

# Blount County IN TENNESSEE

Founded July 11, 1795, nearly a year before Tennessee became a state, Blount County encompasses a rich heritage geographically and historically. Its 571 square miles range in altitude from 700 feet to

over 5,400 feet above sea level covering rich bottom farmland, rolling valley hills and rugged mountain peaks. Historically, its waves of settlement and economic development reflect the full sweep of history in the American south from pre-historic woodland habitation, through colonial expansion and the Civil War into the industrial age and the era of technology. To tour Blount County is to open a window on our nation's history.

## 1 THOMPSON BROWN HOUSE

a two-story, two-pen-with-passage log home, was built in the Moravian style early in the 19th century. It bears the names of two families who lived here successively during its early years. Now on the National Register, it was deeded to the County in 1975 and serves as headquarters for the Blount County Historic Trust.



*Thompson Brown House*

## 2 JOHN CRAIG'S FORT

was erected in 1792 on the hill now occupied by the Chamber of Commerce, to guard early European settlers against hostile Indians. A marble monument at the base of the hill behind the Chamber marks the spring that supplied the Fort and commemorates the post-revolutionary war settlement that became Maryville in 1795.



*Fort Craig monument*

## 3 THE BLOUNT COUNTY COURTHOUSE

has served as the seat of county government since 1907. Its grounds include several war memorials and, inside the Greek Revival building, a display of historic photographs as well as a statue of Polly Toole, a freed slave who saved the County documents when a Civil War skirmish destroyed the building in which they were located.

## Maryville .....

Named for Mary Grainger Blount, wife of Governor William Blount, Maryville was established the same day as Blount County as the seat of County government. Born in the late colonial period, it was on the edge of the early western frontier with its roots deep in the European tradition of Scotch Irish pioneers who settled in the area.

Blount County Historic Trust  
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# Blount County Historic Tour Guide

## Noteworthy Historic Landmarks



a Publication of the

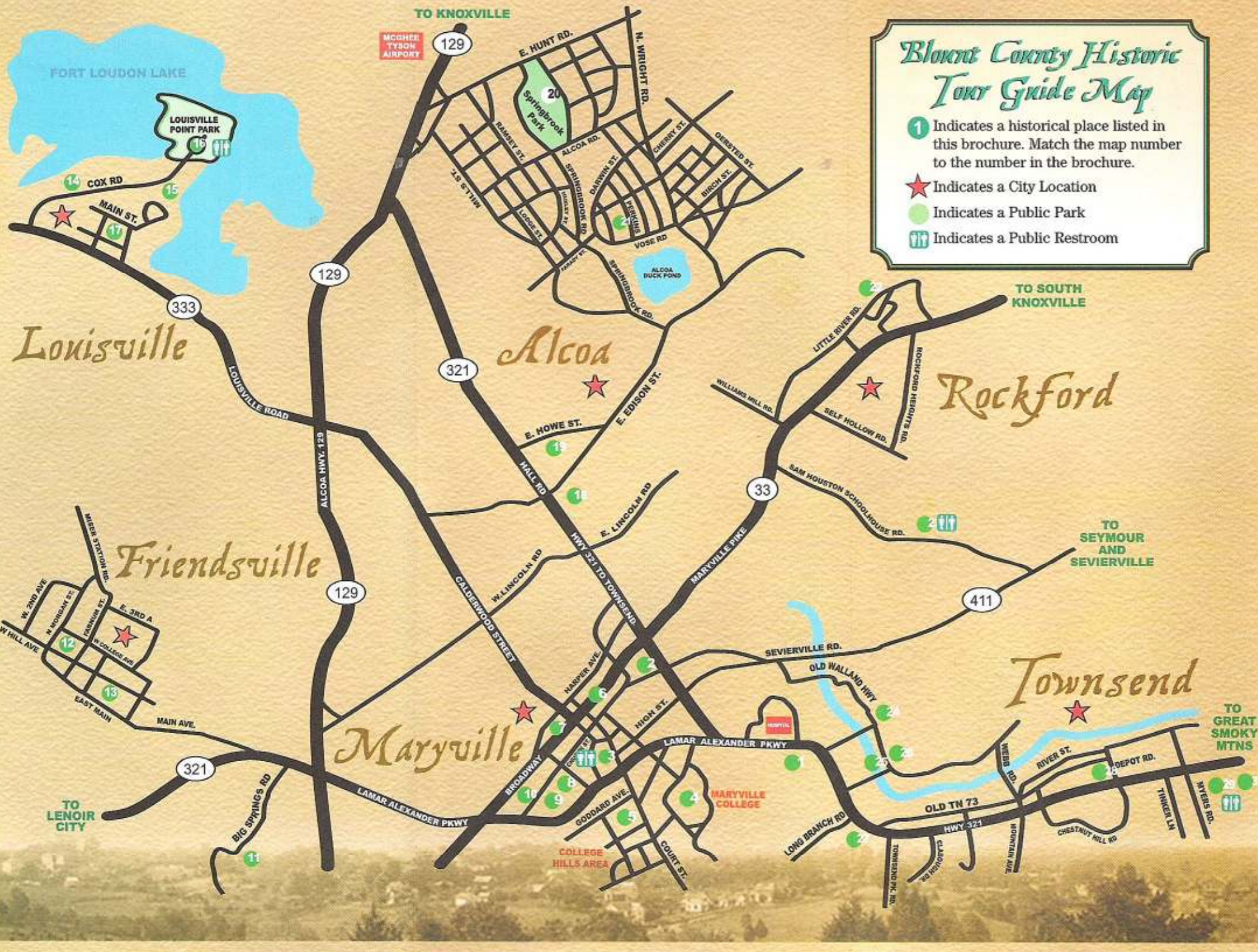


*Blount County Historic Trust*  
and the Smoky Mountain Convention  
and Visitor Bureau

[www.blountcountyhistorictrust.org](http://www.blountcountyhistorictrust.org)

# Blount County Historic Tour Guide Map

- ① Indicates a historical place listed in this brochure. Match the map number to the number in the brochure.
- ★ Indicates a City Location
- 🌳 Indicates a Public Park
- 🚻 Indicates a Public Restroom





Anderson Hall

#### 4 MARYVILLE COLLEGE

Founded in 1819 as the Southern and Western Theological Seminary, has occupied this site since 1869. MC awarded the first college degree to a woman in Tennessee, as well as the first

degree awarded to a Native American. Black students were admitted before the Civil War, a practice later prohibited for a time by Jim Crow legislation expressly invoked to halt the College policy. **Anderson Hall**, constructed immediately after the Civil War, is the oldest of the 13 campus buildings listed on the National Register.

#### 5 HISTORIC COLLEGE HILL NEIGHBORHOOD

The County's first historic district, contains nearly 100 homes listed on the National Register. It includes several houses built c. 1880 by Quakers who moved to the community from Indiana.

#### 6 DOWNTOWN MARYVILLE

is comprised of buildings dating from the 1860s to the 1930s. Broadway traces the ridgeline path of a major Cherokee trade route. Sam Houston enlisted in the military at the town well on Broadway in 1813.

On August 21, 1864, a Confederate cavalry unit headed by Maj. James H. Lewis entered town and sought to rout a Union detachment housed in the County's first brick courthouse at the corner of Broadway and Cusick. Lewis, who was drinking and not much in condition to command, decided to smoke the Federals out. The plan backfired and he burned down most of the town except the courthouse. Lewis finally called for a cannon and fired two or three rounds through the building before the Union forces surrendered.

#### 7 PALACE THEATRE

The Palace Theatre was built in 1868 as Pflanze's cabinet, furniture and casket shop. The building served several commercial uses and was restored in 1999 to its 30s look as the Palace Theatre. It presents live music and houses the popular Palace Cafe.



The Palace Theater

#### 8 NEW PROVIDENCE CEMETERY

New Providence Cemetery served as the town's primary burial ground from the 1790s until 1870. It is the final resting place of Revolutionary War veterans, Maryville's first black mayor, a member of the first Syrian family to reside in the nation and other notables. The cemetery occupies the original site of New Providence Presbyterian Church, founded in 1792 by Rev. Gideon Blackburn under the protection of Ft. Craig. It was later pastored by Dr. Isaac Anderson who founded Maryville College and was criticized by some for using "raisin water" rather than wine for communion.

#### 9 ST. ANDREW'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

The Quakers built what is now St.

(Louisville continued)

cultural community to a thriving river port during the first half of the 19th century. With the opening of steamboat service in 1828, the town became an exchange center for goods traveling as far away as New Orleans. The community once teemed with wholesale businesses, cooper shops, warehouses, blacksmith shops, gristmills, sawmills, iron works, a tannery, mercantile stores, wagon and saddletree shops, flour mills, inns and two saloons.

The Civil War, two postwar floods, and the coming of the railroad saw it lose its commercial advantage. The closing of Fort Loudon Dam in 1943 forced the relocation of families, houses, churches, and cemeteries. In 1974, recognition of the architectural and historical significance of remaining old Louisville led to its listing on the National Register as the Louisville Historic District.

#### 14 MEAD HAVEN/COX HOUSE

(3217 Cox Rd.) is a four-room home built by Samuel Saffell in the early 1800s. It was expanded and reshaped by Jared & Homer Mead in 1870 to its present Italianate architecture. The Cox family, descendants of Homer Mead, keeps the house in excellent condition. Next on the left, the **Tavern/Servants Quarters** served as a stagecoach inn on the road through Louisville c. 1815. After losing its upper story and one wing to a tornado, it became a servant's quarters or guest house for Mead Haven.

#### 15 JOHN L. HARPER HOUSE

(3264 Cox Rd) was built in the 1860s and acquired by Harper when he came to operate the store next door. **Harper Bros. General Store and Post Office** was an early merchandising center, bought by John and L. R. "Doc" Harper in 1886. A post office was added c. 1900 when Doc became postmaster, a post he held 33 years. It closed in 1937.

#### 16 LOUISVILLE POINT PARK

provides a vista of the waterway once traveled by steamboats, barges and boats. Prior to the Civil War, Blount Countians voted 1,766 to 414 against secession and became a Union enclave within the South. Slaves on steamboats from the Deep South found Louisville to be a safe harbor for slipping away to Friendsville and seeking shelter on their way north.

#### 17 LOUISVILLE'S MAIN STREET

offers a picture of the past. This quaint neighborhood contains a rich collection of homes, inns and outbuildings from Louisville's heyday. The **Methodist Parsonage** (across from Allison Craft) was moved here in 1943 to escape rising waters of Fort Loudon Lake. The **Heartsill House** or **Goddard's Landing** (212 Main St.) was built in 1825 by Abrams Heartsill, a carpenter who was mayor of Louisville in the early days. The **Wilkerson's House** (306 Main St.) was built c. 1820 by B.F. Wilkerson, a local iron forger. Wings on either side have altered the building's original



(Rockford continued)

bottom land have been home to many for over 3,000 years. When Maryville College founder Dr. Isaac Anderson died, his body was carried from the family farm in Rockford for interment in Maryville by way of a gunnel bridge over Little River. Still a working farm, the **Anderson Farm** entrance is next to the 1930s era garage formerly known as "**The Old Oaken Bucket**".

#### 22 ROCKFORD MANUFACTURING

a textile mill and the oldest continually operating manufacturing plant in Tennessee, stands on the banks of the Little River. The company bought land in 1852 and received its first permit to operate in 1854. Rope manufactured in Rockford has supplied America's military from Union troops commanded by General Burnside to service members in the field today.

#### 23 SAM HOUSTON SCHOOLHOUSE MUSEUM

built in 1794, is on the National Register of Historic Places and is a Tennessee Historic site. At the age of 18, Sam Houston taught school in what is now a museum displaying artifacts and teaching tools used by Houston and other area educators.



Sam Houston Schoolhouse

#### 24 THE CHILHOWEE INN

at the quiet Walland crossroads enroute to Townsend was operated by the Schlosser Tannery in the early 1900s as part of a once thriving commercial center. It enjoyed a reputation for fine foods well after the tannery burned in 1931.

#### 27 CAMPGROUND METHODIST CHURCH

where Little River cuts through Chilhowee Mountain, hosted camp meetings prior to the construction of the original church in 1831 and served as a mustering ground for local troops as well as a location for the collection of taxes. During the Civil War, Confederate troops were ordered to disarm local Union militia gathered there beneath the "Stars and Stripes". Fore-warned not to show disrespect for the Union flag, the Confederate cavalry officer ordered his men to circle the pole and salute the flag under which they were born. As they proceeded up the valley the many Union sympathizers living in the area were kind to the Confederate force that day. Years later the Confederate officer learned his men had been thoroughly surrounded by hidden, well-armed Union sympathizers and would probably have been annihilated had they not paid due respect to the flag.

## Townsend .....

While Townsend bears the name of Colonel W. B. Townsend, who oversaw a thriving logging enterprise here during the early 1900's, it boasts a long history. Recent archeological finds in the bottom land along the river give clear indication of these

Andrew's Episcopal Church in 1871 as the Friends Meeting House and it was acquired in 1947 by the congregation of St. Andrew's. A National Register site, alterations include transepts and a new parish house added in 2005.



St. Andrew's Episcopal Church

**10 ST. PAUL A.M.E. ZION CHURCH** H

was organized shortly after freedom by Civil War veterans Thomas Lillard and Oscar Wilson. The congregation first met on the site in a school and subsequent buildings were constructed in 1886, 1922 and 1944.

**11 OLD STONE HOUSE**

on Big Spring Road en route to Friendsville was built in the late 18th century by Samuel Frazier and is said to be the oldest home in the County. Never moved from this site, it has been in three states and a territory - North Carolina, the Lost State of Franklin, Territory South of the River Ohio and the State of Tennessee. A mansion in its day, it was built of limestone quarried from a hill at the rear of the house and has recently been restored and expanded by the present owners.

*Friendsville* .....

Settled in the late 1700s, the town of Friendsville was founded by Quakers. The first marble quarries opened in 1883 and made Friendsville a thriving business community. Marble from Friendsville can be found in America's finest landmarks including Grand Central Station, the Library of Congress, the National Archive, San Francisco City Hall and the National Gallery of Art.

**12 FRIENDSVILLE VILLAGE** H

The Friendsville Village center included a train depot, grist mill, cotton gin, boarding house and tan yard. The structures remaining in the present day housed the **Peoples Bank** (for many years the only bank in the County outside of Maryville), a doctor's office and pharmacy, **Friendsville Academy** and the **Junior Order of Masons**.



Peoples Bank of Friendsville

**13 FRIENDS MEETING HOUSE**

The present day Friends Meeting House was dedicated in 1878 and occupies the site of the original Meeting House. During the Civil War, Friendsville was a stop on the "Underground Railroad." Union sympathizers as well as runaway slaves were initially hidden in local homes and later in caves, one of which is located on private land near the Meeting House. Among gravesites of local residents is the final resting place of William Forrester, a distinguished Quaker, orator and the father of Britain's Minister of Education. He died while in this country pleading the abolitionist cause with President Franklin Pierce and the southern governors.

*Louisville* .....

Named for Prince Louis Phillippe of France after his April 29, 1797 visit to the County, Louisville changed from a quiet agri-

Federal style to a more Victorian appearance.

*Alcoa* .....

The Aluminum Company of America (ALCOA) began Blount County operations in 1910 at Calderwood, base camp for construction of three hydroelectric dams. In 1913 it opened its first plant in what was known as North Maryville, a stop on the Southern Railroad route to Knoxville, and became a city in 1919. Employees came from Mexico, the urban centers of the north and the plantations of the Deep South as well as the surrounding community. As the first fully planned city in Tennessee, Alcoa provided housing, government buildings, retail stores and recreational facilities owned by the Company.



**18 ALCOA SOUTH PLANT OFFICE**

The original ALCOA South Plant Office, built in the late 1930's, is a good example of an Art Deco building, with particularly fine etched stonework seen in the carved marble surrounding the aluminum framed doors as well as in the patterned brickwork.

**19 CHARLES M. HALL HIGH SCHOOL** H



Charles M. Hall High School served the Black community in Alcoa for many years. Its current renovation as the Alcoa City Center retains many fine features of the original building, especially its handsomely tiled corridors. It may be visited currently, and the entrance area occasionally houses displays featuring the history of the building and the City of Alcoa.

**20 SPRINGBROOK PARK**

reflects the value placed on parkland and recreational facilities by the City founders. Bordering the beautiful swimming pool is the original unique stonework and a sculptured fish-head fountain created by the first city manager. Built in the early 1930s, the pool was among the finest in the South.

**21 PERKINS STREET**

and the surrounding neighborhood brim with original Company homes built for employees. Neighborhoods were organized according to race and employment status with the company. They offered a range of exterior designs reflecting the Craftsman style of the time and many still boast their original slate roofs.

*Rockford* .....

The original name, "Rocky Ford," came from the rocky river bottom where the Federal Road to Knoxville forded Little River. A transportation route always, its fields and fertile



Anderson Farm

land was used for the first great migration of the Cherokee villages constructed in the late 1600's as well as a seasonal habitation for Woodland Indians 4,000 to 9,000 years ago. Revolutionary War veterans granted land after the war were later followed by a second wave of settlement that eventually swelled with workers for the logging industry and tourists brought in by train.

**25 DARK ISLAND SWINGING BRIDGE**

Dark Island Swinging Bridge is one of 20 swinging bridges that provided cottage dwellers access to the railroad and lumber mills across the river. This bridge was the most widely used by lumbermen and railroad workers during the early 1900's.

**26 KINZEL SPRINGS**

is the site of a vacation home built in 1894 by Edward John Kinzel, the youngest son of a German-born immigrant who came to this country in the early 1800's. In 1907, he donated property across Little River to the International Sunshine Society for the construction of the Sunshine Hotel and Cottages where young women, employed by the textile industry in Knoxville, could enjoy a well-chaperoned vacation from the mills. In 1914, Kinzel expanded his vacation home area into Kinzel Springs Hotel with 28 rooms and 10 cottages. He named the four mountains around the site, still known as **Sunshine**, for the Apostles - Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

**28 LITTLE RIVER RAILROAD MUSEUM** H

provides displays and interpretive exhibits including one-of-a-kind railroad and logging machinery as well as the restored Shay Engine No. 2147, the last Shay that ran for Little River Railroad Company. The railroad company was a subsidiary of Little River Lumber Company that, between 1901 and 1939, logged some 77,000 acres that are now in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park.



Little River Railroad

**29 THE TOWNSEND VISITORS CENTER** H

provides displays, demonstrations and resource materials relating to the life and culture of Blount County, Cades Cove and the Great Smoky Mountains.

One of the major natural attractions in the area is **Tuckaleechee Caverns**, where Cherokee Indians once roamed. Beneath Dry Valley, which drains into an underground stream that flows through the caverns, Tuckaleechee has the largest caverns room open to the public east of the Mississippi.

**30 GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAIN HERITAGE CENTER**

promotes the history and culture of those who once lived in what is now the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. It includes permanent galleries of Native American and pioneer life as well as temporary exhibits, genealogical resources, classrooms, performance areas and outdoor exhibits.



Heritage Center

H Indicates public restrooms open during regular business hours.  
H Indicates the location of a Tennessee State Historical Marker.