - Will need to research how to coordinate with the existing state scenic byways program, which does very little currently.
- Participants questioned how these programs work with construction and development in the county.
  - No regulatory aspects with NHAs and Scenic Byways.
  - NHAs help with planning and setting priorities, such as to where development should focus and what should be preserved.
- Several attendees asked about the best ways to educate those that were opposed to the NHA for unfounded reasons.
  - Remind them that NHAs don't legislate and protect private property rights.
  - Use designation as a way to build coalitions for common goals and to market the area.
  - Recognize that this is a challenge but it can be worked through.
- Participants asked what NHA funding can be used for.
  - Can use for personnel to coordinate and manage NHA.
  - Projects.

- SMCVB will help manage and coordinate now, then potentially hire a director in the future.

Overall, the majority of participants expressed interest and support for the National Heritage Area concept in Blount County. Most favored the potential for a more integrated approach to smart growth, preservation and sustainable tourism through the NHA strategy of forming committed partnerships to work together toward shared goals. Protecting private property rights was the main concern raised during the meetings, but most attendees understood that NHA designation supports a pro-private property rights stance and does not legislate local zoning laws or development rights.

**What are the logical boundaries for the project, that will both enhance and interpret the nationally important resources and that will be supported by officials, property owners, residents, and businesses?**

Four prospective boundaries have been discussed:

1. County-wide boundaries for a National Heritage Area. This approach is supported by the Smoky Mountains Convention and Visitors Bureau.
2. Linear boundaries following U.S. 321, from Friendsville to Townsend. This approach coincides with the Gateways to the Smokies National Scenic Byway proposal currently under development. The public meetings have discussed the National Scenic Byway as a second potential federal program for assistance.
3. Boundaries defined by transportation routes and concentration of key resources, beginning at Maryville and running to Townsend on US 321 and then turning south on Foothills Parkway to its junction with U.S. 129 at Calderwood Dam and finally returning north on US 129 to Maryville. This would be a smaller National Heritage Area project, or the potential boundaries for a state heritage area or similar state-based program.
4. A larger region that would run from Lenoir City and the Fort Loudon Dam to Greeneville, again following US 321 that could either be a National Heritage Corridor or a National Scenic Byway.

**What is the conceptual financial plan for the project? How will federal involvement be leveraged on the local public and private sides? How will the project support local economic development and activity?**

The project has been touted in public meetings for its ability to create a sustainable tourism economy for Blount County. Achieving sustainable economic growth through quality tourism is a major policy goal of the Smoky Mountains Convention and Visitors Bureau.

If the county gains National Heritage Area designation, the matching funding will be raised through partnerships and in-kind funding. There was no discussion of a capital campaign to raise funds. Initial staffing and related costs will be provided by the SMCVB.

Federal funding will be leveraged with commitments from:

Smoky Mountains Convention and Visitors Bureau  
Blount County Chamber of Commerce  
Keep Blount Beautiful  
Foothills Land Conservancy  
Little River Watershed Association  
Blount County Historical Society  
Sam Houston Schoolhouse Museum  
City of Maryville  
City of Townsend  
City of Alcoa  
Town of Friendsville  
Blount County Government

**What is the best arrangement for project administration that leaves control at the local level? What are the “management entity” options that could be utilized?**

To achieve objectives in resource enhancement, conservation, economic development, and interpretation, there are several potential ways of organizing this project.

1. Separate National Heritage Area designation.

This approach is favored by the Smoky Mountains Convention and Visitors Bureau; it was recommended by the Hunter Interests report of 2004-2005 and has been supported by Senator Alexander.

This keeps control at the local level, probably lodged with the Smoky Mountains Convention and Visitors Bureau. It calls upon a sizeable local match of funding since National Heritage Areas typically call for a one-to-one dollar match, although the match may involve documented in-kind contributions. The working title of the designation would be the “Blount County National Heritage Area.”

The Smoky Mountains Convention and Visitors Bureau is prepared to be the initial management entity, providing matching funds, office space, and staffing for the project, with the eventual goal of hiring a manager or director for the Blount County National Heritage Area. As the management entity, it would be responsible for preparing and submitting all required federal plans, reports, and other documents for the development and management of the proposed national heritage area. No objection to this management structure proposal was raised during the public meetings of 2006.

The benefits to becoming a separate National Heritage Area include the potential for federal funding, a designation that promotes the region’s existing strong sense of place and identity, affiliation with and technical service from the National Park Service, and a national means to unify and identify the county to assist in conservation, preservation, and sustainable tourism efforts.

Challenges to this option include the difficulty in finding funds to match federal appropriations, the lengthy and extensive process (typically 1-3 years) for federal review of a feasibility study and to gain congressional support for designation, identifying a long-term management entity that will maximize local partnerships and share resources, and making a strong enough case for the county’s national significance.

2. Designation as a Heritage and Recreational Corridor of the existing Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area.

This type of organization would allow the Blount County project to launch in a timely fashion since the Tennessee Civil War NHA already legally exists and receives annual

appropriations from Congress to support its operations and projects. It is the “management entity” for all NHA programs and projects in Tennessee. But as a designated heritage corridor, actual day-to-day management and control of the corridor would be lodged with a local partner, probably the Smoky Mountains Convention and Visitors Bureau, who would contract with the Tennessee Civil War NHA for support from its professional services program or funds from its collaborative partnership program. The designation could be titled the “Foothills of the Smokies Heritage Corridor,” or some other type of locally chosen organizational title, of the Tennessee Civil War NHA.

A model of this arrangement already exists. The Tennessee Civil War NHA already supports with professional services and consulting partnership funds the Mississippi River Natural and Recreational Corridor ([www.msrivertn.org](http://www.msrivertn.org)), which serves the six Tennessee counties bordering the Mississippi River in West Tennessee. The Management Plan of the Tennessee Civil War NHA outlined the need for this statewide National Heritage Area to be developed and managed along key corridors. The Mississippi River Natural and Recreational Corridor is one of those corridors and will receive regular and consistent support from the Tennessee Civil War NHA for its projects and programs.

Groups involved in creating a Cumberland Plateau Heritage Corridor have recently discussed with the Tennessee Civil War NHA the possibility of designating the plateau as a separate corridor of the existing NHA.

Thus, the heritage project for Blount County could be achieved through a partnership with the Tennessee Civil War NHA and could begin immediately. No Congressional approval of separate enabling legislation would be required, nor would there be any requirement to amend the enabling legislation of the existing Tennessee Civil War NHA. Nor would a separate Management Plan be necessary for development and submission to the National Park Service. The corridor approach has clear administrative and management efficiencies as strengths.

The limitation with this option is largely monetary. There is the potential of greater federal funding through the separate NHA designation than through the designation of a “heritage corridor” within the existing Tennessee Civil War NHA. Also, all administrative control and oversight, along with all reporting responsibility, would belong to the separately designated Blount County National Heritage Area.

### 3. National Scenic Byways designation

This option was also discussed during the public meetings in March 2006. An application for National Scenic Byways designation and preliminary funding was submitted in January 2006. The Scenic Byways program may provide an alternative source of federal funding in the event that the National Heritage Area option is not pursued.

The Scenic Byways program requires a Corridor Management Plan, which is designed by local stakeholders and determines how the federal funding from the program is used.

Benefits of the Scenic Byways program are similar to the Heritage Area program. They include a means to market the region along 321 with a national designation, a management plan created and regulated by local stakeholders, and merit-based federal funding awarded on an annual basis. This funding can be used to enhance visitor experiences in the county, thus supporting the goal for sustainable authentic tourism.

This program can be used in conjunction with National Heritage Area designation, although neither program allows their funding to be matched by alternate sources of federal money. Typically, Scenic Byways designations and awards do not provide the level of funding accessible to National Heritage Areas.

## Blount County Links:

- Basically Blount website:  
[http://www.blountchamber.com/basicallyblount/nature\\_mountain.html](http://www.blountchamber.com/basicallyblount/nature_mountain.html)
- The Blount Web:  
<http://www.blountweb.com>  
<http://www.blountweb.com/timespast/>
- 2000 Census Data:  
<http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/47/47009.html>
- Blount County Cemeteries:  
<http://www.tennesseegenealogy.org/blount2/Cemetery/index.html>
- ePodunk (Information and statistics for Blount County and cities within the county):  
<http://www.epodunk.com/cgi-bin/genealogyInfo.php?locIndex=12311>
- Linkpendium Blount County:  
<http://www.linkpendium.com/genealogy/USA/TN/Blount/>