

Coffee County Locality Guide (22 February 2024)

Geographic Area and County History



Coffee County was named for John Coffee, a prominent planter, land speculator, and militia officer. The county is located in the central area of the state. ([FamilySearch Wiki](#)).

The Tennessee General Assembly established Coffee County from parts of Bedford, Warren, and Franklin Counties in 1836. It named the new county in honor of General John Coffee, a close political ally of Andrew Jackson. The county has several important prehistoric sites, the most significant being Old Stone Fort State Archaeological Area at the forks of the Duck River. Woodland Period people constructed a

large ceremonial enclosure there. Carbon-dating within the walls has identified construction dates of A.D. 30, A.D. 230, and A.D. 430, indicating that the site was used for at least four centuries. Whites began to arrive in the county during the 1790s. Fort Nash, which protected travelers and encouraged permanent settlement, was established in 1793 on Garrison Fork near Beech Grove.

When the county was created in 1836, Manchester was named county seat on two hundred acres belonging to James Evans and Andrew Haynes. The first courthouse opened in 1837 and served the county until it burned and was replaced by the present Coffee County Courthouse in 1871. This Italianate-style courthouse is listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

The construction of the Nashville and Chattanooga Railroad during the 1850s reshaped the county's landscape and economy. Railroad officials created the town of Tullahoma as the mid-point of the railroad's line and established extensive works there, including a spur line from Tullahoma to Manchester to McMinnville, which eventually continued to coal mines and timber holdings in White County. The presence of the railroad brought both armies to Coffee County during the Civil War. Due to its importance as a rail center, both sides occupied Tullahoma at different times, destroying much of the original town. In August 1862 the Confederate cavalry of Nathan B. Forrest suffered 180 casualties in its attempt to destroy a Federal post protecting the railroad at Guest Hollow. The Tullahoma campaign of 1863 touched many families and several county villages. At Beech Grove, for instance, a cemetery holds the remains of Confederate soldiers who died during the defense of Hoover's Gap.

A quickly rebuilt railroad returned prosperity in the Reconstruction era. Tullahoma grew rapidly into Coffee County's largest and most prosperous town. Important businesses included the retail firm of Dunn and Campbell, headed by Michael Ross Campbell; the Hurricane Springs resort six miles south of Tullahoma; the Tullahoma Woolen Mill; and the M. R. Campbell Hub, Spoke Rim, and Handle Works. Manchester added the Hickerson

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and Wooten Paper Company in 1879. The county's distillery business thrived in these decades, led by Maclin H. Davis's Cascade Distillery, founded in 1882 and now known as George Dickel Distilleries, which opened in 1959.

Transportation remained crucial to Coffee County's growth in the twentieth century. Tullahoma became a railroad division headquarters in 1920. Automobile traffic became increasingly important once the Dixie Highway located through the county, largely running parallel with the railroad tracks, during the 1920s. The prospect of good transportation attracted businesses such as the Lannom Manufacturing Company, which after 1922 made baseballs, softballs, and gloves. Coffee County emerged as a national leader in the sporting goods industry, led now by the Worth manufacturing corporation.

County leaders and civic officials in Tullahoma used the existing transportation network and the offer of free railroad land to convince government officials to locate a military base within the county. In 1926 the state established Camp Peay, a training facility for the National Guard, near Tullahoma. The surrounding countryside became the site of the guard's annual maneuvers and exercises.

The Great Depression slowed growth. The Works Progress Administration built a Colonial Revival-style post office in Manchester. In 1934 investors established in Tullahoma a clothing and shoe company called the General Shoe Corporation, the precursor of the major American corporation known today as Genesco.

World War II boosted the county as had no other event before. In January 1941 the general assembly created the volunteer Tennessee State Guard, which received federal training at Camp Peay. That June the U.S. Second Army came to Coffee County for maneuvers; headquarters were established at the high school in Manchester. The Second Armored Division under the command of Major General George S. Patton used the Coffee County terrain along the river to demonstrate the value, speed, and maneuverability of armored forces in a large-scale combat operation. After the attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, government officials convinced the army to take control of Camp Peay and turn it into a federal induction center, renamed Camp Forrest. During the war, an estimated 250,000 soldiers passed through the gates of Camp Forrest, stimulating a commercial boom countywide but especially in Tullahoma. One estimate has the town's temporary population, counting service personnel, reaching 75,000 during the war years.

After Camp Forrest closed in 1946, local and state officials urged the federal government to transform the old military base into a modern technological and research center. On June 25, 1951, President Harry S. Truman formally dedicated the Arnold Engineering Development Corporation Center (AEDC), named in honor of General "Hap" Arnold, who commanded the Army Air Forces during World War II. AEDC ever since has been an important employer as well as an attraction for other high-tech personnel and firms to locate in the area. In the late twentieth century, Motlow State Community College and the Tullahoma Fine Arts Center have emerged as key institutions shaping modern cultural

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life in Coffee County. According to the 2000 census, 48,014 people lived in Coffee County, representing a 19 percent population growth since 1990. ([Tennessee Encyclopedia](#))

Genealogical Records

Record Loss – Coffee County (Family Search)

1870 Courthouse burned and many records were damaged.

- Marriages recorded between 1836 and 1853 are lost

FamilySearch Coffee County [Catalog](#)

[FamilySearch Digital Books](#) for Coffee County Search Term [Coffee County Tennessee](#)

TnGenWeb Project – [Coffee County](#)

Contact – [Bettye Liberty](#)

[Coffee County Historical Society](#)

[Coffee County Chamber of Commerce](#)

Record Location Table

Record Type	Location	Record Notes
Birth	County Clerk Office	County Registrations began 1881
	Tennessee Vital Records Office	Keeps for 100 years then they are sent to TSLA
Marriages	County Clerk Office	County Registrations began 1854
	Tennessee Vital Records Office	Keeps for 50 years then they are sent to TSLA
	TnGenWeb	Marriages
Divorce	Chancery Court Clerk	
	Tennessee Vital Records Office	TSLA
Deaths	County Clerk Office	County Registrations began 1881
	Tennessee Vital Records Office	Keeps for 50 years then they are sent to TSLA
	TSLA	1908-1912
		1914-1933

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Land Deeds		County Registrations began 1836
	County Register	County Register of Deeds
List of Microfilmed Coffee County Records	TSLA-PDF	Download PDF
Pension Applications	Tennessee State Archives & Library	County Index to Tennessee Confederate Pension Applications
Probate Records	Chancery Court	County Registrations began 1836
Tennessee Enumeration of Male Voters	Ancestry.com (\$)	Tennessee Enumeration of Male Voters
World War I Veterans	Tennessee State Archives & Library	Research Collection
Misc Tenn. Records Southern Claims Commission and Inmates of the TN State Penitentiary	Tennessee State Archives & Library	Research Collection

County Repositories

[Coffee County Manchester Public Library](#)
[Coffee County Historical Society & \(Bookstore\)](#)
[Coffee County Historical Society \(FB\)](#)
[Coffee Co. TN Genealogy Chat \(FB\)](#)
[Coffee County Archives](#)

Contact [Judy Phillips](#) (Archivist)

[Archive Holdings](#)
 1329 McArthur St, Suite 1
 Manchester, TN 37355
 Tues 9:00 am – 3:00 pm

Current Area Information

[Manchester Chamber of Commerce](#)
[Coffee County Government](#)

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Resources

General

[Tennessee County Database \(TNGS\) – Coffee County](#)
[Coffee County Wiki \(Family Search\)](#)
[Coffee County TN - Genealogy Trails](#)
[Linkpendium – Coffee County](#)
[Tennessee State Library & Archives – Coffee County Facts Sheet](#)
[TSLA–Coffee County Inmates of the Tennessee State Penitentiary 1831-1850](#)
[TSLA–Coffee County Inmates of the Tennessee State Penitentiary 1851-1870](#)
[TNGenWeb – Coffee County](#)
[USGenWeb Archives – Coffee County Tennessee](#)
[Tennessee Law, The Early Days](#)
[Coffee Co. TN Genealogy Chat \(FB\)](#)

Newspapers

Tennessee State Archives & Library

[Check Online Catalog for Coffee County Newspaper Details & Dates Held.](#)

We do not necessarily hold all published issues of the newspapers.

Newspaper.com / Genealogybank.com - None

Chronicling America –

1. [The Apalachian. \[volume\] \(Tullahoma, Tenn.\) 1867-18??](#)
2. [The weekly guardian. \(Tullahoma, Tenn.\) 188?-188?](#)
3. [The Northernaire. \(Tullahoma, Tenn.\) 1943-19??](#)
4. [The independent. \(Manchester, Tenn.\) 1994-1995](#)
5. [The independent. \[volume\] \(Tullahoma, Tenn.\) 1872-1875](#)
6. [The weekly Tullahomian. \[volume\] \(Tullahoma, Tenn.\) 189?-19??](#)
7. [The true patriot. \[volume\] \(Manchester, Tenn.\) 1862-1863](#)
8. [The Tullahoma guardian. \(Tullahoma, Tenn.\) 19??-1948](#)
9. [Tullahoma guardian. \(Tullahoma, Tenn.\) 1???-190?](#)
10. [The Tullahoma journal. \(Tullahoma, Tenn.\) 1984-1987](#)
11. [The Tullahoma news and guardian. \(Tullahoma, Tenn.\) 1948-current](#)
12. [The Tullahoma news. \(Tullahoma, Tenn.\) 1946-1948](#)
13. [The Tullahoma republican. \(Tullahoma, Tenn.\) 188?-18??](#)
14. [Tullahoma standard. \[volume\] \(Tullahoma, Tenn.\) 1902-19??](#)
15. [Tullahoma times. \[volume\] \(Tullahoma, Tenn.\) 1917-19??](#)
16. [Tullahoma weekly guardian. \(Tullahoma, Tenn.\) 188?-1???](#)
17. [The Sunday news. \(Tullahoma, Tenn.\) 1990-current](#)
18. [The journal. \(Tullahoma, Tenn.\) 1987-1987](#)
19. [The Saturday independent. \(Manchester, Tenn.\) 2004-current](#)
20. [The peoples' paper. \[volume\] \(Manchester, Tenn.\) 1860-186?](#)

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Selected Published County Histories

Tennessee State Archives & Library

Camp Forrest	Taylor, 2016
Coffee County: From Arrowheads to Rockets; A History of Coffee County, Tennessee	Martinez, 1969
Coffee County, Tennessee Then and Now	McMahan, 1983
Duck River Valley in Tennessee and its Pioneers	Jacobs, 1968
Goodspeed's Coffee County History	1990
Heritage of Coffee County, Tennessee, 1836-2004	Coffee County Heritage Book Committee, 2005
History of Coffee County Tennessee	Ewell, 1936
History of Tennessee From the Earliest Time to the Present: Together with a Historical and a Biographical Sketch of Cannon, Coffee, Dekale [sic], Warren, White	Goodspeed, 1979
Manchester, Coffee County, Tennessee: A Business and Community Pictorial Heritage	West, 1986
Pictorial History of Coffee County Tennessee: Established 1836	1999
Tullahoma: The 1863 Campaign for the Control of Middle Tennessee	Bradley, 2000

Selected Published Local Records

Tennessee State Archives & Library

1840 Federal Census of Coffee County, Tennessee	Potter & Majors, 1970
1860 Federal Census of Coffee County, Tennessee	Bridgewater, 1979?
1870 Federal Census of Coffee County, Tennessee	Bridgewater, 1984
1880 Census, Coffee County, Tennessee	Sistler, 1992
1880 Federal Census, Coffee County, Tennessee	Coffee County Historical Society, 2011
African-Americans in Coffee County, Tennessee	Maszaros, 2002
African-Americans in Coffee County, Tennessee: Transcribed from the 1870, 1880, 1900, 1910 and 1920 Census Records of the 13th Civil District (Tullahoma)	Allen & Maszaros, 1995
Betsy Willis Cemetery	East Middle School, 1999

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Carden Cemetery, Coffee County, Tennessee	East Middle School, 1997
Cash Robinson Cemetery, Hillsboro, Coffee County, Tennessee	East Middle School, 1996
Cemeteries and Tombstone Inscriptions of Coffee County, Tennessee [vol. 1 - Cemeteries Adams to Noah; vol. 2 - cemeteries Oak Hill to Zion]	Winters, 2006
Civil War Soldiers of Coffee County, Tennessee [Book 1 Surnames A-B; Book 2 Surnames C-F; Book 3 Surnames G-J; Book 4 Surnames K-M; Book 5 Surnames N-S; Book 6 Surnames T-Z]	Coffee County Historical Society, 2012
Coffee & Franklin Counties, Tennessee, Regional Polk City Directory	1998
Coffee, Franklin & Bedford Counties, TN, Polk City Directory [2004-2007, 2009-2015, 2017-2020]	Porch, 1969
Coffee County, Tennessee, 1850 Census	
Coffee County, Tennessee, Bonds and Settlements, 1858-1868	WPA, 1939
Coffee County, Tennessee, Cemetery & Family Records (WPA, 19???)	WPA
Coffee County, Tennessee, Circuit Court Divorces, 1856-1939	Phillips, 2020
Coffee County, Tennessee, Court Minutes [1836-1841]	WPA, 1937
Coffee County, Tennessee, Marriage Book [vol. 1 1853-1862; vol. 2 1863-1870; vol. 3 1870-1886]	WPA, 1936
Coffee County, Tennessee, Marriage Records, Volume 1 Book A 1853-1862	Douthat, 2013
Coffee County Tennessee Polk City Directory	2003
Coffee County, Tennessee, Will Book [1833-1860] (WPA, 1936)	WPA, 1936
Coffee County, Tennessee, Wills [1833-1860]	Overall & Sistler, 1998
Daves Culbertson Funeral Home, Tullahoma, Tennessee: Over a Century in Business, Daves Culbertson Funeral Home, Tullahoma, Tennessee, Records [vol. 1 1914-1941; vol. 2 1941-1965; vol. 3 1965-1986; vol. 4 U.S. Army, Camp Forrest, 1941-1946]	Wilkinson, 1993
Index to Leighton Ewell's History of Coffee County	Jernigan, 1975
Land Deed Genealogy of Coffee County, Tennessee [vol. 1 1836-1842; vol. 2 1843-1850]	Marsh, 2006
Marriage Books A and C, 1853-1870, Coffee County, Tennessee	Potter, 1981
Name Index to History of Tennessee ... Together with ... Sketch of the Counties of White, Warren, Coffee, DeKalb and Cannon	Marsh, 1972
Oakwood Cemetery Tombstone Inscriptions, 1936: Tullahoma, Coffee County, Tennessee	Lee, 2006
Original Surveyor's Record Book, 1836-1887, Coffee County, Tennessee: With Additional Material on Early Tullahoma	Potter, 1976
Pioneers of Coffee County, Tennessee: Their Ancestors and Descendants	Pritchard, 1996

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Private Acts of Coffee County, Tennessee	McIntyre, 1993
Registration of Voters, Coffee County, Tennessee, 13th District, 1899-1903	Potter, 1976
Shady Grove Cemetery, Genealogical History	1996
Some Early Coffee County Deaths & Guardianship book, 1838-1869	Majors, 200?
Tombstone Inscriptions of Coffee County, Tennessee	Jernigan & Shapard, 1971?
Tullahoma Funeral Home, Tullahoma, Tennessee: Taken from Day Records of Moore-Motlow Funeral Home	Wilkinson, 1996

Selected Manuscripts Material

Tennessee State Archives & Library

Albigeance Waldo Putnam Papers, 1775-1869	(Mfilm Manuscript #1565, 1 reel)*
Carey Edward Waldrip Papers, 1935-1973	(Mfilm Manuscript #1293, 1 reel)*
Charles L. Moffatt Funeral Home Records. Coffee County, 1903-1914	(Mfilm Manuscript #639, 1 reel)*
David King Papers, 1901-1978	(Mfilm Manuscript #1645, 18 reels)*
E. P. Vaughan Papers. Coffee County, ca. 1901-1951	(Mfilm Manuscript #817, 2 reels)*
First Baptist Church (Manchester, Tenn.), Records, 1843-1986	(Mfilm Manuscript #2020, 5 reels)*
First United Methodist Church Records. Tullahoma, 1941-1945, 1984-1989	(Mfilm Manuscript #1127, 1 reel)*
Katherine E. Vaughan Diaries, 1926-1955	(Mfilm Manuscript #840, 4 reels)
King, David, Papers, Addition, 1961-1996	(Mfilm Manuscript #1706, 1 reel)*
Maxwell Baptist Church Records, Coffee County Association. Tullahoma, 1830-1889	(Mfilm Manuscript #1064, 1 reel)*
Methodist Church Records. Warren and Coffee Counties, 1898-1967	(Mfilm Manuscript #375, 1 reel) *
Methodist Episcopal Church Records. Coffee County, 1815-1940	(Mfilm Manuscript #526, 1 reel)*
Methodist Episcopal Church Records. Coffee County, 1869-1974	(Mfilm Manuscript #516, 1 reel)*
St. Barnabas's Episcopal Church Records. Tullahoma, 1872-1972	(Mfilm Manuscript #461, 1 reel)*
Tullahoma Methodist Episcopal Church Records. Coffee County, 1867-1932	(Mfilm Manuscript #1011, 1 reel)*
William P. Hickerson, Sr. Papers, 1820-1896 *	

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Wilson's Department Store Account Books. Coffee County, 1921-1955	(Mfilm Manuscript #1135, 1 reel)*
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Maps

- [TDOT Map of Coffee County](#)
- [Coffee County - 1888](#)
- [Coffee County Soil Map \(1908\)](#)
- [TnGenWeb Project - Maps Our Ancestors Followed](#)

Cemeteries

- [Coffee County Cemeteries - Find-a Grave](#)
- [Coffee County Cemeteries - USGenWeb](#)
- [Coffee County Cemeteries - Genealogy Trails](#)
- [Coffee County, Poor House Cemetery](#)

Bibliography

- [The Land Laws of Tennessee \(Whitney, 1891\) Google Books](#)
- [Guide to Public Vital Statistics in Tennessee \(WPA 1941\)](#)

TSLA = Tennessee State Library & Archives
 GRH&GC = Germantown Regional History & Genealogical Center
 MPL = Memphis Public Library

Library Titles	Author / Date	TSLA	GRH&GC	MPL
"An old ballad composer of the nineties." TN Folklore Soc. Bull. 19 (1953)	Lowe, Maggie J., 1953	Y		
"Folklore of the Branch Line Railroad." TN Folklore Soc. Bull. 13 (1947)	Keele, Robert L., 1947	Y		
"Fort Nash-- outpost of the 1790s." THQ 29 (1970)	Jernigan, V.H., 1970	Y		
"Jim Bobo's fatal ride: a study in progress of a TN ballad." TN Folklore Soc. Bull. 50 (1984)	Moore, Debra., 1984	Y		
"Social activities associated with two rural cemeteries in Coffee County, TN." TN Folklore Soc. Bull. 41 (1975)	Bell, Donald B.	Y		
"The late Archaic in the Upper Duck Valley." TN Anthrop. 4 (1979)	Bowen, William R.	Y		
"The Old Stone Fort near Manchester, TN." AHM 1 (1896), pp. 253-256.	Thruston, Gates P., 1896	Y		

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"The soldier town." J. of Ed. Soc. 15 (1942)	Hoyer, Raymond A., J. of Ed. Soc. 15 (1942)	Y		
1850 census, Lawrence County, Tennessee (Including some other early records)	Carter, Marymaud Killen, 1973			Y
A book about Manchester until 1905. Manchester, Tennessee: Coffee County Historical Society, Inc., 1985.	Bridgewater, Betty Anderson, 1985		Y	
Beech Grove Confederate Park.	Jacobs, David L., 1962	Y		
Coffee County (Tennessee) deed index: Vol 1-3 May 1836–November 1910	Tennessee State Archives [microform]		Y	
Coffee County (Tennessee) probate records: Wills[microform]. TN State Arch.	Tennessee State Archives [microform]		Y	
Coffee County from arrowheads to rockets: a history of Coffee County, TN. Tullahoma, Coffee County Conservation Board, 1969.	Martinez, Corinne., 1969	Y		
Coffee County Hist. Soc. History of Beans Creek Christian Church of God, 1857–1917.	Coffee County Hist. Soc., 1974.	Y		
Coffee County Hist. Soc. Newsletter. v.1, 1969– (irregular).	1969	Y		
Coffee County Hist. Soc. Quarterly. v.1, 1970– (quarterly).	1970	Y		
Coffee County Tennessee then and now	McMahan, Basil B., 1983			Y
Coffee County, Tennessee will book 1, 1833–1860.	WPA		Y	
Coffee County, Tennessee, deeds	[microform]			Y
Coffee County, Tennessee, marriage records	[microform]			Y
Coffee County, Tennessee, wills	[microform]			Y
Coffee County, Tennessee, wills v. 1. 1833–1860.	Overall, Juanita. WPA, 1936			Y
Coffee County, TN, then & now. Nashville, Williams, 1983.	McMahan, Basil B., 1983	Y		
Duck River Valley in Tennessee and its pioneers	Jacobs, Lucile Frizzell., 1968		Y	Y
Duck River Valley in TN & its pioneers.	Jacobs, Lucile F., 1968	Y		

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Goodspeed's history of TN (Coffee County, 827-845, 921-951).	Goodspeed, 1887.	Y		
Historic Preservation Society of Tullahoma, Inc. [newsletter]. vol. 1, 1980-v.4, 1983. 4 vols.	1983	Y		
Historic Preservation Society of Tullahoma, Inc. Tullahoma time-table. v.5, 1984-. (semi-annual).	1984	Y		
Historic Tullahoma.	Tullahoma, Trader's National Bank, 1986.	Y		
History of Coffee County, TN.	Ewell, Leighton, 1936	Y		
History of Manchester Rotary Club, 1935-1977, Manchester, TN.		Y		
History of Tennessee: from the earliest time to the present: together with an historical and a biographical sketch of Cannon, Coffee, Dekale [i.e. Dekalb], Warren, White Counties	Goodspeed, Firm, Publishers, 1979		Y	Y
History of the Church of Christ at Bean's Creek & cemetery.	Coffee County Historical Society. Bridgewater, Betty Anderson, 1974			Y
History of the Church of Christ at Bean's Creek & cemetery: Coffee County, Tennessee.			Y	
Index to Leighton Ewell's History of Coffee County, TN.	Jernigan, Verna T., 1975	Y		
Index to Tennessee county court records.	WPA, 1971		Y	
Land deed genealogy of Coffee County, Tennessee.	Marsh, Helen C., 2006		Y	
Land grant genealogy: North Carolina warrants, surveys & surveyor plats.	Masters, Jack., 2012		Y	
Manchester, Coffee County, TN: a business & community pictorial heritage.	West, Judy F.	Y		
Manchester.	Campbell, Jane Banks, 2013		Y	
Marriage books A and C, 1853-1870, Coffee County, Tennessee.	Potter, Dorothy Williams, 1973		Y	Y
Mrs. The country doctor & his people, 1910-1923.	Helsley, Wilford V., 1983	Y		

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Original surveyor's record book, 1836-1887: Coffee County, Tennessee with additional material on early Tullahoma.	Potter, Dorothy Williams, 2004		Y	
Pioneers of Coffee County, Tennessee: their ancestors and descendants,	Pritchard, Alice Daniel, 1996			Y
St. Barnabas' Parish; the first one hundred years: its people, its churches, its clergy.	Bridgewater, Betty A., Coffee County Hist. Soc., 1974.	Y		
Tennessee convicts: early records of the State Penitentiary	Sherrill, Charles A., 1997	Y	Y	Y
The excavation and interpretation of the Old Stone Fort, Coffee County, Tennessee	Faulkner, Charles H., 1967			Y
The Goodspeed histories of Cannon, Coffee, DeKalb, Warren and White Counties	Goodspeed Publishing Company, 1972		Y	Y
The Methodists came this way.	Murrell, Frances C., Tullahoma, First United Methodist Church of Tullahoma, 1984.	Y	Y	
Tims Ford Reservoir T.V.A. grave removals.	Douthat, James L., 2007		Y	
Tombstone inscriptions of Coffee County, Tennessee.	Jernigan, Verna Thomas, 1972		Y	
Tullahoma & Hurricane Springs Hotel Co.: with notes. Manchester, Coffee County Hist. Soc., 1976. (its Special publication #3). Burt, Jesse C., Jr. "Efforts for an Army camp at Tullahoma, 1916-1917." THQ 10 (1951),	Bridgewater, Betty A.	Y		
Tullahoma 1851.	Tullahoma, Historic Preservation Society of Tullahoma, 1986.	Y		
Ward's history of Coffee County. Atlanta, Foote & Davies Co., 1930.	Ward, Warren P., 1930	Y		