

Campbell County

Established 1806 County Seat: Jacksboro

Early History

Prior to the arrival of European settlers in the 1740s, Campbell County was home to several Native American settlements. The largest settlement was located near the present location of Cove Lake State Park. In 1806, Campbell County was created from land from Anderson and Claiborne counties. It was named for Revolutionary War soldier Colonel Arthur Campbell. Settlements along the rivers continued to grow as many people took advantage of the fertile soil for farming.

Civil War and Reconstruction

During the Civil War, Campbell County was strongly Unionist. Three Union companies made up of Tennesseans are credited to Campbell County. Both Union and Confederate armies passed through during the war, with Jacksboro briefly serving as the headquarters of General Felix Zollicoffer. Following the war, a thriving mining industry developed in the Big Creek gap area. Harvey Lafollette, of Indiana, purchased thirty thousand acres of land and formed The Lafollette Coal, Iron and Railway Company. The company operated coal and iron mines, coke ovens, railroads, and a blast furnace. Harvey Lafollette also built the town named in his honor as part of the operation. In September of 1906, a train carrying more than ten tons of dynamite exploded in Jellico. Nine people were killed and over two hundred others were injured. The force of the explosion blew out every window in town and leveled several nearby houses.

Great Depression and World War II

While the iron and coal industries declined in the early 1900s, the town of Lafollette benefited from its location on US25W, also known as the Dixie Highway. The Dixie Highway was the most important north-south route for travelers until the completion of the Interstate Highway system in the 1950s. The construction of Norris Dam, which was completed in 1936, brought massive changes to Campbell County. Hundreds of families were displaced when the lake flooded their communities. The creation of the lake led to a thriving tourism industry in Campbell County.

Grace Moore

One of Campbell County's most famous daughters is Grace Moore. Moore, nicknamed "The Tennessee Nightingale," became a nationally known opera singer and movie star in the 1930s and 1940s. Moore began her singing career in the First Baptist Church's choir. She later trained in New York, Washington D.C., and Paris. Moore joined the Metropolitan Opera in 1928 and performed in several title roles during her sixteen seasons with the company. Moore also worked in Hollywood and was nominated for the Academy Award for Best Actress in 1935 for her role in Columbia Pictures' *One Night of Love*.

Moore received many honors during her lifetime including being commissioned an honorary Tennessee colonel. Grace Moore died in a plane crash near Copenhagen, Denmark on January 26, 1947.

For more information, see

[Campbell County Chamber of Commerce](#)

[1906 Dynamite Explosion in Jellico](#)

[Grace Moore](#)