

Scott County

Established 1849 County Seat: Huntsville

Early History

Scott County was formed from portions of Anderson, Campbell, Fentress and Morgan Counties. It was named after General Winfield Scott who had led American troops to victory in the Mexican War just two years before the county was established. The county seat of Huntsville is named in honor of an early hunter. The county held its first election in 1850. Because of the county's poor soil and rough terrain, most settlers lived on small, self-sufficient farms. The only industries were gristmills and whiskey distilleries. The poor soil was likely the main reason that few slaves were brought to the county. Prior to the Civil War, less than 2 percent of the county's population was African-American. (The figure includes both enslaved people and freemen living in the county.)

Civil War and Reconstruction

During the Civil War, residents of Scott County were strongly Unionist. On June 4, 1861, Senator Andrew Johnson gave a speech at the courthouse in Huntsville, the county seat, in which he condemned secession. The residents of Scott County voted against secession by the highest margin of any Tennessee county. However, their efforts could not stop Tennessee from seceding on June 8, 1861. The residents of Scott County responded by seceding from Tennessee and declaring themselves to be the "Free and Independent State of Scott." Tennessee did not recognize their independence. Scott County experienced guerilla warfare throughout the war years. In 1861, Confederate soldiers came to the home of sixteen-year-old Julia Marcum, looking for her father, who was a Union supporter. As Julia headed upstairs, Julia grabbed an ax and swung at the Confederate soldier following her. The soldier stabbed her with his bayonet, blinding her in one eye, and then shot her at close range. Her father, who had been hiding in the barn, came inside and killed the soldier. Julia's wounds healed well enough to allow her to teach school for a time after the war. However, the wounds had never fully healed; by the 1880's, Julia could no longer teach due to them. In 1884, by Special Act of Congress, Julia Marcum was granted a pension for active Civil War duty. She received \$35 dollars a month and became a member of the Grand Army of the Republic. The construction of the Cincinnati Southern Railroad in the 1880s allowed new industries to grow. Timber, coal, farm products, and livestock were shipped from Oneida to larger markets in Cincinnati or Chattanooga.

Twentieth Century

Mining, lumbering and other Scott County industries were seriously damaged during the Great Depression. A once prosperous rail line connecting Oneida and Jamestown fell into disuse and was dismantled in 1953. In 1974, the Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area was created from parts of Scott, Fentress, Pickett and Morgan Counties in Tennessee and McCreary County in Kentucky. The county has developed a tourism industry based around the park.

Howard Baker, Sr. and Howard Baker, Jr.

Howard Baker Sr. was born in Kentucky in 1902 and moved to Huntsville, TN as a child. After attending the University of Tennessee as an undergraduate and law student, he became a partner in his father's law firm in Huntsville. His son, Howard Baker, Jr. was born in Huntsville, TN in 1925. In 1928, Baker, Sr. was elected to the Tennessee General Assembly. In 1934, he was elected Attorney General for the 19th Judicial Circuit. In 1938 and 1940, he unsuccessfully ran for governor and U.S. Senate respectively. In 1948, he chaired the Tennessee delegation at the National Republican Convention.

Baker, Sr. was elected to Congress in 1950. Baker, while a conservative, also had ties to the African American community in Tennessee and refused to sign the "Southern Manifesto" that opposed the Supreme Court's ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education*. Howard Baker, Sr. passed away unexpectedly in 1964, and his wife Irene succeeded him in Congress.

Howard Baker, Jr. also received his law degree from the University of Tennessee and practiced law in Scott County. He lost a Senate race in 1964, but won in 1966, becoming the first popularly elected Republican Senator from Tennessee. In 1973, Baker, Jr. rose to national prominence when he served as vice-chairman of the Senate Special Committee investigating the Watergate scandal. Baker, who initially believed that Watergate was nothing more than a ploy by Democrats, famously asked the question, "What did the president know and when did he know it?" Baker became Senate minority leader in 1977, and after an unsuccessful bid for the presidency in 1980, became Senate majority leader. Baker left the Senate in 1988 to plan another run for the presidency, but instead became Ronald Reagan's Chief of Staff after Donald Regan was fired due to the Iran-Contra scandal. In his later career, Baker served as a diplomat. In 1991, Reagan sent Baker to meet with Mikhail Gorbachev prior to an important summit, and in 2001 George W. Bush appointed Baker ambassador to Japan. In 2003, the Howard H. Baker, Jr. Center for Public Policy was established at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville to highlight the importance of public service and to educate the public about government. Howard Baker, Jr. died in his hometown of Huntsville, Tennessee on June 26, 2014.