

**Innovation in History: Impact and Change**  
**2010 History Day theme**  
**Related Tennessee Topics**

**Good Roads Movement**

Beginning in the early 1900s and culminating in the 1920s, the Good Roads Movement organized to improve Tennessee's economic future by creating new roads and connecting rural areas with cities. New roads attracted millions of tourists, gave rural folks access to the cultural entertainment and educational opportunities in the city, and broke the monopoly railroads had on transporting goods in Tennessee.

**Tennessee Centennial Exposition**

It was held in Nashville in 1897 to celebrate 100 years of statehood. It was the largest Southern exposition. The design of the park grounds inspired the City Beautiful Movement. For the exposition, they built a replica of the Parthenon of ancient Greece. This brought, and continues to bring, tourists to Nashville.

**A.H. Patch**

A.H. Patch created the Black Hawk Corn Sheller in Clarksville, Tennessee in 1886. It was a huge success and it revolutionized how corn was shelled, making work faster and easier. Its portable and inexpensive nature made it possible for each small farmer to purchase their own. It permanently changed corn production as millions of this award-winning sheller were sold around the world.

**Tennessee Valley Authority**

The TVA was created as part of Roosevelt's New Deal to bring the U.S. out of the Great Depression. "TVA developed fertilizers, taught farmers how to improve crop yields, and helped replant forests, control forest fires, and improve habitat for wildlife and fish. The most dramatic change in Valley life came from the electricity generated by TVA dams. Electric lights and modern appliances made life easier and farms more productive. Electricity also drew industries into the region, providing desperately needed jobs."

**Miniature Golf**

Garnet Carter was the first person to patent a game of miniature golf which he called "Tom Thumb Golf" in 1927. It was located at Lookout Mountain in Tennessee.

**Piggly Wiggly**

The first Piggly Wiggly grocery store was opened in September 1916 in Memphis by Clarence Saunders. It was the first self-service grocery chain. With products sitting next to each other on shelves, customers could compare them, making it important for items to be attractive and cheaper. Piggly Wiggly was also the first grocery to have refrigerated food cases. By 1922, the company operated twelve hundred stores in twenty-nine states thus revolutionizing the way groceries were marketed and sold in America

**DeFord Bailey**

He was the first African American to play on the Grand Ole Opry, and he participated in the very first recording session in Nashville.

**Elvis Presley**

King of rock n' roll, this Memphis native transformed American popular music and culture during the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century. His innovative ideas left a strong and creative impression on American cultural history forever.

**Lester Flatt**

Lester Flatt is said to be one of the reasons bluegrass music is successful today. His long career with Earl Scruggs and earlier with Bill Monroe made him a legend, and his strong rhythm guitar playing helped make bluegrass music the identifiable entity that it is.

**Coca Cola Bottling Company**

Benjamin F. Thomas and Joseph Whitehead opened the Chattanooga Bottling Company in Chattanooga, the first soft drink bottling company in the US. The bottling of Coca-Cola paved the way for mass production of soft drinks and permanently changed the way we consume soda throughout the world.

**Tow Truck**

The first tow truck was created by Ernest Holmes in Chattanooga in 1915. He manufactured more and used them to create his own business of transporting sold cars to their new owners.

**Highlander Folk School**

It was a training school in Monteagle, Tennessee for activists in the organized labor and Civil Rights movement between the 1930s and 1960s.

**Scopes Trial**

The Scopes Trial took place in Dayton Tennessee. The jury was to decide the fate of John Scopes, a biology teacher. He had been charged with teaching evolution in his classroom. It was the first live radio broadcast of a trial.

**Ida B. Wells**

Wells sued a railroad company who forced her to move on the train and won. She wrote against racial injustice and eventually helped found the NAACP.

**Uncle Dave Macon (1870-1952)**

As the first performer on America's Grand Old Opry, Uncle Dave Macon took Banjo playing and American minstrel singing to new levels. His innovative new styles in music and performance during his era helped shape the evolution of country music to the present day.

### **The Birth of Country Music- The Bristol Sessions (1927)**

Held in Bristol, TN, the recording sessions by the Victor Talking Machine Company carried American music into a new revolutionary era. The birth of country music began in the inventive spirit of local Tennessee folk music.

### **The Rayon Plant Strike in Elizabethton, TN (1929)**

In 1929, at the beginning of the Great Depression, many people struggled to keep their jobs. With dissatisfied working wage and conditions, small strikes led to the formation of the Local 1630 of the United Textile Union of America, and a huge massive walk out. These beginnings helped bring about the innovation of labor laws and labor unions throughout all of East Tennessee that would echo throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

### **WSM/The Grand Ole Opry**

Country music's first creation, the Grand Ole Opry was the leading voice in innovative country music from the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and has continued as the oldest live radio broadcast in American history.

**Cordell Hull** served 12 yrs as FDR's Secretary of State and was the chief architect of the United Nations.

### **Fisk Jubilee Singers**

Fisk University opened in Nashville in 1866, and was the first American University to offer liberal arts to men and women of all races. In 1871 a group of singers left Nashville to tour and raise money for the university. They became world renowned.

### **Oak Ridge and Manhattan Project**

Oak Ridge brought about a transformation in modern scientific research. Utilizing the knowledge of international academic scientists, the technological expertise of the American industrial community, and the funding of the federal government, Oak Ridge portended the future of science. The work done at Oak Ridge was pioneering in the nuclear age. Oak Ridge also brought about a significant change to higher education in Tennessee and attracted more technologically related businesses to Tennessee. The result of the Manhattan project also drastically impacted international diplomacy.

### **James K. Polk and the Innovative Spirit of American Expansion**

One of President Polk's most creative characteristics was his spirit of expansion. During Polk's Presidency, through his innovative thinking and negotiating, he acquired the Pacific Northwest which eventually would become Oregon, Washington, Idaho, and parts of Montana and Wyoming.

### **Bessie Smith (1892-1937)**

Born in Chattanooga, TN, Bessie Smith was one of the leading innovators of Jazz music in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Known as the "Empress of Jazz," she was one of the most popular female jazz singers of her time.

### **Robert Penn Warren (1905-1989)**

American poet and novelist, Robert Penn Warren was a leading innovative voice in Post WWII American literature. His most famous novel, *All the Kings Men*, won the Pulitzer Prize in 1947, and he remains to be the only writer who received the Pulitzer in both fiction and poetry.

### ***I'll Take My Stand* (1930)**

A group of 12 Southern writers and intellectuals who called themselves the Agrarians, came together at Vanderbilt University to comprise a collection of essays entitled, *I'll take My Stand*. This collection of essays was a direct reaction against Southern illiteracy and the popular view that the South was void of intellectual thought. These men helped begin the innovation of the Southern Renaissance in American literature.

### **Casey Jones (1863-1900)**

This legendary engineer hailed from Jackson, Tennessee and quickly rose to his position as Engineer through his hard work and innovative skills. Casey Jones served his highest position as the Locomotive Engineer for I.C Railroading, and was known to be the best in the business. He was also known for the creative invention of his own personal train whistle. Binding six thin tubes together, he created a distinctive tone, that let others know when he was always coming.

### **The Memphis Jug Band & Gus Cannon's Jug Stompers**

Jug Band music was one of the most innovative styles of music in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century; especially in Western Tennessee. Field hands and migrant workers all flocked to the Memphis area to play music and create culture, and the jug band genre was created out of this urban setting. From Guitars and Harmonics, to washboards and kazoo's, jug band music from Tennessee was a distinctive type of blues that had never been popularized until the 1920s.

### **Chet Atkins and the Invention of the "Nashville Sound"**

Chet Atkins was a pioneer performer on the Grand Ole Opry in the early 1940s, and soon developed a style of guitar playing that would later be known as the "Nashville Sound." He was a prominent Nashville musician and was the first manager of the famous Victor RCA recording studio on Music Row. His guitar styles and recording techniques inspired and changed the Nashville recording industry forever.

### **Kitty Wells**

Known as the "Queen of Country Music," her first hit, "It Wasn't God who Created Honky Tonk Angels," made her the first female country singer to top the U.S country charts. Her innovative and creative talent has made her one of the most successful country music singers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

### **East Tennessee Iron Manufacturing Company and Bluff Furnace**

The East Tennessee Iron Manufacturing Company operated on the cutting edge of iron making technology from its founding in 1847 until the Civil War ended its operation. Its location in Chattanooga directed the future of that city and the surrounding region.

### **Gibson Guitars**

Established in Nashville in 1896, Gibson Guitars has created many new instruments that have changed the way instruments are created and music is played and heard.

### **Sequoyah and the Cherokee Syllabary**

Sequoyah created a new system of writing that led to the preservation of hundreds of years of Cherokee history and literacy for the Cherokee people. He was the first known individual to create a totally new system of writing, and was the first to create a system of writing for the Native Americans.

### **Sun Records**

Sun Records in Memphis, Tennessee impacted the evolution of American rock music by combining working-class gospel, white hillbilly, and black rhythm and blues music to introduce the world to Rockabilly music. Sun Records is responsible for the rise of stars like Elvis Presley, Johnny Cash, Roy Orbison, and Carl Perkins.

### **Gerard P. Troost**

Troost became the State Geologist in 1831 and led Tennessee to become the 4<sup>th</sup> state to undertake geological mapping. Under his direction, Tennessee became the only state to finish geological mapping and Troost and his students went on to map 10 other states. Troost and his students taught at colleges and universities throughout the country and helped contribute to the rise of interest in geology during the early 19<sup>th</sup> century.

### **First Women's Bank in Clarksville**

It was a financial institution created, directed, and staffed entirely by women. Its opening produced a sensation, and deposits totaling twenty thousand dollars came in the first day. The bank was established at a time when women had recently experienced successes in their war efforts and in the temperance movement and were moving ever closer to gaining the vote.

**Fedex** is the largest express transportation company in the world, and they are headquartered in Memphis. By 1983 it was the first U.S corporation to achieve \$ 1 billion in revenues.