

NORTH OF THE RIVER Fall Driving Tour

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The section of Sevier County north of the French Broad River was isolated from the rest of the county until 1942 when TVA moved a bridge from Dandridge to the west side of Douglas Dam. Today, that section of the county, known as Kodak, serves as the main gateway to downtown Sevierville and Great Smoky Mountains National Park. The city limits of Sevierville extend north through Kodak all the way to Interstate-40 along Winfield Dunn Parkway (TN Hwy #66) which is dotted with everything from lodging to retail shops. Thousands of visitors pass through daily; few see the backroads of Kodak beyond the main highway. This drive takes you through some of the most picturesque rolling hills and mountain vistas in East Tennessee.

Kodak got its name from a trademark. After his appointment as postmaster in 1892, Harvey Underwood was asked to search for a name. Soon afterwards, as Underwood was walking, he saw a box along his path with the word Kodak stamped on it. The reasons for choosing Kodak were because it would be short and easy to pronounce.

1. This tour begins at the **Sevierville Visitor Center**, at 3099 Winfield Dunn Parkway. Take a few minutes to park your car and go inside. The friendly staff will be happy to answer questions before you start. The visitor center has several museum quality exhibits worth taking time to see while you are there.
2. Take a right out of the parking lot and travel south on Winfield Dunn Pkwy to the next traffic light and turn right onto Douglas Dam Road

(TN Hwy # 139). Immediately on the left is the historic Henry's Crossroads Cemetery adjacent to The Crossings Church at 2941 Douglas Dam Road. The church was originally **Henry's Crossroads United Methodist Church** until the congregation merged with other Methodist churches in the community and moved to a new location. If you want to stroll through the cemetery, search for the flat gravestone marking the graves of William and Laura Whaley who were murdered by the vigilante White Caps in 1896.

3. Turn left onto Douglas Dam Road. You will soon pass by **Yarberry Farm*** on the left. The farm has been owned by several generations of the Dr. Horace Yarberry family. It is believed to be the largest intact farm in Sevier County. The acreage extends from Douglas Dam Road to the French Broad River. On a clear day, a beautiful view of the Smoky Mountains can be seen in the background.

4. Continue traveling to the next intersection, turn left onto Bent Road and continue to 3587 Bent Road. On the left is **Mountain View Farm***. This well-maintained farm is owned by R.M.(Dick) and Marlee Ewers. Mountain View Farm is one of the most scenic farmsteads in the county with well-maintained fencing, pastureland, and buildings. Look for horses and other livestock grazing in the fields.

5. Stay on Bent Road until you reach Pollard Road and turn left. Turn right onto Pollard Cemetery Road and drive to **Pollard Cemetery** at the top of the hill, 3740 Pollard Cemetery Road. As you circle the rural burying ground observe the stunning views of the mountains in the distance. Look for a small white clapboard building with a tin roof among the monuments. This little building covers the graves of Dr. V. Fuquay Pollard and his wife, Elizabeth Cate. When Elizabeth died in 1892, Dr. Pollard erected the structure to shelter

his beloved wife's grave from the elements. Nearby is a small, weathered monument marking the grave of Walter Underwood. When Underwood died in 1911, his funeral procession arrived by steamboat at nearby Underdown Ferry Crossing where his casket was loaded on a wagon hauled by mules to the cemetery.

6. Return to Pollard Road and turn left. Continue to the intersection where the street changes names and becomes Kodak Road. Drive to the new state-of-the-art **American Eagle Foundation**, at 510 Kodak Road. The facility is the home of Challenger, the famous eagle who has soared over Presidential Inaugurations, football stadiums and other events and venues. With a pre-purchased ticket, you are welcome to go inside to enjoy a guided tour of the raptor center and watch the four world-famous nest cams.

7. Turn right out of the parking lot and go to where Kodak Road makes a sharp right turn. Keep your eyes open for stunning views of the distant mountains beyond the French Broad River. At 9610 Kodak Road, **Island Pointe Golf Club** is on the left. Spectacularly set on 175 acres, bald eagles soar high above the river and pedestrian bridges link golfers between the island and other side of the river.

8. Travel a short distance and you will see **Bethel United Methodist Church** on your left at 9400 Kodak Road. The white clapboard church with a striking red door was built in 1888. The building at the back of the church was once a schoolhouse. The church is in an area once called Dug Hollow and was said to be haunted in days past. Over a century ago, Bruce Underwood was riding his horse near the church when he was caught in a severe thunderstorm. He stopped and went inside to get out of the downpour. As the lightning flashed inside the church, an alarmed Bruce

observed a scary-looking, ragged figure ambling toward him. As she came closer, to his great relief, he recognized Rindy Bailey, an infamous local vagrant known as Ramblin' Rindy. The church was probably the most elegant accommodations poor Rindy ever found to pass an inclement night.

9. A few feet beyond the church, turn left onto Kelley Lane and travel to where the road ends at the entrance to **Seven Islands State Birding Park**. This is a great opportunity to get out of the car, stretch your legs, visit a restroom, go on one of the hiking trails, or have a picnic. The diverse natural landscape of aquatic and grassland habitats makes this park a premier birding destination with more than 190 species of birds sighted. The park encompasses 416 acres along the French Broad River. This peninsula of land features more than eight miles of natural trails, rolling hills, and views of the Smoky Mountains. In addition to being a wildlife refuge, the park is a research and educational facility and a demonstration area for land use and habitat management techniques. Songbirds, hawks, and waterfowl can be seen along the meadow trails and several old barns are a favorite refuge for Barn Owls. For paddlers and anglers, there is a small canoe/kayak launch that provides access to the French Broad River.

The North of the River Driving Tour ends here. The quickest return route is to turn right onto Kodak Road and follow it all the way back to Winfield Dunn Parkway. Turn right to return to the Sevierville Visitor Center which will soon come into view on the right.

***Please remember, some points of interest on the self-guided Fall Driving Tour are private. Please enjoy their history and the view from the comfort of your vehicle.**