

TAKE A COUNTRYSIDE RIDE

A SCENIC TOUR OF SOUTHEAST LAWRENCE COUNTY

This tour was developed by:

Anne Morrow, Director of the Lawrenceburg Beautification Board
Bobby Alford, President of the Lawrence County Historical Society
Kathy Niedergeses of Lawrence Co Archives & Official Lawrence Co Historian
Wallace Palmore of the Lawrence County Genealogical Society
Our very special thanks to Donnie Joe Brown, Lawrence Co Road Superintendent

This tour is estimated at 3 hours and can be taken at your own leisure. This is strictly a “sightseeing tour”. Properties are privately owned, No trespassing please! The tour begins on the Lawrenceburg Public Square and takes the South exit onto South Military Avenue. (Zero odometer)

.1 mile As you go down South Military Avenue, just past the four-way stop on the left side of the road is the David Crockett Home Museum. This site may be toured by visitors. (Actually this site was only used as an office by David Crockett.)

.2 miles To your left is the Cumberland Presbyterian Church which is the oldest standing church in Lawrence County. The church was actually built by a group known as the “New School Presbyterian Church” in 1851. The building was originally a brick structure 40 feet wide and 60 feet long, with a basement, large auditorium with a slave gallery (balcony) and a tall wooden steeple. It was sold in 1866 to the Cumberland Presbyterian Church. The large, hand-made mosaic windows were made by Italian craftsmen. In the early 1900’s the church was repaired and redecorated, the slave gallery removed and in 1947 stucco was applied to the brick structure.

.3 miles Just a short distance further on the right side of the road and just before the road curves to the left, stands a house known as Monument Hill. Deeds show the property was owned by Thomas D Deavenport until 1850 and the house was built between December 180 and May The property was inherited by Thomas D Deavenport, Jr after his father’s death in 1854. The home is now owned by William H and Virginia Blair Lindsey.

.4 miles Turn left on Garner Lane. Shortly after turning left on Garner Lane, look to your left and you will see the site of the Old Garner Mill on Shoal Creek. The mill was originally built by James Scott in 1820 when he was given permission by the court to have a mill on Shoal Creek adjoining the City of Lawrenceburg. Many people have owned the mill since that time but two are of particular interest. The mill was sold to C H Nicholson in 1851 and was a water powered sawmill and grist mill. The mill property was purchased by W A Garner in 1899. The mill was placed on the National Register of Historic Places when owned by William “Bud” Richardson. The dam and mill were completely destroyed in the flood of 1998.

.5 miles On your left is the site of the Hodge/Halbert Ice Company. Before electricity was available and the invention of refrigerators and freezers, blocks of ice were sold at ice plants to individuals and businesses to keep their food cold. The Garner Mill site was sold to W A and Mary Ellen Hodge in 1935 and the mill became the Hodge Ice Company. In 1943, the property was conveyed to H L and Georgia Halbert and was known as the Halbert Ice Company which operated 24 hours a day. The property and ice house equipment were purchased by W E and H J Harlan in 1948. The Harlans moved the equipment to the Harlan Ice Company on First Street, which had been in business since 1921.

.6 miles Turn right onto Hwy 43 South.

5.8 miles You are going through a portion of Leoma. This small town began in 1893 when A H Freemon dug a well and moved his sawmill to this site. He built dwelling houses for the men who worked for him. It was once a much larger town with a large General Merchandise and Grocery Store, depot, boarding house and several other businesses, many started by A H Freemon. The school, churches and post office remain today along with a few other businesses. Leoma also has the distinction of holding the first two Lawrence County fairs. Leoma was once named "Dean Switch" but was renamed "Leoma" after a railroad clerk's daughter.

5.9 miles Turn left onto Rabbit Trail Road/Highway 98 between a car lot and the Leoma Post Office.

6.6 miles On your left is Big Oak Market, a perfect place to get a drink and snack before you begin the next portion of the tour.

6.6 miles Travel a short distance and turn left onto the Old Florence-Pulaski Road (also known as Big Oak Road). You will pass Freemon Cemetery on your right where many of the Freemon family are buried.

7.9 miles Springer House – In the 1860's Irving T Freemon purchased several tracts of property in this area, now referred to as the Antioch Community. He sold part of the property to this brother Allen Parks Freemon, who along with his brother Samuel Lynch Freemon, ran a grist mill.

"Freemon's Stage Stop and Tavern" operated out of the Springer House. In 1893 a post office was established in their home but later moved to Leoma. This was also the home of little Molly Freemon, who came to the door covered with chicken pox during the Civil War and scared Union Soldiers away because they thought she had the dreaded small pox. **One log room is all that's left of the original house. Absolutely no trespassing!

8.1 miles Turn right onto Antioch Road. On your right will be the Antioch Methodist church which was started by Milly Freemon and the Freemon family. Just a short distance down the road on your right is where the Freemon's Grist Mill was located on Mill Creek. The Freemon's expanded their ventures to include a blacksmith shop (where they also melted lead and made ammunition) and a powder mill, Freemon's Store, with supplies being shipped from Nashville to Pulaski, where he picked them up. Freemon's Store may have been in the Springer House also. They had a sawmill and woodwork shop where furniture was made and a flour mill on another stream.

8.3 miles After you cross the creek, turn right onto Marston Road. The Mill dam was located on Mill Creek, which runs beside the road on the right. Stay on this road until you are back to Rabbit Trail Road.

9.8 miles Turn left onto Rabbit Trail Road and continue South for several miles.
Center Point Community – The Center Point Community was established in 1909 when it was settled by families from Alabama who were mostly cotton farmers and logged timber for use at their saw mills.

12.1 miles On the left side of the road, the building is still standing that once housed Center Point School. It is used by the Center Point Baptist Church with an addition being added to provide more space for the congregation.

On the right side of the road, you will see the Center Point Methodist Church. The land for the church and the cemetery were donated by members who also built the church in 1910.

12.8 miles Crabb Cemetery – Go straight into the big curve just past Center Point onto Richardson Road (please use caution). Being sure to veer left again staying on Richardson Road, travel about 3.4 miles to the Crabb Cemetery (originally named the Mockerson Cemetery and it is also referred to as Richardson Cemetery).

16.3 miles The cemetery is on your left just past Mockerson Road on the right. You must pay close attention or you will miss the cemetery as it is located on a bank and only has a small sign. It is here that the James family tradition says “the” Frank James is buried. Making a circle through the cemetery, Frank James is buried in the second row, the last stone on the right. Legend has it that Frank James taught school here after his days as an outlaw.

Note: When exiting the cemetery, turn right onto Richardson Road. If you do not wish to continue this tour you may return to Lawrenceburg by following Richardson Road back to Rabbit Trail Road and turning right onto Rabbit Trail Road, then turning right onto Hwy 43 North, back to Lawrenceburg. If you choose to continue on the tour, follow the directions below.

16.9 miles A very short distance from the cemetery, turn left onto Mockerson Road (please take the right entrance as it is less steep). A short distance down this road is where the new Flat Rock School was located on your right and the old Flat Rock School was located on your left on Mockerson Branch on a large flat rock.

17.0 miles Travel about one-half mile and on your left you will be able to see the James Roper log house, built in the early 1830’s from the road (part of the log house is now covered in vinyl). Continue on until you come to a concrete bridge but just before the bridge is a fork in the road (17.9). Turn left at the small road entrance (yellow triangle road sign) and continue on Mockerson Road. The Stutts Funeral Home was located on this road on your left but was torn down not too long ago. Continue towards Five Points Cross Road and you will pass the old Five Points School on your right (19.7) not long before coming to the cross roads.

19.8 miles Five Points Community – The town of Five Points got its name from the fact that five roads intersect here. It was once a small thriving town with a sawmill, cotton gin, warehouse, general store, large commercial orchard, three churches and a school. All that remains today are the churches, cemetery, post office and a couple of stores. Mashburn's General Store is located at the point where the roads intersect. This would be a great place to stop for refreshments or a bathroom break. While there, take a minute to look around. This store carries quite a bit of Lawrence County history with it, too.

20.0 miles Continue straight through Five Points and turn left onto Rabbit Trail Road.

22.6 miles Bonnertown Community – Traveling South again, right after Hood Road on your left, you will see what was once the Bonnertown School. It is now a remodeled home. Continue a little further and you reach the Appleton/Bonnertown Road. On your right is the small community of Bonnertown. This community was settled in 1909 by families from Alabama the same as many of the other small communities in Southeast Lawrence County. At one time there was three stores, sawmill, cotton gin and Dr Martin's office and drug store but the only places left now are the Methodist and Baptist Churches, cemetery and the old school building. The United States Singing Convention was organized at Bonnertown Methodist Church in 1914 and held there until 1988.

Now turn left onto Appleton Road.

26.7 miles The Pole Bridge – As you travel down Appleton Road, you will cross Pole Bridge Branch. The area was once a swamp and difficult to cross; beyond this was the "barrens", called this because there were very few trees and the vegetation was very scrubby. There are two tales as to when the Pole Bridge was built. One says it was built by General Dodge's men during the Civil War as they traveled East through Lawrence County and came upon this area. Supposedly they camped and spent the winter here. They cut long poles to place in the swamp so they could cross when Spring came. Some think it was built after the last battle in Tennessee in December, 1864, when General John Bell Hood and his defeated men started West across Lawrence County moving their equipment toward Blue Water in order to cross into Alabama. They reinforced the ground with poles in order to cross, leaving some of the heavier equipment behind in the marsh. Either way, many poles were removed from this swamp when road construction began to progress in the early 1920's. The poles had been laid parallel and perpendicular and were in good condition. Horseshoes, cannon balls and minnie balls were found also. Many people think a cannon is still buried there. The source of the branch is Pole Bridge Spring, which is said to have no bottom. To enjoy a refreshing drink of water from this spring, turn down the road to your left just past the bridge.

Appleton Community – Follow this road to the small town of Appleton. To look at it now, you would never know what a booming town Appleton once was. However, the community is still rich in history. Where Warren Road enters Appleton Road, you will see Appleton Church of Christ on your right. Just before the road forks again, Appleton School is to your right.

27.1 miles Veer right at the fork in the road and immediately on your left will be what was once the famous "Big Red General Merchandise Store". In the early 1900's this store, famous in Northern Alabama and Middle Tennessee, was three stories high and built by Hall, Kelton

and Company. When it opened July 15 1902, soda pop from the fanciest soda fountain in the entire South was given away free to a crowd estimated between 500 and 600, who had lined up for the bargains in this one-stop shopping store. Two boarding houses operated close to the store for those who wanted to spend the night. The old cotton gin was across the road from the store.

27.4 miles Looking East and proceeding down the road is located a house over 100 years old, referred to as the “Music House”, so called because for many years the community has met here to play various musical instruments and “buck” dance on Saturday nights. Continuing this tradition today, several community musicians gather on Sunday afternoon Around 2:00 p.m. to play together. They enjoy visitors, so if you are in the neighborhood, stop by and sign their guest book. They’ve had visitors from as far away as Canada, Alaska and New Mexico.

Note: There have been several different school buildings in Appleton but the one most known for miles around was Kelton Academy built by Kelton and Hall around 1898. Families from miles around in North Alabama and Tennessee were sending their children to this school. Children stayed in the boarding house or boarded with other families. The school later became a teachers’ training academy and in order to receive a teacher’s certificate, students had to pass a very difficult test.

27.6 miles Next on your right is the Dobbins (also called Appleton) Cemetery. Many early settlers are buried here and there is a slave cemetery behind the cemetery. On a rise below the cemetery is an Indian Mound. **School buss passengers should park here and walk down the road to Sugar Creek. Do not cross the creek! This is private property, stay on the road! This road is an old farm road – very muddy and hard to travel at times.**

28.2 miles It is in this general area, between the two Sugar Creeks near Puncheon in Giles County and near Appleton in Lawrence County that the last Civil War battle fought in Tennessee supposedly took place and actually covered a much larger area North, South and East of this spot. General John Bell Hood led the Confederate troops to a victorious battle, securing many horses and boats from the Federal troops. **Turn around and go back out Appleton Road and turn right onto Blooming Grove Road (29.2 miles).**

Note: At this point you may wish to follow Appleton Road back to Rabbit Trail Road and Back to Lawrenceburg. If you wish to continue the tour, turn right onto Blooming Grove Road. There are several low water bridges on this route.

29.4 miles On your left will be the site of New Hope School. On your right is one remaining room of what was once a beautiful home in this neighborhood. Continue to follow this road and you will come to Blooming Grove Baptist church and School on the left.

33.3 miles Proceed straight ahead until you reach Revilo Road, turning right onto Revilo Road. Follow this road until it veers far to the LEFT. Keep going to your left. (To the right is Rosson Road).

34.4 miles Mt Zion Church, Swing Bridge and Cemetery – go a short distance and turn right onto Mt Zion Road (at road sign). This road was once very narrow and was made for wagon

traffic only but is now tar and graveled. It has some of the most beautiful scenery in Lawrence County. Continue down this road and you will come to another low water bridge.

Do not attempt to cross if water is high!!

35.4 miles After crossing the bridge you will see two churches. The church on your left is the Mt Zion Methodist Church, built in 1885 after the original log one burned. (Peek inside the windows and see what a church was like during pioneer days.) Directly in front of you is the Mt Zion Church of Christ located in the building that served as Mt Zion School until 1954. Many of the earliest citizens of Lawrence County are buried in Mt Zion Cemetery. Something very unique to this cemetery is the gingerbread trimmed "Grave House" that was built to keep rain from ever falling on the grave of H B Harrison, who died in 1899.

Note: This would be a wonderful time to take a break, walk across the swinging bridge or have a picnic lunch at this picturesque and peaceful site at the tables provided a short distance beyond the church. **If there is a reserved sign or other people already using the tables at either church, please do not use them).**

Do not continue on this road, as you will chance getting lost and using roads that are overgrown or run into roads that are closed in part. Turn around and go back down Mt Zion Road to Revilo Road.

39.6 miles Turn right onto Revilo Road again. Follow this road North to the small community of Revilo. Not much is left of this community except the fine people who live there. The old Revilo School gym is still standing on the left side of the road; the school itself is no longer there. The old Cotton Mill is still standing but the Gin has been torn down. The stores and other businesses are now closed and abandoned. Follow this road to the Fall River Cross Roads where you will turn right onto Fall River Road. If you need another break, visit Crossroads Country Store and Deli.

47.1 miles Turn right onto Fall River Road at Cross Roads. Follow the winding Fall River Road to the small community of all River. This area was first known as Hagan's Chapel, named after the Hagan family who moved there in 1860 and established a church, school and grist mill. When you come to the point where Clear Creek Road crosses Fall River Road and just before you enter Giles County, turn to your right at Fall River Church of Christ sign, then **immediately** veer right onto Wilburn Mill Road. You will pass the Fall River Church of Christ on your right then next is the mill. **Owners request absolute no trespassing!**

Please take pictures from your vehicle – do not exit your vehicle.

Turn around, come back to Fall River Road, turn left and make your way back to Lawrenceburg.

THIS CONCLUDES THE TOUR.

THANKS FOR YOUR INTEREST IN LAWRENCE COUNTY. FOR MORE INFORMATION CONCERNING THESE AND OTHER HISTORICAL SITES, YOU MAY PURCHASE A BOOK ON LAWRENCE COUNTY HISTORY AT THE LAWRENCE COUNTY ARCHIVES.

COME BACK AND SEE US ANYTIME!!