

## Useful Maps: Tennessee State Department of Transportation; Tennessee Valley Authority

by Paula Gammell

Nowadays there's so many alternatives to the old paper maps but I find these two remain as useful as ever.

### Tennessee State Department of Transportation County Highway Maps

These maps are rather basic. They are just in black and white; one county is shown per map.

Of course they show roads, including small trails, and even some abandoned ones. And, most usefully, they show locations of cemeteries and churches. Try highlighting all the cemeteries in one area and tracing over the watercourses in blue.

You can download these for free at the Tennessee Department of Transportation website. Or you can purchase them for 50¢ each, plus a nominal amount for shipping. Details here: [www.tdot.state.tn.us/Maps/county/default.htm](http://www.tdot.state.tn.us/Maps/county/default.htm) and also see here: [www.tdot.state.tn.us/maps.htm](http://www.tdot.state.tn.us/maps.htm).

### Tennessee Valley Authority Quadrangle Maps

These maps, at a scale of 1:24,000, are much more detailed. Each map spans, very roughly, 7 by 8 1/2 miles. They take a bit of getting used to, but once you do, you'll wonder how you ever did without them. They are in color – mostly white, green, and blue – green shows tree cover and blue shows rivers, lakes, and creeks.

There is so much information on these maps! They show buildings and they differentiate between houses, barns, churches, and so forth, they show locations of cemeteries and often the names of cemeteries, and they show elevation, with 20' contours. Combine all this, and you can easily see why settlement patterns happened as they did: of *course* people settled along this creek; see how steep the mountain rises behind it!

TVA updates these every couple of decades or so, and the new material is added in purple. They do still have some of the original ones, and I would recommend also getting the earliest version available.

These maps cost \$9.00 apiece, plus \$5 for shipping. Their website is here: <https://maps.tva.com>.

Since there can be 12 or 15 maps per county, or more, you'll probably want to start with just a few. To find which maps you need, start by clicking on the first option in the list at the left, "Topographic Maps," then type in a town or area in the search box. You'll get a few options; you can easily choose the one you are interested in. So far, so good.

Now if you want the adjacent maps – well, good luck with finding them quickly. If you give up trying, they've provided a number to call for help. (If you have access to it, "Place Names of Tennessee," by Ralph O. Fullerton, 1974, Tennessee Department of Conservation, quickly and easily shows which maps cover each county.)

Once you determine which map you need, now you can see if there are any old versions left. To find out, click on "Historic Maps" at the top left of their main page. TVA also has, as you can see, many, many other maps, including Tennessee maps at other scales, navigation maps, maps for other southeastern states, and more, so browse around and see what else you might be interested in.

So the county maps are more convenient to use; the TVA maps are more detailed. They are each useful by themselves, but I like to use them together because sometimes I find a feature or name on one map but not the other.