

Tennessee Abolitionists



"The longer I reflect upon involuntary slavery, the more I abhor it, as...the most flagrant injustice and cruelty. It makes an innocent man the property of another, who may, if please, deprive him of all the comforts of life, and subject him to a thousand sufferings."

Reverend John Rankin, 1825

As early as 1797, East Tennesseans were speaking out against slavery. In 1820, Elihu Embree started the nation's first abolitionist newspaper in Jonesborough. By 1827 East Tennessee was home to one-fifth of the nation's antislavery societies. However by 1840 most Tennessee abolitionists, including Rev. Rankin, had left the state.

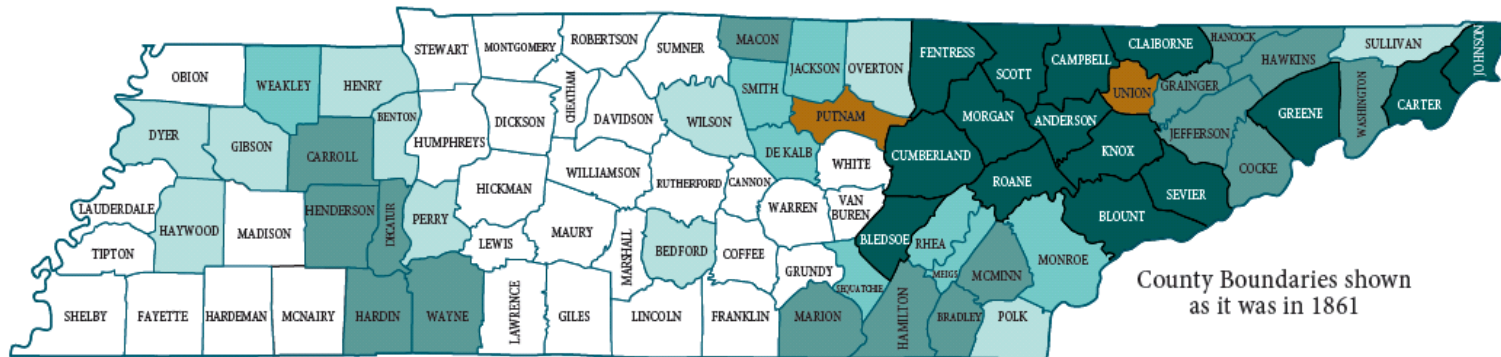
Student Task: Read the quotation above. Re-write it in your own words. Why do you think that the abolition movement was so strong in East Tennessee? Why do you think so many abolitionists had left the state by the 1840's?

FYI: For more information on John Rankin, see: <http://freedomcenter.org/journey-to-freedom/network/rev-john-rankin>

For more information on Elihu Embree, see: <http://tennesseencyclopedia.net/entry.php?rec=433>

Secession in Tennessee

How Each County Voted for Secession, June 1861



In February 1861, only 49 percent of Tennesseans favored secession. On June 8, 1861 Tennesseans voted in statewide referendum this time 88 percent of them voted in favor of secession.

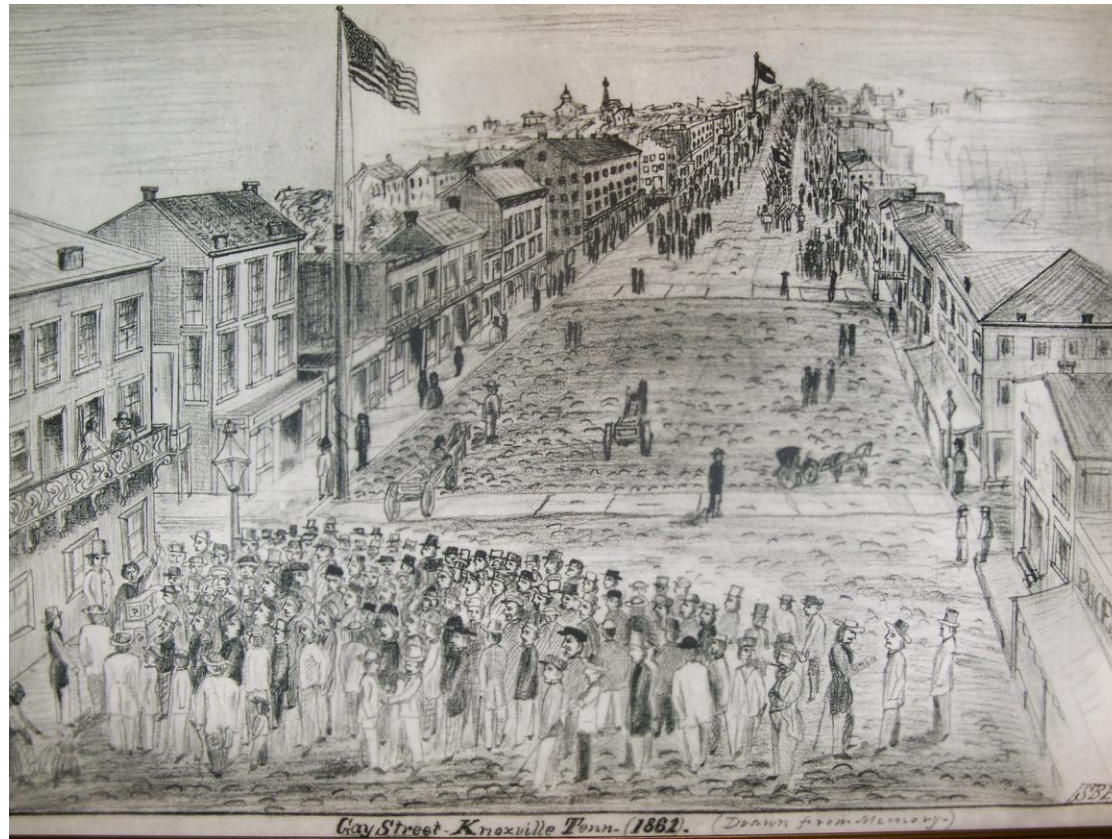
Student Task: Examine the map above. What patterns do you see? How do you think these patterns will affect the course of the war in Tennessee? Why do you think so many Tennesseans changed their minds about secession between February and June of 1861?

FYI: For more information on Tennessee and secession, see:

<http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2011/06/01/when-tennessee-turned-south/>

<http://www.nps.gov/cwindepth/StateByState/Tennessee.html>

Divided Loyalties



Sketch of Gay Street by David Palmer

Student Task: Analyze the sketch above using the question words: who, what, when, where, why and how. Would you have witnessed a scene similar to this one in Charleston, S.C. or Boston, M.A.? Why or why not?

FYI: David Palmer drew this sketch from memory while in a Union prisoner of war camp near Chicago named Camp Douglas in honor of Senator Stephen Douglas. For more information on Camp Douglas, see:

<http://www.encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org/pages/207.html> and http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2013-05-31/entertainment/ct-ae-0602-kogan-sidewalks-20130531_1_ghosts-civil-war-stephen-a

Bridge Burners

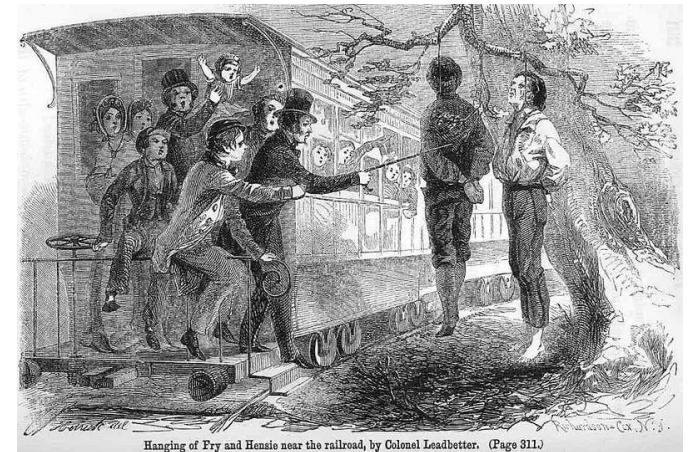


Modern Lick Creek Railroad Bridge

On November 8, 1861 a small group of men from Greene County, Tennessee burned the Lick Creek railroad bridge. They had been promised that a Union army under the command of General Sherman would soon arrive. It did not. Henry Fry and Jacob Hinshaw were captured and hanged from an oak tree near the Greene County railroad depot. C.A. Haun, Jacob Harmon Jr., and Henry Harmon were hanged in Knoxville in December 1861.



Student Task: Why were railroads so important to both sides in the Civil War? How do you think the failure of the Union army to enter East Tennessee in 1861 affected East Tennessee Unionists?



Hanging of Fry and Hensio near the railroad, by Colonel Leadbetter. (Page 311)

FYI: For more information on the Bridge Burners, see:

<http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2011/11/14/the-conspiracy-at-lick-creek/>

Video: Rivers and Rails <http://www.wnpt.org/productions/civilwar/rr/index.html>

Friend or Foe?



Belle Boyd was a daring and notorious Confederate spy. After being captured and imprisoned by the Union on two separate

occasions, she was exiled to the South. She came to Knoxville in 1863 to stay with relatives. Her cousin, Dr. John Boyd was serving as a surgeon in the Confederate army. The Boyd family lived in Blount Mansion, former home of Tennessee first territorial governor, William Blount. Belle described her time in Knoxville as filled with parties and fun.

Student Task: Imagine that you attend a party at Blount Mansion and meet Belle. What would you say to her? What factors would influence your conversation?

FYI: For more information on Belle Boyd, see <http://www.civilwar.org/education/history/biographies/maria-belle-boyd.html>

http://www.knoxcivilwar.org/Knoxcivilwar/Civil_War_Walking_Tours_files/Knoxville%20Civil%20War%20Walking%20Tour_2012.pdf

Preserving the Past



In September of 1863, Knoxville came under the control of Union forces under General Ambrose Burnside. Confederate General Braxton Bragg besieged Union forces and Chattanooga. General Longstreet was sent to Knoxville to prevent Burnside from reinforcing the Union position in Chattanooga. Burnside had taken control of an earthworks fort begun by the Confederates. Captain Orlando Poe improved the fort's defenses by digging a 12 feet deep ditch around its exterior and stringing telegraph wire between the tree stumps. The Confederates attacked on a cold and foggy morning on November 29th. They were not prepared to scale the high wall. The result was disaster. The Confederates suffered 813 casualties compared to the Union's 13. Knoxville remained in Union hands.

Student Task: Though the Battle of Fort Sanders was a pivotal moment in Knoxville's history, the site itself was not protected from development. Today, only a monument marks the approximate location. Consider historic site in your town or community. How well is your community doing at protecting its past? How could you get involved in preservation efforts?

FYI: For more information on The Battle of Fort Sanders, see: <http://mcclungmuseum.utk.edu/exhibits/civil-war-in-knoxville/>

<http://www.nps.gov/hps/abpp/battles/tn025.htm>

Home Sweet Home?



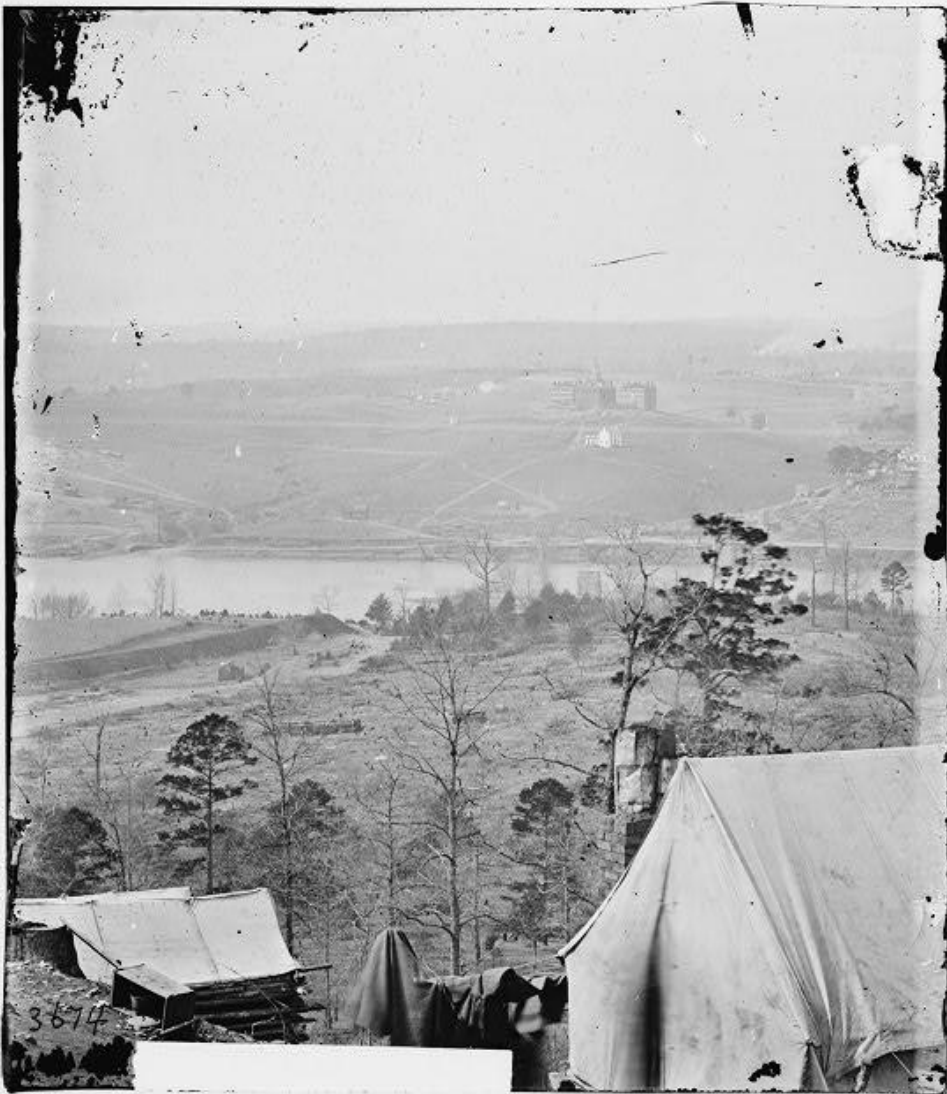
Image from <http://www.knoxvillecmh.org/history.htm>

Bleak House, built in 1858, was the home of the Armstrong family. When Confederate General Longstreet came to Knoxville in 1863 he used the family home as his headquarters.

Student Task: Imagine that you are a member of the Armstrong family in 1863. How would you feel about having Longstreet in your home? What would be the pros and cons of having your home used as headquarters?

FYI: For more information on the Battle of Fort Sanders, see <http://www.knoxnews.com/news/2007/aug/05/mcclung-exhibit-tells-civil-war-story/>

Holding the High Ground



By the time the Civil War began in 1861, photography was becoming common place. This photograph was taken from one of the hills south of Knoxville. The building in distance is East Tennessee University, the forerunner of the University of Tennessee. The tents belong to Union soldiers who spent a long cold winter protecting that ground.

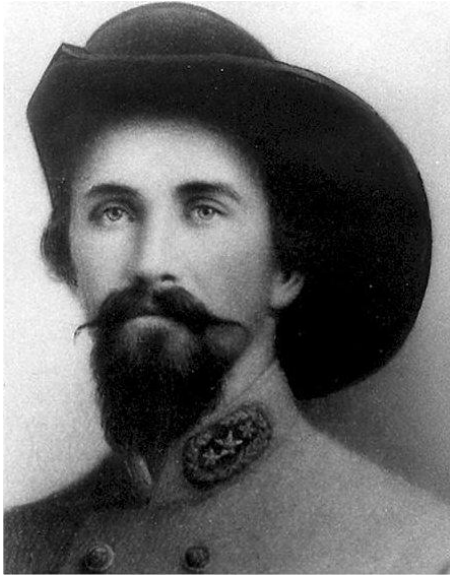
Student Task: Analyze the photograph. What advantage would an army occupying the high ground have in a battle? What disadvantages could occupying the high ground have?

FYI: For more information on Civil War photography, see

<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/cwphtml/cwtake.html>

<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/cwphtml/cwpcam/cwcam1.html>

Civil War Tech



John Hunt Morgan was known as the “Thunderbolt of the Confederacy” for his lightning fast cavalry raids. In 1862, Morgan led raids in Tennessee and Kentucky that disrupted Union supply and communication lines. After the Confederate losses at Gettysburg and Vicksburg in 1864, Morgan crossed the Ohio River and raided Indiana and Ohio. He was captured and briefly imprisoned before escaping and returning south. In September of 1864, Morgan was staying with the Williams family in their mansion in Greeneville when he was surprised by Union forces. Morgan was killed somewhere on the grounds of the Dickson-Williams mansion as he tried to reach his horse in the stables.

Student Task: Modern armies no longer use horses to conduct raids on supply and communication lines. Create a timeline showing how military technology has evolved since the Civil War.

FYI: For more information on John Hunt Morgan, see:

<http://www.civilwar.org/education/history/biographies/john-hunt-morgan-1.html>

<http://www.growinggreene.com/images/uploads/Death%20of%20General%20John%20Hunt%20Morgan%20Fina.pdf>

For more information on military technology, see:

<http://www.pbs.org/wnet/ground-war/featured/6/6/>

Politics as Usual?

"Let [the Rebels] be impoverished and made bankrupts. Let them be beggars, going from door to door for their bread. They brought on this rebellion-they caused all this suffering and trouble-let them be made odious, and let their estates be confiscated."

Knoxville Whig, March 1, 1865



William "Parson" Brownlow was a Methodist minister, prominent Unionist and newspaper editor in Knoxville before and during the Civil War. Brownlow went in to hiding in 1861 to avoid arrest by Confederate authorities and was later forced to leave the state. He returned to Knoxville in 1863 and remained there until he was elected governor on March 4, 1865.

Student Task: Analyze the language of the quotation above. What does it tell you about Brownlow? What predictions can you make about Brownlow's term as governor based on the quotation?

FYI: For more information on William Brownlow, see:

<http://tennesseencyclopedia.net/entry.php?rec=150>

http://www.tnhistoryforkids.org/people/william_brownlow

Answer Key

These activities are meant to spark discussion and debate. The answers given here are meant to help teachers guide the discussion.

Tennessee Abolitionists

Answers should reference the lack of plantation agriculture in eastern Tennessee. Students should mention social pressure and the lack of success in abolishing slavery as reasons for leaving.

Secession in Tennessee

Students should notice that support for secession was weakest in the east and strongest in Middle and West Tennessee. They should connect that to the presence or absence of large plantations. They should recognize that east Tennessee would be more likely to support the Union than Middle and West Tennessee. Students should also note the dates of the two secessions and recognize that the vote to secede happens after the first shots are fired at Fort Sumter.

Divided Loyalties

Students should recognize the American flag in the foreground and the presence of a different flag in the background. They should also note the people listening to the speaker and the other group marching down the street. Students should recognize that the two groups represent Union and Confederate supporters and that a fight seems likely. You can tell students that a group of businessmen intervened and convinced both sides not to fight in order to avoid damage to their businesses. Students should recognize that a scene like this would be unlikely to happen in Charleston since very few people in South Carolina openly supported the Union.

Bridge Burners

Students should recognize that railroads were important for transporting men and equipment as well as communication. Students should speculate the Tennessee Unionists may have felt betrayed by the army. Unionists may have been more reluctant to act in the future. Conversely, some students may argue that the executions could have hardened the resolve of Unionists.

Friend or Foe

Answers will vary widely. The key factor is that students recognize that the questioner's personal allegiance will determine the tone of the conversation with Belle Boyd.

Preserving the Past

Students should mention writing letters, creating websites, contacting local officials and media as ways of getting involved in local preservation efforts.

Home Sweet Home

Students should identify pros such as meeting important people and access to supplies. They should also recognize cons such as increased risk of danger, possible damage to house and lack of freedom as cons. Students should also recognize that the family's perception would depend on their allegiances.

Holding the High Ground

Students should recognize that high ground is an excellent defensive position. It can also serve as a platform for artillery. It provides a view of any approaching forces. Students should also recognize that positions on the high ground can be surrounded and besieged. It can also be difficult to move men and equipment over steep terrain.

Civil War Tech

Students should mention airplanes, tanks, helicopters, satellites, missiles and drones as examples of technology. Students should identify airplanes and tanks being prominent in World War II, helicopters as being widely used in Vietnam, missiles in the Gulf War and drones in conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Politics as Usual

Students should recognize that Brownlow is very opinionated and has harsh feelings towards Confederates. They should be able to speculate that as governor, Brownlow will use his power to punish former Confederates.