



ETOWAH L&N DEPOT, 1907

The town of Etowah is an example of the many small towns that grew up around railroad stops. The depot represented the important role of the **Louisville and Nashville (L&N) Railroad** in East Tennessee. It served as a headquarters and a passenger and freight depot. The products from farms and factories were moved quickly and easily using railroads. East Tennessee's location in the center of the Southeast made it an economic center for buying and selling goods.

What Do You See?

The depot is large because it was very important to the L&N Railroad Company and it served as the regional offices for the company as well as serving the many passengers and businesses in the area. You can visit the Etowah Depot today and take a tour of the building and its museum.

Think More About It!

- 1.) Trains were the main way people traveled long distances in the early 1900s. What has replaced them today?
- 2.) Trains still carry goods through East Tennessee. Are there train tracks close to where you live? Have you seen an old depot close by?
- 3.) What geographical features do we have in East Tennessee that make travel difficult?

Journal It!

Imagine that you are a boy/girl growing up in the early 1900s and you went on your first train ride. Write a letter to a friend or family member describing your experience.



GLOSSARY

Louisville & Nashville Railroad—As one of the premier Southern railroads, the L&N extended its reach far beyond its namesake cities, ultimately building a network of nearly 7,000 miles of track.

Railroads are one of the most potent factors in modern civilization.

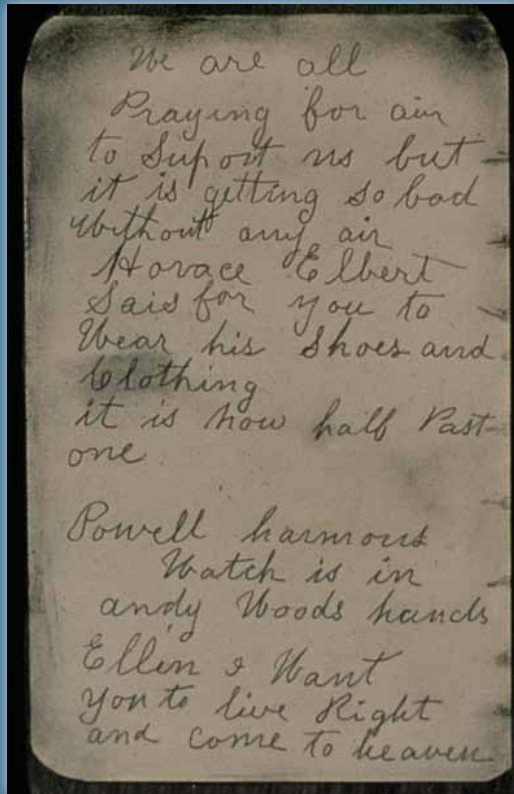
—CAPTAIN WILLIAM S. RULE,
PROMINENT NEWSPAPER EDITOR, 1900

No doubt, in the near future, we will have an ample outlet for the products of the farm and timber resources. The coming of this railroad marks an epoch in our history that will surpass any event or effort at improvement in the past.

—W. L. DUGGAN, SEVIER COUNTY, 1910

Front, image: Louisville & Nashville Railroad, Etowah Depot, McMinn County, 1907
Courtesy of Durant Tullock

Front, image: First train entering Sevierville, Sevier County, 1910
Courtesy of the Calvin M. McClung Historical Collection, Knox County Public Library



**Oh God, for one more breath. Ellen,
remember me as long as you live.
Goodbye darlings...**

—JACOB VOWELL

JACOB VOWELL LETTER, MAY 19, 1902

Coal miners at the **Fraterville Mine** were just beginning their work when an explosion ripped through the mine. A total of 184 miners lost their lives. Some were trapped underground for several hours before being suffocated by the gas that had caused the explosion. Twenty-six of these trapped men wrote sad letters to their families. Jacob Vowell and his 14-year-old son, Elbert, were among these miners. The farewell letters were printed in newspapers around the world. The disaster brought attention to the dangers of mining and in 1910 led to the formation of the United States Bureau of Mines. The bureau's purpose is to create and enforce safety regulations in mines.

What Do You See?

Read the first page of the letter. Does Mr. Vowell's spelling seem different than yours? Many men and women attended only a few years of elementary school in the late 1800s. They often spelled words by the way they sounded instead of the way the dictionary spelled them. The law requiring children to attend school in Tennessee was not passed until 1905.

Think More About It!

- 1.) Why do you think the men wrote the letters?
- 2.) Do you think the miners knew about the dangers of their work? If so, why did they do it?
- 3.) Why do you think children like Elbert were employed by the mine?

Journal It!

Write a newspaper headline and story on the Fraterville Mine explosion. What details would readers need to know?

GLOSSARY

The Fraterville Mine Disaster—The worst coal mining disaster in Tennessee history took place on May 19, 1902, at the Fraterville Mine, near Coal Creek (now Rocky Top). One hundred and eighty four men were killed. Only three adult men remained in Fraterville after the explosion. Many women lost every male member of their families: husbands, fathers, brothers, and sons.



Left: Miners inside Block Coal Mine, near Caryville, Campbell County, 1940
Left to right: Roy Ausmus, Arvel “Darb” Cross, Kelly Terry, Jess Davis, Claude Hatmaker, and John McKinney
Courtesy of Arvel and Minnie Cross

Front, artifact: Jacob Vowell letter, May 19, 1902
Courtesy of W. L. Wilson



“MOBILE HOMES,” C. 1915

As forests were cut, loggers and their families moved with the work. “Set off” houses, so called because they could be loaded on flatbed railcars and set off at new work sites, were provided by the logging companies. “String towns” developed along the rails where a number of houses were located together. Hundreds of men had jobs in the logging industry in the Smoky Mountains and across the Cumberland Plateau. Women sometimes found jobs as cooks in camp.

What Do You See?

The train in the background is the type of train that moved the family’s home place to place. Do you see the address for the house?

Think More About It!

- 1.) How many people might live in a one room set-off house?
- 2.) Do you think there would be a way to make more room?
- 3.) What materials were the houses made of?

Journal It!

Set off houses were very small and the people living in them could not bring very many possessions with them to the camps. Think about your own possessions. If you could only chose three to take with you when you moved, which three would you select? Why?





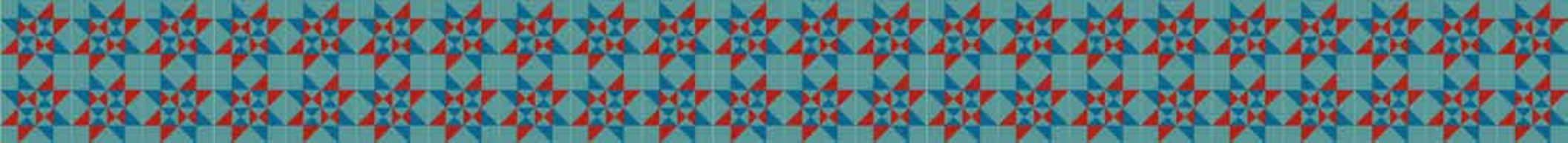
There is an immense amount of valuable timber in these mountains... One curly ash was seen that was estimated as being worth \$500, if it could be gotten out of there.

—*Maryville Times*, NOVEMBER 1, 1893

Left, image: Big polar on Norton Creek, photograph by Thompson Brothers
Courtesy of the Calvin M. McClung Historical Collection, Knox County Public Library

Front, image: Mobile homes or “set-off” houses, c. 1915–1920
Courtesy of Great Smoky Mountains National Park

Front, image: Snaking logs out of the mountains
Courtesy of Great Smoky Mountains National Park



STEAM WHISTLE, BROOKSIDE COTTON MILLS, c. 1886

This original whistle from Brookside Mills in Knoxville signaled the beginning and end of work shifts. Brookside Mills was a textile mill that produced brown sheeting—a course, cheap cotton cloth. Textile mills were built throughout East Tennessee and employed many women and children in the early 1900s. People who came from the farms to work in the mills or factories faced major changes in their lives.

What Do You See?

Steam power was very important for industries after the Civil War. Look at the whistle. Steam was produced by burning wood and coal which were both abundant in Tennessee.

Think More About It!

- 1.) Besides using clocks, how did people tell time on the farm?
- 2.) What dangers did children working in the cotton mills face?
- 3.) Can you think of a type of transportation that has a whistle like this?

Journal It!

Imagine that you are one of the children in the picture at left. What thoughts are going through your mind as the picture is being taken?



They would blow a whistle at 15 till 7:00 and again at 7:00, then would blow again at 11:30 for lunch. We did not get paid by the day, we got paid by the bunches.

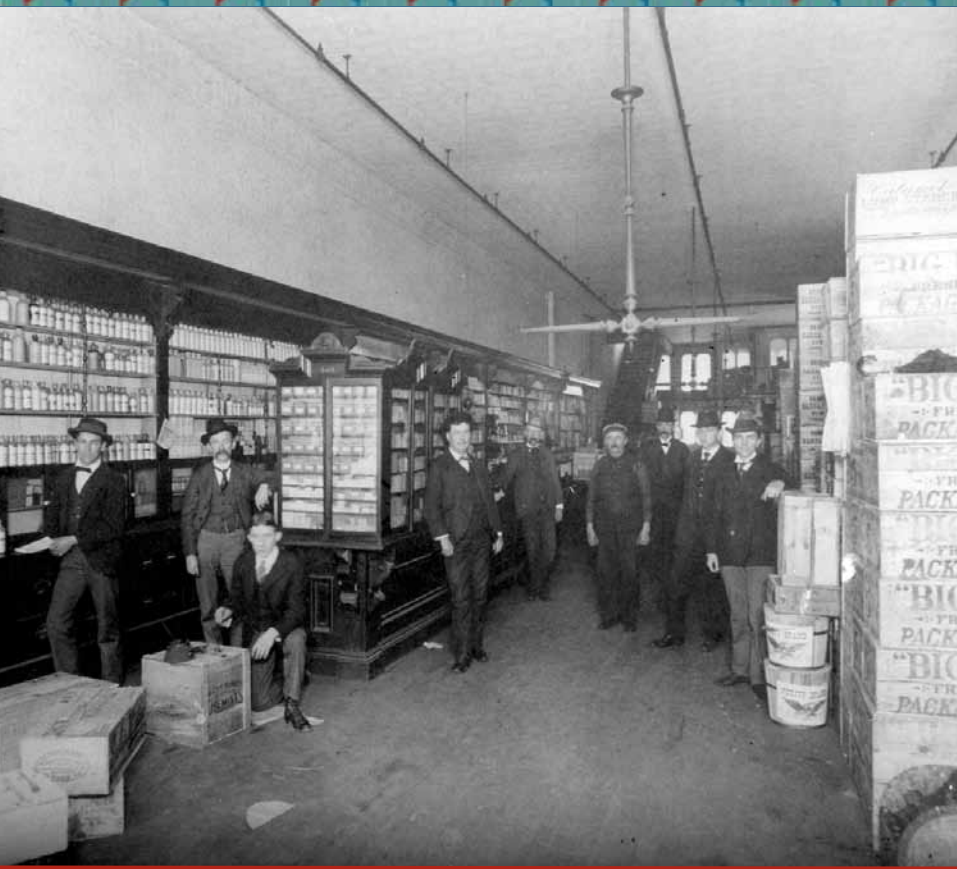
—THELMA MCKINNEY MOSES, McMINN COUNTY,
RECALLING THE EUREKA COTTON MILLS IN THE 1920S

But still Ma and Pa were not happy. Pa didn't like being cooped up in the mills. His free, mountain spirit was cramped. He'd worked out in the open air all his life. The linty, noisy mills were more than he could bear. "Some of the foremen call us lint-heads," he said. "I don't like being called names."

—DORIE WOODRUFF COPE

Front, artifact: Steam whistle, Brookside Cotton Mills, c. 1886
East Tennessee Historical Society Permanent Collection, gift of Lynn Redmon

Front, image: *Some of the young knitters in Loudon Hosiery Mills (photograph taken during working hours), photograph by Lewis W. Hine, December 1910*
Courtesy of the Library of Congress



SANFORD, CHAMBERLAIN, AND ALBERS WHOLESALE DRUG COMPANY—RECEIVING AND SHIPPING DEPARTMENT, C. 1900

Druggist and Civil War veteran Andrew Jackson Albers came to Knoxville before the end of the Civil War to work with E.J. Sanford, who was starting a wholesale drug company—a company which would sell drugs to drugstores. In 1872, the two joined with William P. Chamberlain to form Sanford, Chamberlain and Albers, one of the Southeast’s most successful wholesale drug distributors.

What Do You See?

Like today’s drugstores, Sanford, Chamberlain, and Albers sold both prescription and non-prescription drugs.

Think More About It!

- 1.) Besides medicine, what other items did Sanford, Chamberlain, and Albers sell?
- 2.) How do you think shipments were transported?

Journal It!

Create an advertisement for Sanford, Chamberlain, and Albers.



GLOSSARY

Patent Medicines—Pre-packaged medicines sold “over the counter” without a prescription. Many patent medicines promised extreme results that they rarely achieved.



Left: Medicine bottles from Sanford, Chamberlain, and Albers Company
East Tennessee Historical Society Permanent Collection

Front, image: Sanford, Chamberlain, and Albers Company, receiving and shipping department, c. 1900
Courtesy of the Calvin M. McClung Historical Collection, Knox County Public Library

Front, image: Sanford, Chamberlain, and Albers Company letterhead
Courtesy of the Calvin M. McClung Historical Collection, Knox County Public Library



ALVIN C. YORK, 1918

Fentress County-native **Alvin Cullum York** began his military career as a conscientious objector. York later experienced a change of heart and went on to become one of the United States' most famous heroes of World War I. York killed several German soldiers and captured 132 more during the Meuse-Argonne offensive in 1918. News services from around the country wanted to photograph the sharp-shooting Tennessean when he returned home. York did not want to be famous, but he did allow a movie called *Sergeant York* to be made about his life for the purpose of promoting patriotism during World War II. Gary Cooper won an Academy Award for his portrayal of York in the film.

What Do You See?

York received the Medal of Honor and French *Croix de Guerre* medals after World War I. The State of Tennessee also presented him with a home and a large farm in Fentress County.

Think More About It!

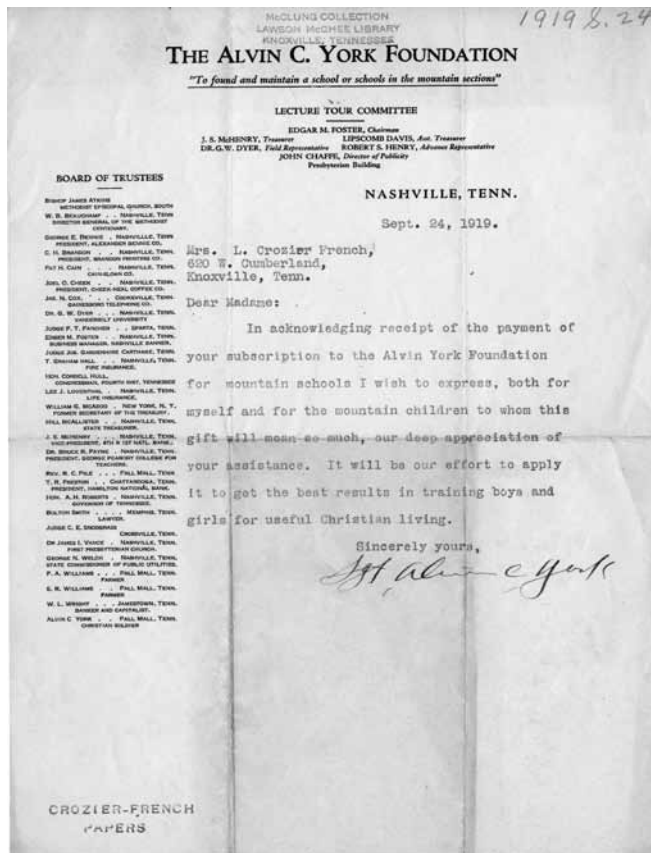
- 1.) How do you think Alvin York's hunting experience helped him in France?
- 2.) Why was York famous?
- 3.) Why would a movie about Alvin York inspire patriotism during World War II?

Journal It!

New York City honored York with a parade when he returned to the United States. Design a poster advertising the parade for York.

GLOSSARY

Alvin Cullum York—Congressional Medal of Honor winner and hero of World War I, Alvin C. York was born in Pall Mall, Tennessee (Fentress County). He was awarded the Medal of Honor for leading an attack on a German machine gun nest, taking 32 machine guns, killing several German soldiers and capturing 132 others.



Left: Letter from Alvin York to Lizzie Crozier French, September 24, 1919
Courtesy of the Calvin M. McClung Historical Collection, Knox County Public Library

Front, image: Sergeant Alvin C. York, c. 1918
Courtesy of the Library of Congress

Front, inset: World War I draft registration card for Alvin C. York, June 5, 1917
Courtesy of the National Archives and Records Administration



I had rather have had a share in the battle for woman suffrage than any other world event. It is the purest American patriotism.

—ABBY CRAWFORD MILTON TO
CARRIE CHAPMAN CATT, FEBRUARY 5, 1921

WOMAN'S SUFFRAGE PENNANT

A struggle that began at an 1848 woman's rights conference in Seneca Falls, New York, culminated 72 years later in Tennessee. Thirty-five states had ratified the Nineteenth Amendment giving women the right to vote by the summer of 1920. One more state was needed to make it law. After receiving a letter from his mother, **Harry T. Burn** of McMinn County broke the tie in the general assembly and cast the deciding vote in favor of ratification. Tennessee's ratification made the Nineteenth Amendment law.

What Do You See?

The felt pennant was designed to be attached to a stick and waved in parades and at rallies.

Think More About It!

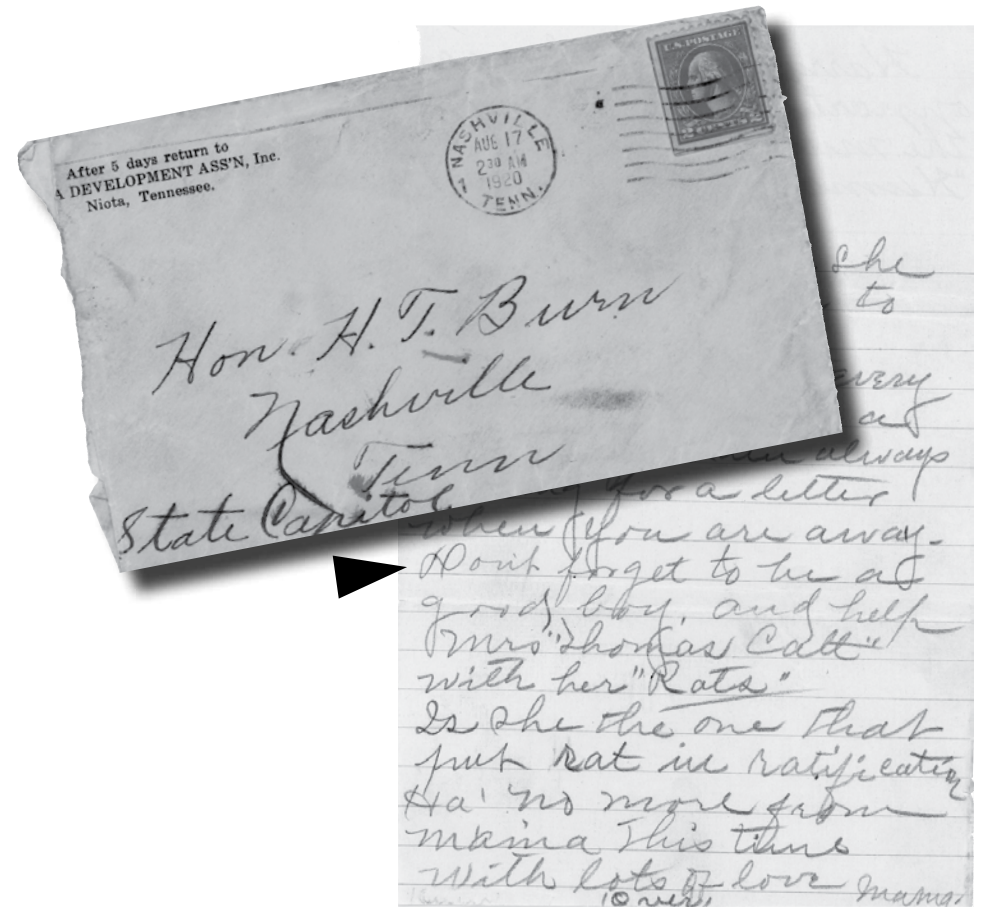
- 1.) Why do you think women were not granted voting rights in the Constitution?
- 2.) Why did the Founding Fathers make the Constitution difficult to amend?

Journal It!

Imagine that you are a reporter in the summer of 1920. You have just been told that the Tennessee has ratified the Nineteenth Amendment. Write a headline for a newspaper story on ratification.

GLOSSARY

Harry T. Burn—Harry T. Burn (*below*) originally sided with the anti-suffragists who opposed suffrage on many grounds, including state's rights. After receiving a letter from his mother in which she advised him, "Don't forget to be a good boy and help Mrs. 'Thomas Catt' with her 'Rats' (meaning ratification)," Burn changed his vote.



Above Excerpt from Febb Ensminger Burn's letter to her son, Harry T. Burn
Courtesy of the Calvin M. McClung Historical Collection, Knox County Public Library

Left: Harry T. Burn, 1919
Courtesy of the Calvin M. McClung Historical Collection, Knox County Public Library

Front, artifact: Suffrage pennant carried by Mary Trigg Jackson to Washington, D.C., 1915
Courtesy of the Calvin M. McClung Historical Collection, Knox County Public Library



ROY ACUFF'S FIDDLE, LATE 1800S

Union County-native and “King of Country Music” **Roy Acuff** was a collector of stringed instruments. The fiddle shown below is among the many he gathered from around the world. Acuff gained fame performing on WNOX and WROL in Knoxville before he began performing with the *Grand Ole Opry* in the late 1930s. He remained one of the *Opry's* leading stars until his death in 1992. He was inducted into the Country Music Hall of Fame in 1962. Acuff's popularity even led to a run for governor in 1948.

What Do You See?

What materials are used in the fiddle? While many things were made by machine after the Civil War, this fiddle was actually made by hand in the 1800s.

Think More About It!

- 1.) What is another name for a fiddle?
- 2.) Do you think Acuff is wearing his normal clothes or a costume? Why?
- 3.) What do we call the piece used to play the strings?

Journal It!

Pretend that you are conducting an interview with Roy Acuff. What questions would you ask him? You could focus on his life growing up in East Tennessee or his life as a famous country music star.



GLOSSARY

Roy Claxton Acuff—Roy Acuff, a Union County, Tennessee, native, who became a popular singer, fiddler, and promoter. Known as the “King of Country Music,” he joined the *Grand Ole Opry* in 1938 and remained one of the *Opry*’s key figures for nearly 40 years.

Many, many times back in Maynardville, when I was just a kid, Papa would take the old fiddle out from under the bed and play it up there in the hollow... Those tones in the wee hours of the morning just before daylight, before we went out to feed... built something in me that I have never forgotten.

—ROY ACUFF

Front, image: Roy Acuff
Courtesy of the Grand Ole Opry

Front, artifact: Roy Acuff’s fiddle, late 1800s
Loaned by the Grand Ole Opry, Roy Acuff Collection