

STATE & BEALE

Celebrating Tennessee from the Smokies to the Mississippi

Issue 4

Summer 2025

Summer Forever

Great Lakes

Three amazing places to swim, boat, ski, fish, or just escape.

East Nash Grass

A bluegrass band born in a triple-wide trailer hits the road with new music

Dolly

A new Country Music Hall of Fame exhibit examines the life of the "Seeker"

Credit: Toby Sells



A new exhibit at The Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum explores the life of Tennessee icon, Dolly Parton.

Credit: Wes McFee on Unsplash

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Letter From the Editor

Tennessee is the most beautiful state in the union. I know this because I just saw most of it...on I-40 from my windshield.

My family travelled to North Carolina for a wedding recently. Hurricane Helene clean-up found portions of 40 closed or down to one lane. So, we headed north at Knoxville to Johnson City and down into the Carolina mountains from there.

I wanted to make a million stops to visit great places I've read about online, or to grab a fun lunch to snap for Instagram, or to — at least — drink a Dr. Enuf. But the road from Memphis to Little Switzerland is long and Nintendo Switch batteries have their limits.

So, I settled for admiring the state's changing landscape from the driver's seat. The flat Delta began to give way to rolling hills. Then, up the Cumberland Plateau and further up and up as the Appalachian foothills become the Smoky Mountains. Just amazing, even in Knoxville's constant standstill traffic.

But Tennessee is long, too. And driving through it so quickly made me realize just how many stories are still ahead of us here at *State & Beale*. I can't wait. One last great thing about our trip, I got that Dr. Enuf after all.

If you have a story idea, please email me at toby@stateandbeale.com.

— Toby Sells



Credit: State of Tennessee

We had time to take in some real, Tennessee beauty — Dale Hollow Lake (above) in Fentress County.

Also, do you think I should get this exact Dr. Enuf tattoo that I found on the company's Facebook page? (Credit: Dr. Enuf from Facebook)



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The true size of The Lost Sea has never been measured. (Photo: State of Tennessee)

Tenn-e-Secrets:

The Lost Sea is a living mystery.

Somewhere beneath the quiet hills of Sweetwater, a vast underground lake stretches into darkness, its edges unmapped, its depths unknown.

Known simply as The Lost Sea, this hidden body of water has fascinated explorers, scientists, and curious travelers for more than a century.

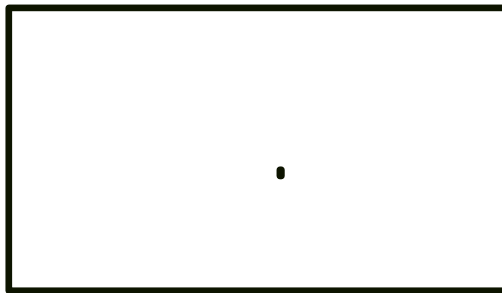
In 1905, a 13-year-old boy named Ben Sands discovered the lake when he crawled through a narrow tunnel approximately 300 feet underground and fell into a cavern half-filled with water. He tossed mudballs into the darkness to gauge the cavern's size. But instead of hearing those clods hit walls, Sands only heard splashes. His discovery was later confirmed by adults during a drought that lowered water levels.

The Lost Sea is in Craighead Caverns, a limestone cave system used by the Cherokee as a council chamber. This is evidenced by artifacts like pottery, arrowheads, and jewelry found in the "Council Room" nearly a mile from the entrance.

In the Civil War, Confederate forces mined saltpeter in the caves for gunpowder. In 1915, locals decided to open the cave to the public. A dance floor was installed in one of the large

upper rooms. Cockfights were held. During Prohibition, moonshiners used the cave for illicit distilling.

In 1939, the fossilized remains of a giant Pleistocene jaguar were uncovered inside the caverns. Some of those bones now reside in New York's American Museum of Natural History,



while tracks and casts remain at the Lost Sea visitor center.

The lake's visible surface spans roughly 800 feet long and 220 feet wide (roughly 4.5 acres). Divers have mapped about 13 acres of submerged chambers but still have not charted the cavern fully. That is, no end to the lake has been found. One diver ventured into the water-filled rooms with a sonar device. He took soundings in all directions and

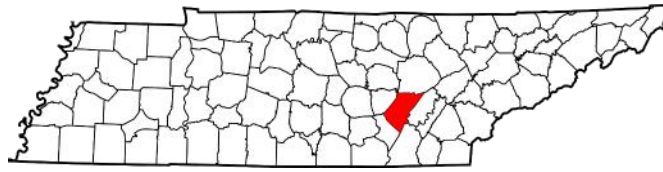
found nothing but more water.

Today the Lost Sea holds the distinction of being the largest underground lake in the United States and the second-largest, non-glacial underground lake in the world, after Dragon's Breath Cave in Namibia. Visitors can descend about 140 feet into Craighead Caverns via sloped walkways that pass through impressive limestone formations, including rare anthodites, also known as "cave flowers," found in only a few places worldwide.

The guided tour includes a glass-bottom boat ride across the underground lake, where guests often spot rainbow trout. (Though, no fishing is allowed.) Tours typically run year-round (closed Thanksgiving and Christmas), lasting about 75 minutes over a three-quarter-mile route.

The Lost Sea isn't just a tourist attraction, it's a living mystery. Its discovery by a curious kid in 1905, its deep ties to Native American history, war, moonshine, paleontology, and subterranean geology make it a layered story. And with vast swaths still uncharted beneath its surface, it remains one of America's most compelling underground enigmas.

County Profile: Bledsoe



The “Gateway to Fall Creek Falls” charms with natural beauty and small town vibes.



Easy hikes around Bledsoe County offer amazing views of the Sequatchie Valley. Beautiful farms dot the landscape of the county. Visit Oren Wooden’s Apple House for fresh fruit and eat at Oren’s Orchard Cafe for a hearty meat-and-three meal. (Photos: Visit Pikeville)

Bledsoe County

Grand Division: East Tennessee

County Seat: Pikeville

Population (2023 estimate): 15,060

One of Tennessee’s greatest jewels lies partly in Bledsoe County: Fall Creek Falls State Park.

While the falls themselves lie in neighboring Van Buren County, the proximity to them is enough for the Pikeville tourism folks to dub the town “The Gateway to Fall Creek Falls State Park.” As majestic as those falls are, the gateway matches in natural beauty and small-town charm. Bledsoe County was founded in 1807, during the second term of U.S. President Thomas Jefferson.

Nature divided it into three distinct regions, according to the Tennessee Encyclopedia – the Sequatchie Valley, Cumberland Plateau, and the Walden Ridge. Named for Revolutionary War veteran Anthony Bledsoe, settlers were

drawn to area on the promise of a fertile valley.

In 1816, Pikeville was established as the county seat. Its original 30 acres were sold to its commissioners at the time for \$110.25. The town served as a supply and trade center for locals and as a stop along a stage route from Knoxville to Huntsville, Alabama.

Catch up on even more history in a geocaching tour (like a scavenger hunt with clues on your phone) on the Bledsoe GeoTour. Through its 41 locations, you’ll learn why the county has



been called “Bloody Bledsoe,” fueled by years of national strife, moonshine wars, and family feuds. The tour will also take you to outdoor adventure, great food, charming communities, and spectacular views.

In Pikeville, a half-mile trail follows the same path the first European settlers of Tennessee and Native Americans walked to an overlook at Devilstep Hollow Cave. The Falcon Warrior Trail begins at the birthplace of the Sequatchie River and meanders gently to the cave. Devilstep Hollow Cave was an important ceremonial site and is home to some of the most archaeologically significant pictographs, petroglyphs, and mud glyphs in the southeastern United States.

If adventuring has you famished, head back to Pikeville proper. Stop at Scottie’s Restaurant for a diner feel and fan-favorite burgers and fries. Stop for pint at Bankwalker Brewing Co. Kids can find their favorites at Pizza King and Embers Ice Cream.

Don’t miss Pikeville this August. It lies on the route of The 127 Yard Sale, known as the world’s longest yard sale. It stretches across six states and covers a total of 690 miles of shopping fun. It’s the weekend of August 7th.





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— author Willy Bearden

"This book is a treasure."
— author Frank Murtaugh

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Classic Cocktail: Lynchburg Lemonade



Does anything beat lemonade in Tennessee summertime? Yes.

Lynchburg Lemonade. It's a Tennessee classic cocktail recipe. And it's simple as pie to make. Simpler than pie to make, actually. Much more simple. Cold. Refreshing. Sweet. And Jack just can't be beat.

Easily whip one up for yourself. Or, make a batch for your next cookout.

Here's the recipe straight from the source: the Jack Daniel Distillery in Lynchburg. Enjoy.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 oz Jack Daniel's Old No. 7
- 1 oz Triple sec
- 0.75 oz Lemon juice
- 0.25 oz Simple syrup
- 4 oz lemon-lime soda (like Sprite)

INSTRUCTIONS

- 3/4 fill a highball glass with cubed ice
- Pour Old No. 7 over ice
- Add remaining ingredients and stir
- Garnish with lemon wedge

Bluegrass Delinquents

— The Bluegrass Situation

State & Beale
Magazine



Photo: Scott Simontacchi,
Courtesy of East Nash Grass

East Nash Grass

Nashville's white-hot, bluegrass supergroup keeps cooking with a new album and tour.

East Nash Grass walks the line between bluegrass reverence to keep the music honest and a general irreverence to keep their live shows spicy, fun, and engaging.

The band's bona fides makes plain its bluegrass pedigree. East Nash Grass members have played with icons like Rhonda Vincent, Tim O'Brien, and Dan Tyminski. The band itself won the Best New Artist award from the Nashville-

James Kee: We're definitely traditional bluegrass. But I think we have maybe a newer edge to what we do. Still, we're within the confines of whatever you would call bluegrass. But we're all lifelong bluegrassers trying to pay homage to the old stuff and, then, also create something new. It's a little different.

SB: I saw on your website that "The Bluegrass Situation" called y'all "bluegrass delinquents." Does that sound

"I've been waiting and wondering, 'where did the hard-hitting bluegrass go'? Enter East Nash Grass. No one is doing bluegrass better than them. Try and prove me wrong." — Pokey LaFarge

based International Bluegrass Music Association last year.

"People listen to music different ways and may take it more serious than others," East Nash Grass guitarist James Kee said. "We just kind of started joking around at that [in our live shows] some over the years. It kind of became this persona of ours for having some things that are maybe a little bit bizarro, you know?"

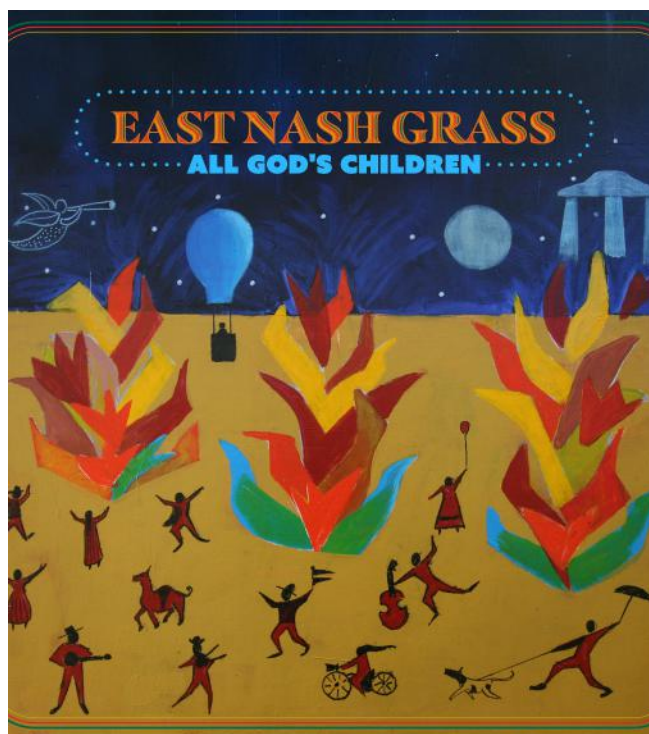
In our recent conversation for the *State & Beale* podcast, Kee never elaborated on "bizarro" or gave examples of these jokes in their live shows, breaking only once to admit there is a "grass element" in the show. (Can't wait to find out what that is.)

But crowds across the country are about to find out. The band hit the road earlier this summer for a nationwide tour to support its new album, "All God's Children," due out on August 22.

State & Beale: If someone has never heard the band before, could you describe your sound?

about right?

JK: Sure. I love that. We have a little bit of irreverence sometimes mixed in with the respect for the music.





SB: I've been listening to "Gamblers and Railroaders," is that the name of the song?

JK: "Railroading and Gambling."

SB: Yeah, that's a barn burner, man.

JK: That's classic Tennessee native Uncle Dave Macon.

SB:
The old
Dixie
Dewdrop.
I went to
[Middle

Tennessee State University] and Uncle Dave's from down there. So, when I was there, we'd go to Uncle Dave Macon Days. I saw Old Crow Medicine Show play in the parking lot of Uncle Dave days one time, to tell you how long ago I was at

MTSU. [Laughs.]

JK: I might've been there because I saw them as well down there. I went to that when I was kid. I'm from Chattanooga. So, kind of close.

SB: Y'all won the [Nashville-based International Bluegrass Music Association – IBMA]

other band members are highly awarded and have been for quite some time. I think to have respect of your peers is certainly really wonderful and that's what that one feels like to us.

SB: East Nash Grass won new group but your members have been around

forever playing with bluegrass icons like Rhonda Vincent, Tim O'Brien, and

Dan Tyminski. It's kind of a super group.

JK: Everybody's got a lot of experience in it. We've been at it our whole lives. It has sort of given us proving grounds that we've been lifelong bluegrassers. It's a lot of fun.

Dee's turned into a little, unlikely hotspot for music. It's really just a triple-wide trailer over in Madison.

award for New Artist of the Year last year. What was that like?

JK: You know, I've never put a whole lot of stock in awards. But that being said, it was quite an honor to get it. I had never been eligible for that myself. Some of my

One of the things that's really, that's really entertaining in this band is that everybody gets to make their own music. Whereas we've all been part of a lot of different groups as maybe a side man – and there's nothing wrong with that, of course. But there's something special about being able to make your own music and say whatever you want to musically or, in our case, even on stage, to be able to say whatever comes to mind.

SB: How did the group come together?

JK: We started playing at a little bar here in Nashville called [Dee's Country Cocktail Lounge] on Monday nights. Dee's turned into a little, unlikely hotspot for music. It's really just a triple-wide trailer over in

Madison, which is kind of East Nashville.

Dee's kind of became a home for a lot of different folks like us and we started playing there every Monday from 6 p.m. -8p.m. We realized that was a really great musicians' hang. Musicians are off on Mondays. A lot of times because the majority of us are working the weekends. So, it was great to be able to have this little community gathering that it really turned into something.

I didn't forecast that initially when we started playing there in 2017. But that's kind of what it turned into and we recognized that pretty quick. We realized within a few months of doing it. We were getting to meet some folks that we

really wouldn't get to meet. We were just very consistently there every Monday for almost seven years, there still doing bluegrass each and every Monday.

SB: You have a new album coming out in August. Tell me about it.

JK: The album was recorded last year. It's our first new music out in two years.

There's a lot of new music on (the new record). Some stuff that we've written. Some other stuff that's written friends of ours.

Then, there's of course a couple of bluegrass classics and some traditional music classics in there that, maybe, not a whole lot of folks have heard.





Serendipity

A West Tennessee gem lies off the beaten path. But it's a surefire cure for the summertime blues.



The Serendipity Bar & Grill elevates the traditional camping and RV experience with a great menu (get the cheese curds) and a full bar.

By Toby Sells

Serendipity has become a summertime staple in our family.

The incredible RV resort and campground put unlikely Brownsville on our mental map of cherished places. Without Serendipity, that wonderful, West Tennessee town would likely have just remained a name on an I-40 exit sign.

The sprawling Serendipity campus lies on what once was the Brownsville Country Club. Word around the campfire is that Serendipity's original owners bought it for a song on the courthouse steps, cleaned it up (inducing decades of

nicotine from the restaurant), re-purposed the whole thing for visitors, and sold it for sacks of cash. Again, though, that's word around the campfire.

Signs of the old country club abound. The restaurant is still there just below the pool. A massive pond just beyond the restaurant patio features an enormous jet fountain in the center. The 18-hole golf course was re-made into a signature long-par disc golf course. The old clubhouse and locker rooms are still there, serving as a camp store and showers for guests. Narrow ribbons of golf cart paths vein the areas around the clubhouse. A big, wooden sign still maps the old golf course.

But beyond that, Serendipity is its own place. Rows of modern RVs line long stretches of former

fairways. Four A-frame cabins overlook what was surely a frustrating water hazard. Tents stretch on the pond bank, below a grove of trees. Scattered here and there, yurts built on wooden platforms promise a glamping experience with soft beds, air conditioning, and patio space.

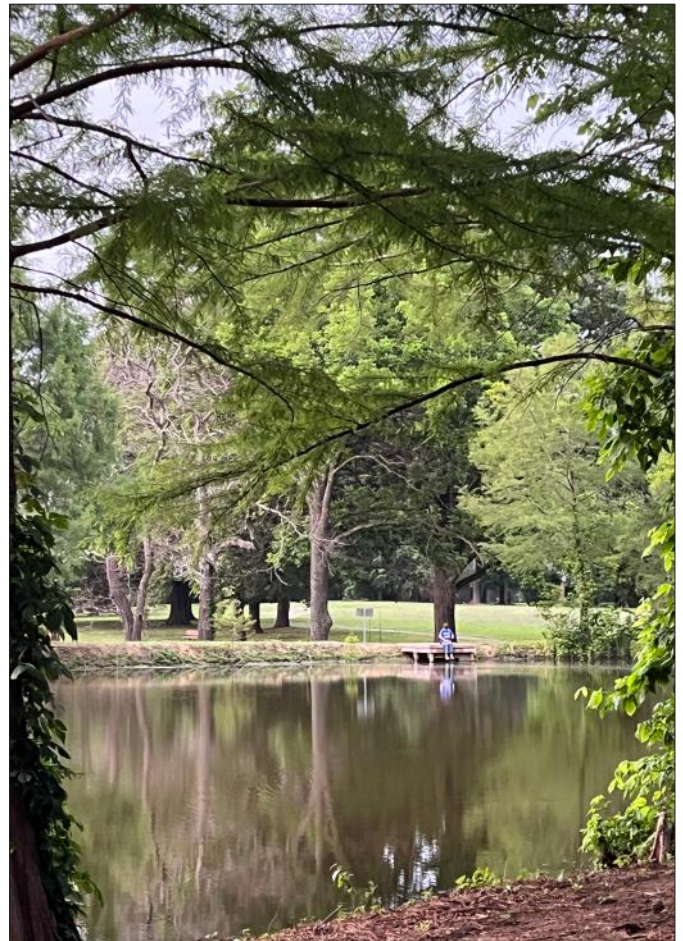
Maybe the centerpiece to Serendipity's new identity is its massive water park. The man-dug lake is an enormous oval. Its size reminds me of those high school football fields with the oval tracks around them. Maybe that was the just the heat of the day clouding my judgment. But that's how I remember it. It's huge.

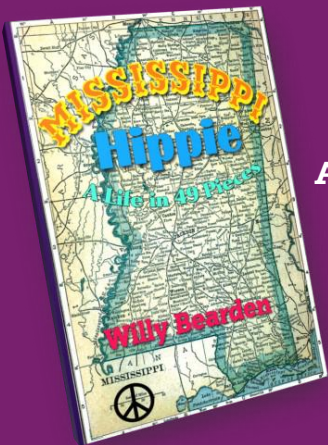
And clean. It's lake clean, not pond scummy and has a thick, plastic tarp covering the bottom. Soft sand surround the entire thing. Floating on this massive water body is an enormous, green-and-yellow, inflatable obstacle course. It's sturdy enough to walk and jump on and wobbly enough for a day of focused challenges and hilarious falls into the water. It's all fun enough that I have to drag our children from it to re-apply sunscreen or to even eat a lunch they love.

Over the years, I've watched Serendipity add nice bathrooms to the water park area. Then, they added a covered pavilion with shade and picnic tables. Most recently, too, they added a freshwater shower for an after-swim rinse or to just knock the sand from your sandals.

Over the years of going to Serendipity, we've become familiar with Brownsville (especially its Walmart). We've never eaten at the state-famous Helen's Bar-B-Que, preferring the Raisin' Cain BBQ close to Serendipity. We've also had good experiences at El Ranchito, closer to the Brownsville town square. It claims to be home of the "wet burrito." I tried it one and it's exactly as good (and kind of weird) as it sounds. One thing still on our Brownsville to-do list is a visit to the huge art installation called "The Mindfield." It looks amazing and I'm sure my confusion would wane once I saw it up close.

Word around the campfire is that new owners run Serendipity now. I wish them well. Not only for the future of this off-the-beaten-path Tennessee treasure, but so our family can continue to make treasured memories there for years to come.






MISSISSIPPI Hippie

A Life in 49 Pieces
by
Willy Bearden


Laugh out-loud funny and heartbreakingly poignant.
-Pam Parker Branham

The prose in this memoir is transcendent, giving respect to his fellow humans as only an erudite southern gentleman can. Hats off Mr. Bearden, I know this one is here for the ages.
-Keith Sykes

That hopeful, clear-eyed, and even bawdy approach to the world rings out from every page of this book, and it's still heard in Bearden's current work as a historian, filmmaker, and raconteur.
-Alex Greene, Memphis Flyer



Available where fine books are sold, or:
willybearden.com



GREAT LAKES

Photos: State of Tennessee

State & Beale
Magazine

Old Hickory Lake

Want to get away from it all but be near the thick of things? Head to Old Hickory Lake. Hit the lake and you'll feel worlds away from the hustle and noise of Downtown Nashville. But you'll be only about 15 miles away.

If you do go to Old Hickory, you'll be in good company. The lake has been home to Johnny Cash, Taylor Swift, and Kelly

Clarkson. Tennessee comedian Nate Bargatze taught millions the Old Hickory (his hometown) ZIP code ($37138 = 37+1=38$) in a massive Amazon comedy special.

Old Hickory has plenty to do outdoors—swimming, boating, and fishing. A good hub for all of it is the Blue Turtle Bay Marina for boat rentals, fuel, and a marina shop. Stay for lunch at the marina at Sam's Sports Grill for incredible wings, pizza, burgers, and more.

Kentucky Lake

You know that little notch on Tennessee's northern spine? That's Kentucky Lake.

In 1944, the TVA dammed the Tennessee River in Kentucky to form the massive lake that stretches nearly 160,300 acres. Since then, Kentucky Lake has been a go-to-getaway for Tennesseans and Kentuckians alike (to the tune of nearly 17 million visits each year).

The Tennessee side is packed with

marinas, resorts, and more. A quick VRBO search turned up dozens of beautiful cabins and cottages, many of them with their own boat docks.

But for a one-stop solution, check in to the beautiful Paris Landing State Park. It's on the widest spot on the river, making it perfect for any and all water sports. There, the new 91-room Lodge at Paris Landing provides hotel, resort-style vacation rentals. The Lodge includes a restaurant, an outdoor pool, and 18-hole, par-72 golf course.



South Holston Lake

It's hard to describe South Holston Lake as anything but picture perfect. Its clear, placid waters are almost completely surrounded by the stunning, untouched mountains of the Cherokee National Forest. There, hundreds of mile of lake shoreline await anglers, boaters, skiers, nature lovers, friends, and families.

The Tennessee Valley Authority reservoir cover 7,580 acres with wide-open spaces for cruising in the fast lane and plenty of private coves for peaceful floats.

The lake is an easy day trip from Knoxville or Bristol. Head to the Laurel Marina to rent a boat, shop at the Ship Store, or catch a summer concert. Bristol's Delta Blues BBQ just opened at the marina this summer to ensure blues and Memphis-style barbecue rocks the dock all summer long.

Seeking The Seeker



A new exhibit at The Country Music Hall of Fame explores the life of Dolly Parton.



Photo: Country Music Hall of Fame from Facebook

Story by Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum.

The Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum explores the life and career of a Tennessee icon in a new exhibit, Dolly Parton: Journey of a Seeker.

The exhibit focuses on major turning points in Parton's more than 60-year career where she overcame obstacles and ignored naysayers to become one of the most beloved and widely

butterflies used by Parton at performances in 1992 and on her "Halos & Horns Tour" in 2002.

"After accomplishing enough for three lifetimes, Dolly Parton continues to astound and amaze us with her

"Being inducted into the Country Music Hall of Fame was one of the greatest moments of my life."
— Dolly Parton

recognized celebrities across the world. The exhibit is open until September.

"Being inducted into the Country Music Hall of Fame was one of the greatest moments of my life, and being able to have a personal exhibit for the fans that put me there is a very big deal to me," Parton said. "This seeker is very proud and honored, and I hope you enjoy my journey. I will always love you."

Access to the exhibit is included with museum admission. However, a limited number of timed tickets for the exhibit are available each day. Advance reservations are encouraged and ticket availability can be found on the museum's website.

The exhibit includes clothing, awards, handwritten lyrics, instruments, photographs, exclusive interview footage, and more. Examples of items to be displayed include:

- Parton's first draft of handwritten lyrics to her classic song and No. 1 country hit "Jolene."
- A custom-built Gibson five-string banjo with rhinestones and

boundless talent, her vivacious wit, and her tremendous generosity," said Kyle Young, CEO of the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum. "Like all great artists, Parton has

demonstrated consistently that she can transform adversity and setbacks into works of stunning beauty and insight into the human condition."

Dolly Parton was born the fourth of 12 children 15 miles east of Sevierville. The remote cabin had no plumbing, electricity, or access roads. Embracing her father's

enterprising work ethic and her mother's love of traditional Scots-Irish folk music, she pursued her dream of becoming an entertainer despite limited opportunities. By

age 10, Parton performed regularly on radio and television shows in Knoxville, recorded teen-pop tunes in Louisiana at age 13, and signed with Mercury Records in Nashville at age 16 — moving there to pursue her career the day after finishing high school.

The Dolly exhibit at the Hall of Fame explores the many times





persistent triumphed over critics and norms in the pursuit of her dreams. Some of these include:

- At age 13, Parton made her Grand Ole Opry debut, but only after she and her uncle Bill Owens persuaded singer Jimmy C. Newman to give her one of his time slots after an Opry manager refused to schedule her, citing her youth.

- After establishing herself in Nashville, Parton resisted advice from record executives who warned that her flamboyant fashions would overshadow her talent – determined to present herself as boldly as she dreamed as a young girl with a vivid imagination and a desire to stand apart and experience life beyond the Smoky Mountains.

- When Parton collaborated with L.A. pop producer Gary Klein for her 1977 album "Here You Come Again," many in the Nashville community accused her of abandoning country music in search of pop success.

The album became Parton's first million-selling album, earning her first Grammy Award. It also led to her film debut as Doralee Rhodes, in Jane Fonda's film "9 to 5," after Fonda heard Parton's hit "Two Doors Down" from the album.



- To encourage an interest in reading in children five and under in Sevier County and to honor her father, who never learned to read but insisted on his children becoming readers, she founded

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library in 1995 – shocking skeptics when 1,700 books reached mailboxes from the first month on. She launched the Dollywood Foundation in 1998, with the Imagination Library as its flagship program, which is now active in all 50 states, as well as in Australia, Canada, Ireland, and the United Kingdom.

- A singer, songwriter, movie and television actor, author, businesswoman and philanthropist, Parton is a member of the Country Music Hall of Fame, Nashville Songwriters Hall of Fame, Rock & Roll Hall of Fame and Songwriters Hall of Fame, and has received the National Medal of Arts and the Kennedy Center Honors.



ESCAPE TO THE LAKESIDE OF THE SMOKIES

Top 10
Things to do in
Jefferson County
this summer.

Story by Visit
Jefferson County TN

Nestled between the Smoky Mountains and two stunning lakes, Douglas and Cherokee, lies Jefferson County, Tennessee, a charming and lesser-known destination that offers the perfect blend of natural beauty, small-town charm, and outdoor adventure.

Known as the Lakeside of the Smokies, this scenic area is just a short drive from popular spots like Gatlinburg, Pigeon Forge, Sevierville, and Knoxville, but it feels like a world of its own. Whether you're craving a peaceful retreat, a family-friendly escape, or a weekend of water sports and mountain views, Jefferson County invites you to slow down, explore, and discover one of Tennessee's best-kept

secrets.

1. Explore Our Historic Towns

Jefferson County, Tennessee, was established in 1792, and we pride ourselves on preserving our rich history.

Dandridge along the banks of Douglas Lake is the second oldest city in the state of Tennessee and the only city named after a former first lady, Martha Dandridge Washington. The downtown area offers a quaint window into the past with its four original taverns, a landmark embankment along the lake, and a variety of historical markers.

Jefferson City, on the other end of the county near Cherokee Lake, has a

thriving downtown known as the Historic Mossy Creek District. The district offers visitors a number of restaurants and things to do, including a distillery offering a special selection of other worldly spirits. Just up the road from downtown is a Jefferson County icon – Glenmore Mansion. Glenmore is a Victorian-era mansion that has been preserved to its original state. Throughout the summer, Glenmore plays host to farmers market and tour events.

2. Take to the Lakes

If the weather allows, it's highly recommended to take to the waters while visiting the Lakeside of the Smokies.

Cherokee Lake in the northeast

Photo courtesy Jim Shupe

end of the county offers its visitors great hiking trails, boat and slip rentals through Black Oak Marina, lakeside eats with Off the Hook Bar and Grill, and pristine conditions for fishing, no matter the time of year.

Douglas Lake towards the south end of the county also offers visitors a selection of places to rent a boat or other watercrafts, RV parks with a number of amenities, and even more worldclass fishing.

Be sure to learn more about how to play safely on Tennessee waterways before you go.

3. Go Antiquing

Are you an antiquing enthusiast? Or maybe you just appreciate well-made, unique items. Either way, the Lakeside of the Smokies has some phenomenal antique stores for you. Added bonus? Many of our antique shops are in historical buildings themselves, so when you're checking out the goods take a moment to enjoy the architecture and beauty of the space around you.

4. Live Like a Local

If you're going to visit somewhere, it's always a good idea to do as the locals do, right? In the Lakeside of the Smokies that's easy. When you're in town, check out our event calendar to see what's going on! From outdoor concerts to cultural festivals, there's always something happening in the Lakeside. Make sure to enjoy a meal from one of our local restaurants. With food selections from classic Southern fare to delicious pizza and wings, you'll find something to tickle your tastebuds. Then don't forget to peruse our local shops to find that perfect souvenir for a loved one or yourself.

5. Soak In Some History

As you've probably gathered by now, there's a lot of history to the Lakeside of the Smokies, and we've done a pretty good job of preserving it to share with others. During your visit, take a self-guided walking tour of one of our towns, discover the historic churches in our area, and learn more about the meaning of the quilt squares you see around town on buildings.

If you're in Dandridge, stop by the county museum located in our courthouse. The museum offers a glimpse into the past

with documents dating back to 1792 – the beginning of our county! There's even a replica of the rifle Davy Crockett (who's from our area) used and his wedding license to Polly Finley.

Did you know that Bush Beans started right here in the Lakeside of the Smokies? Head over to Chestnut Hill to see where it all started and learn more about the world's most famous secret family recipe. If you're lucky, you may even get to see Duke while you're there.

6. Take in the Scenes from the Open Road

The Lakeside of the Smokies is home

to 5 driving trails, so buckle up and get ready for a dreamy scenic drive (or two) around the foothills of the Smokies.

Rather be a passenger princess? Let Great Smoky Mountain Eco Tours be your driver! Get the full experience when you sit back and take in the sights while your local guide does the driving.

7. Have a Reel Good Time

Did you know that Jefferson County is home to some of the country's best fishing? Douglas Lake and Cherokee Lake each continue to be named two of the best lakes for bass, crappie, and general fishing. Take to the waters on your own or go out with one of our area's expert fishing guides. No matter how you choose to fish, the prize will be worth the effort.

8. Relax in a Lakeside Cabin

You're on vacation – relax a little! There's no shame in enjoying downtime at your home away from home when visiting Jefferson County. The Lakeside has a wide selection of lakeside mountain cabins, cottages, and rentals. Whether you're in

town to escape your family or bring the whole crew with you, you'll find the perfect getaway for your needs.

Prefer to camp or RV? We have those too.

9. Visit the Sites Nearby

One of the biggest advantages of choosing Jefferson County as your vacation destination is that you get the beauty of the mountains without the bumper-to-bumper traffic. Here, you can enjoy peaceful lake views, charming towns, and uncrowded attractions at your own pace. But if you're in the mood for a little more hustle and bustle, you're just minutes away. The

Lakeside of the Smokies is only about 20 minutes from Gatlinburg, Sevierville, and Pigeon Forge; 45 minutes from Knoxville; and just over an hour from Asheville, NC. It's the perfect balance: all the access, none of the stress. As the saying goes, you really can have your cake and eat it too. And in Jefferson County, we make sure it's a slice worth savoring.

10. Opt for Outside

East Tennessee is known for its year round temperate weather, making it a great place to visit no matter the time of year. But if you're here in the warmer months (March – October) opt for outside! Whether its eating at a local restaurant on the patio, a round (or more) of golf, or bird watching, there's a variety of ways to opt of outside during your stay.

Speaking of sites nearby – the Great Smoky Mountains! Enjoy 100s of miles of public trails and hiking when you visit the Smokies during your stay. You'll discover rock formations, waterfalls, and beautiful flora and fauna while on your adventure in America's most visited national park.



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