

# Unicoi Turnpike Trail

## 3. Sequoyah Birthplace Museum



**Then** – Sequoyah, inventor of the Cherokee syllabary, was born around 1776 in what was then the Overhill town of Tuskegee. He grew up in the midst of the American Revolution. Like many other Overhill Cherokees, Sequoyah and his family left to find refuge in the Chickamauga settlements of Alabama, where several of his kinsmen were leaders. Sequoyah recognized that his nation’s illiteracy was a legal obstacle in the struggle to preserve Cherokee lands so he developed a way to render the Cherokee language in written form. The Cherokee “alphabet” was introduced to the world with the publication of the Cherokee Phoenix, a bilingual newspaper that was published in New Echota (Georgia). Although Tuskegee was the birthplace of Sequoyah, other Overhill Cherokee towns of prominence were located near here as well, including Chota and Tanasi, both of which served as capitals of the Cherokee Nation. The State of Tennessee takes its name from Tanasi.

**Now** – Museum exhibits focus on the lifeways of the Overhill Cherokees and the accomplishments of Sequoyah. The waters of Tellico Lake now cover the old Overhill villages of Chota and Tanasi but memorials to honor both towns are located alongside the lake about 12 miles from the museum. Special events and programs take place at the museum year round. Authentic Cherokee crafts can be purchased at the museum gift shop.

576 Hwy 360  
Vonore, TN 37885  
423-884-6246

[www.sequoyahmuseum.org](http://www.sequoyahmuseum.org)

Hours: Mon-Sat, 9:00-5:00; Sun,  
Noon-5:00