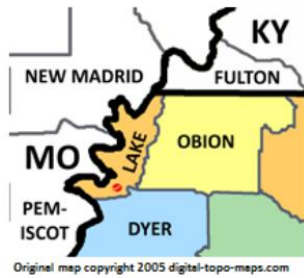


# Lake County Locality Guide (2 December 2022)

## Geographic Area



Lake County is a county located in the U.S. state of Tennessee. ([FamilySearch Wiki](#))

Located in the northwest corner of Tennessee, Lake County is bounded by Kentucky on the north, Reelfoot Lake and Obion County on the east, the Mississippi River on the west, and Dyer County on the south. The smallest county in the state, Lake County covers 210 square miles. Its flat terrain contains some of the richest soil in the state. The county was named for Reelfoot Lake, which was formed by a series of earthquakes that jolted the region from December 1811 to mid-March 1812. Despite popular legends that attribute the name of the lake to "Chief Reelfoot and his Indian Bride," the lake was named for Bill Jones, whose clubfoot gained him the nickname "Reelfoot Jones." Jones died in March 1839, when he slipped from a foot log, fell into Spring Creek, and drowned. Thereafter the creek was known as "Reelfoot Creek," and since it fed the lake, the shallow body of water acquired the name Reelfoot also.

The Tennessee General Assembly organized Lake County in June 1870, and Tiptonville was designated as the county seat. The first session of court was held on September 5, 1870. Settlers established homesteads along the river and the lake as early as 1827. Until the organization of Lake County, area residents were part of Obion County and traveled to Troy to conduct county business. In recognition of the difficulty associated with crossing the "scatters of the Lake" (a swampy area extending south from the lake to the Obion River), a special Circuit Court was established in 1858 for the portion of Obion County lying west of Reelfoot Lake. The first term of this court was held in June 1858 in the Masonic Hall in Cronanville, the largest village. The men living in this area were exempted from militia duty in Troy. The scatters of the lake were brought under control by digging a dredge ditch from the lake to the Obion River along the boundary line between Lake and Obion Counties. Bridges crossing the ditch replaced the earlier ferry boats.

Lake County's economy is based on agriculture, with cotton and soybeans the chief crops. Farmland has remained in the same families for generations, and Lake County has several Tennessee Century Farms, including the Ed Sumara Farm, the Wynn Farm, and the Carter Farm. In the nineteenth and early twentieth century, cotton gins operated alongside the tracks of the Illinois Central Railroad, ginning as much as forty bales per day. Located on a spur of the railroad, the community of Ridgely was once the site of several cotton gins, whose abandoned operations are still visible. In 1997, however, only one gin still operated in the county, turning out a bale of cotton every five minutes. Continental Grain Company ships corn, wheat, and soybeans by river and has replaced several earlier soybean companies. Lake County Seed Company, which operated a cottonseed oil mill in Tiptonville from 1906 to 1971, now stands abandoned.

In 1861 the last major Confederate fort on the Mississippi River fell in the battle of Island #10, which lies in the great river bend near Tiptonville. The Confederate loss at Island #10 opened the Mississippi River to Union forces and assured the occupation of Memphis in June 1862.

Lake County and Reelfoot Lake returned to national prominence in 1907, when lake residents waged a violent battle against the West Tennessee Land Company for control of the lake. In a series of slick legal moves, the land company acquired title to the lake and developed plans for

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draining the lake for cotton production. Local commercial fishermen and lake residents fought back, and the conflict escalated into a series of night rider attacks in which armed and masked men terrorized the company and its supporters. The attacks resulted in the kidnapping and death of company attorney Quinton Rankin of Trenton and the arrest of three hundred men accused of being nightriders. The cases against the men were eventually dropped, and the state acquired the lake for public use in 1914.

Lake County has 7,954 residents in 2000. It contains twenty-two villages, including the communities of Ridgely, Tiptonville, and Wynnburg. In the great Mississippi River flood of 1927, Ridgely became the site of one of the 154 emergency relief camps established by the American Red Cross. Today the community operates two schools for students in the south end of the county; one school contains kindergarten through sixth grade, and the other is a junior high school.

Wynnburg was created by Samuel F. Wynn, when he divided his farm in 1907 to accommodate the construction of a branch line of the Illinois Central from Dyersburg to Tiptonville. Wynn donated land for a depot, schools, and churches, and the town acquired its name from the family.

Tiptonville, the county seat, dates from 1857 but was not incorporated until 1900. Located on a small rise known as the Tiptonville Dome, the town also served as an emergency relief camp during the flood of 1927 and again during the flood of 1937. Tiptonville serves the educational needs of the northern end of the county with kindergarten through sixth grade and the county high school. The Lake County High School football team won the state championship in 1980 and 1985, and has been runner-up in 1977, 1979, and 1994.

Today Lake County has several factories, including Georgia Gulf, which produces PVC, a vinyl compound. The Illinois Central Railroad still plays an important role in the county's economy. Formerly, the county was served by trains making two round trips daily for passengers and freight. Today, it makes one trip daily for freight.

General Clifton Bledsoe Cates, a four-star general and nineteenth commandant of the U.S. Marine Corps, was born at Cates Landing in 1898. He was raised in the county, attended elementary school here, and called the county "home." Cates died in 1970. Tiptonville also was the early home of Carl Perkins, whose combination hillbilly music and rhythm and blues influenced early rock-n-roll. ([Tennessee Encyclopedia](#))

[Lake County Chamber of Commerce](#)

Record Loss – Lake County ([Family Search](#))

Lost marriage records: 1870 to 1883

FamilySearch [Lake County Catalog](#)

TnGenWeb Project – [Lake County](#)

Contact – [Randy Brown](#)

[Lake County TN Genealogical & Historical](#)

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Record Location Table

Record Type	Location	Record Notes
Birth	County Clerk Office	County Registrations began 1914
	<a href="#">Tennessee Vital Records Office</a>	Keeps for 100 years then they are sent to <a href="#">TSLA</a>
Marriages	County Clerk Office	County Registrations began 1883
	<a href="#">Tennessee Vital Records Office</a>	Keeps for 50 years then they are sent to <a href="#">TSLA</a>
Divorce	Chancery Court Clerk	
	<a href="#">Tennessee Vital Records Office</a>	<a href="#">TSLA</a>
Deaths	County Clerk Office	County Registrations began 1914
	<a href="#">Tennessee Vital Records Office</a>	Keeps for 50 years then they are sent to <a href="#">TSLA</a>
	TSLA	<a href="#">1908-1912</a>
		<a href="#">1914-1933</a>
Land Deeds		County Registrations began 1870
	County Register	County Register of Deeds
List of Microfilmed Lake County Records	<a href="#">TSLA-PDF</a>	
Pension Applications	Tennessee State Archives & Library	<a href="#">County Index to Tennessee Confederate Pension Applications</a>
Probate Records	Chancery Court	County Registrations began 1870
Tennessee Enumeration of Male Voters	Ancestry.com (\$)	<a href="#">Tennessee Enumeration of Male Voters</a>
World War I Veterans	Tennessee State Archives & Library	Research Collection

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## County Repositories

[Ridgely Public Library](#)

[Facebook](#)

[Tiptonville Public Library](#)

[Facebook](#)

[Lake County TN Genealogical & Historical](#)

[West Tennessee Heritage Study Center](#)

## Current Area Information

[Lake County Chamber of Commerce](#)

[Lake County Government](#)

## Resources

### General

[Tennessee County Database \(TNGS\) – Lake County](#)

[Lake County Wiki \(Family Search\)](#)

[Linkpendium – Lake County](#)

[Tennessee State Library & Archives – Lake County Facts Sheet](#)

[TNGenWeb – Lake County](#)

[USGenWeb Archives – Lake County Tennessee](#)

### Newspapers

Tennessee State Archives & Library

[Check Online Catalog for Lake Newspaper Details & Dates Held.](#) We do not necessarily hold all published issues of the newspapers.

Lake County News

Lake County Banner

Tiptonville Ttimes

The Tiptonville News

Laker News

Clinch Valley Chronicle

Lake City Citizen

Camp Carnes Anti-bushwhacker

The Town Crier

Newspaper.com & Genalogybank.com

No holdings for Lake County, Tn. – Might Check Obion County for area news

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## Chronicling America

[Lake County banner and the Tiptonville times. \(Tiptonville, Tenn.\) 1936-1937](#)

[Lake County banner. \(Tiptonville, Tenn.\) 1937-current](#)

[Lake County banner. \(Ridgely, Tenn.\) 192?-1936](#)

[Lake County news. \(Tiptonville, Tenn.\) 190?-192?](#)

[The Tiptonville news. \(Tiptonville, Tenn.\) 192?-19??](#)

[Tiptonville times. \(Tiptonville, Tenn.\) 1929-1936](#)

## Tennessee State Archives & Library

### Selected Published County Histories

History and Families: Lake County, Tennessee, 1870-1992 (Lake County Historical Society, 1993) [*surname index*]\*

History of Tennessee From the Earliest Times to the Present: Together with a Historical and a Biographical Sketch of Gibson, Obion, Dyer, Weakley and Lake Counties (Goodspeed, 1978)\*

Lake County Memories: History in Newsprint and Pictures (Davis, 1998) [*surname index*]\*

### Published Local Records

1880 Census Lake County, Tennessee (Sistler, 2002) [*alphabetical by surname*]

Burnetts Chapel Baptist Church of Lake County, Tennessee: Its Formation, History, and Early Members (Hyde, 1997) [*name index*]

Churches of Lake County, Tennessee, Past and Present (Lake County Historical Society, 1986)

Dyer Co., Tennessee, Gibson Co., Tennessee, Lake Co., Tennessee, Obion Co., Tennessee, Weakley Co., Tennessee: Enumeration of Male Inhabitants of Twenty-One (Reed, 1990)

Lake County Veterans of World War II (Lake County Historical Society, 1998) [*alphabetical listings*]

Private Acts of Lake County, Tennessee (McIntyre, 1993)

Tiptonville City Cemetery (Lake County Historical Society, 1988) [*alphabetical listing*]

### Selected Manuscripts Material

Henley Collection. Lake County, 1968-1982 (Microfilm Manuscript #721, 1 reel)\*

### Maps

[TDOT Map of Lake County](#)

[Lake County - 1888](#)

[Map of Reelfoot Lake and land grants in Lake and Obion Counties - 1905](#)

[Map of Lake County, Tennessee for use of county health department - 1930's](#)

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## Cemeteries

[Lake County Cemeteries – Find-a Grave](#)

[Lake County Cemeteries - USGenWeb](#)

[Lake County Cemeteries – Genealogy Trails](#)

## Bibliography

[The Land Laws of Tennessee \(Whitney, 1891\) Google Books](#)

Library Titles	Author / Date	TSLA	GRH&GC	MPL
Churches of Lake County, TN, past & present. Compiled by the Lake County Hist. Soc. Tiptonville, the society, 1986. 78 pp.	LCHS, 1986	Y		
Donaldson, R.C. By gone days. N.p., n.d.		Y		
Franco, Alfred. Early inhabitants of this region. N.p., n.d.		Y		
Goodspeed's history of TN (Lake County, pp. 852-857, 1073-1087). Goodspeed, 1887.	Goodspeed, 1887	Y		Y
History & families of Lake County, TN, 1870-1992. Paducah, KY, Turner Pub. Co., 1993. 160 pp.	1993	Y		
Hyde, Abigail R. Memories of the 1937 flood in Lake County, TN. Ripley, Harmon Pub., 1989. 78 pp.	1989	Y		
The stories they tell. Tiptonville, Lake County Hist. Soc., 1988. 113 pp.	1988	Y		
Reelfoot Lake / New Madrid Earthquake				
Burt, Jesse. "Reelfoot Lake-- child of violence." Natural Hist. (Feb. 1955), pp. 95-114.	Burt, 1955	Y		
Carter, John P. Life & lore of Reelfoot Lake. George Peabody College dissertation, 1958. 92 pp.	Carter, George, 1958	Y		
Clifton, Juanita as told to Lou Harshaw. Reelfoot & the New Madrid quake. Asheville, NC, Victor Pub. Co., 1980. 84 pp.	Clinton, John, 1958	Y		
Fuller, Myron L. The New Madrid Earthquake. Washington, U.S. Geological Survey Bulletin 494, 1912 (reprinted 1992), 119 pp.	Fuller, Myron, 1912	Y		
Humphreys, Cecil C. "The formation of Reelfoot Lake & consequent land & social problems." WTHSP 14 (1960), pp. 32-73.	Humphreys, Cecil, 1960	Y		
Humphreys, Cecil C. The history of the Reelfoot Lake region. UT thesis, 1938. pp.	Humphreys, Cecil, 1938	Y		
Lowe, Walter E. History of Reelfoot Lake. George Peabody College thesis, 1930. pp.	Lowe, Walter, 1930	Y		

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McGill, J.T. & W.W. Craig. "The ownership of Reelfoot Lake." J. TN Acad. Sci. 8 (1933), pp. 13-21.	McGill, JT, 1933	Y		
Mueller, Myrl R. Lost in the annals: history & legends of the New Madrid earthquake of 1811-1812. Paragould, AR, the author, 1990. 173 pp.	Mueller, Myrl, 1990	Y		
Nelson, Wilbur A. "Reelfoot-- an earthquake lake." Nat. Geog. Mag. (Jan. 1924), pp. 95-114.	Nelson, Wilbur, 1924	Y		
Purcell, Martha G. Birth of Reelfoot Lake & the legend of Kalopin. Paducah, KY, Paducah Printing, 1929. 19 pp.	Purcell, Marhta, 1929	Y		
Taylor, Hillsman. "The night riders of west TN." WTHSP 6 (1952), pp. 77-86.	Taylor, Hillsman, 1952	Y		
Vanderwood, Paul J. "Night riders of Reelfoot Lake." THQ 28 (1969), pp. 126- 140.	Vaderwood, Paul, 1969	Y		
Van Dresser, C. "Reelfoot, a dying lake." Nature Mag. (Feb. 1955), pp. 90-93.	Van Dresser, C, 1955	Y		
Walker, Paul E. Illustrated history of Reelfoot Lake. Ridgely, the author, 1929. 30 pp.	Walker, Paul, 1929	Y		
Algee, Isabelle R. History of First United Methodist Church of Ridgely. Ridgely, the author, 1986. 28 pp.	Algee, Isabel, 1986	Y		
Callis, Ruby. Ridgely panorama. N.p., 1967. 113 pp.	Calis, Ruby 1967	Y		
Algee, Isabelle Rogers. <i>The Shull family of Lake County, Tennessee and allied families</i> . Tiptonville, Tenn.: Banner Printing Company, ©1998.	Algee, Isabelle Rogers, 1998		Y	
Algee, Ralph Sands. <i>Crockett Chapel Cemetery: Crockett Chapel United Methodist Church, Lake County, Tennessee</i> . Tiptonville, Tennessee: Banner Printing Company, ©2002.	Algee, Ralph Sands, 2002		Y	
Bailey, Loretta. <i>Lake County, Tennessee circuit court minutes, March 1892-March 1895</i> . Germantown, Tennessee: The Tennessee Genealogical Society, [2015?].	Bailey, Loretta, 2015		Y	
Callis, Ruby. <i>Ridgely panorama</i> . [Place of publication not identified]: [Publisher not identified], ©1967.	Callis, Ruby, 1967		Y	
Davis, Emily. <i>Lake County memories: history in newsprint and pictures</i> . Humboldt, Tennessee: Rose Publishing Company, ©1998.	Davis, Emily, 1998		Y	
Goodspeed Publishing Company. <i>History of Tennessee: from the earliest times to the present; together with an historical and a biographical sketch of Gibson, Obion, Dyer, Weakley and Lake Counties;</i>	Goodspeed, 2006		Y	

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Griffith, Cary J. <i>Lost in the wild: danger and survival in the North woods</i> . St. Paul: Borealis Books, an imprint of the Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2006.	Griffith, Cary J, 2006		Y	
Hyde, Abigail R. <i>2008 yearbook of the Lake County Tennessee Historical Society</i> . Tiptonville, TN: Lake County Historical Society, 2008.	Hyde, Abigail R., 2008		Y	
Hyde, Abigail Rice Chadwick. <i>Burnetts Chapel Baptist Church of Lake County, Tennessee: its formation, history, and early members</i> . Tiptonville, Tennessee: Banner Printing Company, ©1997.	Hyde, Abigail R., 1997		Y	
Lake County Historical Society (TN). <i>Lake County Historical Society 1988-89 yearbook</i> . [Tiptonville, TN]: [Lake County Historical Society], 1989?.	1989		Y	
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Tennessee. Circuit Court (Lake County). <i>Lake County Circuit Court: minutes, civil and criminal</i> . Nashville, Tennessee: Tennessee State Library and Archives, [Date of publication not identified].			Y	
<i>History and families, Lake County, Tennessee, 1870-1992</i> .	LCHS			Y
<i>Lake County veterans of World War II / compiled by the members of the Lake County Historical Society</i> .	LCHS			Y
<i>Marriage records of Lake County [Tenn. Books 1, C-G, Nov. 1883-1941. Copied by Roxie Helton Patterson]</i>	Patterson, Roxie Helton.			Y
<i>A promise of good things : Longfield Baptist Church 1831-1981 / Edith Wilson Hutton</i> .	Hutton, Edith Wilson, 1981			Y
<i>Land Between the Lake[s] cemeteries / James L. Douthat</i> .	Douthat, James L.			Y
<i>The Dale Hollow Lake graves</i>	Norris, Gary Denton.			Y
<i>Tiptonville City cemetery, Tiptonville, Tennessee : census / by Ralph Sands Algee &amp; Isabelle Rogers Algee ; edited by Isabelle Rogers Algee</i> .	Algee, Ralph Sands.			Y