



THE EAST TENNESSEE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

MUSEUM of EAST TENNESSEE HISTORY

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## **New Feature Exhibition opens at the Museum of East Tennessee History in Celebration of the 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the War of 1812**

**WHAT:** *Becoming a Volunteer State: Tennessee in the War of 1812*, a traveling exhibition from the Tennessee State Museum

**DATE:** Open Jan. 28- May 19, 2013

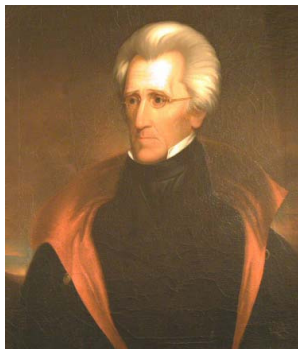
**LOCATION:** East Tennessee History Center  
601 S. Gay Street  
Knoxville, TN 37902

The East Tennessee Historical Society and the Tennessee State Museum are pleased to announce the opening of the traveling exhibition, *Becoming a Volunteer State: Tennessee in the War of 1812*, which will be on view at the Museum of East Tennessee History through May 19, 2013. The exhibition commemorates the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the War of 1812 and the important role Tennessee played in the war.

### **About the War of 1812:**

The War of 1812, fought against Great Britain, culminated in the Battle of New Orleans in January 1815. While this conflict is often overlooked by the American public, it was incredibly important in establishing the American national identity. Some noted historians refer to it as the “second American Revolution,” which marked the United States true independence from Britain.

At its conclusion, the war made western lands accessible for settlement, secured the American frontier from Native American uprisings and protected the Mississippi as an avenue for trade and prosperity. The war also gave America one of its most important heroic figures, Andrew Jackson of Tennessee. Jackson eventually rode his success as a military commander all the way to the White House, where the strong presidency he created became a model for American democracy.



Portrait of Andrew Jackson  
by Ralph E. W. Earl, ca. 1837

“Like Andrew Jackson, other Tennesseans also played an important role in the War of 1812. They were keenly aware of the danger that Britain posed to America’s western security. Tennesseans were among the most ardent ‘War Hawks,’ clamoring for armed conflict to settle the

continuing challenge by Great Britain once and for all,” said Curator Myers E. Brown II. On June 18, 1812, after years of escalating tensions between the two countries, the United States declared war on Great Britain.

Two notable events from the War of 1812 are forever etched in the collective consciousness of America’s heritage: the British burning of Washington, D.C. when First Lady Dolly Madison saved the portrait of George Washington before she fled the capital, and the writing of the “Star Spangled Banner” by attorney Francis Scott Key during the British attack of Ft. McHenry at Baltimore.

Tennesseans participated in the war against the British and their Indian allies in the Great Lakes area. Then, when the British threatened the Gulf Coast, then helped defeat the British at New Orleans. By the time the war was over several Tennesseans were beginning to emerge as important American figures, including Jackson, David Crockett, Sam Houston, Edmund Gaines (Act of Congress Medal winner), and Sequoyah.

The war in the south was particularly a Tennessee war, waged predominately by Tennessee militia, volunteers, or regular army units raised in the state. So many Tennesseans volunteered for service that the state soon began to be known by its now-famous nickname, the “Volunteer State.” The victory at the Battle of New Orleans propelled Andrew Jackson to the White House and established Tennessee at the forefront of American politics.

#### **About the exhibit:**

The State Museum collaborated with five other organizations to develop and produce the exhibition, including The Hermitage: Home of President Andrew Jackson, the Tennessee Historical Society, the State Library & Archives, the East Tennessee Historical Society, and the Tennessee War of 1812 Bicentennial Committee. Important art, portraits, uniforms, weapons and period artifacts from the era, as well as a broad variety of documentary art, maps and illustrations have been selected to recreate a flavor of the times.

In conjunction with the exhibition, the museum will take part in several events scheduled in commemoration of the War of 1812:

- **February 6** – Brown Bag Lecture and Gallery Tour with exhibit curator Myers E. Brown II, at noon at the East Tennessee History Center.
- **February 18** – “A Presidential Conversation with Jon Meacham” special lecture at the Bijou Theatre. Tickets are on sale at [knoxbijou.com](http://knoxbijou.com) or by calling (865) 684-1200.
- **March 23**– “Revisiting the Creek War of 1813” The 2<sup>nd</sup> Tennessee in the War of 1812 Bicentennial Symposium War of 1812 Symposium - hosted by the



East Tennessee Historical Society with funding from the Middle Tennessee State University Center for Historic Preservation. The symposium will be held at the East Tennessee History Center and will be open to the public.

The three symposium speakers are:

- 9:30-10:15 am: “The Cherokees in the Creek War” by Dr. Susan Abram, West Carolina University
- 10:15-11 am: “Tennessee and the Creek War” by Dr. Tom Kanon, Tennessee State Library and Archives
- 11 am to 11:45: “Rethinking the Significance of the Creek War within the War of 1812” by Dr. Kathryn Braund, Auburn University
- 11:45 to 12:15: Roundtable discussion moderated by Dr. Carroll Van West of the MTSU Center for Historic Preservation.
- On the afternoon of March 23, several Knoxville heritage sites will have special programs on the War of 1812.

*Becoming a Volunteer State: Tennessee in the War of 1812* is sponsored locally by the East Tennessee Historical Society and will be on view at the Museum of East Tennessee History, 601 S. Gay Street, Knoxville, until May 19, 2013.

#### **About the Museum of East Tennessee History**

The Museum of East Tennessee History is operated by the East Tennessee Historical Society and is open 9:00 am to 4:00 pm, Monday through Friday; 10:00 am to 4:00 pm, Saturday; and 1:00 pm to 5:00 pm, Sunday. The East Tennessee History Center is located at 601 South Gay Street, Knoxville, TN 37901, across from the Tennessee Theatre. For more information call (865) 215-8830, email eths@eastTNhistory.org, or visit [www.easttnhistory.org](http://www.easttnhistory.org).

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