

# Post-Civil War Industrialization

Following the Civil War, Tennessee entered into a period of industrialization. This shift was due in part to the damage the war had inflicted on Tennessee's economy. It was also due to investments from people outside of Tennessee. Many Northerners had been in Tennessee during the Civil War and saw opportunities for investing after the war was over. Northerners who moved South after the war to take advantage of business opportunities were called "carpetbaggers," because many of the investors carried their belongings in satchels made from heavyweight, carpet-like fabric.

Railroads were one of the first industries to be developed after the war. A number of important railroad lines ran through Tennessee before the war, but many of them had been either deliberately or accidentally damaged during the war. After the war, Tennessee's railroads were repaired and new ones were built, and this expansion of railroads was a key factor in the growth of other industries, especially coal mining.<sup>1</sup>

Coal had been mined in the Cumberland Plateau region since before the Civil War. By the 1850s coal was replacing wood as the fuel of choice in homes and industries. As Tennessee's railroads expanded after the war, the need for coal grew as well. Another factor that helped Tennessee's coal mining industry evolve was the convict labor system.<sup>2</sup> Though the 13th Amendment outlawed slavery, a clause in the amendment allowed people convicted of crimes, or convicts, to be forced to work during their prison term. Tennessee, like many other states, rented out convicts to mining companies and

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<sup>1</sup> "How They Worked." Tennessee4me. Tennessee State Museum [http://www.tn4me.org/minor\\_cat.cfm/minor\\_id/59/major\\_id/20/era\\_id/6](http://www.tn4me.org/minor_cat.cfm/minor_id/59/major_id/20/era_id/6) accessed 13 July 2018.

<sup>2</sup> James B. Jones. Jr. "Coal mining in the Cumberland Plateau." Appalachian Cultural Workshop Papers. National Park Service. [https://www.nps.gov/parkhistory/online\\_books/sero/appalachian/sec9.htm](https://www.nps.gov/parkhistory/online_books/sero/appalachian/sec9.htm) Accessed 13 July 2018.

other industries. The state earned revenue from the rental, and the mining company gained a cheap source of labor.<sup>3</sup> Many of the convict laborers were African Americans who were often accused of crimes and unfairly convicted in order to add laborers to the system. Convict laborers were treated horribly, and many died due to dangerous conditions in the mines. The low cost of labor allowed mining companies to sell their coal at a lower price than coal from the North. The era of convict labor in Tennessee ended in 1896 in response to the actions of free miners in an event known as the Coal Creek War.<sup>4</sup>

Mining companies often set up company towns for their workers. Most miners and their families lived in company-owned houses, worshipped in company-owned churches, and shopped in the overpriced company store. Many companies did not pay their miners using American currency; they created their own money called script. Script was only accepted in the company store, so miners were forced to pay high prices for goods. These conditions, along with the dangerous working conditions in the mines, eventually led to strikes and the introduction of labor unions.<sup>5</sup>

The increase in railroads also helped other industries grow as well. Coke, a byproduct of coal, was used as fuel in the iron smelting process. The railroads provided easy access to coke which allowed the iron industry to grow as well. Railroads made

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<sup>3</sup> James B. Jones. Jr. "Coal mining in the Cumberland Plateau." Appalachian Cultural Workshop Papers. National Park Service. [https://www.nps.gov/parkhistory/online\\_books/sero/appalachian/sec9.htm](https://www.nps.gov/parkhistory/online_books/sero/appalachian/sec9.htm) Accessed 13 July 2018.

<sup>4</sup> James B. Jones. Jr. "Coal mining in the Cumberland Plateau." Appalachian Cultural Workshop Papers. National Park Service. [https://www.nps.gov/parkhistory/online\\_books/sero/appalachian/sec9.htm](https://www.nps.gov/parkhistory/online_books/sero/appalachian/sec9.htm) Accessed 13 July 2018.

<sup>5</sup> James B. Jones. Jr. "Coal mining in the Cumberland Plateau." Appalachian Cultural Workshop Papers. National Park Service. [https://www.nps.gov/parkhistory/online\\_books/sero/appalachian/sec9.htm](https://www.nps.gov/parkhistory/online_books/sero/appalachian/sec9.htm) Accessed 13 July 2018.

transportation more accessible for people as well as products.<sup>6</sup> Tennessee's cities also began to grow during this time period, and as cities grew, people had more money to spend on luxury products.

One product that benefited from increased luxury spending was Coca-Cola. Coca-Cola was invented in 1882 by an Atlanta pharmacist named Dr. John S. Pemberton. Pemberton sold the rights to Coca-Cola to Asa Chandler who expanded the product to soda fountains outside Atlanta.<sup>7</sup> In 1899, three young lawyers from Chattanooga, Benjamin Thomas, Joseph Whitehead, and John Lupton bought the rights to bottle Coca-Cola for one dollar. The three men divided up the country into regions and sold bottling rights to local businessmen. By 1909, there were more than four hundred Coca-Cola bottling plants around the country.<sup>8</sup>

## Coal Creek Wars

After the Civil War southern states found themselves in debt. Several states decided to raise funds by leasing convicts as workers to industrialists and mining companies. The revenue from convict leasing programs became a significant part of southern state budgets, and the state of Tennessee took full advantage of the convict leasing system.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> "How They Worked." Tennessee4me. Tennessee State Museum 2018.

[http://www.tn4me.org/minor\\_cat.cfm/minor\\_id/59/major\\_id/20/era\\_id/6](http://www.tn4me.org/minor_cat.cfm/minor_id/59/major_id/20/era_id/6) accessed 13 July 2018.

<sup>7</sup> "About Us: History of Coca-Cola." World of Coca-Cola. 2018. <http://www.worldofcoca-cola.com/about-us/coca-cola-history/> Accessed 13 July 2018.

<sup>8</sup> Coca-Cola Company. "History of Bottling." Coca-Cola Journey. 2018. <https://www.coca-colacompany.com/our-company/history-of-bottling> Accessed 13 July 2018.

<sup>9</sup> A.C. Hutson, Jr. "The Coal Miners' Insurrections of 1891 in Anderson County, Tennessee." The East Tennessee Historical Society's Publications 7 (1935): 104. [http://www.teachtnhistory.org/file/The%20Coal%20Miners'%20Insurrection%20of%201891%20in%20Anderson%20Co.,%20TN%20\(Hutson\).pdf](http://www.teachtnhistory.org/file/The%20Coal%20Miners'%20Insurrection%20of%201891%20in%20Anderson%20Co.,%20TN%20(Hutson).pdf) Accessed 13 July 2018. .

A labor dispute erupted in 1891 at the Tennessee Coal Mining company in Briceville. Coal miners in Tennessee at this time were usually not union members but they would strike if conditions warranted. At first it seemed the miners and the company worked out their differences; the miners went back to work, but problems still existed. Again the miners walked out; this time a compromise could not be reached causing the miners to go on strike.<sup>10</sup>

Mine owners leased convicts from the state to replace the striking miners. Mine owners said the convicts were “a class of labor that could be depended upon”. Also, if a convict was injured or died the state would send a replacement at no cost to the mining company. Everyone seemed satisfied except the striking miners. The first action by the miners was not violent. A large number of miners surrounded the convicts’ stockade and forced the guards to surrender. The miners marched the guards and convicts to the train station, put them on the train, and sent them to Knoxville.<sup>11</sup>

Governor John Buchanan called out the state militia who led the convicts back to Briceville. The governor met with the miners in Coal Creek and Briceville but nothing was settled. The governor returned to Nashville leaving the militia behind with the convicts. There were more negotiations, but no compromise was reached. The miners took up arms and once again surrounded the stockade, trapping the convicts along with the state militia. The state militia found themselves outnumbered so they surrendered.

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<sup>10</sup> A.C. Hutson, Jr. “The Coal Miners’ Insurrections of 1891 in Anderson County, Tennessee.” The East Tennessee Historical Society’s Publications 7 (1935): 107-117.  
[http://www.teachtnhistory.org/file/The%20Coal%20Miners%20Insurrection%20of%201891%20in%20Anderson%20Co.,%20TN%20\(Hutson\).pdf](http://www.teachtnhistory.org/file/The%20Coal%20Miners%20Insurrection%20of%201891%20in%20Anderson%20Co.,%20TN%20(Hutson).pdf) Accessed 13 July 2018. .

<sup>11</sup> A.C. Hutson, Jr. “The Coal Miners’ Insurrections of 1891 in Anderson County, Tennessee.” The East Tennessee Historical Society’s Publications 7 (1935): 118-121.  
[http://www.teachtnhistory.org/file/The%20Coal%20Miners%20Insurrection%20of%201891%20in%20Anderson%20Co.,%20TN%20\(Hutson\).pdf](http://www.teachtnhistory.org/file/The%20Coal%20Miners%20Insurrection%20of%201891%20in%20Anderson%20Co.,%20TN%20(Hutson).pdf) Accessed 13 July 2018. .

Once again the miners took the convicts and the militia to the train and sent them to Knoxville.

The conflict intensified and in 1892 the governor sent the Tennessee National Guard in substantial numbers. The troops built a defensive structure, complete with cannon, and named it Fort Anderson. Construction of the fort made it possible for the troops to fire into the town of Coal Creek. The miners escalated their efforts against the troops. The strike spread to Oliver Springs, Tracy City, and Inman.<sup>12</sup>

At the beginning of this conflict, most of the general public in Tennessee was against the miners or at least indifferent to their plight. But as time passed and people learned of the miners' conditions and the situation they faced, public sentiment changed. One message sent by the miners to the governor stated, "We struggle for the right to earn bread by honest labor, and...we are opposed to that system of labor that may be involved to our degradation". Governor Buchanan seemed to have difficulties handling the situation, causing members of his own party to turn against him. Buchanan lost his party's nomination for governor. The new governor, Peter Turney, along with the state legislature, abolished Tennessee's convict lease system in 1893, but the last contract did not run out until 1896.<sup>13</sup>

Several miners were arrested and put on trial, but only two, P. B. Monroe and S. A. Moore, were convicted. Neither Monroe nor Moore served over a year in prison. The Coal Creek War was over, and because of the actions of the miners in the Coal Creek

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<sup>12</sup> A.C. Hutson. , Jr. "The Overthrow of the Convict Lease System" The East Tennessee Historical Society's Publications 8 (1936): 82-90.  
[http://www.teachtnhistory.org/file/The%20Overthrow%20of%20the%20Convict%20Lease%20System%20in%20TN%20\(Hutson\).pdf](http://www.teachtnhistory.org/file/The%20Overthrow%20of%20the%20Convict%20Lease%20System%20in%20TN%20(Hutson).pdf) Accessed 13 July, 2018.

<sup>13</sup> A.C. Hutson. , Jr. "The Overthrow of the Convict Lease System" The East Tennessee Historical Society's Publications 8 (1936):90-97.  
[http://www.teachtnhistory.org/file/The%20Overthrow%20of%20the%20Convict%20Lease%20System%20in%20TN%20\(Hutson\).pdf](http://www.teachtnhistory.org/file/The%20Overthrow%20of%20the%20Convict%20Lease%20System%20in%20TN%20(Hutson).pdf) Accessed 13 July, 2018.

area, the convict leasing system was abolished in Tennessee, and other southern states followed Tennessee's lead.<sup>14</sup>

## African Americans in the Post War Era

The end of Civil War and the passage of the 13th, 14th, and 15th amendments meant increased opportunities for African Americans in the South. However, the rise of Jim Crow laws such as Tennessee's Chapter 130<sup>15</sup>, made it increasingly difficult for African Americans to achieve economic or social equality with their white neighbors. Some African American leaders like Ida B. Wells challenged discrimination in the press and through the court system. However many African Americans chose to leave Tennessee and seek better opportunities elsewhere. Tennessean Benjamin "Pap" Singleton encouraged many African Americans to seek a better future in the west earning him the title "Father of the Exodus."

## Exodusters and Buffalo Soldiers

Benjamin "Pap" Singleton was born a slave in Nashville in 1809. He worked as a cabinet maker until he was sold into the Deep South. He escaped slavery and went to Canada and then moved to Detroit. In Detroit, he ran a boarding house that provided

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<sup>14</sup> A.C. Hutson, Jr. "The Overthrow of the Convict Lease System" The East Tennessee Historical Society's Publications 8 (1936):97-103.  
[http://www.teachtnhistory.org/file/The%20Overthrow%20of%20the%20Convict%20Lease%20System%20in%20TN%20\(Hutson\).pdf](http://www.teachtnhistory.org/file/The%20Overthrow%20of%20the%20Convict%20Lease%20System%20in%20TN%20(Hutson).pdf) Accessed 13 July, 2018.

<sup>15</sup> This law gave business owners the right to refuse service to anyone they choose. "This Honorable Body: African American Legislators in 19th Century Tennessee." TSLA Exhibits. Tennessee State Library and Archives, 2013. <https://sharetn.gov.tnsosfiles.com/tsla/exhibits/blackhistory/index.htm> Accessed 11 July 2018.

shelter to fugitive slaves. Following the Civil War, Singleton returned to Nashville and again worked as a carpenter.<sup>16</sup>

Singleton believed that land ownership was the key to economic, political and social independence. Singleton tried and failed to buy land in Tennessee in the 1860s. Singleton encountered many African American families who lost their homes when their landlords turned them out. African Americans also faced violence from the Ku Klux Klan as well as discrimination institutionalized by the black codes. Singleton began to encourage families to form independent communities in the West.<sup>17</sup> The people who moved west were called “Exodusters” because they believed that the dusty lands of the west would be their promised land. The term is a play on the biblical term Exodus which described the journey of the Jews after they were freed from slavery in Egypt.<sup>18</sup>

Singleton began to investigate the possibility of forming a colony in Kansas. He sent men to study the possibility and determined that for African American families to relocate to Kansas it would cost about one thousand dollars.<sup>19</sup> Most African American families were very poor and could not afford the journey. A few did relocate to Cherokee County, Kansas, but were mostly unsuccessful. Land was just too expensive. Many of the settlers were forced to become sharecroppers or day laborers.

Singleton learned from his mistakes and formed the Freedman’s Aid Association to provide educational opportunities for African Americans. In 1878, Singleton turned his attention to central Kansas. The 1862 Homestead Act had made land in that part of the

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<sup>16</sup> Brent Campbell. “Singleton, Benjamin “Pap.” BlackPast.org. 2018.  
<http://www.blackpast.org/aaw/singleton-benjamin-pap-1809-1892>. Accessed 13 July 2018.

<sup>17</sup> Kansas Historical Society. “Exoduster Flier.” Kansapedia. 2017.  
<https://www.kshs.org/kansapedia/exoduster-flier/10198> Accessed 13 July 2018.

<sup>18</sup> “The Exodusters.” PBS. 2001.  
<http://www.pbs.org/weta/thewest/program/episodes/seven/theexodust.htm> Accessed 13 July 2018.

<sup>19</sup> Kansas Historical Society. “Exoduster Flier.” Kansapedia. 2017.  
<https://www.kshs.org/kansapedia/exoduster-flier/10198> Accessed 13 July 2018.

territory much more affordable. In 1877, African Americans founded the Nicodemus Colony in central Kansas. Singleton is credited with bringing twenty thousand African American migrants to Kansas.<sup>20</sup> Later, Singleton backed plans for African American emigration to Cyprus and Africa that did not succeed. Singleton died in Kansas City, Missouri on February 17, 1900.<sup>21</sup>

Another Tennessean who sought opportunities in the West was George Jordan. Jordan was born into slavery in Williamson County, Tennessee around 1849. After emancipation, Jordan traveled to Nashville and enlisted in the U.S. Army on Christmas Day, 1866.<sup>22</sup> The army offered African Americans food, shelter, and some medical benefits. Jordan transferred to the 9th Cavalry in 1870 and served for twenty-six years. He was promoted to corporal in 1874 and sergeant in 1879. He also learned to read and write during this time period.<sup>23</sup>

The 9th Cavalry was one of four segregated units formed after the Civil War. The 10th Cavalry, 24th and 25th infantry units were also made up of African American soldiers commanded by white officers. These units came to be known as “The Buffalo Soldiers.” The nickname was probably given by the Cheyenne who thought that the soldiers’ hair looked like the fur between the horns of a buffalo. The nickname was meant as a term of praise and respect because buffalo were highly revered by Native

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<sup>20</sup> Kansas Historical Society. “Exoduster Flier.” Kansapedia. 2017. <https://www.kshs.org/kansapedia/exoduster-flier/10198> Accessed 13 July 2018.

<sup>21</sup> Brent Campbell. “Singleton, Benjamin “Pap.” BlackPast.org. 2018. <http://www.blackpast.org/aaw/singleton-benjamin-pap-1809-1892>. Accessed 13 July 2018.

<sup>22</sup> Edward Mikkelson. “Jordan, George.” BlackPast.org. 2018. <http://www.blackpast.org/aaw/jordan-george-1849-1904> Accessed 13 July 2018.

<sup>23</sup> Edward Mikkelson. “Jordan, George.” BlackPast.org. 2018. <http://www.blackpast.org/aaw/jordan-george-1849-1904> Accessed 13 July 2018.



Americans on the Great Plains.<sup>24</sup> It also referred to the fighting ability of the soldiers. The term first appeared in print in 1873 in a letter from a frontier army wife to a magazine. Describing the 10th Cavalry she wrote, “The officers say that the Negroes make good soldiers and fight like fiends ... the Indians call them 'buffalo soldiers' because their woolly heads are so much like the matted cushion that is between the horns of the buffalo.”<sup>25</sup>

On May 14, 1880, Jordan was in command of a group of twenty-five men who stopped an attack on Fort Tularosa by a force of more than 100 Apaches. In 1881, Jordan and a group of nineteen men held back an attack from an extremely exposed position in Carrizo Canyon; their bravery prevented the enemy from surrounding the command. On May 7, 1890, George Jordan was awarded the Medal of Honor for his bravery at Fort Tularosa. He also received a Certificate of Merit for his involvement at Carrizo Canyon.<sup>26</sup>

At Fort Robinson in 1896, Jordan retired and joined a community of other buffalo soldier veterans in Crawford, Nebraska. Jordan soon became a successful landowner, but his success as a soldier and landowner did not spare him from the injustices of a segregated America. Jordan was denied the right to vote. In 1904, Jordan became ill and tried to seek medical care at the Fort Robinson’s hospital. Jordan, a Medal of Honor Recipient, was denied care. He was told to try the Soldier’s Hospital in Washington D.C. George Jordan died on October 19, 1904, and the chaplain for Fort Robinson filed an

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<sup>24</sup> “The Buffalo Soldiers.” National Park Service. 2018. <https://www.nps.gov/prsf/learn/historyculture/buffalo-soldiers.htm> Accessed 13 July 2018.

<sup>25</sup> “The Buffalo Soldiers.” National Park Service. 2018. <https://www.nps.gov/prsf/learn/historyculture/buffalo-soldiers.htm> Accessed 13 July 2018.

<sup>26</sup> Edward Mikkelson. “Jordan, George.” BlackPast.org. 2018. <http://www.blackpast.org/aaw/jordan-george-1849-1904> Accessed 13 July 2018.

official complaint stating that he “died for the want of proper attention.” Jordan was buried in the Fort Robinson cemetery with full military honors.<sup>27</sup>

## Ida B. Wells

Ida B. Wells was born a slave in Holly Springs, Mississippi on July 16, 1862. Following emancipation, Wells’ father, James, worked as a skilled carpenter in the Holly Springs community. He and his wife Elizabeth had a total of eight children. James and Elizabeth encouraged all their children to attend school. In 1878, yellow fever swept through the Holly Springs community. James, Elizabeth, and their youngest child died from the disease. Ida, the eldest, was only sixteen. She refused to allow her siblings to be separated. Instead, she found work teaching in a rural school to support her family. Ida was also able to attend college during this period.<sup>28</sup>

In 1884, Wells accepted a position as a teacher in the community of Woodstock. She purchased a ticket for the ladies car of the Chesapeake, Ohio, and Southwestern Railroad to make the journey to her new job. Once on the train, she was confronted by a conductor who demanded that she give up her seat in the first class car and move to the smokers’ car. Wells refused, and eventually authorities forcibly removed her from the train.<sup>29</sup> Wells filed a lawsuit against the railroad company based on the Civil Rights Act of 1875. She won her case and was awarded five hundred dollars, but the ruling

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<sup>27</sup> Edward Mikkelson. “Jordan, George.” BlackPast.org. 2018. <http://www.blackpast.org/aaw/jordan-george-1849-1904> Accessed 13 July 2018.

<sup>28</sup> Black, Patti. “Ida B. Wells: A Courageous Voice for Civil Rights.” History Now. Mississippi Historical Society, 2017. <http://mshistorynow.mdah.state.ms.us/articles/49/ida-b-wells-a-courageous-voice-for-civil-rights> Accessed 13 July 2018.

<sup>29</sup> Miriam DeCosta-Willis. “Ida B. Wells-Barnett.” Tennessee Encyclopedia. 2018. <https://tennesseencyclopedia.net/entries/ida-b-wells-barnett/> Accessed 13 July 2018.

was reversed by the Tennessee State Supreme Court. The failure of the lawsuit inspired her to begin a career in journalism.<sup>30</sup>

Wells began her career as a journalist by writing articles for local African American newspapers. Eventually she was able to purchase a share of a local paper called *Free Speech and Headlight*. After writing an article critical of the Memphis school board's unequal funding for African American schools, Wells lost her teaching job. She then became a full time journalist.<sup>31</sup>

In 1892, an incident occurred in Memphis that changed the course of Wells' life. A white man attempted to disrupt the business of a grocery store owned by three African American men, Thomas Moss, Calvin McDowell and Henry Stewart. When the men attempted to protect their business, a fight broke out in which a white deputy sheriff was killed. The three store owners were arrested, but before a trial could be held, a mob dragged them from jail and lynched them. Wells was outraged by the incident and bought a gun for protection stating that "one had better die fighting against injustice than to die like a dog or a rat in a trap." Wells urged African Americans to leave Memphis and took on the issue of lynching in hard hitting editorials. She argued lynching was a way to get rid of successful and politically active African Americans. She further argued that the "thread-bare lie" of rape of a white woman was simply an excuse used to justify violence against African American men. Wells' suggestion that white women were sexually attracted to African-American men outraged white Memphians and led to the destruction

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<sup>30</sup> Miriam DeCosta-Willis. "Ida B. Wells-Barnett." Tennessee Encyclopedia. 2018. <https://tennesseencyclopedia.net/entries/ida-b-wells-barnett/> Accessed 13 July 2018.

<sup>31</sup> Black, Patti. "Ida B. Wells: A Courageous Voice for Civil Rights." History Now. Mississippi Historical Society, 2017. <http://mshistorynow.mdah.state.ms.us/articles/49/ida-b-wells-a-courageous-voice-for-civil-rights> Accessed 13 July 2018.

of her newspaper office. Wells was not in Memphis at the time and decided to relocate to New York.<sup>32</sup>

In New York, she intensified her anti-lynching campaign as well as her lecturing and published a number of articles and pamphlets including *Southern Horrors: Lynch Law in All Its Phases* in 1892. Wells also traveled extensively during this period. In 1895, she married Ferdinand Barnett, a prominent Chicago attorney. She continued her career as a journalist writing a number of articles critical of Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. DuBois. Wells was also a supporter of Marcus Garvey and the Black Nationalist movement. As her views became increasingly militant, she was considered a radical by the United States Secret Service.<sup>33</sup>

Wells was active in many social and political causes. She supported the suffrage movement and desegregated the National American Woman Suffrage Association's parade in Washington D.C. when she refused to join the African American delegates who were told to march in the back of the parade. She also worked with Jane Addams to prevent segregation in Chicago's public schools. However, stopping lynching remained the focus of her life's work.<sup>34</sup>

Wells covered the 1918 race riots in East St. Louis for the *Chicago Defender*. In 1922, she investigated the murder of twelve African American farmers in Elaine, Arkansas and raised money to publish and distribute the results of her investigation. Wells continued her work for social justice into the last years of her life. She began her

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<sup>32</sup> Miriam DeCosta-Willis. "Ida B. Wells-Barnett." Tennessee Encyclopedia. 2018. <https://tennesseencyclopedia.net/entries/ida-b-wells-barnett/> Accessed 13 July 2018.

<sup>33</sup> Miriam DeCosta-Willis. "Ida B. Wells-Barnett." Tennessee Encyclopedia. 2018. <https://tennesseencyclopedia.net/entries/ida-b-wells-barnett/> Accessed 13 July 2018.

<sup>34</sup> Black, Patti. "Ida B. Wells: A Courageous Voice for Civil Rights." History Now. Mississippi Historical Society, 2017. <http://mshistorynow.mdah.state.ms.us/articles/49/ida-b-wells-a-courageous-voice-for-civil-rights> Accessed 13 July 2018.

autobiography *Crusade for Justice: The Autobiography of Ida B. Wells* in 1928. Ida B. Wells died on March 25, 1931 at the age of sixty-nine.<sup>35</sup>

## Tennessee during the Progressive Era, World War I and the Roaring Twenties

Ida B. Wells' crusade against lynching and her active support of the women's suffrage movement branded her as a progressive. Progressives sought to improve many aspects of American society through legislation. Progressives worked to improve safety in factories and mines, limit child labor, improve the living conditions of the poor, reform government, and gain suffrage for women.<sup>36</sup> Tennesseans Anne Dallas Dudley and Harry T. Burn both played a critical role in women's suffrage movement and helped to make Tennessee the "Perfect 36", or the 36<sup>th</sup> state to ratify the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment making women's suffrage national law.

The desire to spread democracy led the United States to ally itself with Great Britain and France against the autocracies of Germany and Austria-Hungary during World War I.<sup>37</sup> The United States entry into the war in 1917 reenergized the allied war effort. American troops, known as "Doughboys," fought alongside French forces at Aisne and the Marne in 1918. By the fall of 1918, General John "Black Jack" Pershing finally had

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<sup>35</sup> Miriam DeCosta-Willis. "Ida B. Wells-Barnett." Tennessee Encyclopedia. 2018. <https://tennesseeencyclopedia.net/entries/ida-b-wells-barnett/> Accessed 13 July 2018.

<sup>36</sup> "Progressive Era to New Era 1900-1929." Library of Congress. 2018. <http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/presentationsandactivities/presentations/timeline/progress/> Accessed 2 January 2019.

<sup>37</sup> "Progressive Era to New Era 1900-1929." Library of Congress. 2018. <http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/presentationsandactivities/presentations/timeline/progress/> Accessed 2 January 2019.

enough troops in France for the Americans to launch their own offensive at the Meuse-Argonne.<sup>38</sup> As a result of his heroism during the offensive, Tennessean Alvin C. York was awarded the Croix de Guerre and the Medal of Honor. York returned home to a hero's welcome and used his new found fame to improve the lives of his fellow citizens in Fentress County. Despite the warm welcome York received, many Americans were unhappy about the United States' involvement in World War I. When the Senate failed to ratify the Treaty of Versailles and the included charter of the League of Nations, it signaled that the United States was returning to an isolationist stance that would continue until the onset of World War II.

The end of the Great War, as World War I was known, left Europe in a state of devastation. Millions had died in bloody battles on the Eastern and Western fronts and millions more had succumbed to disease. The terrible gas weapons used by both sides left many veterans with debilitating injuries. Famine loomed for many as the war had utterly destroyed some the most productive farmland in Europe. By contrast, the United States late entry into the war and geographic isolation from the fighting meant that the country's losses had been minimal compared to its allies and enemies.

The American economy continued to grow and newly prosperous families began to spend money on automobiles and radios, luxuries that would have been unheard of a few years earlier.<sup>39</sup> The rise of radio stations such as WSM meant that the Carter Family and country music would soon find a national audience. Tennessee also contributed such artists as W.C. Handy, Bessie Smith to the blues genre.

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<sup>38</sup> John Simkin, "The United States Army and the First World War." Spartacus Educational. 2014. <https://spartacus-educational.com/FWWusa.htm>. Accessed 2 January 2019.

<sup>39</sup> Progressive Era to New Era 1900-1929." Library of Congress. 2018. <http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/presentationsandactivities/presentations/timeline/progress/> Accessed 2 January 2019.

Even the era of Prohibition could not slow nation as it roared into the 1920s. The rapid social and economic changes of the Roaring Twenties provoked strong reactions in the politically conservative and deeply religious South. Such reactions against the overwhelming forces of change were a factor in the most famous court case in Tennessee history, the so-called Scopes Monkey Trial which took place in Dayton in 1925.

## Anne Dallas Dudley

Anne Dallas Dudley was beautiful, eloquent, and privileged; a wife and the mother of two daughters, she enlisted in the crusade for women's rights, laboring for nearly ten years in a hard fought campaign to achieve women's suffrage. Unlike the pioneers of woman suffrage, Dudley embodied a new generation of feminist leaders that emerged in the progressive era. Dudley represented a living retraction of the negative anti-suffrage argument that women's rights advocates were both unattractive male-haters and childless radicals bent on destroying the idea of the traditional American family.<sup>40</sup>

Born into a wealthy Middle Tennessee family, Dudley was raised and educated at Ward Seminary and Price's College in Nashville as a belle of the post-Civil War "New South." Her father, Trevanion B. Dallas, prospered as he joined a leading mercantile firm and began to build and buy cotton mills in Nashville and southward in Huntsville,

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<sup>40</sup> Carol Lynn Yellin and Janann Sherman. *The Perfect 36: Tennessee Delivers Woman Suffrage*. (Memphis, TN: Vote 70 Press, 2016,) 53.

Alabama. His support of the Confederacy during the Civil War helped open doors to him upon his arrival in Tennessee's state capital in 1869.<sup>41</sup>

His daughter created a buzz in social circles as her gowns, parties, and her suitors became material for the gossip columns. In 1902, she married widower Guilford Dudley, a prominent local banker and insurance broker (one of the founders of the Life and Casualty Insurance Company) and maintained a country estate in West Nashville.

Proper Victorian notions of a woman's sphere were instilled in her as part of an unspoken education. Dudley later acknowledged that prior to her involvement in the women's suffrage campaign; she had once been an anti-suffragist. "But reading and studying showed me that it was the only way that women could come into their own.... Not only does the world need women's votes, but woman needs the ballot for her own development."<sup>42</sup>

Like several other middle and upper class women, Dudley joined local groups in which women met for self-improvement. Typically, these groups of women discussed art, books, music, and drama. Later, the meetings evolved into discussions concerning problems of urban living that were consequences of industrialization. They concerned themselves with the education of children, poverty, political corruption, and working conditions of women and children. The late nineteenth and early twentieth century's progressive female leaders originated within these societies. They began to argue that women needed the vote in order to cure and purify the ills of American society.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Carol Lynn Yellin and Janann Sherman. *The Perfect 36: Tennessee Delivers Woman Suffrage*. (Memphis, TN: Vote 70 Press, 2016,) 53.

<sup>42</sup> Carol Lynn Yellin and Janann Sherman. *The Perfect 36: Tennessee Delivers Woman Suffrage*. (Memphis, TN: Vote 70 Press, 2016,) 53.

<sup>43</sup> Carol Lynn Yellin and Janann Sherman. *The Perfect 36: Tennessee Delivers Woman Suffrage*. (Memphis, TN: Vote 70 Press, 2016,) 54.



This notion reflected a subtle but important change in the thrust of the women's suffrage movement that Dudley and other middle and upper class women would enlist in. Earlier generations had insisted that women were fundamentally equal to men; however, a new generation of Progressive Era suffragists argued that women were different from men. Many of the movement's new leaders began to couch their language and justification for suffrage in less threatening ways that did not overtly challenge the separate spheres in which men and women resided in late nineteenth-century American society. By doing so, they ignored the natural constraints of their position to speak with great force and persuasion. Women, they stressed, possessed a moral sense and a nurturing quality that men naturally lacked. Consequently, they understood the civic obligations implied by the franchise and could be trusted to vote virtuously. Their votes would hasten to completion the progressive task of cleansing the political process of corruption. Moreover, their experience as mothers and household managers would enable them to guide local and state governments in efforts to improve education, sanitation, family wholesomeness, and the condition of women and children in the workforce.<sup>44</sup>

In September 1911, Dudley enlisted in the women's suffrage cause when she and a handful of other Nashville women formed the Nashville Equal Suffrage League. The League nominated Dudley as its president, who set about to link up with other equally committed women throughout the state to organize similar local organizations. Between 1911 and 1919, they helped found suffrage organizations in seventy-eight towns in Tennessee. The suffragists throughout the state followed Dudley's lead to institute May

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<sup>44</sup> Majorie Spruill Wheeler. "The Woman Suffrage Movement in the Inhospitable South." *Votes for Women! The Woman Suffrage Movement in Tennessee, the South, and the Nation*. (Knoxville, Tn: University of Tennessee Press, 1995) 25-45.

Day parades throughout their cities and towns. Dudley often led these parades with her two young daughters. She was also photographed reading to her children, which was widely distributed among other women's suffrage materials, all in an effort to rebuke negative stereotypes created by anti-suffragists that all suffragists were mannish and disregarded their children.<sup>45</sup>

In 1915, Dudley was elected as the president of the Tennessee Equal Suffrage Association. She was instrumental in arranging for some of the nation's most prominent women's rights advocates to visit and speak in Nashville, which rallied support throughout the state for their cause. When a suffrage amendment to the state constitution failed, Dudley introduced a second measure to give women the right to vote in presidential and municipal elections. However, when her second attempt to secure woman suffrage (albeit on a limited scale) failed to pass the state Senate, she proclaimed "We are not cry-babies," and pressed her foot soldiers to push onward. In fact, the alternate bill did pass the General Assembly in 1919; however, at this time, Dudley and other women's rights advocates were consumed with the passage and ratification of the 19th Amendment.<sup>46</sup>

Dudley was vitally important to the campaign for women's suffrage primarily for two reasons: she embodied a new, attractive generation of progressive era reformers and was an outspoken proponent of women's suffrage in the South, a region in which the prospect of women's suffrage was very unpopular. To her southern male, and female, detractors, Dudley countered their hysterical, anxious, and racist arguments that

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<sup>45</sup> Carol Lynn Yellin and Janann Sherman. *The Perfect 36: Tennessee Delivers Woman Suffrage*. (Memphis, TN: Vote 70 Press, 2016,) 54.

<sup>46</sup> Carol Lynn Yellin and Janann Sherman. *The Perfect 36: Tennessee Delivers Woman Suffrage*. (Memphis, TN: Vote 70 Press, 2016,) 54.

enfranchisement of women would lead to “Negro” domination of the region, with a racist pro-suffrage argument designed to allay their fears: there were more white women than black women. Interestingly, white suffragists, including Dudley and her southern counterparts, crossed the South’s Jim Crow racial barricades to enlist black women to join them. One black woman later observed, “a little patience, trust, vision, and the universal ties of motherhood and sisterhood could overcome the prejudice against them as voters.”<sup>47</sup>

## Women’s Suffrage

On a hot and muggy summer morning in the month of August 1920, a twenty-four year-old Republican lawmaker from Niota (McMinn County), in the southern valley of East Tennessee, changed his “Nay” vote to an “Aye” during a critical final ballot to decide the fate of the ratification of the 19th Amendment to the United States Constitution. Burn’s momentous decision to vote in favor of women’s suffrage not only secured the elusive victory that suffragists had sought since the Seneca Falls Convention of 1848, but it also secured a place for both Burn and his widowed mother, Febb Ensminger Burn, in American history as they delivered Tennessee as the “Perfect 36” state to ratify the 19th Amendment.

On Friday, August 18, the Tennessee House deliberated a joint resolution for ratification of the 19th Amendment that had recently passed in the state Senate. Thirty-five states had already ratified the amendment. If Tennessee became the thirty-sixth state to ratify, the amendment would become Federal law. It was in a tense atmosphere

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<sup>47</sup> Carol Lynn Yellin and Janann Sherman. *The Perfect 36: Tennessee Delivers Woman Suffrage*. (Memphis, TN: Vote 70 Press, 2016,) 55.

that several legislators rose from their desks to deliver impassioned speeches that recounted the age-old arguments waged by “suffs” (suffragists) and “antis” (anti-suffragists) for and against women’s suffrage. After a lengthy debate, House Speaker Seth Walker, a proclaimed “anti,” boldly stated, “The hour has come. The battle has been fought and won, and I move . . . that the motion to concur in the Senate action goes where it belongs—to the table.”<sup>48</sup>

Silence blanketed the chamber as the motion was put forth on the House floor to table the amendment— a decision that could be tantamount to the bill’s death as it would be held over until the legislative session convened after the fall elections. In the midst of the excitement, no one could discern the inner turmoil that waged within Harry Burn’s mind. Sitting in his chair in the third row to the right of the rostrum, Burn wore a red rose (the symbol of the antis) on his jacket lapel. His constituents back home in McMinn County were bitterly divided—an ever-increasing majority of public opinion in the county was turning against women’s suffrage. He also faced re-election in the upcoming fall election, and a deciding vote either way might cost him the votes needed to secure his seat in the next session of the General Assembly. Therefore, Burn was content to vote in favor of tabling the amendment. When the House clerk reached his name, the seventh on the list of ninety-six in attendance, Burn voted with the antis to table the amendment. “I had voted to table the amendment,” he later explained, “not in opposition but in hopes that it would come up again at the next session.” The vote was forty-eight to forty-eight. Speaker Wallace demanded a recount. Again, the vote was

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<sup>48</sup> Carol Lynn Yellin and Janann Sherman. *The Perfect 36: Tennessee Delivers Woman Suffrage*. (Memphis, TN: Vote 70 Press, 2016,) 106.

deadlocked at forty-eight to forty-eight. Therefore, the amendment remained alive on the House floor.<sup>49</sup>

Speaker Wallace then moved to reconsider the original motion—a vote on the 19th Amendment. Now Burn was faced with a decision he had hoped he would not have to confront as the deciding vote on whether or not the 19th Amendment became the law of the land. Unbeknownst to his fellow colleagues, Burn carried a letter from his mother in his breast pocket that encouraged him to vote in favor of the amendment.<sup>50</sup>

Burn's mother, a strong-willed widow of a farmer, followed the woman suffrage debate from their Niota home when not milking cows, churning butter, cleaning and mending for her family, by reading four newspapers and a dozen magazines that she subscribed to. Febb Burn would later tell a reporter, "Suffrage has interested me for years. I like the suffrage militants as well as the others." But after having read a barrage of bitter "anti" speeches published in the papers and realizing that her son's constituents in McMinn County were fiercely in opposition to women's suffrage, Mrs. Burn maintained that she felt compelled to force the issue. "I sat down on [my] little chair on the front porch and penned a few lines to my son."<sup>51</sup>

In fact, Febb Burn wrote more than a few lines in regards to supporting ratification, which were interspersed among other family matters, in a seven-page letter to Harry.

"Dear Son, ... Hurray and vote for Suffrage and don't keep them in doubt.

I noticed Chandlers' speech, it was very bitter. I've been waiting to see

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<sup>49</sup> Carol Lynn Yellin and Janann Sherman. *The Perfect 36: Tennessee Delivers Woman Suffrage*. (Memphis, TN: Vote 70 Press, 2016,) 106, 117.

<sup>50</sup> Carol Lynn Yellin and Janann Sherman. *The Perfect 36: Tennessee Delivers Woman Suffrage*. (Memphis, TN: Vote 70 Press, 2016,) 117.

<sup>51</sup> Carol Lynn Yellin and Janann Sherman. *The Perfect 36: Tennessee Delivers Woman Suffrage*. (Memphis, TN: Vote 70 Press, 2016,) 116-117.

how you stood but have not seen anything yet.... Don't forget to be a good boy, and help Mrs. Thomas Catt with her "Rats." Is she the one that put rat in ratification, Ha! No more from mama this time. With lots of love, Mama." <sup>52</sup>

Burn had read and re-read the words that he had received from his mother, and he hoped that he would not have to take a definitive stand on the measure until after the election. In fact, Burn had earlier told a prominent suffragist lobbyist that his vote would never hurt their cause, which led many to believe he was in fact a supporter of women's suffrage, but also a legislator conflicted by the will of his constituents. Despite his pledge to the suffragist, Burn did not believe he would ever have to take a decisive stand on the issue at this point in time. Nevertheless, when the "antis" made a move to kill the bill by calling for a vote on the amendment itself, Burn faced a moral dilemma—to vote against the amendment and remain faithful to his "anti" constituents in light of his upcoming re-election campaign or remain faithful to the wishes of his mother.<sup>53</sup>

The House clerk proceeded to call the roll for the third time, this time, a vote to decide the fate of the 19th Amendment in Tennessee. When the clerk called his name, Burn voted "Aye." His vote came so quickly, that many in the galleries and on the House floor were caught off guard. Several thought that the young Republican freshman had innocently become confused by the prior two votes and meant to vote "Nay" instead of "Aye." Indeed, Burn had made no mistake. He had cast his ballot for women's suffrage,

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<sup>52</sup> Carol Lynn Yellin and Janann Sherman. *The Perfect 36: Tennessee Delivers Woman Suffrage*. (Memphis, TN: Vote 70 Press, 2016,) 117.

<sup>53</sup> Carol Lynn Yellin and Janann Sherman. *The Perfect 36: Tennessee Delivers Woman Suffrage*. (Memphis, TN: Vote 70 Press, 2016,) 117.

and thus, cast the key ballot in the forty-nine to forty-seven vote that made the 19th Amendment the supreme law of the land.<sup>54</sup>

“Antis” in the galleries and on the House floor began shouting absurdities at Burn. Josephine Pearson, the most vocal Tennessee anti-suffragist labeled Burn a “traitor to manhood’s honor.” “Anti” supporting newspapers reported that Joe Hanover, a Jewish immigrant legislator targeted by the anti-suffragists for his ardent defense of women’s suffrage, had paid Burn ten thousand dollars to change his vote. He was also accused of accepting a bribe from Governor Robert’s personal secretary. The charges of bribery did not stick to the East Tennessean<sup>55</sup>. Unfazed by the intimidation tactics, Burn responded to the anti-attacks on his integrity and honor by inserting a personal statement in the *House Journal*, explaining his decision to cast his vote for the suffragists based on morality, justice, his mother, and the glory of the Republican Party:

“I desire to resent in the name of honesty and justice the veiled intimidation and accusation regarding my vote on the Suffrage Amendment as indicated in certain statements, and it is my sincere belief that those responsible for their existence know that there is not a scintilla of truth in them. I want to state that I changed my vote in favor of ratification first because I believe in full suffrage as a right; second, I believe we had a moral and legal right to ratify; third, I knew that a mother’s advice is always safest for a boy to follow and my mother wanted me to vote for ratification; fourth, I appreciated the fact that an opportunity

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<sup>54</sup> Carol Lynn Yellin and Janann Sherman. *The Perfect 36: Tennessee Delivers Woman Suffrage*. (Memphis, TN: Vote 70 Press, 2016,) 106.

<sup>55</sup> Carol Lynn Yellin and Janann Sherman. *The Perfect 36: Tennessee Delivers Woman Suffrage*. (Memphis, TN: Vote 70 Press, 2016,) 107.

such as seldom comes to a mortal man to free seventeen million women from political slavery was mine; fifth, I desired that my party in both State and nation might say that it was a republican from the East mountains of Tennessee, the purest Anglo- Saxon section in the world, who made national woman suffrage possible at this date, not for personal glory but for the glory of his party.”<sup>56</sup>

The anti-attacks on Burn did not cease following the momentous vote. His enemies poured into McMinn County during Burn’s fall re-election campaign. “People from all over the country went into my county,” he recalled. “They held indignation meetings, passed resolutions.... When I went home for a weekend I would generally keep a bodyguard around so that no one would attack me.” His political enemies even accosted his mother at their farm when he was away from home. They urged her to disavow her “infamous” letter, but she remained steadfast. In the end, Burn managed to survive and win re-election to a second term; however, Tennessee’s Democratic Governor Albert H. Roberts, a “Johnny-come-lately” supporter to the suffragist camp, did not fare so well, suffering defeat to Republican Alfred A. Taylor.<sup>57</sup>

Years later, Burn proudly reflected on his deciding vote: “I had always believed that women had an inherent right to vote. It was a logical attitude from my standpoint. My mother was a college woman, a student of national and international affairs who took an interest in all public issues. She could not vote. Yet the tenant farmers on our farm, some of whom were illiterate, could vote. On that roll call, confronted with the fact that I

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<sup>56</sup> Tennessee. Legislature. House of Representatives. *“House Journal of the Legislature of the State of Tennessee.”* Nashville, TN: [publisher not identified], 1920.

<sup>57</sup> Carol Lynn Yellin and Janann Sherman. *The Perfect 36: Tennessee Delivers Woman Suffrage.* (Memphis, TN: Vote 70 Press, 2016,) 117.



was going to go on record for time and eternity on the merits of the question, I had to vote for ratification.<sup>58</sup>

## Alvin York

Alvin C. York was born in Pall Mall, Tennessee on December 13, 1887. The third son of William and Mary Brooks York, Alvin had seven brothers and three sisters. William taught Alvin to shoot a muzzleloader when he was very young, and by the time he was seven, Alvin owned his own rifle. As a child, Alvin attended a subscription school for three months of each year after the fall harvest and before the spring planting. By the time Alvin was nine, he was strong enough to work on the farm full-time, so his formal schooling ended with the equivalent of a third-grade education.<sup>59</sup>

In 1911, William York died after being kicked in the head by a mule. Alvin's older brothers Henry and Joe were already married and heading households of their own, so the responsibility of providing for his mother and younger siblings fell to Alvin. The responsibility weighed heavily on Alvin and led to bouts of binge drinking and fighting in taverns that straddled the Tennessee and Kentucky state lines. The death of York's best friend, Everett Delk, in a bar fight forced York to reevaluate his lifestyle. On January 1, 1915, York attended a revival led by H.H. Russell of the Church of Christ in Christian Union. The Church of Christ in Christian Union was a small sect that had been deeply influenced by the devastation of the Civil War, and as a result, strict non-

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<sup>58</sup> Carol Lynn Yellin and Janann Sherman. *The Perfect 36: Tennessee Delivers Woman Suffrage*. (Memphis, TN: Vote 70 Press, 2016,) 117.

<sup>59</sup> Wall text, Rogers-Claussen Feature Gallery, *In the Footsteps of Sergeant York A Travelling Exhibition from the Museum of the American Military Experience*, Museum of Tennessee History, Knoxville, TN.

violence was a core tenet of the church. The church both comforted York in his grief and gave him the structure he needed to reform his life.<sup>60</sup>

York became an elder and song leader in the church. He stopped drinking and fighting and got a job on the crew constructing modern-day Highway 127. York's clean living and frequent victories in local shooting matches helped to improve his neighbors' opinions of him. During this time York became interested in fifteen-year-old Gracie Williams. Although he had worked hard to change his life following his religious conversion, she was slow to return his interest due to his formerly wild lifestyle. The arrival of a draft notice in 1917 would change York's life once again.<sup>61</sup>

By 1917 the war in Europe had been raging for three years with France, England Germany, and Russia all suffering heavy losses. In Russia, the hardships created by the war were the tipping point that led to the Bolshevik Revolution and Russia's withdrawal from fighting in December 1917. In the United States, most Americans favored neutrality until the German attacks on merchant ships and the possibility of a German-Mexican alliance led President Wilson to ask Congress for a declaration of war on April 2, 1917.<sup>62</sup>

York found himself highly conflicted by the draft notice he received. "So you see my RELIGION and my own experience sorter told me not to go to war, and the MEMORY OF MY ANCESTORS jes (sic) as plainly sorter (sic) told me to get my gun and go and

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<sup>60</sup> Wall text, Rogers-Claussen Feature Gallery, *In the Footsteps of Sergeant York*  
*A Travelling Exhibition from the Museum of the American Military Experience*, Museum of  
Tennessee History, Knoxville, TN.

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*A Travelling Exhibition from the Museum of the American Military Experience*, Museum of  
Tennessee History, Knoxville, TN.

<sup>62</sup> Wall text, Rogers-Claussen Feature Gallery, *In the Footsteps of Sergeant York*  
*A Travelling Exhibition from the Museum of the American Military Experience*, Museum of  
Tennessee History, Knoxville, TN.

fight. I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT TO DO, but I kinder (sic) felt that my ancestors would want me to do whatever my country demanded of me..." Ultimately, York decided to report to Camp Gordon, Georgia as ordered but continued to wrestle with his conscience. At first, York's loyalty was questioned by his superiors who knew about his application of conscientious objector status. However, over time York's skill as a marksman and his quick adjustment to the structure of army life helped him gain the respect of his superiors as well as forge friendships among the other enlisted men.<sup>63</sup>

One of the superior officers, Captain Danforth, spoke with York about his objections to war on several occasions and brought him to the attention of Colonel G. Edward Buxton. Buxton, a graduate of Brown University and a Biblical scholar, used Augustine's idea of a "just war" to try to persuade York. Eventually, York was given a ten-day furlough home to consider the arguments Danforth and Buxton had made. When York returned he told Buxton that he was ready to go to war having been persuaded by Chapter Thirty-three of the Book of Ezekiel. York completed his training and prepared to ship out for Le Havre in the spring of 1918.<sup>64</sup>

York described the men in his platoon as "a gang of the toughest and most hard-boiled doughboys I ever heard tell of. There were bartenders, saloon bouncers, ice men, coal miners, dirt farmers, actors, mill hands, and city boys who had growed up in the back alleys and learned to scrap ever since they was knee high to a duck. They were MIXED UP FROM 'MOST EVERY COUNTRY. They were as hard as a forest full

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<sup>63</sup> Wall text, Rogers-Claussen Feature Gallery, *In the Footsteps of Sergeant York*  
*A Travelling Exhibition from the Museum of the American Military Experience*, Museum of Tennessee History, Knoxville, TN.

<sup>64</sup> Wall text, Rogers-Claussen Feature Gallery, *In the Footsteps of Sergeant York*  
*A Travelling Exhibition from the Museum of the American Military Experience*, Museum of Tennessee History, Knoxville, TN.

of oaks, and they were meaner and more full of fights than a hive of wild bees. They could out-swear, out-drink, and out-cuss any other crowd of men I have ever known.” The soldiers were impatient with the realities of trench warfare. They wanted to attack the Germans and “get it over [with].”

On October 8, 1918 during the Battle of the Argonne Forest, York’s life took another extraordinary turn. York was part of a seventeen-man patrol whose mission was to conquer German machine guns. The men came across two Germans who they pursued to a clearing where they found several more Germans who began to surrender. Accounts vary as to what happened next. German soldiers spotted their men surrendering and opened fire on York and the other soldiers with a machine gun; killing six men including Sergeant Early who was in command. York maneuvered into position and shot the six machine gunners one by one. As the last machine gunner fell, a German officer led a bayonet charge down the hill. Using his .45 Colt automatic, York shot the charging soldiers as he shot turkeys back home- from back to front- so that they would not scatter or take cover. Realizing that the situation was futile, the German commander ordered his men to surrender. York and the seven remaining Americans took charge of one hundred and thirty two prisoners. By the time York and the men reached the Battalion headquarters at Varennes, they had more than two hundred prisoners. As a result of his actions, York was promoted to sergeant and awarded the Distinguished Service Cross, the Croix de Guerre, and the Medal of Honor after the war.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Wall text, Rogers-Claussen Feature Gallery, *In the Footsteps of Sergeant York*  
*A Travelling Exhibition from the Museum of the American Military Experience*, Museum of  
Tennessee History, Knoxville, TN.

York, like most Doughboys, was eager to return home after the end of the war. York was honored with a ticker-tape parade in New York and received a number of business offers. He was grateful, but wanted to return home to his family and sweetheart Gracie. In 1919, York and Gracie married and moved onto a three hundred and eighty five acre farm purchased for them by the Nashville Rotary and citizens of Tennessee. York was happy to be home, but for the first time he began to realize his beloved mountains had “kept put many good and worthwhile things like, good roads, schools, libraries, up-to-date homes, and modern farming methods.” York dedicated the rest of his life to helping improve his community through education.<sup>66</sup>

York went on a speaking tour to raise money for the school he built in Pall Mall, the York Institute. York also became interested in politics. While he supported Hoover in 1932, York approved of Roosevelt’s New Deal policies and was appointed the chairman of the Cumberland Homesteads in 1939. When war broke out in Europe, York, like many Americans, anticipated the war but supported isolationism. Hollywood filmmaker Jesse Lasky believed that the United States should intervene in the war. He thought that telling York’s story would convince Americans that it was necessary to intervene in Europe, just as York had been convinced to fight in World War I. York hated traditional war movies, but agreed to the movie because Lasky promised it would tell York’s whole story. York also wanted the profits from the movie to fund his dream of a non-

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<sup>66</sup> Wall text, Rogers-Claussen Feature Gallery, *In the Footsteps of Sergeant York A Travelling Exhibition from the Museum of the American Military Experience*, Museum of Tennessee History, Knoxville, TN. and Michael Birdwell. “Alvin Cullom York.” Tennessee Encyclopedia. 2018. <https://tennesseeencyclopedia.net/entries/alvin-cullom-york/> Accessed 18 July, 2018.

denominational Bible school.<sup>67</sup> During filming, York became convinced of the need to intervene in Europe. York was appointed Chief Executive of the Fentress County Draft Board.<sup>68</sup>

The film *Sergeant York* premiered in July, 1941 and became the highest grossing film of the year. Gary Cooper won an Academy Award for Best Actor for his portrayal of Alvin York. After the attack on Pearl Harbor, the film became an unofficial recruitment tool for the United States military. York tried to reenlist, but was turned down due to his age and weight. Instead, he traveled around the country on recruitment and bond drives.<sup>69</sup>

In 1951, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) accused York of not paying taxes on his profits from the film that he had donated to his school. The fight with the IRS took a toll on York's health, and he suffered a stroke in 1954 that left him bedridden. York received assistance in his fight with the IRS from several key political figures, including President Kennedy who ordered a resolution to the case in 1961. Alvin York died on September 2, 1964 and was buried with full military honors in the cemetery of the Wolf River Methodist Church. His home, gristmill, grave and other related sites are now part of the Alvin C. York State Historical Area in Pall Mall.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> Michael Birdwell. "Alvin Cullom York." Tennessee Encyclopedia. 2018. <https://tennesseencyclopedia.net/entries/alvin-cullom-york/> Accessed 18 July, 2018.

<sup>68</sup> Michael Birdwell. "Alvin Cullom York." Tennessee Encyclopedia. 2018. <https://tennesseencyclopedia.net/entries/alvin-cullom-york/> Accessed 18 July, 2018.

<sup>69</sup> Michael Birdwell. "Alvin Cullom York." Tennessee Encyclopedia. 2018. <https://tennesseencyclopedia.net/entries/alvin-cullom-york/> Accessed 18 July, 2018.

<sup>70</sup> Michael Birdwell. "Alvin Cullom York." Tennessee Encyclopedia. 2018. <https://tennesseencyclopedia.net/entries/alvin-cullom-york/> Accessed 18 July, 2018.

# The Music Industry Develops in Tennessee: Country Music

The history of WSM and the Grand Ole Opry started in the early days of radio. Nikola Tesla realized that the key to making radio waves work as a form of communication was individualization. In other words, one needed to be able to select the desired signal and cancel out the rest. Italian inventor Guglielmo Marconi used Tesla's ideas to create and market his own Wireless Telegraph Company. At first, the U.S. Patent Office rejected Marconi's patent claims, but later reversed that decision and granted the patents to Marconi in 1904. This set the stage for American corporations to start building and selling radio to the public.<sup>71</sup>

In order to boost sales of radios, Westinghouse set up the first commercial radio station, KDKA, in Pittsburgh in 1920. Department stores soon followed suite, setting up their own stations to boost sales of radios. In time, almost everyone who could afford a radio would buy one. In response, the radio stations began to sell advertising; the first radio advertisement was broadcast on August 28, 1922.<sup>72</sup> The idea of using radio to advertise other products and services revolutionized the medium and led to the creation of WSM and the Grand Ole Opry.

In 1925, the National Life and Accident Insurance Company in Nashville began operating a radio station. Edwin Craig, the executive in charge of the project, believed that the station would reach new customers and enhance the company's image. The call letters WSM were based on the company's motto: "We Shield Millions." The station

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<sup>71</sup> "Who Invented Radio." Tesla: Life and Legacy. Public Broadcasting Service, 2004. [http://www.pbs.org/tesla/ll/ll\\_whoradio.html](http://www.pbs.org/tesla/ll/ll_whoradio.html) Accessed 13 July 2018.

<sup>72</sup> McDonough, John. "First Radio Commercial Hit Airwaves 90 Years Ago." Npr.org. National Public Radio, 2012. <https://www.npr.org/2012/08/29/160265990/first-radio-commercial-hit-airwaves-90-years-ago> Accessed 13 July 2018.

began broadcasting on October 5, 1925 from the National Life building in Nashville. At first, the station played mostly classical music. That would change, however, on November 28, 1925.<sup>73</sup>

It was on that date when George Hay, announcer and program director, launched a new show called the *WSM Barn Dance*. The show starred championship fiddler Uncle Jimmy Thompson playing the traditional music of Southern Appalachia. The show was a huge hit, but people wanted the opportunity to see their favorite musicians perform as well. Crowds began coming to the office to see the musicians play. This led the National Life Company to build an auditorium for the show. Hayes renamed the show *The Grand Ole Opry* in 1927.<sup>74</sup>

Another important development in country music history occurred in 1927. Maybelle Addington Carter joined her cousin Sara and brother in law A.P. Carter to form the Carter Family. The trio traveled to Bristol, Virginia later that year and recorded several songs as part of the so called “Bristol Sessions”. The “Bristol Sessions” were part of a recording tour of Southern towns by Victor Talking Machine Company producer Ralph Peer. Peer hoped to find new talent and record blues, gospel, and “hillbilly” music.<sup>75</sup> Sara’s voice and Maybelle’s distinctive guitar style which came to be known as “Carter Family Picking,” made the group an instant sensation and helped to popularize hillbilly or country music throughout the nation.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> “WSM Interactive Timeline.” WSMonline.com. 2015. <https://www.wsmonline.com/history/> Accessed 13 July 2018.

<sup>74</sup> “WSM Interactive Timeline.” WSMonline.com. 2015. <https://www.wsmonline.com/history/> Accessed 13 July 2018.

<sup>75</sup> “The Bristol Sessions.” The Bristol Sessions.com. 2018. <http://bristolsessions.com/> Accessed 13 July 2018.

<sup>76</sup> Carter Family.” Country Music Hall of Fame. <https://countrymusichalloffame.org/Inductees/InducteeDetail/carter-family> Accessed 13 July 2018.



As country music grew in popularity, so did the *Grand Ole Opry*. As a result of this growth, the Opry moved to various locations around Nashville until finally moving to the Ryman Auditorium on June 5, 1943. By that time, WSM had become one of the nation's most powerful broadcasters. Using an eight hundred seventy-five foot antenna, WSM could broadcast nationwide.<sup>77</sup>

Musicians who played the Opry quickly became stars. On December 8, 1945, Bill Monroe brought to the Opry stage a group of musicians who invented a new musical style called "bluegrass." "The Original Bluegrass Band," as the musicians called themselves, were Bill Monroe on mandolin, Earl Scruggs on the banjo, and Lester Flatt on the guitar. Other stars who found fame on the Opry stage include Minnie Pearl, Hank Williams Sr., Patsy Cline, Loretta Lynn, Johnny Cash and Mother Maybelle & The Carter Sisters. In 1974, The *Grand Ole Opry* moved from the Ryman Auditorium to a new facility on the grounds of Opryland. Performing at the Opry continues to be a career-defining moment for country and bluegrass musicians.<sup>78</sup>

## The Music Industry Develops in Tennessee: The Blues

William Christopher "W.C." Handy was born in Florence, Alabama on November 16, 1873. Handy was born with a gift for music. In his 1941 memoir *Father of the Blues*, Handy said that from the age of ten he could identify and remember any sound that came to his ear. He would later reproduce some of those sounds in his music. However, Handy's religious middle-class family did not approve of his interest in music. When

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<sup>77</sup> "Ryman Auditorium Timeline." Ryman. 2018. <https://ryman.com/history/> Accessed 13 July 2018.

<sup>78</sup> "Ryman Auditorium Timeline." Ryman. 2018. <https://ryman.com/history/> Accessed 13 July 2018.

Handy brought home a guitar that he had purchased, his father made him return it for a dictionary. Handy wrote that to his parents “becoming a musician would be like selling my soul to the devil.”<sup>79</sup>

Handy did become a musician. In 1893 he organized a quartet to play at the Chicago World’s Fair; after the fair, he worked as a traveling musician for a number of years before taking a teaching job at Alabama A&M. Handy soon discovered that teaching did not pay well, and in 1896 he joined Mahara’s Minstrels. By 1903, he was directing the Colored Knights of Pythias, a group that played for both African American and white audiences.<sup>80</sup>

It was during a performance for a white audience that Handy’s musical career began to change. A member of the audience asked Handy to “play some of your own [African American] music”. Handy and his group continued playing the popular music they were familiar with, but the crowd was not pleased. Then three local African American men came on stage and played some blues. Handy saw the positive response the blues songs received and considered adding some blues to the group’s repertoire. While waiting for a train in Tutwiler, Mississippi in 1903, Handy had another encounter with the blues. An African American musician at the train station was playing his guitar with a knife and singing about going “where the Southern Crosses the Dog.” Handy said that “it was the weirdest music I’d ever heard.”<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> “W.C. Handy- the “Father of the Blues”-dies.” History.com. 2010. <https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/w-c-handythe-father-of-the-bluesdies> Accessed 13 July 2018.

<sup>80</sup> “William Christopher ‘W.C.’ Handy.” Trail of the Hellhound: Delta Blues in the Lower Mississippi Valley.” National Park Service. 2017. <https://www.nps.gov/locations/lowermsdeltaregion/wc-handy.htm> Accessed 13 July 2018.

<sup>81</sup> “William Christopher ‘W.C.’ Handy.” Trail of the Hellhound: Delta Blues in the Lower Mississippi Valley.” National Park Service. 2017. <https://www.nps.gov/locations/lowermsdeltaregion/wc-handy.htm> Accessed 13 July 2018.

Blues is a distinctly African American folk music that developed in the rural south. Like all folk music, blues songs were passed from musician to musician and changed to suit the needs or intentions of the individual artist. Handy's remarkable ear for music and his boyhood training in musical notation allowed him to transform the songs he heard into sheet music that other musicians could play. Handy did not invent the blues, but he did bring it to the masses.<sup>82</sup>

Handy's first blues hit was written in 1909. Handy was living in Memphis and wrote a campaign song for E.H. Crump, who was running for mayor. The song remained popular even after the election, and in 1912 Handy gave the tune new lyrics and published it as "The Memphis Blues." Handy and his partner, Harry Pace, operated a music publishing house on Beale Street from 1913-1918, and it was during this period that Handy published "St. Louis Blues" which became famous worldwide and a hit for "Empress of the Blues" Bessie Smith.<sup>83</sup>

In 1918, Handy and Pace moved to New York City. Handy continued to write blues songs, but none were as popular as his earlier hits. In 1931, Memphis honored Handy by creating the W.C. Handy Park on Beale Street. Handy died in New York City on March 28, 1958. The self-proclaimed "Father of the Blues" left behind a musical legacy that can be heard in the works of musicians as diverse as Keith Richards of the Rolling Stones and George Gershwin.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> "William Christopher 'W.C.' Handy." Trail of the Hellhound: Delta Blues in the Lower Mississippi Valley." National Park Service. 2017. <https://www.nps.gov/locations/lowermsdeltaregion/wc-handy.htm> Accessed 13 July 2018

<sup>83</sup> "William Christopher 'W.C.' Handy." Trail of the Hellhound: Delta Blues in the Lower Mississippi Valley." National Park Service. 2017. <https://www.nps.gov/locations/lowermsdeltaregion/wc-handy.htm> Accessed 13 July 2018.

<sup>84</sup> "W.C. Handy- the "Father of the Blues"-dies." History.com. 2010. <https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/w-c-handythe-father-of-the-bluesdies> Accessed 13 July 2018.

Like W.C. Handy, Bessie Smith was born in Alabama, but she moved to Chattanooga as a young girl. Smith's parents died when she was only nine years old, and she was then raised by an older sister. She soon joined an older brother performing songs in a variety of musical styles including Tin Pan Alley, minstrel tunes, and vaudeville hits. In 1910, Smith met Gertrude "Ma" Rainey, known as "The Mother of the Blues." Rainey's influence helped Smith develop into one of the most well-known blues singers of all time.<sup>85</sup>

Smith, who is often remembered for her high flying lifestyle, recorded her first song, "Downhearted Blues," in 1923. The record became a hit and was followed by others including "St. Louis Blues" and "Nobody Knows When You are Down and Out." Smith sold out venues in the 1920's and was one of highest paid African American entertainers of her time, earning one thousand, five hundred dollars a week for a season in Detroit. The Stock Market Crash and the ensuing Great Depression hurt Smith's career and forced her back to the smaller venues of her early performing days. Smith's star was once again on the rise when she died as the result of a traffic accident in Mississippi in 1937.<sup>86</sup>

## Scopes Trial

*The State of Tennessee v. John Thomas Scopes*, also known as the "Scopes Trial" or "Scopes Monkey Trial," took place in 1925 in the small town of Dayton, Tennessee.

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<sup>85</sup> Jeff Biggers. *The United States of Appalachia*. (Berkeley: Counterpoint,2006), 16-17.

<sup>86</sup> Ivan Hewett. "Bessie Smith: the greatest female blues singer who ever lived." *The Telegraph* (London, UK) 13 Aug 2015. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/tvandradio/11801473/Bessie-Smith-the-greatest-female-blues-singer-who-ever-lived.html> Accessed 13 July 2018.

The central issue of the case surrounded the Butler Act, a law passed that same year which outlawed the teaching of Charles Darwin's Theory of Evolution and "any theory that denies the story of the Divine Creation of man as taught in the Bible."<sup>87</sup> After the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) promised to fund anyone who challenged the Act, community leaders in Dayton banded together and charged high school teacher John Thomas Scopes, who may or may not have actually taught evolution. After famous attorneys Clarence Darrow and William Jennings Bryan agreed to argue each side of the case, the trial, and Dayton in general, gained national attention and brought the clash between science and religion to the American forefront.

Charles Darwin laid out his Theory of Evolution by publishing *The Origin of Species* in 1859. The book caused a firestorm among religious denominations in the United States. Some churches denounced the theory outright while others attempted to adjust their doctrine around it. By the 1920s, most mainstream northern Protestant churches had accepted the theory and chose to view the Bible as a symbolic work only, as opposed to the literal truth. Some church leaders even went as far to say that evolution was just how God worked.<sup>88</sup> Many conservative Southern and mid-Western religious leaders, however, would have none of it. The Bible, to them, was the literal truth and anything deviating from it and subsequently taught in schools threatened to corrupt the youth. These leaders also believed that there should be consequences for those who taught such subjects. In 1878, for example, eminent naturalist Alexander Winchell was dismissed from Vanderbilt University for promoting the idea that civilizations of man existed before those mentioned in the Bible. Organizations such as the Anti-Evolution

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<sup>87</sup> Paul H. Bergeron, Stephen V. Ash, and Jeanette Keith, *Tennesseans and their History* (Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press, 1999), 250.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, 249.

League and Bible Crusaders of America paraded throughout Tennessee spreading anti-Darwinist ideas. The famed orator William Jennings Bryan gave a speech in Nashville in 1924 entitled “Is the Bible True?,” in which he rebuked Darwinism before thousands of cheering listeners.

With a majority of Tennesseans firmly opposed to evolutionary theory, the General Assembly took up the matter in 1925. State Representative George Washington Butler presented for debate House Bill 185, which made it illegal to teach any theory “that man has descended from a lower order of animals.”<sup>89</sup> The so-called Butler Act passed both houses of the legislature with ease, and with some reluctance, Governor Austin Peay signed the measure into law.

In reaction, the ACLU promised to fund anyone brave enough in Tennessee to break the law and stand trial for teaching the theory of evolution. Enter John Thomas Scopes; while listening to local men debate whether or not biology could be taught effectively without Darwin’s theory, Scopes entered the conversation and, when questioned, said that he had discussed the topic with his students. Truthfully, Scopes could not remember if he had actually taught Darwinism at all, and he secretly hoped that no students would come forward to challenge the claim that he had. Dayton’s leaders, on hearing of the exchange at the drug-store, decided to test the ACLU’s offer and charged Scopes for breaking the Butler Act. The community leaders believed that such controversy would bring national attention to Dayton and put the town “on the map.”<sup>90</sup> The stage was set for *The State of Tennessee v. John Thomas Scopes*.

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<sup>89</sup> 3 Robert E. Corlew, *Tennessee: A Short History*, 2nd ed., (Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press, 1981), 540-41

<sup>90</sup> Bergeron, Ash, Keith, *Tennesseans and their History*, 252-53.

John T. Scopes was born on August 30, 1900 the son of a railroad machinist. After a brief stint at the University of Illinois, Scopes earned a bachelor's degree from the University of Kentucky in 1924. He majored in law but studied with a variety of teachers in a number of subjects. An indication of things to come there was a battle between evolution and religion in Kentucky during Scopes' time there. In that case, progressive school officials triumphed over the anti-evolutionists. At twenty-four, Scopes became a teacher of algebra, physics, and chemistry at Central High School in Dayton, Tennessee, which lies about forty miles from Chattanooga. He was also the football coach at the school, and proved a popular figure in town; he incidentally, attended church every Sunday.<sup>91</sup> But when he stood trial in 1925, his popularity was overshadowed by negative press as Dayton became the staging ground for one of the twentieth century's most famous courtroom battles.

Volunteering to try the case for the prosecution was none other than William Jennings Bryan. Bryan had lived a successful life up to the trial; he had been a lawyer, a Populist politician, a congressman, a journalist, a three-time nominee for U.S. President, and, most importantly an ardent anti-evolutionist. He believed that Darwin's work undermined religion and threatened the basic fabric of society. He spoke out across the country and, in his effective but simple style, questioned the scientific community. "It is better to trust in the Rock of Ages," he is noted for saying, "than to know the age of rocks."<sup>92</sup> For the Scopes Trial, Bryan assisted state Attorney General A. Tom Stewart to try the defendant.

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<sup>91</sup> Kathleen S. Brown, "Scopes, John Thomas," from *American National Biography*, Vol. 19 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 263-64

<sup>92</sup> Robert W. Cherney, "Bryan, William Jennings," from *American National Biography*, Vol. 3 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 815.

Opposing Bryan and representing Scopes was the most well-known trial lawyer in America, Clarence Darrow. As a young man Darrow graduated from public school, taught local students, and enrolled in the law school at the University of Michigan. Afterward, he apprenticed in Youngstown, Ohio, and was formally admitted to the bar at the age of twenty-one. Darrow spent years on the law circuit, first in Chicago and then all over the nation. He became a friend to organized labor until a bribery scandal damaged his reputation in 1911. After serving as a war propagandist for the Allies in World War I, Darrow defended the infamous murderers Leopold and Loeb and urged them to plead guilty so as to avoid the death penalty. The public's attention was focused on the trial, and by the end, Darrow was able to spare the two young murderers' the death penalty. In Dayton, Darrow's task was primarily to face off against his longtime-foe, Bryan.<sup>93</sup> Darrow was joined by Dudley Field Malone and Arthur Garfield Hayes in the defense of Scopes.

The trial itself, taking place at the Rhea County Courthouse, resembled a circus more than a trial. Journalists and newspaper men from all corners of the country descended upon the little town. Writers sent their publishers colorful descriptions of "Monkey State" Tennesseans, whom they ridiculed incessantly.<sup>94</sup> The New York Times described the proceeding as "the first case of its kind since we stopped trying people for witchcraft."<sup>95</sup> H.L. Mencken, the most renowned journalist of the age, wrote several articles for the Baltimore Sun. It was Mencken who gave the event the title of "Monkey Trial" and described Dayton as "the bunghole of the United States, a cesspool of

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<sup>93</sup> Kevin Tierney, "Darrow, Clarence," from *American National Biography*, Vol. 6 (New York: Oxford University Press), 1999, 114-15.

<sup>94</sup> Corlew, *Tennessee: A Short History*, 542.

<sup>95</sup> New York Times, July 21, 1925.



Baptists, a miasma of Methodism, snakecharmers, phony real estate operators, and syphilitic evangelists.”<sup>96</sup>

When the trial began, Darrow attempted to bring in witnesses from many diverse fields. The experts included Christian theologians, Hebrew scholars, geologists, biologists, and others. Instead of simply defending Scopes, Darrow and the defense team wanted to put not only the Butler Act but conservative Christianity on trial. The judge, John T. Raulston, refused to allow Darrow’s witnesses and shot down the notion that the trial was about more than Scopes’ violation of the law. Raulston did, however, admit that some examination of the Book of Genesis was necessary to determine whether Scopes was guilty.<sup>97</sup>

For days, the two sides battled. Contrary to Judge Raulston’s wishes, the overarching themes of Darwinism and Creationism were discussed. Bryan, as expected, ridiculed Darwin and attempted to poke holes in his theory. His speeches were directed at homespun Tennesseans and other Southern Christians as he tried to sway them to his side. He found the notion that man evolved from apes to be not only factually wrong but insulting as well. He complained that according to the theory of evolution American men were not even descended “from American monkeys, but from old world monkeys.” This remark caused the courtroom to erupt in approving laughter.<sup>98</sup>

On the seventh day of the trial, Darrow called Bryan himself to the stand in order to question his defense of anti-evolutionism. Judge Raulston, fearing that the building

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<sup>96</sup> Bergeron, Ash, Keith, Tennesseans and their History, 253

<sup>97</sup> Bergeron, Ash, Keith, Tennesseans and their History, 252

<sup>98</sup> The World’s Most Famous Court Trial: Tennessee Evolution Case: a word-for-word report of the famous court test of the Tennessee anti-evolution act, at Dayton, July 10 to 21, 1925, including speeches and arguments of attorneys, testimony of noted scientists, and Bryan’s last speech, Reprint, (Dayton, Tennessee: Rhea County Historical Society, 1978), 176.

would not support the crowds of people who had gathered to hear the examination, called a recess to escape to the courthouse lawn.<sup>99</sup> When the recess ended, Darrow and Bryan had their confrontation. The two argued about everything from the age of the Earth to Adam and Eve to Confucianism to whether Bryan had any respect at all for scientists. “We have the purpose,” Darrow declared, “of preventing bigots and ignoramuses from controlling the education of the United States.” Bryan, however, presented himself as a Christian martyr. “I am simply trying to protect the word of God,” he said, “against the greatest atheist or agnostic in the United States. I want the papers to know I am not afraid to get on the stand in front of him and let him do his worst.” Bryan’s statement was followed by prolonged applause.<sup>100</sup> Finally, after another heated exchange between the two rivals, Raulston banged his gavel and adjourned for the day.

The debate between Darrow and Bryan did nothing to affect the outcome. Scopes had defied the Butler Act, and as a result, he was found guilty and fined one hundred dollars. An appeals court later upheld the law but overturned Scopes’ conviction on a technicality. Scopes received donations from admirers, which he then used to attend graduate school. Darrow went on trying cases for another decade while Bryan died in Dayton shortly after the Scopes Trial.

While the trial brought evolution to the forefront of American thought, the Butler Act remained in place in Tennessee until 1967. Darwin was excluded from state textbooks until the 1960s. So while Darrow believed that he had won a moral victory for science, and media portraying the event (most notably the film *Inherit the Wind*) claimed the same, anti-evolutionism won the day in Tennessee. The outcome and the trial, as

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<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, 227

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, 299.

described by northern newspapers, contributed to the stereotypical image of the backward, uneducated Tennesseans who shunned science and clung to an outdated rural existence. Continuing into present day, the battle between religion and science has persisted; the Scopes Trial only intensified the conflict and brought Tennessee to the issue's forefront.

## The Great Depression and the New Deal

The seeming prosperity of the 1920s masked serious problems within the American economy. First, for most workers wages were not rising fast enough to support the purchase of the vast amount of consumer goods available. Families turned to buying goods on monthly installments plans in many cases accumulating serious consumer debt. Second, crop prices fell as international demand for crops fell as Europe recovered from World War I. Many farmers had borrowed money to buy land and equipment to meet the high demand of the war years. Farmers tried to compensate by growing more crops, but this only served to lower prices even more. Many farmers defaulted on their loans and rural banks collapsed. Congress tried to stop the impending crisis by passing the McNairy-Haugen bill which called for price supports for key products. However, President Coolidge vetoed the bill with the comment that "Farmers have never made much money. I don't believe we can do much about it."<sup>101</sup>

Coolidge's laissez-faire attitude towards price supports for farmers extended to the stock market. The government did little to regulate stock speculation or stop the practice of buying on margin. Buyers paid a small percentage of a stock's price and borrowed the rest of the money when making a stock purchase. This practice drove

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<sup>101</sup> Gerald Danzer et al. *The Americans: Reconstruction to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. (Evanston, Illinois: McDougall Littell, 1991), 464-465.

stock prices higher than the true value of the companies and left buyers vulnerable to any drop in prices. By September of 1929, stock prices had reached a peak and began to fall. The market dropped sharply on October 24 but on October 29, Black Tuesday, the stock market crashed. Investors frantically tried to unload their overpriced stocks, but it was too late. By the end of day, thousands of people were had lost their entire savings and were left with massive debts they had no way to pay.<sup>102</sup>

The stock market crash led to a run on banks as many people lost confidence in the financial system and began to withdraw their money in record amounts. By 1933, eleven thousand banks had closed. The stock market crash and bank failures led to business failures and massive unemployment. Congress responded by passing the Hawley-Smoot Tariff Act to protect American farmers and manufacturers, but it backfired. Countries that could no longer sell their goods to the United States could not afford to buy American products and in many cases raised their own tariffs. The resulting fall in international trade compounded the problems the American economy faced. The country fell into a period of economic hardship known as the Great Depression.<sup>103</sup>

The Great Depression shattered the lives of millions of Americans. Families split apart as men struggled to find work and often travelled looking for work. Many men found themselves dependent on soup kitchens and bread lines for survival. Mothers struggled to provide for their children and many teen age boys left home to “ride the rails.” Schools closed in many places and the number of children suffering from diseases related to malnutrition such as rickets skyrocketed. Thousands of families

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<sup>102</sup> Gerald Danzer et al. *The Americans: Reconstruction to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. (Evanston, Illinois: McDougall Littell, 1991), 466-469.

<sup>103</sup> Gerald Danzer et al. *The Americans: Reconstruction to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. (Evanston, Illinois: McDougall Littell, 1991), 469-471.

were forced off their farms when a drought turned the once fertile Great Plains into the Dust Bowl.<sup>104</sup>

Tennesseans suffered along with the rest of the nation. In cities such as Memphis, manufacturing jobs disappeared and white workers took jobs as cooks and maids and janitors that had previously been held by African Americans. Many African Americans could find no work at all. By 1933, social workers reported a steep rise in malnutrition in the cities as charities could not keep up with the growing needs of the urban poor. In contrast, people in rural areas saw little change in their circumstances. Falling farm prices following World War I had already damaged the rural economy. Farm families returned to the lifestyle of their ancestors. They grew their own food, bought the bare necessities and “made do” wherever possible.<sup>105</sup>

Republican candidate Herbert Hoover victory in the 1928 presidential race was due in part to the belief of many Americans that Hoover would continue the era of prosperity.<sup>106</sup> Another key factor in his victory was the strong anti-Catholic sentiment. Many voters believed the outrageous claim that electing the Democratic candidate Alfred Smith was tantamount to putting the pope into the oval office. Hoover had coordinated relief efforts in Europe following World War I and had a reputation as a humanitarian. However, he also believed that the government’s role in the economy should be limited to encouraging interested parties to cooperate, not taking direct control. As a result, Hoover did little to intervene as the depression grew steadily

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<sup>104</sup> Gerald Danzer et al. *The Americans: Reconstruction to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. (Evanston, Illinois: McDougall Littell, 1991), 475-476.

<sup>105</sup> Bergeron, Ash, Keith, *Tennesseans and their History*, 259-260.

<sup>106</sup> Gerald Danzer et al. *The Americans: Reconstruction to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. (Evanston, Illinois: McDougall Littell, 1991), 466.

worse. Public sentiment turned against Hoover and led victories for Democrats in the 1930 Congressional elections.<sup>107</sup>

In 1932, Hoover ordered the forced disbanding of the Bonus Army that had descended on Washington D.C. in the spring. The Bonus Army, which was made up of World War I veterans and their families, came to Washington to support a bill which would have provided cash payments to World War I veterans. The bill failed in Congress and many of the Bonus Marchers went home. On July 28<sup>th</sup>, Hoover ordered the one thousand soldiers under Douglas MacArthur to force the Bonus Army out of its shantytown. The soldiers used tear gas on the crowd of men, women and children. Many people were injured including an infant who died after being gassed and an eight year old boy who was partially blinded. The American public was outraged by the harsh treatment of veterans. The damage to Hoover's image along with his failure to deal with the depression led to the election of Democrat Franklin Delano Roosevelt in 1932.<sup>108</sup>

Roosevelt wasted no time in creating a plan to deal with the Great Depression. Between his election in November, 1932 and his inauguration in March, 1933 Roosevelt worked with a team of expert advisors to create the program known as the New Deal. The New Deal consisted of a number of government programs designed to stabilize the economy, provide immediate assistance to the needy and put people back to work.<sup>109</sup> Tennessee, like the nation, benefitted from all the New Deal programs. However, the greatest impact came from the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) and the Civilian Conservation Corp (CCC).

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<sup>107</sup> Gerald Danzer et al. *The Americans: Reconstruction to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. (Evanston, Illinois: McDougall Littell, 1991), 480-481.

<sup>108</sup> Gerald Danzer et al. *The Americans: Reconstruction to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. (Evanston, Illinois: McDougall Littell, 1991), 482-483.

<sup>109</sup> Gerald Danzer et al. *The Americans: Reconstruction to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. (Evanston, Illinois: McDougall Littell, 1991), 492-493..

# Tennessee Valley Authority

When Franklin Roosevelt was elected president in 1932, the nation was in the depths of the Great Depression. Nearly twenty-five percent of American workers were unemployed and people throughout the nation were struggling to survive. Roosevelt promised to implement a program of relief, recovery and reform called the New Deal.

The Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) was one of the agencies created during the first one hundred days of the New Deal. During the 1920s George Norris, a Senator from Nebraska, had tried to secure support for a multipurpose development in Muscle Shoals, Alabama where the government owned a large fertilizer plant. Roosevelt expanded the scope and size of Norris's proposal to encompass the entire watershed of the Tennessee River. TVA was given a number of goals: prevent flooding, improve navigation, help farmers, provide cheap electricity, and form a strategic plan for the region.<sup>110</sup>

The Tennessee Valley Region was one of the most economically depressed parts of the nation. Soil erosion had left much of the farmland ruined. Families scratched out a living on subsistence farms and lived in much the same way as their ancestors had one hundred years earlier. Only one percent of farm families had indoor plumbing and only eight percent owned radios. TVA's solution to those problems was to build dams to control flooding and generate cheap electrical power. Unfortunately, building dams would displace thousands of the families that TVA was charged with helping.<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>110</sup> W Bruce Wheeler. "Tennessee Valley Authority." Tennessee Encyclopedia. 2018. <https://tennesseencyclopedia.net/entries/tennessee-valley-authority/> Accessed 18 July 2018.

<sup>111</sup> W Bruce Wheeler. "Tennessee Valley Authority." Tennessee Encyclopedia. 2018. <https://tennesseencyclopedia.net/entries/tennessee-valley-authority/> Accessed 18 July 2018.

The first dam project TVA undertook was on the Clinch River in Anderson County. It was named Norris in honor of Senator George Norris who had worked so tirelessly for development in the Tennessee Valley region. Dam construction began in October of 1933 and was completed in March 1936 at a cost of thirty-six million dollars. Some of those funds were used to buy the land that would be flooded when the dam was completed.<sup>112</sup>

Residents in the Clinch River Valley, like residents in other areas where TVA would subsequently build dams, had varying points of view on the dam. Some residents viewed the dam project as beneficial because it would provide construction jobs in the present and hopefully manufacturing jobs in the future. Other residents argued that the dam would flood the best farmland leaving only marginal land to be farmed. Lastly, many residents did not want to leave the land their families had lived on for generations.<sup>113</sup>

TVA employed a “carrot-and-stick” approach to land acquisition. Farmers were offered payment for their lands, and the first to accept the offer often received help with moving expenses as well. TVA agents also appealed to residents’ sense of patriotism and duty. They told residents how much the entire community would benefit from their sacrifice. One sticking point for many residents was that cemeteries would be flooded covering the graves of loved ones. To overcome this objection, TVA offered to relocate

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<sup>112</sup> Marian Moffett. “Norris Dam.” Tennessee Encyclopedia. 2018  
<https://tennesseencyclopedia.net/entries/norris-dam/> Accessed 18 July 2018.

<sup>113</sup> Rogers, Michael. “TVA Population Removal: Attitudes and Expectations of the Dispossessed at the Norris and Cherokee Dam Sites.” The Journal of East Tennessee History 67 (1995): 89-105.  
[http://www.teachtnhistory.org/file/TVA%20Population%20Removal-%20Attitudes%20&%20Expectations%20of%20the%20Dispossessed%20at%20the%20Norris%20&%20Cherokee%20Dam%20Sites%20\(Rogers\).pdf](http://www.teachtnhistory.org/file/TVA%20Population%20Removal-%20Attitudes%20&%20Expectations%20of%20the%20Dispossessed%20at%20the%20Norris%20&%20Cherokee%20Dam%20Sites%20(Rogers).pdf) Accessed 18 July, 2018.



community and family cemeteries in a manner that most residents considered respectful and dignified.

Residents who resisted TVA's more generous approach found themselves being ordered off their land under the doctrine of eminent domain. Eminent domain is the power of the government to take private land and convert it for public use as long as the owners receive just compensation. Many of the residents that were resistant to moving argued that the price being offered for their land was too low. Others simply felt that the right of individuals to own property should not be violated by their government. Some residents fought the sale of their land in court; others simply ignored the notices and went on with their lives. Ultimately, the courts upheld the use of eminent domain to force the sale of land for TVA projects. People who remained on their land after the sale was finalized were forcibly removed by local authorities.<sup>114</sup>

By 1945, TVA had built twelve dams, created fourteen million acres of floodwater storage, improved navigation from Knoxville to Paducah, Kentucky and was generating electric power for more than six hundred and fifty thousand households. Many of the dams, like Douglas Dam, were built as part of the war effort. In Oak Ridge, TVA generated power had helped to enrich the uranium used in the atomic bomb. TVA had also displaced thousands of people and dismantled entire communities. While many of the displaced people came to see the economic benefits that TVA brought to the region, including the unexpected benefit of tourists utilizing the reservoirs for recreation, that did

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<sup>114</sup> Rogers, Michael. "TVA Population Removal: Attitudes and Expectations of the Dispossessed at the Norris and Cherokee Dam Sites." *The Journal of East Tennessee History* 67 (1995): 89-105. [http://www.teachtnhistory.org/file/TVA%20Population%20Removal-%20Attitudes%20&%20Expectations%20of%20the%20Dispossessed%20at%20the%20Norris%20&%20Cherokee%20Dam%20Sites%20\(Rogers\).pdf](http://www.teachtnhistory.org/file/TVA%20Population%20Removal-%20Attitudes%20&%20Expectations%20of%20the%20Dispossessed%20at%20the%20Norris%20&%20Cherokee%20Dam%20Sites%20(Rogers).pdf) Accessed 18 July, 2018.

not stop them from feeling a profound sense of loss for the communities that disappeared.<sup>115</sup>

## Great Smoky Mountains National Park and the Civilian Conservation Corp

The Great Smoky Mountains National Park began as the idea of Mr. and Mrs. W.P. Davis of Knoxville, Tennessee. The Davis's had visited a number of national parks in the west and thought that the Smoky Mountains were just as deserving of status as a national park. The Davis's did not know that the federal government was also looking for a location to designate as a national park in the eastern United States. W.P. Davis brought the idea to the attention of other prominent members of the Knoxville community, and, together, they formed the Great Smoky Mountains Conservation Association in December 1923. The park would have a dual purpose; it would preserve the natural beauty of the area, while also promoting economic development of the region.<sup>116</sup>

The Southern Appalachian National Park Committee, the government group responsible for choosing the location of the new park, toured potential sites in 1924. The group refused an invitation to come to Knoxville, but did allow members of the Great

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<sup>115</sup> W Bruce Wheeler. "Tennessee Valley Authority." Tennessee Encyclopedia. 2018. <https://tennesseeencyclopedia.net/entries/tennessee-valley-authority/> Accessed 18 July 2018. And Rogers, Michael. "TVA Population Removal: Attitudes and Expectations of the Dispossessed at the Norris and Cherokee Dam Sites." The Journal of East Tennessee History 67 (1995): 89-105. [http://www.teachtnhistory.org/file/TVA%20Population%20Removal-%20Attitudes%20&%20Expectations%20of%20the%20Dispossessed%20at%20the%20Norris%20&%20Cherokee%20Dam%20Sites%20\(Rogers\).pdf](http://www.teachtnhistory.org/file/TVA%20Population%20Removal-%20Attitudes%20&%20Expectations%20of%20the%20Dispossessed%20at%20the%20Norris%20&%20Cherokee%20Dam%20Sites%20(Rogers).pdf) Accessed 18 July, 2018.

<sup>116</sup> Dan Pierce. "Great Smoky Mountains National Park." Tennessee Encyclopedia. 2018. <https://tennesseeencyclopedia.net/entries/great-smoky-mountains-national-park/> Accessed 18 July 2018.

Smoky Mountains Conservation Association to make a presentation during their stop in Asheville. The group used compelling photographs taken by James “Jim” Thompson to present their case to the members of the committee. A week later some of the committee members hiked to Mt. LeConte and witnessed the beauty of the mountains firsthand. On December 13, 1924, the government announced that the Great Smoky Mountains would be one of two national parks in the South.<sup>117</sup>

Despite the good news there were still a number of obstacles standing in the way of the park’s creation. The first was the ownership of the land. The western parks, such as Yellowstone and Yosemite, had been created out of lands that belonged to the federal government. The land in the proposed boundaries of the park was owned by private individuals and large timber corporations. Secondly, the federal government was not responsible for providing funds to purchase land. North Carolina and Tennessee both agreed to contribute two million of the ten million dollars required. Schoolchildren and citizens pledged one million dollars through a “Pennies for the Park” campaign but the members of the Conservation Association would still have to raise the rest. They contacted Henry Ford and John D. Rockefeller as potential donors. Ford was not interested, but on March 6, 1928, Rockefeller agreed to donate five million dollars in memory of his mother.<sup>118</sup>

The park’s supporters soon found that many landowners in the park were not interested in selling; the largest landowners were timber companies who depended on the old-growth trees harvested in the mountains. The state took the five largest

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<sup>117</sup> Dan Pierce. “Great Smoky Mountains National Park.” Tennessee Encyclopedia. 2018. <https://tennesseencyclopedia.net/entries/great-smoky-mountains-national-park/> Accessed 18 July 2018.

<sup>118</sup> Dan Pierce. “Great Smoky Mountains National Park.” Tennessee Encyclopedia. 2018. <https://tennesseencyclopedia.net/entries/great-smoky-mountains-national-park/> Accessed 18 July 2018.

companies to court and was eventually able to force them to sell. However, the combination of legal fees and unfulfilled pledges due the Great Depression meant the project no longer had enough funding to continue. President Roosevelt rescued the project by using some creative language to justify using federal funds to purchase land for the park, despite a provision in the original law that forbade federal funds from being used. Roosevelt and Ickes, the Secretary of the Interior, justified the expense as necessary to enlarge and expand the effectiveness of the Civilian Conservation Corp.<sup>119</sup>

The Civilian Conservation Corp (CCC) was one of the first New Deal agencies created in 1933. The CCC's purpose was to give employment to young men that would teach them new skills to help the nation recover from the Great Depression. The CCC provided enrollees with food, clothing, housing, healthcare, and education. The CCC focused on conservation activities such as reforestation, flood and fire control, and agricultural management.<sup>120</sup> As many as four thousand CCC men lived and worked at twenty-two different camps within the park between 1933 and 1942. Crews built stone bridges and guard rails, built ponds for fish hatcheries, cut trails, and built roads throughout the park.<sup>121</sup>

While some small families were eager to sell their farms and seek better opportunities elsewhere, other residents did not wish to leave. The small farms were not necessarily economically valuable, but many of them had been in the same family for generations and represented important family and community connections. Some

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<sup>119</sup> Dan Pierce. "Great Smoky Mountains National Park." Tennessee Encyclopedia. 2018. <https://tennesseencyclopedia.net/entries/great-smoky-mountains-national-park/> Accessed 18 July 2018.

<sup>120</sup> Ruth D. Nichols. "Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC)." Tennessee Encyclopedia. 2018. <https://tennesseencyclopedia.net/entries/civilian-conservation-corps-ccc/> Accessed 18 July 2018.

<sup>121</sup> National Park Service. "Great Smoky Mountain National Park: History and Culture." U.S. Department of the Interior. <https://www.nps.gov/grsm/learn/historyculture/index.htm> Accessed 18 July 2018.

residents, like the Walker sisters, sold their land but were allowed to remain for their lifetime under a leasing agreement. Others were forced out under the law of eminent domain. Some of the community buildings were preserved, but most were dismantled or burned.<sup>122</sup>

On September 2, 1940, President Roosevelt dedicated the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. In the years since, the park has been a destination for nearly ten million visitors each year. Tourism has become the leading industry for many counties bordering on the park, while others have not benefited as much. Development of land near the park's borders has also sparked controversy. Many citizens feel that beauty of the mountains is being obscured by hotels, shopping malls, and billboards. The dual purpose of the park to preserve natural beauty while encouraging development continues to create conflicts and opportunities for people who live and work near the park.<sup>123</sup>

## Tennessee during World War II

During the 1930s, most Tennesseans were focused on the Great Depression and the changes that new deal programs such as TVA and the CCC created in the state. As conflicts grew around the world, many Tennesseans favored a policy of isolationism fearful that a nation weakened by depression would not fare well in war. However, events far from Tennessee would soon bring Tennessee and the nation into war. In 1930s saw the rise of totalitarian governments in the Soviet Union, Italy and Spain as well as the rise of a militaristic and expansion minded government in Japan. The

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<sup>122</sup> Dan Pierce. "Great Smoky Mountains National Park." Tennessee Encyclopedia. 2018. <https://tennesseeencyclopedia.net/entries/great-smoky-mountains-national-park/> Accessed 18 July 2018.

<sup>123</sup> Dan Pierce. "Great Smoky Mountains National Park." Tennessee Encyclopedia. 2018. <https://tennesseeencyclopedia.net/entries/great-smoky-mountains-national-park/> Accessed 18 July 2018.

League of Nations, which was created to combat abuses by individual nations, was unable or unwilling to intervene as the actions of Adolph Hitler, Benito Mussolini, Joseph Stalin and Hideko Tojo drew the world into war.

Japan's expansion began in 1910 with the colonization of the Korean Peninsula. In 1931 Japan invaded and conquered the resource rich Chinese province of Manchuria. The League of Nations condemned Japan's action in Manchuria; Japan responded by quitting the League and keeping Manchuria. Mussolini conquered Ethiopia in 1935, and the Spanish Civil War of 1936-1939 left Fascist Dictator Franco in control of Spain. In Germany, Adolph Hitler used the anger German citizens felt over the Treaty of Versailles and long-standing anti-Semitism to propel himself to power. Hitler promised discontented Germans a racial pure, economically and militarily powerful "thousand year reich."<sup>124</sup> To that end, he began to militarize Germany in violation of the Treaty of Versailles. Once again the League of Nations and the nations of the world took no action.

Hitler believed that for Germany to prosper, it needed lebensraum or living space. Hitler planned to expand Germany's borders by annexing or conquering neighboring countries. In 1938, Germany marched its soldiers into Austria and declared its Anschluss or union with Germany without opposition. In 1938, Hitler proposed a deal to British Prime Neville Chamberlain and French premier Edouard Daladier. Hitler promised that if Germany were allowed to annex the Sudetenland, a part of Czechoslovakia, he would not make any more territorial demands. Chamberlain and Daladier agreed in order to avoid war. Hitler's promise was short-lived. Germany

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<sup>124</sup> Gerald Danzer et al. *The Americans: Reconstruction to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. (Evanston, Illinois: McDougall Littell, 1991), 531.

forces invaded the rest of Czechoslovakia on March 15, 1939 and Poland on September 1, 1939. On September 3, Britain and France declared war on Germany; World War II had begun.

Initially, Hitler and Stalin were allies. The Soviets and Germans signed a non-aggression pact on August 23, 1939. Following the Germany invasion of Poland, the Soviets occupied the eastern half of the country. Stalin then annexed Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. In late 1939, the Soviets invaded and occupied Finland. Germany and the Soviet Union's non-aggression pact would come to an abrupt end in 1941 when Hitler launched Operation Barbarossa against the Soviet Union.

The United States remained ostensibly neutral as the world edge closer to war throughout the 1930s. Many Americans, such as aviator and Nazi admirer Charles Lindbergh, argued strongly against any American intervention in a European war.<sup>125</sup> However, Roosevelt realized that there could be no peace with Adolph Hitler and carefully began to prepare the nation for war. Roosevelt began with a "cash and carry" policy under which warring nations could buy American weapons as long as they paid cash and transported their goods on their own ships.<sup>126</sup> At the same time, Roosevelt convinced Congress to increase defense spending and to pass the first peacetime draft. When the British ran out of cash in 1940, Roosevelt created the "lend-lease plan." Under this plan, the United States would "lend" arms and supplies to the British in return for leases to naval bases. Roosevelt famously compared the lend lease plan to lending

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<sup>125</sup> Gerald Danzer et al. *The Americans: Reconstruction to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. (Evanston, Illinois: McDougall Littell, 1991), 552.

<sup>126</sup> Gerald Danzer et al. *The Americans: Reconstruction to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. (Evanston, Illinois: McDougall Littell, 1991), 550.

a garden hose to a neighbor whose house was on fire in one of his fireside chats.<sup>127</sup>

Roosevelt also gave aid to the Soviets after Germany attacked in 1941. When German submarines began attacking American ships in the Atlantic, Roosevelt authorized the navy to return fire and to shoot German submarines on sight.

While Roosevelt was busily trying to shore up his allies defenses in Europe, Japan was taking decisive action in the Pacific. With France under German control and Britain suffering daily bombing raids by the Germans, Prime Minister Tojo knew that neither control was in a position to stop Japan from taking their Asian colonies. The United States responded by cutting off oil to Japan. Tojo ordered the Japanese navy to prepare for an attack on the United States. The Japanese leadership hoped that a surprise attack would cripple the United States navy long enough for them to take the oil fields of the Dutch East Indies and consolidate their other territorial gains.<sup>128</sup> On December 7, 1941, the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor in Hawaii. Stunned Americans listened solemnly as President Roosevelt asked Congress for a declaration of war calling December 7, 1941 “a day that will live in infamy.” In support of his Axis partner Japan, Hitler declared war on the United States on December 11, 1941. The United States was now fighting a two front war.

The war had immediate effects on Tennessee. Thousands of men were drafted into military service and the increasing presence of gold stars in window reminded everyone that not all those men would be coming home. The war also brought economic opportunities as industries hit hard by the depression began to rebound. Thousands of

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<sup>127</sup> Gerald Danzer et al. *The Americans: Reconstruction to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. (Evanston, Illinois: McDougall Littell, 1991), 552.

<sup>128</sup> Gerald Danzer et al. *The Americans: Reconstruction to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. (Evanston, Illinois: McDougall Littell, 1991), 555.



Tennessee “hillbillies” migrated to the great industrial cities of the North to build airplanes and tanks. As more and more men were drafted, women joined the workforce in record numbers and took manufacturing jobs that had traditionally been reserved for men. Tennessee’s mild climate and varied landscape made it an ideal location for military maneuvers that brought thousands of servicemen to Tennessee. Eventually, Tennessee would also be home to thousands of prisoners of war. Tennesseans played prominent roles in the war effort. Alvin York, World War I hero, toured the nation on bond drives as the film based on his life *Sergeant York* inspired thousands of young men to volunteer. Nashville native Cornelia Fort also toured the nation describing the attack on Pearl Harbor which she had witnessed from the cockpit of her plane. Fort eventually joined the Women’s Air Service Pilots (WASPs). Cordell Hull served as Roosevelt’s Secretary of State and helped create the United Nations after the war. Senator Kenneth McKellar used his position on the Appropriations committee to bring the Manhattan Project to Tennessee.

## Oak Ridge and the Manhattan Project

“Where in Tennessee would you like me to hide it?” This was Tennessee Senator Kenneth McKellar’s response when asked in 1942 to hide two billion dollars in the appropriations budget for a secret project to end World War II. That secret project was known as the Manhattan Project, and the place a good portion of the money was hidden was a town called Oak Ridge.

When Roosevelt approached McKellar in 1942, he was acting in part on a warning sent to him by Albert Einstein and others that claimed Hitler’s scientists were capable of

constructing a weapon that used nuclear fission to create immense destructive power. The race was on for the United States to create such a weapon first. It would require not only massive amounts of money and manpower, but also total secrecy by those involved in the project.<sup>129</sup>

The site of Oak Ridge, TN was chosen for part of the Manhattan project for a number of reasons. First, it was close to several TVA dams that could generate the massive amounts of electrical power that was needed to enrich uranium. Second, it was divided into a series of small valleys separated from each other by ridges. By building the plants in separate sections, the engineers ensured that if one plant blew up the others would be safe. Third, there was good access to railroads for transportation, and the land was cheap.<sup>130</sup>

In the fall of 1942 residents in parts of Roane and Anderson counties began to receive notices that the government was taking their land. Local residents had likely heard of eminent domain because of TVA projects in the area, but most had never dreamed that the government would want their land too. Many left willingly; others tried to fight in the courts but quickly found that they could not win. By February of 1943, fifty-nine thousand acres of land had been acquired for the project then known as Clinton Engineering Works (CEW).<sup>131</sup>

Because of the secrecy of the project as well as the need for urgency, it was necessary to build not just housing for workers, but an entire community complete with

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<sup>129</sup> Charles W. Johnson. "Oak Ridge." Tennessee Encyclopedia. 2018. <https://tennesseencyclopedia.net/entries/oak-ridge/>. Accessed 18 July 2018.

<sup>130</sup> Charles W. Johnson. "Oak Ridge." Tennessee Encyclopedia. 2018. <https://tennesseencyclopedia.net/entries/oak-ridge/>. Accessed 18 July 2018.

<sup>131</sup> Charles W. Johnson. "Oak Ridge." Tennessee Encyclopedia. 2018. <https://tennesseencyclopedia.net/entries/oak-ridge/>. Accessed 18 July 2018.

stores, churches, and recreational facilities. Like everything else at CEW, the buildings were built in record time, though access to housing remained a problem throughout the war years as the number of workers climbed steadily. Workers for CEW came from all across the nation. Some were recruited for their specific skills in chemistry or mathematics while others were chosen for their ability to perform routine tasks efficiently, and they were trained on the job. Many of the workers in the plants were young women who sought wartime work out of a sense of patriotism and a desire to earn a good wage.

Only a handful of people at the facility knew what the true purpose of the project was.<sup>132</sup> Security at CEW was tight. Checkpoints were established at all entry points, and everyone had to wear a badge that identified the areas they could access. Workers were also encouraged to inform on each other if someone was asking too many questions about the project. People in the surrounding area openly speculated on the purpose of the project as well and tried to gain information from project workers if they ventured into nearby Knoxville.<sup>133</sup>

Like many New Deal projects, racial discrimination was common at the site. Edward Teller, a leading scientist on the project, could not bring one of his mathematicians to Oak Ridge because the man was African American. The only jobs available for African Americans at Oak Ridge were as construction workers or janitors. Restroom, dining

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<sup>132</sup> Charles W. Johnson. "Oak Ridge." Tennessee Encyclopedia. 2018. <https://tennesseeencyclopedia.net/entries/oak-ridge/>. Accessed 18 July 2018. And Denise Kiernan. *The Girls of the Atomic City: The Untold Story of the Women Who Helped Win World War II*(New York: Simon & Schuster, 2013)

<sup>133</sup> Denise Kiernan. *The Girls of the Atomic City: The Untold Story of the Women Who Helped Win World War II*(New York: Simon & Schuster, 2013)

halls, and other facilities were all segregated. African American married couples were not allowed to live together, though housing was provided for white married couples.<sup>134</sup>

The process for enriching uranium required massive facilities. The K-25 plant contained more than forty-four acres of floor space and was the largest building in the world at the time. Y-12 was not as large but was still considered massive. Each plant carried out a different process for enriching uranium. As Robert Oppenheimer's original estimate for the amount of fissionable material increased, so did the size of the plants and the number of workers at Oak Ridge. While the original plan called for a town of about thirty thousand residents, nearly seventy-five thousand would be living there by 1945.<sup>135</sup>

On August 6th, 1945 the people of Oak Ridge learned what all the work and secrecy had created: a bomb more powerful than any seen before. President Truman's announcement of the bombing of Hiroshima and Oak Ridge's role in its development shocked the people of Oak Ridge, but, for many, that shock was soon replaced with great pride. A second American bomb was dropped on Nagasaki just three days later, and contributed greatly to Japan's decision to surrender. After the war, many residents began to wonder about the future of Oak Ridge. Some were glad to return to their prewar homes, but others had made Oak Ridge their home and wanted to stay. The rise of the Cold War and the need for advanced scientific research on nuclear power ensured the continued existence of Oak Ridge. Though much of its work has shifted

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<sup>134</sup> Teller, Edward. "Letter Concerning Black Mathematician." *We'll Back Our Boys: the Southern Homefront During World War II*. National Archives, Atlanta, [https://www.archives.gov/atlanta/exhibits/item147\\_exh.html](https://www.archives.gov/atlanta/exhibits/item147_exh.html) Accessed 18 July 2018 and Denise Kiernan. *The Girls of the Atomic City: The Untold Story of the Women Who Helped Win World War II* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2013)

<sup>135</sup> Charles W. Johnson. "Oak Ridge." *Tennessee Encyclopedia*. 2018. <https://tennesseencyclopedia.net/entries/oak-ridge/>. Accessed 18 July 2018.

away from nuclear research, Oak Ridge continues to be the center of scientific research in a number of fields.<sup>136</sup>

## Cornelia Fort and the Changing Roles of Women in World War II

Prior to World War II, women who wished to enter the workforce faced a number of challenges. Many types of work, such as construction and heavy manufacturing, were closed to women because many people assumed women were not strong enough to do that sort of work. Women were routinely paid less than men for the same work. African American women faced even greater challenges; often the only work they could find was as janitors or housekeepers. At the time, few women were able to break out of these limited roles.

One woman who defied social norms was Cornelia Fort. Fort was born to a wealthy Nashville family in 1919, and attended exclusive schools including Sarah Lawrence College where she excelled. After graduation, Fort reluctantly returned to a life of civic activities and social functions in Nashville until she visited Nashville's airport in 1940 and immediately fell in love with flying. Fort soloed in less than a month and went on to get commercial and instructor ratings. In 1941, she took a job in Honolulu, Hawaii. Fort was giving a flying lesson on the morning of December 7, 1941 when Japanese Zeros

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<sup>136</sup> Charles W. Johnson. "Oak Ridge." Tennessee Encyclopedia. 2018. <https://tennesseeencyclopedia.net/entries/oak-ridge/>. Accessed 18 July 2018.

flew past her to begin the attack on Pearl Harbor. Fort returned to the mainland and traveled around the nation telling about her experiences to sell war bonds.<sup>137</sup>

The bombing of Pearl Harbor pushed the nation into war and brought women new opportunities in the workforce. Men were volunteering or being drafted into military service at the same time that factories were being asked to double or even triple production. Women, once shunned in heavy industry, joined the workforce in record numbers to fill the void. At the Vultee aircraft plant in Nashville, one out of every three workers was female. These female factory workers were immortalized by Norman Rockwell as “Rosie the Riveter” on the cover of *The Saturday Evening Post*.<sup>138</sup>

While thousands of women worked in aircraft factories, a few, like Cornelia Fort, were uniquely qualified to contribute in other ways. In September 1942, a new organization called the Women’s Auxiliary Ferrying Squadron (WAFS) was formed. The name would later be changed to Women’s Air Service Pilots or WASPs. Female pilots were recruited to ferry planes from factories to military bases. Their efforts would free pilots for combat. Fort was one of the first to report for duty as part of the pioneering group of female pilots who established a record of excellence despite substantial resistance. In January 1943, Fort was transferred to Long Beach, California. While ferrying a plane from Long Beach to Dallas, Fort was killed in a mid-air collision.<sup>139</sup>

Following the war, some women were happy to return to their previous roles as wives and mothers. Other women wanted to remain in the workforce, but found

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<sup>137</sup> Rob Simbeck. “Cornelia Fort.” Tennessee Encyclopedia. 2018.  
<https://tennesseencyclopedia.net/entries/cornelia-fort/> Accessed 24 July 2018.

<sup>138</sup> “Women Working.” Tennessee4me. Tennessee State Museum 2018.  
[http://www.tn4me.org/article.cfm/era\\_id/7/major\\_id/9/minor\\_id/72/a\\_id/218](http://www.tn4me.org/article.cfm/era_id/7/major_id/9/minor_id/72/a_id/218) Accessed 24 July 2018.

<sup>139</sup> Rob Simbeck. “Cornelia Fort.” Tennessee Encyclopedia. 2018.  
<https://tennesseencyclopedia.net/entries/cornelia-fort/> Accessed 24 July 2018.

themselves forced out in favor of returning soldiers. The so-called “glass ceiling” that kept women from rising in the workplace had returned. During World War II, women entered the workforce in unprecedented numbers. They built airplanes, tanks and jeeps. They canned food, sewed uniforms, and enriched uranium for the atom bomb. Some, like Cornelia Fort, served in branches of the military as WASPs, WACs (Women’s Army Corp) and WAVES (Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service). All contributed to the war effort in substantial ways. Their service and sacrifices were essential to the United States’ victory in World War II.

## Prisoner of War Camps in Tennessee

Camp Forrest at Tullahoma, Tennessee was originally named Camp Peay in honor of Governor Austin Peay and served as a National Guard Camp. In 1940, the United States began limited preparations for war and expanded Camp Peay as a training facility.<sup>140</sup> The decision to rename it Camp Forrest in honor of Confederate General Nathan Bedford Forrest created controversy given his role in the Fort Pillow Massacre and leadership in the Ku Klux Klan.

The expanded camp cost thirty-six million dollars and covered seventy-eight thousand acres. The camp served as an induction center where over two hundred and fifty thousand men received their physicals and also served as the site of numerous training maneuvers throughout the war; General Patton and his 2nd Armored “Hell on Wheels” Division performed maneuvers there. The Second Ranger Battalion, famous

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<sup>140</sup> “Camp Forrest.” Arnold Air Force Base. September 23, 2008. <http://www.arnold.af.mil/About-Us/Fact-Sheets/Display/Article/409311/camp-forrest/> Accessed 24 July 2018.

for scaling the cliffs of Pointe Du Hoc on D-Day, also trained at the base.<sup>141</sup> The camp employed twelve thousand civilians to repair equipment, run the laundry and perform numerous other duties.

On May 12, 1942 Camp Forrest also began to house German and Italian POWs. They worked at the base hospitals or on local farms. The arrival of POWs was just one of many changes that residents of Tullahoma faced during the war. Roads were often blocked, stores were crowded, and fences and crops were destroyed. By the end of the war, Tullahoma's population had grown from four thousand five hundred to seventy-five thousand people.<sup>142</sup>

Following D-Day, Camp Forrest was greatly scaled back and in 1946 the buildings were sold for scrap. In 1951, the area was chosen for the Air Force's new Air Engineering Development Center. It was later named Arnold Engineering Development Center and contains the largest and most complex test flight facilities in the world.<sup>143</sup>

## Cordell Hull and the Creation of the United Nations

Cordell Hull was born in a log cabin in Putnam County in 1871. Of the five Hull boys, he was the only one to pursue an education. He attended a one room school, and his father hired private tutors to further his learning. Hull attended college and received a law degree in 1891 at the age of twenty. He worked for a short time as a lawyer and then served as a captain during the Spanish-American War. When he returned to

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<sup>141</sup> Michael R. Bradley. "Camp Forrest." Tennessee Encyclopedia. 2018. <https://tennesseeencyclopedia.net/entries/camp-forrest/> Accessed 24 July 2018.

<sup>142</sup> "Camp Forrest." Arnold Air Force Base. September 23, 2008. <http://www.arnold.af.mil/About-Us/Fact-Sheets/Display/Article/409311/camp-forrest/> Accessed 24 July 2018

<sup>143</sup> "Camp Forrest." Arnold Air Force Base. September 23, 2008. <http://www.arnold.af.mil/About-Us/Fact-Sheets/Display/Article/409311/camp-forrest/> Accessed 24 July 2018



Tennessee, he was appointed as a judge. In 1907, he ran and was elected to a seat in the United States House of Representatives. Hull remained in public service until 1944.<sup>144</sup>

While in Congress, Cordell Hull strongly shared President Woodrow Wilson's idealistic vision of international diplomacy and was one of the first vigorous supporters of the League of Nations. Hull also supported lower tariffs. By supporting lower tariffs, Hull sent a message to other countries that he supported free trade and felt that nations should be able to work together in solving problems that separated them.<sup>145</sup>

In 1932 Franklin D. Roosevelt was elected president and shortly thereafter Cordell Hull was confirmed as the United States Secretary of State. On December 7, 1941 the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor and the United States entered into a state of war. After the outbreak of war, Cordell Hull proposed the formation of a new world organization to offer avenues for countries to solve their problems in a peaceful manner. He envisioned the United States having a major role in this international organization.<sup>146</sup>

Hull formed an Advisory Council on Postwar Foreign Policy and, remembering Wilson's failure with the League of Nations, asked both Democrats and Republicans to contribute. Hull worked diligently to keep all discussion of postwar policies nonpartisan. In 1943 the State Department drafted a document titled "Charter of the United Nations,"

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<sup>144</sup> "The Biography of Cordell Hull." Cordell Hull Museum. 2016. <http://www.cordellhullmuseum.com/the-biography-of-cordell-hull.htm> Accessed 24 July 2018.

<sup>145</sup> "Biographies of the Secretaries of State: Cordell Hull (1871–1955)." Department of State: Office of the Historian. <https://history.state.gov/departmenthistory/people/hull-cordell> 24 July 2018.

<sup>146</sup> The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica. "Cordell Hull." Encyclopaedia Britannica. 19 July 2018. <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Cordell-Hull> 24 July 2018.

and at the Moscow Conference of Foreign Ministers, Hull obtained a pledge from the Soviet Union to agree to help create a postwar world organization.<sup>147</sup>

Cordell Hull gave the opening address at the Dumbarton Oaks conference in Washington, D.C. in 1944. Representatives from the United States, Great Britain, China, and the Soviet Union were in attendance. The preliminary steps toward establishing a postwar international organization were made at this conference.

Due to health problems, Cordell Hull resigned from his position as Secretary of State, but continued to stay politically active and was a member of the U.S. delegation at the San Francisco Conference on April 25, 1945. With fifty nations present, the United Nations was officially founded and quickly became an instrument for international cooperation and peace. Cordell Hull worked so vigorously and championed the cause of the United Nations with such effort that he was honored with the Nobel Peace Prize in 1945. On July 23, 1955 Cordell Hull, “Father of the United Nations,” died after a lifetime of service to his country and mankind.<sup>148</sup>

## Memphis and Music: The Blues, Soul and the Birth of Rock ‘n’ Roll

The story of rock ‘n’ roll in Memphis really begins with the story of the blues. Blues was derived from the folk music of African Americans in the south. Blues developed in the post- Civil War period, but did not become part of mainstream American culture until

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<sup>147</sup> The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica. “Cordell Hull.” Encyclopaedia Britannica. 19 July 2018. <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Cordell-Hull> 24 July 2018.

<sup>148</sup> “Biographies of the Secretaries of State: Cordell Hull (1871–1955).” Department of State: Office of the Historian. <https://history.state.gov/departmenthistory/people/hull-cordell> 24 July 2018.

the beginning of the twentieth century. W.C. Handy is credited with bringing blues into the mainstream by writing and publishing blues sheet music for the first time. Handy and his business partner Harry Pace opened a publishing house on Beale Street in 1913. Memphis was the largest city on the Mississippi River between New Orleans and St. Louis and was a natural gathering place for blues musicians like the “King of the Blues,” B.B. King.

Memphis was a segregated city with separate churches, schools and hospitals for its white and African American citizens. However, it was impossible to segregate the airwaves. Locals could tune into stations playing everything from gospel to country to the blues. It was in this rich musical environment that Elvis Presley, Johnny Cash, Jerry Lee Lewis, Carl Perkins, and Sam Phillips created a new musical sound known as rockabilly. Phillips, a producer and owner of Sun Records, recognized that white singers who could sing “black” music would take the music world by storm. Thus, the rockabilly style was born.<sup>149</sup>

Rockabilly combined elements of country music with the drums that were commonly used in jazz and blues compositions. A strong, danceable beat combined with bold lyrics meant that rockabilly songs captured the interest of white teens. Many of the early songs were remakes of blues songs. Elvis’ first hit was an upbeat remake of the classic blues song “That’s All Right (Mama)” by Arthur “Big Boy” Crudup. “Hound Dog,” another Elvis hit, was also a remake of a blues song by Big Mama Thornton. Over time the music of some rockabilly artists, like Elvis, became less influenced by country music and evolved into rock ‘n’ roll. Rock ‘n’ roll became a cultural phenomenon and made

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<sup>149</sup> “Sam Phillips.” Sun Records. N.d. <https://www.sunrecords.com/artists/sam-phillips> Accessed 24 July 2018.

Elvis an international superstar. In the 1960's, new groups like the Beatles and the Rolling Stones emerged and took rock 'n roll in new directions.<sup>150</sup>

At the same time that rock 'n' roll was evolving in Memphis, soul music was evolving as well. Like rock 'n' roll, soul music had its roots in jazz, blues and gospel. The term "soul music" itself referred to its origins in gospel. Soul music evolved out of the African American experience and was particularly influential in the 1960s.<sup>151</sup>

If Sun Records was the birthplace of rock 'n' roll, then Memphis' Stax Records was the home of southern soul. Stax Records was founded by Jim Stewart and Estelle Axton in 1961. Booker T & the MGs, Sam and Dave and Otis Redding were some the artists who recorded at Stax in the sixties. In Memphis, soul music influenced, and was influenced by, the civil rights movement.<sup>152</sup>

## B.B. King

Legendary blues musician B.B. King was born Riley King in 1925 in the small town of Berclair, Mississippi in the central Mississippi Delta. King's parents separated when he was young. King and his mother moved to Kilmichael, Mississippi to be closer to her family. In 1935, King's mother, Nora Ella, died at the age of thirty-one. For the next five years King lived with his grandmother, and it was during this period that King played guitar for the first time. In January 1940, King's grandmother died owing twenty-one dollars and seventy-five cents to Edwayne Henderson whose land she sharecropped.

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<sup>150</sup> "Sam Phillips." Sun Records. N.d. <https://www.sunrecords.com/artists/sam-phillips> Accessed 24 July 2018.

<sup>151</sup> David Ritz. "Soul Music." Encyclopaedia Britannica. 03 June 2018. <https://www.britannica.com/art/soul-music> Accessed 24 July 2018.

<sup>152</sup> "History." Stax Records. N.d. <https://www.staxrecords.com/pages/history> Accessed 24 July 2018.

Though he was only fourteen years old, King had to assume his grandmother's debt and work the fields alone. That fall, King's estranged father brought his son to live with him and his family in Lexington, Mississippi.<sup>153</sup>

King's time in Lexington was short-lived. He witnessed the lynching and castration of an African American youth whose so-called "crime" was wolf-whistling at a white girl.<sup>154</sup> The horror of that dramatic event, combined with feeling like a stranger in his father's home, led King to return to the only home he had known in Kilmichael. He rode his bicycle for two days only to find that his relatives had moved away in his absence. King moved in with a white family until he joined a cousin working as a tractor driver on a plantation in Indianola.<sup>155</sup>

Between 1944 and 1948 King married for the first time, was inducted in the military and discharged because he was deemed essential to the war economy, and went to Memphis for the first time. King temporarily moved back to Indianola to work off a debt, but returned to Memphis in late 1948. He began playing music at local clubs and was soon hired by WDIA, an African American radio station, to promote an alcohol-based health tonic called Peptikon. King's fifteen minute advertising spot expanded into a full-fledged show. King first used the name "Beale Street Blues Boy King," which was shortened to "Blues Boy King" and eventually became "B.B. King."<sup>156</sup>

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<sup>153</sup> "B.B. King: The Life of Riley Timeline." *American Masters*. PBS.  
<http://www.pbs.org/wnet/americanmasters/b-b-king-life-timeline/6306/> Accessed 19 July 2018.

<sup>154</sup> Ed Vulliamy. "B.B. King at 87: The last of the great bluesmen." *The Guardian* (US Edition), 6 Oct. 2012.

<https://www.theguardian.com/music/2012/oct/06/bb-king-music-blues-guitar>

<sup>155</sup> "B.B. King: The Life of Riley Timeline." *American Masters*. PBS.  
<http://www.pbs.org/wnet/americanmasters/b-b-king-life-timeline/6306/> Accessed 19 July 2018.

<sup>156</sup> "B.B. King: The Life of Riley Timeline." *American Masters*. PBS.  
<http://www.pbs.org/wnet/americanmasters/b-b-king-life-timeline/6306/> Accessed 19 July 2018.

In early 1949, King was playing at a dance hall in Twist, Arkansas when a fight broke out. The men knocked over a bucket of burning kerosene that looked like a “river of fire,” as it ran across the floor. King ran outside only to realize that he had left his guitar inside. He ran back inside to get it as “the building started to fall in around [him.]” The next day King learned that two people had died in the fire, and that the fight had started over a woman named Lucille. He decided to name his guitar “Lucille” to remind himself not to do something that dangerous again.<sup>157</sup> It was also during the late 1940s that King began to develop his own distinctive style. His uncle, the bluesman Bukka White, used a bottleneck to play a slide. King wanted to copy the move, but could not master the technique. Instead, he developed “the butterfly,” his own signature technique for creating a vibrato that is so distinctive that other musicians could identify it as King’s after hearing only a single note.<sup>158</sup>

King’s career took off in 1952, and by 1955 King was touring the country on his own bus. He toured almost non-stop for several years. In 1963, he recorded one of his signature songs, “How Blue Can You Get?,” and in 1964 recorded the *Live at the Regal* album which cemented his status as the “King of the Blues.” In 1968, King played the Fillmore Auditorium in San Francisco for a predominately white audience for the first time; the crowd gave him a standing ovation when he walked onto the stage. The

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<sup>157</sup> Richard Bienstock. “The Legacy of Lucille: The Surprising Story Behind B.B. King’s Guitar,” *Rolling Stone*, 15 May 2015, <https://www.rollingstone.com/music/music-news/the-legacy-of-lucille-the-surprising-story-behind-b-b-kings-guitar-63896/>.

<sup>158</sup> Ed Vulliamy. “B.B. King at 87: The last of the great bluesmen.” *The Guardian* (US Edition), 6 Oct. 2012. <https://www.theguardian.com/music/2012/oct/06/bb-king-music-blues-guitar>

following year, King had a crossover hit with “The Thrill is Gone” which reached number fifteen on the pop chart.<sup>159</sup>

In the 1970s, King opened eighteen concerts for the Rolling Stones and appeared on *The Ed Sullivan Show*. In the 1980s, he was inducted into the Blues Hall of Fame, Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, and was given a Lifetime Achievement Grammy Award. A whole new generation discovered King’s music in 1988 when he recorded “When Love Comes to Town” with U2. In 1995, King received Kennedy Center Honors and in 2000 he had his first blockbuster hit record, *Riding with the King* with Eric Clapton. The State of Mississippi declared February 15 to be “B.B. King Day” in 2005, and in 2006 President George W. Bush presented King with the Presidential Medal of Freedom. In 2008, a museum honoring King opened in Indianola with the mission to “inspire hope, creativity and greatness.” B.B. King died peacefully in his sleep at the age of eighty-nine on May 14, 2015.<sup>160</sup>

## Elvis Presley: The King of Rock n Roll

When a young truck driver named Elvis Presley walked into Sun Studios in 1953, he had no idea that his life was going to be changed forever. Presley wanted to make a record for his mother as a birthday present since, at the time, the studio offered the chance to record an album for \$3.98 plus tax. Sam Phillips, recording engineer and owner of Sun Records, thought that there might be something to the young man’s

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<sup>159</sup> “B.B. King: The Life of Riley Timeline.” *American Masters*. PBS.  
<http://www.pbs.org/wnet/americanmasters/b-b-king-life-timeline/6306/> Accessed 19 July 2018.

<sup>160</sup> “B.B. King: The Life of Riley Timeline.” *American Masters*. PBS.  
<http://www.pbs.org/wnet/americanmasters/b-b-king-life-timeline/6306/> Accessed 19 July 2018.

singing and mentioned it to his partner. That partner, Marion Kreisler, continued to remind Phillips about Presley and, in July, 1954 Phillips invited him back.<sup>161</sup>

Phillips knew that the music world was looking for a new sound to take it by storm. He had some ideas about that new sound, but had not heard it yet. When Presley came in for the session on July 5, Phillips was not immediately impressed. Nothing sounded right, so Phillips called for a break during which Presley began to play around on his guitar and started singing the blues classic “That’s All Right,” but in a fast paced style. When Phillips heard it, he knew he had found his sound. He recorded Presley’s version of “That’s All Right,” which became a local hit and launched both Presley’s career and the rockabilly style that would soon become rock ‘n’ roll.<sup>162</sup>

Elvis Presley was born in Tupelo, Mississippi on January 8, 1935. He grew up surrounded by his mother’s love and the gospel music he heard in the Pentecostal church. In 1948, the family moved to Memphis. It is said that as a teenager, Presley would sneak out to Beale Street to listen to jazz and blues musicians. Whether or not this anecdote is true, Presley was certainly influenced by those styles of music.<sup>163</sup>

Within a few short months Presley was a star in Memphis, and Phillips soon sold his contract to RCA. “Heartbreak Hotel” became his first across the board hit. Presley’s star power derived not only from his singing ability, but also his good looks and dance

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<sup>161</sup> “This Day in History: July 5, 1954.” History.com. <https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/elvis-presley-records-thats-all-right-mama> Accessed 24 July 2018.

<sup>162</sup> “This Day in History: July 5, 1954.” History.com. <https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/elvis-presley-records-thats-all-right-mama> Accessed 24 July 2018.

<sup>163</sup> “Elvis Presley Bio.” Rock & Roll Hall of Fame. <https://www.rockhall.com/inductees/elvis-presley> Accessed 24 July 2018.



moves. Presley's live performances featured hip-shaking dance moves that made teenage girls swoon and outraged many adults.<sup>164</sup>

While there are many examples from Presley's career of his status as a teen icon, one in particular stands out, Presley's 1956 appearance on the Ed Sullivan show. Presley had already scandalized some members of the TV audience when he performed his signature dance moves while singing "Hound Dog" on the Milton Berle Show. When Presley appeared on the Ed Sullivan show on September 9, 1956, he once again sang "Hound Dog" while snarling his lip and gyrating his hips. Eighty-two percent of American television viewing audience was watching. When the studio audience realized he was going to sing "Hound Dog" during a repeat performance on October 28<sup>th</sup>, the crowd went wild.<sup>165</sup>

Viewers who viewed Presley as a threat to morality, decency, and American youth went wild as well. Following the October performance, crowds burned Presley in effigy in Nashville and St. Louis. Ministers, politicians and concerned citizens pushed to stop the growth of rock 'n' roll and youth culture. Presley's sexy dance moves had created so much controversy that when he appeared on Ed Sullivan for the final time on January 6, 1957, the CBS censors demanded that he only be filmed from the waist up. Presley's critics had won the battle, but they lost the war. Teenagers across America continued to buy Presley's albums and flock to his performances. Presley went on to a wildly successful career with over one hundred Top 40 hits and numerous hit movies. Soon other rock 'n' roll groups, like the Beatles, would take the stage at the Ed Sullivan show,

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<sup>164</sup> "Elvis Presley Bio." Rock & Roll Hall of Fame. <https://www.rockhall.com/inductees/elvis-presley> Accessed 24 July 2018.

<sup>165</sup> "Elvis Presley." The Ed Sullivan Show. 2010. <http://www.edsullivan.com/artists/elvis-presley> Accessed 24 July 2018.

but nothing defined the shift in attitudes that signaled the birth of a youth culture like Elvis Presley's performance on the Ed Sullivan show.<sup>166</sup>

## The Civil Rights Movement

The civil rights movement has its origin in the Reconstruction era. The 1898 Supreme Court decision *Plessy v. Ferguson* established the doctrine of "separate but equal" which governed race relations in the South for the next sixty years. During World War I, African American leaders decided not to press for change so that the African American community would not be seen as disloyal. The Great Depression years were very difficult for African American families as many service jobs such as cook and maid that had traditionally been held by African Americans were taken over by whites desperate for any work they could find.<sup>167</sup>

The United States entry into World War II brought new opportunities for African Americans in the workforce and in the military. However, it did not bring about an end to segregation in the military or in the south. In some camps African American soldiers were forced to sit behind German and Italian POWs entertainment, including USO shows.<sup>168</sup> African Americans whose service took them to Europe encountered a world without Jim Crow for the first time. When they returned to the United States after the war, many of these veterans were not willing to quietly reassume the place they had been assigned in the social, political and economic hierarchies of the Jim Crow south.

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<sup>166</sup> "Elvis Presley." The Ed Sullivan Show. 2010. <http://www.edsullivan.com/artists/elvis-presley> Accessed 24 July 2018. and "Elvis Presley Bio." Rock & Roll Hall of Fame. <https://www.rockhall.com/inductees/elvis-presley> Accessed 24 July 2018.

<sup>167</sup> Bergeron, Ash, Keith, *Tennesseans and their History*, 259-260.

<sup>168</sup> Gail Buckley. *American Patriots: The Story of Blacks in the Military from the Revolution to Desert Storm* (New York: Random House, 2002), 261.

In the spring of 1946, a disagreement over a radio repair led to a race riot in Columbia, TN. James Stephenson, a navy veteran, intervened in an argument between his mother and a white store clerk. William Fleming, the clerk, was thrown through a window and the Stephensons were arrested. Fleming's father wanted James Stephenson charged with attempted murder and began to enflame the white community. African American men, many of whom were veterans like Stephenson, began to arm themselves to protect Stephenson and their community. Ultimately, four white patrolmen were wounded, two African Americans were killed in police custody and the African American business district suffered thousands of dollars' worth of damage. The NAACP sent Thurgood Marshall to defend the African American men arrested in the aftermath of the riot. All but two of the men were acquitted and the Stephensons were not charged with any crimes. The deaths of the two African American prisoners were ruled justifiable homicide. While the Columbia Race Riot did not bring an end to segregation in Tennessee it did demonstrate new resolve on the part of African Americans to resist their treatment as second class citizens and would ultimately lead to the civil rights victories of the late 1950s and 1960s.

The NAACP and Thurgood Marshall worked tirelessly throughout the 1940s and early 1950s to destroy segregation through the courts. On May 17, 1954, the Warren court handed down a landmark decision in the case of *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*. The court ruled that "in the field of public education, the doctrine of separate but equal has no place."<sup>169</sup> The ruling set the stage for twelve high school students in Clinton, TN to become the first African American students to integrate a public high

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<sup>169</sup> Gerald Danzer et al. *The Americans: Reconstruction to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. (Evanston, Illinois: McDougall Littell, 1991), 703.

school in the south, a full year before the better known Little Rock Nine integrated Little Rock Central High School.

The integration of Clinton High School was one of many key civil rights victories in Tennessee and demonstrates the integral role that Tennessee played in the civil rights movement. A 1960 voter registration drive in Fayette County, a precursor to the Freedom Summer of 1964, led to the eviction of hundreds of African Americans who lived in tent cities rather than return to the status quo. In Nashville, students inspired by events in Greensboro, N.C., staged sit-ins at lunch counters and forced their desegregation in 1960. Diane Nash, one of the student leaders, became a leading force in the civil rights movement. One of Tennessee's most significant contributions to the civil rights movement is one of the least well-known. The Highlander Folk School in Monteagle served as a training center in non-violence and hosted such luminaries as Rosa Parks and Dr. Martin Luther King.

## Highlander Folk School

Highlander Folk School was founded in 1932 near Monteagle, Tennessee by Myles Horton and Don West. As college students, Horton and West had both been active in social justice movements during their college years and were deeply impressed with the folk high schools of Denmark. They believed that if people were given a safe place to share and talk about their problems they would be able to find solutions through

collective wisdom. Leadership from within became one of the founding principles of Highlander.<sup>170</sup>

The first social justice issue that Highlander addressed was the plight of miners, timber men, and unemployed workers in the mountain communities. In the late 1930s Highlander helped organize unions in textile mills; however, Highlander's relationship with organized labor was strained by segregationist practices within the organizations. By this time West had left Highlander and Horton was sole director. Horton had long been an advocate of desegregation, and in 1953 Highlander's board of directors announced that their new focus would be school desegregation.<sup>171</sup>

Horton believed that desegregation of schools in East Tennessee would serve as an indicator of how desegregation would be carried out in the nation as a whole. The nearby town of Clinton had a desegregation case pending in the courts when the *Brown vs. Board of Education* case was decided. The judge in the Clinton case then ruled that Clinton school had to desegregate by the fall of 1956. Highlander reached out to school officials in Clinton to offer their help in planning for integration. Highlander hosted summer camps for the students as well as training sessions for teachers and administrators. Desegregation in Clinton proceeded smoothly in the fall of 1956 until outside segregationists stirred up trouble. Highlander then served as a support for the African American students who remained in the school despite threats and constant fear. Students were brought to Highlander for parties and took part in a tutoring program to help them through the difficult first year of integration.<sup>172</sup>

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<sup>170</sup> John M. Glen. "Highlander Folk School." Tennessee Encyclopedia. 2018. <https://tennesseeencyclopedia.net/entries/highlander-folk-school/> Accessed 24 July 2018.

<sup>171</sup> Jeff Biggers. *The United States of Appalachia*. (Berkeley: Counterpoint,2006), 178-79.

<sup>172</sup> Jeff Biggers. *The United States of Appalachia*. (Berkeley: Counterpoint,2006), 187-89.

Highlander also hosted leadership workshops for African Americans and whites interested in ending segregation. One of the most important parts of the workshops was the experience of living, eating, and working in a completely integrated environment. People who came to Highlander often left with the skills and resolve to take non-violent action against segregation in their own communities. Rosa Parks was one such Highlander graduate. Parks had been a leader in the African American community in Montgomery, Alabama for years, served as secretary of the local National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) chapter, and had earlier refused to enter a bus by the back door. After her experience at Highlander, Parks returned to Montgomery ready to demonstrate that “we would no longer accept the way we had been treated as a people.” On December 1, 1955, four months after attending the workshop, Parks’ refusal to give up her seat to a white passenger became a catalyst for the civil rights movement.<sup>173</sup>

Highlander also began a literacy project in the Sea Islands of South Carolina that worked towards increased voter registration in the area. Literacy tests for voting had been deemed constitutional in South Carolina, which meant many African Americans could not vote. Highlander hired locals as teachers and gave them money to buy buildings in which to hold evening classes. As locals learned about the classes, the numbers skyrocketed. Dr. King, who himself attended workshops at Highlander, would later send movement leaders who would be instrumental in the Citizenship School to Highlander.

When Dr. King came to Highlander to speak at the 25th anniversary celebration, he heard the song that would later become the unofficial anthem of the civil rights

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<sup>173</sup> Jeff Biggers. *The United States of Appalachia*. (Berkeley: Counterpoint, 2006), 182-84.

movement, "We Shall Overcome." The song was originally an African American spiritual with the refrain "I'll Be All Right." In 1946, however, a group of African American students from the Food, Tobacco, and Agricultural Workers Union in South Carolina came to Highlander after winning a hotly contested strike. Zilphia Horton, the schools music director, urged them to share their version of the spiritual that they had transformed into a labor song. Horton took their "rough draft" and recast it using her musical background to alter the rhythm and harmonies. The song became "We Shall Overcome." The song was later shared with college students who had participated at some early sit-ins and was sung on national television for the first time in the spring of 1960 during the Nashville Sit-Ins.<sup>174</sup>

During the 1950s and 1960s Highlander underwent intense scrutiny from politicians and law enforcement. The school was accused of everything from being a communist training school to a place where people "engage in immoral, lewd, and unchaste practices." In 1959, the school was raided by law enforcement, the staff arrested, and the school closed. In a trial the following year, the judge threw out most of the charges, but found that the school had "sold" beer as well as that Horton had used the non-profit school for his personal gain. The charges, while flimsy, were enough to get the school closed and its property sold. On the day of the public auction, Horton and his staff were a few miles away setting up another school. For as Horton said, "A school is an idea, and you can't padlock an idea."<sup>175</sup>

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<sup>174</sup> Jeff Biggers. *The United States of Appalachia*. (Berkeley: Counterpoint,2006), 184-86.

<sup>175</sup> Jeff Biggers. *The United States of Appalachia*. (Berkeley: Counterpoint,2006), 192-194.

# Tent Cities in Fayette County

The story of Tennessee's Tent Cities began on May 23, 1940. Burton Dodson was an African American man living in Fayette County. He got into fight with a white man over an African American woman that both men were interested in. The sheriff, W.H. Cooke, came to Dodson's house with his deputies and a group of deputized white men, and they demanded that Dodson surrender. Dodson refused and the group opened fire. Dodson fired back and during the fight, Deputy Olin Burrow was killed. Dodson escaped, but in 1958 he was found in St. Louis and returned to Fayette County to stand trial for murder.<sup>176</sup>

Dodson was defended by J.F. Estes, an African American attorney from Memphis. When Estes asked why an all-white jury had been chosen, he was told that no African Americans were registered as voters in Fayette County. Dodson was found guilty and sentenced to twenty years in prison which was later reduced to ten years. Dodson's trial spurred John McFerren and Harpman Jameson to begin a voter registration drive in the African American community.<sup>177</sup>

McFerran and Jameson were World War II veterans and had little trouble when they registered to vote. However, when they tried to vote in the Democratic primary in August 1959, they were told that it was an all-white primary and were not allowed to vote. However, McFerran and Jameson did not give up. First, they contacted Estes and began a voter registration drive. Next, they traveled to Washington, D.C. and met with

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<sup>176</sup> Linda T. Wynn. "Tent City, Fayette and Haywood Counties. Tennessee Encyclopedia. 2018. <https://tennesseeencyclopedia.net/entries/tent-city-fayette-and-haywood-counties/> Accessed July 24, 2018.

<sup>177</sup> Jacque Hillman and Jimmy Hart. "October 1960: The Untold Story of Jackson's Civil Rights Movement." *Orig.jackson.com*. The Jackson Sun. 2003. [http://orig.jacksonsun.com/civilrights/sec4\\_tent\\_city.shtml](http://orig.jacksonsun.com/civilrights/sec4_tent_city.shtml) Accessed 24 July 2018.



an official from the Justice Department. On November 16, 1959, the federal government filed a lawsuit against the Fayette County Democratic Party under the Civil Rights Act of 1957.<sup>178</sup>

White officials tried to stop voter registration by resigning, but the federal government appointed new officials and registration continued. African Americans stood in long lines for hours while being taunted and spat upon in order to register. African Americans were also banned from shopping in local stores, and refused crop loans at the bank. Gas companies also refused to sell oil and gas until a boycott organized by the NAACP broke the embargo in August, 1960.<sup>179</sup>

In November, hundreds of African Americans voted, and for the first time since Reconstruction, Fayette County voted Republican. In retaliation, African American sharecroppers were evicted from their homes. Shepard Towles, a local landowner, allowed the displaced people to set up tents on his land. The tents were donated by a white merchant who has never been identified. As the Tent Cities gained national attention, the people living there received aid from the NAACP, the American Friends Committee, and, eventually, surplus food from the federal government. People in the Tent Cities had to deal with violence as well as the cold weather. Earlie Williams was shot while sleeping in his tent. A later incident of gunfire caused the residents of Tent City to move to a secret location for safety.<sup>180</sup>

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<sup>178</sup> Jacque Hillman and Jimmy Hart. "October 1960: The Untold Story of Jackson's Civil Rights Movement." *Orig.jackson.com*. The Jackson Sun. 2003.  
[http://orig.jacksonsun.com/civilrights/sec4\\_tent\\_city.shtml](http://orig.jacksonsun.com/civilrights/sec4_tent_city.shtml) Accessed 24 July 2018.

<sup>179</sup> Jacque Hillman and Jimmy Hart. "October 1960: The Untold Story of Jackson's Civil Rights Movement." *Orig.jackson.com*. The Jackson Sun. 2003.  
[http://orig.jacksonsun.com/civilrights/sec4\\_tent\\_city.shtml](http://orig.jacksonsun.com/civilrights/sec4_tent_city.shtml) Accessed 24 July 2018.

<sup>180</sup>

On June 26, 1962, the federal district court in Memphis issued a decree that ended all pending lawsuits and ordered that the white defendants not take any other actions to interfere with voting rights. In 1963, African American families began to move into low interest homes. After the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, voter registration continued. The Tent Cities, like sit-ins, boycotts, and marches brought national attention to the inequalities that African Americans faced in the South and specifically in Tennessee. Ultimately, the sacrifices of the men, women, and children who lived in the Tent Cities helped to bring an end to the Jim Crow South.

## Diane Nash and the Nashville Sit-Ins

Diane Nash was born in 1938 in Chicago, Illinois. After graduating high school, Nash attended Howard University in Washington, D.C. before transferring to Fisk University in Nashville where she majored in English. As a student in Nashville, Nash experienced the full effect of Jim Crow laws for the first time. For example, African Americans were not allowed to eat at lunch counters in downtown department stores.<sup>181</sup> The city had begun to desegregate schools in 1957, and many African Americans were hopeful that they could extend their rights further. As a gateway for the rest of the South, the hope was to begin a movement in Nashville that would extend to other parts of the state and farther South.

The nonviolent direct action workshops led by the Rev. James Lawson in late 1959 stressed a nonviolent approach to protesting Jim Crow laws. The young volunteers had to practice being in such dangerous positions ahead of time. They would do so by

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<sup>181</sup> Linda T. Wynn. "Diane Nash." Tennessee Encyclopedia. 2018.  
<https://tennesseeencyclopedia.net/entries/diane-j-nash/>. Accessed 24 July 2018.

taunting, attacking, and pulling at each other. The hope was that the students would be prepared to take the potential abuse if they had practiced their reactions ahead of time. In addition, students were given a list of do's and don'ts when dealing with negative situations. The rules were as follows:

Do not:

- Strike back or curse if abused
- Laugh out loud
- Hold conversations with a floor walker
- Leave your seat without permission to do so from your leader
- Block entrances to the store or aisles inside

Do

- Be friendly and courteous at all times
- Sit straight and face the counter at all times
- Report any serious injuries to your leader
- Send people with questions to your leader
- Remember the teachings of Jesus Christ, Mahatma Gandhi, and Martin Luther King, Jr.<sup>182</sup>

Planning and preparation for the protests took place in conjunction with four area colleges and local churches. Churches offered a place for meetings and training while college students gave their time and dedication to the cause by volunteering to participate in the sit-ins. The students also worked with their professors to prepare for the possibility of missed classes; this preparation would be essential as some students missed classes during sit-in events or were absent due to their subsequent arrest.

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<sup>182</sup> Exhibit text, Civil Rights Reading Room, Nashville Public Library, Nashville, TN.

Some professors volunteered to send classwork to prisons as a way to help these dedicated students not fall behind as the sit-ins continued.<sup>183</sup>

Nash and the other students had the opportunity to practice nonviolent direct action when the Student Central Committee in Nashville organized a sit-in at a local department store lunch counter in 1960. At first, things were going well for the sit-in volunteers who hoped to further the impact of their protest by staging the events near the Easter holiday; however, as time continued, more issues began to arise. Initially, the students were able to sit at the lunch counters daily without any problems. In February of 1960, the first students were attacked by white students and were arrested, so they hired African American attorney Alexander Looby to represent them. The front of Looby's home was later bombed while he and his wife were in the back of the house. In total, Looby was able to have charges of conspiracy to disrupt trade and commerce dropped for ninety-one students.<sup>184</sup>

As a response to the incidents, civil rights activists held a march in Nashville in which over two thousand people participated. When the protesters reached City Hall, Nash, asked Nashville mayor, Ben West, a question: "Do you feel it is wrong to discriminate against a person solely on the basis of their race or color?" His response of 'yes' was the final stamp on the situation in Nashville. By May, the lunch counters of Tennessee's capital opened to both white and African American customers. Nash was

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<sup>183</sup> "Timeline: The Civil Rights Movement in America." Tennessee State Library and Archives. 2013. <https://sharetn.gov.tnsosfiles.com/tsla/exhibits/blackhistory/civil.htm> Accessed 24 July 2018.

<sup>184</sup> "Timeline: The Civil Rights Movement in America." Tennessee State Library and Archives. 2013. <https://sharetn.gov.tnsosfiles.com/tsla/exhibits/blackhistory/civil.htm> Accessed 24 July 2018.

nominated by Dr. King for an award from the New York NAACP. Dr. King said, "Nash was the driving spirit in the nonviolent assault on segregation at lunch counters."<sup>185</sup>

Nash's leadership in Nashville impressed people and she was soon elected chairperson of the Student Central Committee. Nash's prominence is notable because there were very few female leaders in the civil rights movement. In April 1960, Nash helped found and lead the national Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). After the Nashville sit-ins, Nash helped to coordinate and participate in the Freedom Rides organized by the Congress of Racial Equality. There was some opposition to the Freedom Rider program by some leading members in the civil rights movement. Even after the Ku Klux Klan burned a Freedom Rider bus in Anniston, Alabama, Nash continued to coordinate Freedom Ride efforts into Mississippi from her Nashville base.<sup>186</sup>

In 1961, Nash dropped out of school to become a full time organizer, strategist and instructor for the Southern Christian Leadership Conference headed by Dr. Martin Luther King. Nash was active in the civil rights movement for several years and received several awards for her leadership in the fight for civil rights. She later taught in Chicago and continued her activism on issues related to social and economic reform.<sup>187</sup>

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<sup>185</sup> Heidi Hall, "Diane Nash Refused to Give her Power Away." *The Tennessean*. March 2, 2017. <https://www.tennessean.com/story/news/local/2017/03/02/diane-nash-refused-give-her-power-away/98198804/> Accessed 24 July 2018.

<sup>186</sup> Linda T. Wynn. "Diane Nash." Tennessee Encyclopedia. 2018. <https://tennesseeencyclopedia.net/entries/diane-j-nash/>. Accessed 24 July 2018.

<sup>187</sup> Heidi Hall, "Diane Nash Refused to Give her Power Away." *The Tennessean*. March 2, 2017. <https://www.tennessean.com/story/news/local/2017/03/02/diane-nash-refused-give-her-power-away/98198804/> Accessed 24 July 2018.

# The Clinton 12 and the Integration of Clinton High School

Most people believe that the Little Rock Nine were the first African Americans to successfully integrate a public high school in the South. But, in fact, a year before Little Rock was integrated; Clinton High School in Clinton, Tennessee became the first public school in the South to desegregate on August 27<sup>th</sup>, 1956. The twelve African American students who successfully integrated Clinton High School in 1956 were Jo Ann Allen, Bobby Cain, Theresser Caswell, Minnie Ann Dickey, Gail Ann Epps, Ronald Hayden, William Latham, Alvah J. McSwain, Maurice Soles, Robert Thacker, Regina Turner, and Alfred Williams; these twelve individuals became known as the “Clinton Twelve.”<sup>188</sup>

In 1950, a group of parents filed a lawsuit on behalf of four black students who were denied the right to attend Clinton High School. The lawsuit was known as *McSwain et al. v. County of Board of Education of Anderson County, Tennessee*. The lawsuit was heard in February of 1952. A number of distinguished local African American attorneys represented the citizens. Thurgood Marshall also attended on behalf of the Legal Defense Fund of the NAACP. Judge Robert Taylor of the U.S. District Court in Knoxville denied the lawsuit. Taylor did not believe that the school board violated the separate but equal doctrine by forcing African American students to attend school in another county..<sup>189</sup>

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<sup>188</sup> Green McAdoo Cultural Center. “About.” Green McAdoo Cultural Center <http://www.greenmcadoo.org/about-the-center> Accessed 24 July 2018.

<sup>189</sup> Carroll Van West. “Clinton Desegregation Crisis.” Tennessee Encyclopedia. 2018 <https://tennesseencyclopedia.net/entries/clinton-desegregation-crisis/> Accessed 24 July 2018.

The official end of the Jim Crow era in the South came on May 17<sup>th</sup>, 1954 when the Supreme Court handed down their historic decision in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas*. The Brown decision overturned *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896), which had ushered in the doctrine of “separate but equal.” Brown declared that all laws establishing segregated schools to be unconstitutional throughout the nation. The Brown decision was a legal milestone for a number of reasons. First, because it officially ended de jure, or legal, segregation in the South, and second, because the decision finally guaranteed African Americans the rights that had been granted them almost one hundred years earlier with the passage of the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment. The *Brown* decision also opened the door for the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, which would federally outlaw discrimination based on race, sex, color, or national origin. Following the *Brown* decision in 1954, the sixth District United States Court of Appeals reversed Taylor’s decision and sent the *Mc Swain* case back to the federal court. In January, 1956, Judge Taylor ordered the school board to end segregation by beginning of the 1956 school year.<sup>190</sup>

The integration of Clinton High School by the Clinton Twelve would not be easy. White supremacist John Kasper and Asa Carter both spoke in Clinton, TN in September of 1956 in an attempt to stir up trouble and to halt the integration of Clinton High School. National Guard troops were stationed in Clinton for two months to help deter any violence. However, the integration of Clinton High School, unlike the integration of Little Rock High School in Arkansas, occurred with less violence than many had predicted. This was in large part due to the support from leaders in the community who opposed

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<sup>190</sup> Carroll Van West. “Clinton Desegregation Crisis.” Tennessee Encyclopedia. 2018 <https://tennesseeencyclopedia.net/entries/clinton-desegregation-crisis/> Accessed 24 July 2018.

making the integration of Clinton a national spectacle. For example, each day the Clinton Twelve were escorted by different leaders in the community, both white and black. Even white members of the Clinton High School football team were involved in supporting the Clinton Twelve.

However, the integration of Clinton High School did not occur without protest. On December 4<sup>th</sup>, 1957, the Reverend Paul Turner, a white Baptist minister, was attacked by a white mob after escorting the Clinton Twelve to school. Then on October 5<sup>th</sup>, 1958, over a year after the school was integrated, it was bombed.<sup>191</sup> The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) investigated but made no arrests. The case was dropped when the two main suspects died. The bombing served to unite the previously divided community in an effort to protect their schools, children, and teachers. Eleanor Davis, Clinton High School English teacher, recalled, "that was one thing the bombing did. All factions came together. We didn't want anyone to destroy our schools." Students were bussed to Linden Elementary School in Oak Ridge until the school could be rebuilt.<sup>192</sup> Today, the Green McAdoo Cultural Center and Museum commemorates the actions of the Clinton Twelve and their contributions to the civil rights movement.

## Famous Tennesseans

In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, a number of Tennesseans played prominent roles in politics, sports and the arts. Author Alex Haley brought new light to the experience of African Americans in *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*, on which he served as ghostwriter, and

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<sup>191</sup> Carroll Van West. "Clinton Desegregation Crisis." Tennessee Encyclopedia. 2018. <https://tennesseeencyclopedia.net/entries/clinton-desegregation-crisis/> Accessed 24 July 2018.

<sup>192</sup> Associated Press. "1958 School Blast United a Divided Tennessee Town : Bombing Over Desegregation Recalled." *Los Angeles Times*., 15 October 1988. [http://articles.latimes.com/1988-10-16/news/mn-6500\\_1\\_high-school](http://articles.latimes.com/1988-10-16/news/mn-6500_1_high-school) Accessed 31 July 2018.



his ground-breaking novel *Roots*. Wilma Rudolph's story overcoming obstacles to become an Olympian inspired thousands to follow in her footsteps. Dolly Parton found fame as a singer, songwriter and actress, but has never forgotten her roots in East Tennessee. Parton's philanthropy continues to benefit families in Tennessee and children around the world. Al Gore Jr. served as United States Senator and vice-president under Bill Clinton before a controversial loss to George W. Bush in the 2000 presidential election. Gore remains politically active particularly on the issue of climate change. Like Gore, Oprah Winfrey began her career as a journalist. Winfrey's empathy propelled her to the top of the daytime talk show ratings and made her a household name. Since retiring from daytime television, multibillionaire entrepreneur Winfrey has remained active in numerous social and political causes.

## Alex Haley

Alex Haley was born in Ithaca, N.Y. on August 11, 1921. When he was still young, his family moved to his mother's hometown of Henning, Tennessee. In Henning, Haley was surrounded by family members who often told stories about their ancestors; these stories would later be the inspiration for his bestseller *Roots*.<sup>193</sup>

From 1937 to 1939, Haley attended teacher's college in North Carolina before joining the Coast Guard. Haley spent his years in the Coast Guard improving his skills as a writer, and in 1952 he was appointed chief journalist of the Coast Guard. The position was created just for him.

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<sup>193</sup> Richard Marius. "Alex Murray Palmer Haley." Tennessee Encyclopedia. 2018  
<https://tennesseencyclopedia.net/entries/alex-murray-palmer-haley/> Accessed 24 July 2018.

As his career progressed, Haley published articles in a number of magazines including *Playboy* and *Reader's Digest*. This exposure led to his selection as the ghostwriter for Malcolm X's autobiography. *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* became a bestseller and brought increased attention to Haley's work.

For years Haley had often thought about the family stories he heard as a boy. He decided to research his family's history and use that research as the basis for a book entitled *Roots*. *Roots* was published in 1976 and became an international bestseller and Pulitzer Prize winner. In 1977, a miniseries based on the book became one of the most watched television programs in American history. Haley's story of how he had traced his family back to a village in West Africa inspired thousands of people, particularly African Americans, to research their own family history.<sup>194</sup>

While *Roots* was well received by the public, historians had reservations about the work. The book had been marketed as non-fiction, but historians found numerous errors in the story. Haley was also sued for plagiarism. He was accused of plagiarizing over eighty passages from a 1967 novel called *The African*. Haley claimed that he had not read the novel and that the passages were based on suggestions he had received from others. The lawsuit went to court, but Haley agreed to a settlement of six hundred and fifty thousand dollars before the judge made his ruling.<sup>195</sup>

Other criticisms followed, and it was revealed that many passages in *Roots* were written by Murray Fisher, Haley's editor at *Playboy*. One of the most moving and remarkable moments of the novel was Haley's meeting with a West African griot who

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<sup>194</sup> Eric Pace.. "Alex Haley, 70, Author of 'Roots' Dies." Nytimes.com. The New York Times. 11 February 1992. <https://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/learning/general/onthisday/bday/0811.html> Accessed 24 July 2018.

<sup>195</sup> Richard Marius. "Alex Murray Palmer Haley." Tennessee Encyclopedia. 2018 <https://tennesseeencyclopedia.net/entries/alex-murray-palmer-haley/> Accessed 24 July 2018.

claimed to know an oral history of Haley's ancestor Kunta Kinte. Upon further investigation it was revealed that story was a fabrication created by Haley and the government of Gambia. The Gambian authorities realized the potential for tourism that the book would create and arranged for Haley to meet a griot who would tell him exactly what he wanted to hear. After these facts were revealed, Haley began to refer to *Roots* as "faction" a mixture of fact and fiction. Haley lived in Knoxville for many years and continued to write for the remainder of his life, but the criticisms of *Roots* continue to linger. Haley on February 10, 1992 and was buried on the grounds of his childhood home in Henning, Tennessee.<sup>196</sup>

## Wilma Rudolph

Wilma Rudolph was born in St. Bethlehem, Tennessee on June 23, 1940. She was the twentieth of her father's twenty-two children. Rudolph was a small and sickly child; during her childhood she contracted double pneumonia, scarlet fever, measles, whooping cough and polio. Her left leg was weakened by polio and she was forced to wear a brace for many years. Once a week her mother drove her ninety miles to and from Nashville so that Rudolph could receive physical therapy. The therapy, love, and support from her family, and Rudolph's own determination paid off. By the time she was nine, she was out of the braces and had begun to play basketball.<sup>197</sup>

Rudolph became a basketball star and was recruited by the track coach, Ed Temple, from nearby Tennessee State University. Rudolph began attending his track practices

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<sup>196</sup> Richard Marius. "Alex Murray Palmer Haley." Tennessee Encyclopedia. 2018  
<https://tennesseencyclopedia.net/entries/alex-murray-palmer-haley/> Accessed 24 July 2018.

<sup>197</sup> M.B. Roberts. "Rudolph ran and world went wild." ESPN Sports Century. ESPN.com.  
<https://www.espn.com/sportscentury/features/00016444.html> Accessed 25 July 2018.

while she was still in high school. In 1956, sixteen-year-old Rudolph competed in the Melbourne Olympics where she won a bronze medal in the 400 meter relay. In the 1960 Rome Olympics Rudolph took gold in the 100 meter, 200 meter, and 4X100 meter relay becoming the first American woman to win three gold medals in a single Olympics. European crowds adored Rudolph and the press dubbed her “The Black Pearl” and “The Black Gazelle.”<sup>198</sup> When Rudolph returned to the United States, she learned that Tennessee’s segregationist governor, Buford Ellington, planned to head the delegation welcoming her home. Rudolph flatly refused to attend a segregated event. As a result, her victory parade and banquet were the first integrated events in her hometown of Clarksville.

Following her Olympic career, Rudolph became a track coach at DePauw University and served as a mentor to other African American athletes, including Jackie Joyner-Kersey. Rudolph died in 1994 after a battle with brain cancer. Rudolph believed her greatest accomplishment was the Wilma Rudolph Foundation, a non-profit organization she created that promotes community based amateur sports programs. Rudolph understood the importance of overcoming adversity to achieve her goals; she once said, “Winning is great, sure, but if you are really going to do something in life, the secret is learning how to lose. Nobody goes undefeated all the time. If you can pick up after a crushing defeat, and go on to win again, you are going to be a champion someday.”<sup>199</sup>

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<sup>198</sup> M.B. Roberts. “Rudolph ran and world went wild.” ESPN Sports Century. ESPN.com. <https://www.espn.com/sportscentury/features/00016444.html> Accessed 25 July 2018.

<sup>199</sup> Biography.com Editors. “Wilma Rudolph Biography,” Biography.com. 2 April 2014. <https://www.biography.com/people/wilma-rudolph-9466552> Accessed 25 July 2018.

# Dolly Parton

Dolly Rebecca Parton was born on January 19, 1946, in Sevier County, Tennessee.

Parton grew up surrounded by traditional Appalachian music. Her professional career began at age ten when her Uncle Bill Owens helped her land a spot on Cas Walker's radio show in Knoxville; only a year later Parton recorded her first single, "Puppy Love." In 1959, Parton made her first appearance at the *Grand Ole Opry*. Parton moved to Nashville after graduating from Sevier County High School in 1964.<sup>200</sup>

In Nashville, Parton found success as a singer and songwriter. Unlike many artists, Parton understood the importance of protecting the rights to the songs she wrote or co-wrote. The U.S. Copyright Office has over eight hundred sixty two copyrights registered to Parton. Parton gained fame in 1967 with the release of her first full length album *Hello, I'm Dolly* and her addition to the cast of the popular *Porter Wagoner Show*. The mid 1970s saw Parton reach new heights of success with hits such as "Jolene," "I Will Always Love You," and "Love is Like a Butterfly."<sup>201</sup>

In the 1980s Parton appeared in a number of films, including the hit *9 to 5*, which also featured Parton singing the title track. During this period, Parton's music shifted from its country roots and she had several crossover hits in the pop charts. Parton became an investor in a theme park, *Dollywood*, in Pigeon Forge. Parton's career as a songwriter had an unexpected boost when Whitney Houston recorded Parton's song "I

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<sup>200</sup> "Dolly Parton Timeline." *Dolly Parton and the Roots of Country Music*. Library of Congress. <https://www.loc.gov/collections/dolly-parton-and-the-roots-of-country-music/articles-and-essays/dolly-parton-timeline/> Accessed 25 July 2018.

<sup>201</sup> "Dolly Parton Timeline." *Dolly Parton and the Roots of Country Music*. Library of Congress. <https://www.loc.gov/collections/dolly-parton-and-the-roots-of-country-music/articles-and-essays/dolly-parton-timeline/> Accessed 25 July 2018. And "Dolly Parton and Copyright." *Dolly Parton and the Roots of Country Music*. Library of Congress. <https://www.loc.gov/collections/dolly-parton-and-the-roots-of-country-music/articles-and-essays/dolly-parton-and-copyright/> Accessed 25 July 2018.

Will Always Love You” for the film *The Bodyguard*. In the 1990s Parton returned to her country roots and recorded several critically acclaimed bluegrass albums.<sup>202</sup>

Throughout her career Parton has generously supported a number of charities in her local community; most notably, *Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library*, which provides free books for children in the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom and Australia. Since its creation in 1995, the *Imagination Library* has mailed over one hundred and seven million free books to children. Parton also serves as the honorary chairperson of the *Dr. Robert F. Thomas Foundation* which seeks to improve access to high quality medical care for Sevier County residents. The foundation assisted in the creation of a state-of-the-art hospital in 2010 which includes the *Dolly Parton Birthing Unit*. Following the wildfires that devastated parts of Sevier County in 2016, Parton created the *Mountain Tough Recovery Team* which provided financial assistance for those affected by the wildfires.<sup>203</sup>

In 2004 Parton accepted the *Living Legend Medal* from the Library of Congress and in 2006 she was recognized for her achievements in the arts by the Kennedy Center. Parton received the Willie Nelson Lifetime Achievement Award from the Country Music Association and she continues to write and record songs as well as playing an active role in a number of charities.<sup>204</sup>

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<sup>202</sup> “Dolly Parton Timeline.” *Dolly Parton and the Roots of Country Music*. Library of Congress. <https://www.loc.gov/collections/dolly-parton-and-the-roots-of-country-music/articles-and-essays/dolly-parton-timeline/> Accessed 25 July 2018.

<sup>203</sup> Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library. *Dollywood Foundation* 2018. <https://imaginationlibrary.com/> Accessed 25 July 2018. And Mountain Tough Recovery Team. *Dollywood Foundation* 2018. <http://www.mountaintough.org/> Accessed 25 July 2018. And Dr. Robert F. Thomas Foundation. *Leconte Medical Center*. 2018. <https://www.lecontemedicalcenter.com/giving/> Accessed 25 July 2018.

<sup>204</sup> Biography.com Editors. “Dolly Parton Biography.” Biography.com 2 April 2014. <https://www.biography.com/people/dolly-parton-9434112> Accessed 25 July 2018.

## Al Gore Jr.

Albert Arnold Gore Jr. was born on March 31, 1948 in Washington, D.C. His father, Albert Gore Sr., served as a United States Senator from Tennessee. As a child, Gore spent most of the year in Washington, but spent his summers on the family farm near Carthage, Tennessee. Gore graduated from Harvard University in 1969 and volunteered for military service. He served in Vietnam from 1969 to 1971. After returning to Tennessee in 1971, Gore spent five years working as an investigative reporter for the Nashville *Tennessean*. In 1976 Gore was elected to the United States House of Representatives; he was reelected in 1978, 1980, and 1982.<sup>205</sup>

In 1985, Gore was elected to the Senate seat vacated by Howard Barker. Gore ran for president in 1988, but lost the nomination to Michael Dukakis. While in the Senate, Gore pushed for the passage of the High Performance Computer and Communication Act which greatly helped to expand the Internet. Gore remained in the Senate until Bill Clinton chose him as his running mate in 1992; that same year Gore also published *Earth in the Balance: Ecology and the Human Spirit*.<sup>206</sup>

Gore served two terms as Clinton's vice president and announced his intention to run for president in 2000. The election was marked by a number of controversies particularly in Florida where Gore's opponent George W. Bush's brother Jeb was governor. Gore clearly won the popular vote, but not the Electoral College. After the

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<sup>205</sup> "Al Gore Fast Facts." CNN.com. 30 March 2018. <https://www.cnn.com/2013/09/02/us/al-gore-fast-facts/index.html> Accessed 25 July 2018.

<sup>206</sup> Biography.com Editors. "Al Gore Biography." Biography.com. 27 April 2017. <https://www.biography.com/people/al-gore-9316028> Accessed 25 July 2018.

Supreme Court ruled that it would not order another recount of the vote in Florida, Gore conceded the election to Bush.<sup>207</sup>

Since the 2000 presidential election, Gore has been involved with a number of media and technology ventures. He serves as an advisor to Google and serves on the Board of Directors of Apple Computers. In 2005 Gore's television network, Current TV debuted, and the network was sold to Al-Jazeera in 2013 for a reported five hundred million dollars.<sup>208</sup>

In 2006, Gore's crusade against global warming was featured in the book *An Inconvenient Truth: The Planetary Emergency of Global Warming and What We Can Do About It* and the documentary *An Inconvenient Truth*. The following year, Gore testified before Congress on the need to stop global warming. He was also co-winner of the Nobel Peace Prize for his work in global warming in 2007.

Gore has continued to remain active in politics and environmental causes. He met with President Trump in 2017 to discuss climate change issues. He also issued a new edition of his book *The Assault on Reason: Our Information Ecosystem, From the Age of Print to the Age of Trump*.<sup>209</sup>

## Oprah Winfrey

Oprah Winfrey was born in rural Kosciusko, Mississippi on January 29, 1954.

Winfrey's teenage mother could not care for her, so Oprah lived on a farm with her

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<sup>207</sup> Biography.com Editors. "Al Gore Biography." Biography.com. 27 April 2017. <https://www.biography.com/people/al-gore-9316028> Accessed 25 July 2018.

<sup>208</sup> "Al Gore Fast Facts." CNN.com. 30 March 2018. <https://www.cnn.com/2013/09/02/us/al-gore-fast-facts/index.html> Accessed 25 July 2018.

<sup>209</sup> "Al Gore Fast Facts." CNN.com. 30 March 2018. <https://www.cnn.com/2013/09/02/us/al-gore-fast-facts/index.html> Accessed 25 July 2018.



grandmother until she was six. Winfrey was sexually abused by several family members beginning at the age of nine. At fourteen, she became pregnant as a result of the abuse and gave birth to a son who died shortly after his birth; Winfrey was then sent to live with her father in Nashville where she excelled in speech and drama and won a scholarship to Tennessee State University. Just before starting college, Winfrey began her broadcasting career reading the news on a local radio station.<sup>210</sup>

Winfrey dropped out of college to take a job as a news anchor at WLAC in Nashville. In 1976, Winfrey moved to Baltimore where she hosted *People Are Talking*, a daytime talk show. Her success in Baltimore led to a move to Chicago in 1984 where she took over *AM Chicago* which was quickly renamed *The Oprah Winfrey Show* and nationally syndicated. The show became a phenomenon and spawned careers for many people associated with it including Dr. Phil McGraw. *Oprah's Book Club* pushed many books to the top of the bestseller list and brought about a renewed interest in book clubs nationwide.<sup>211</sup>

Winfrey ended her successful talk show in 2011 in order to pursue other projects including OWN television network and her acting career. Winfrey has appeared in a number of films including 1985's *The Color Purple* for which Winfrey received an academy Award Nomination for Best Supporting Actress. Most recently Winfrey has acted in *The Butler*, *Selma*, and *A Wrinkle in Time*.<sup>212</sup>

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<sup>210</sup> Jane Mulkerrins. "Oprah Winfrey: Her Untold Story." *The Telegraph*. 13 May 2017. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/tv/2017/05/13/oprah-winfrey-untold-story/> Accessed 25 July 2018.

<sup>211</sup> Biography.com Editors. "Oprah Winfrey Biography." 21 May 2018. <https://www.biography.com/people/oprah-winfrey-9534419> Accessed 25 July 2018.

<sup>212</sup> Biography.com Editors. "Oprah Winfrey Biography." 21 May 2018. <https://www.biography.com/people/oprah-winfrey-9534419> Accessed 25 July 2018.

Winfrey, a multi-billionaire, has donated over fifty million dollars to a variety of charitable programs. Most recently, Winfrey donated five hundred thousand dollars to the “March for Our Lives” rally organized by students from Marjorie Stoneman Douglas High School following the shooting that took seventeen lives. Winfrey tweeted “These inspiring young people remind me of the Freedom Riders of the ‘60s who also said we've had ENOUGH and our voices will be heard.”<sup>213</sup>

Winfrey has also become involved in politics. She campaigned for Barack Obama during his successful run for the presidency. At the University of South Carolina, over twenty-nine thousand supporters filled the football stadium to hear Winfrey speak. In 2018, Winfrey sparked rumors about a possible political career of her own following the response to her powerful speech at the Golden Globes Awards.<sup>214</sup>

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<sup>213</sup> Biography.com Editors. “Oprah Winfrey Biography.” 21 May 2018.  
<https://www.biography.com/people/oprah-winfrey-9534419> Accessed 25 July 2018.

<sup>214</sup> Biography.com Editors. “Oprah Winfrey Biography.” 21 May 2018.  
<https://www.biography.com/people/oprah-winfrey-9534419> Accessed 25 July 2018.