Bridge Burners’ Civil War Bike Ride – Rated Easy

Starting location is the cemetery and monument on Pottertown Road. Parking and benches with a little shade are available. Distances were measured with a bike odometer and are fairly accurate. From 11E, turn onto Bridge Burners’ Blvd. At the stop sign, turn left. The cemetery and monument are a short distance on the left.

1. Left - onto Pottertown Road
2. Right - onto Gravel Woods Road – first road
3. One small incline prior to the railroad tracks
4. Ride 1.2 miles
5. Right - onto McDonald Road
6. Ride .9 miles
7. Left - onto Bible’s Chapel Road
8. Ride 3.1 miles
9. Right - onto South Mohawk Road
10. Ride .4 miles
11. Left - onto Concord Road
12. Ride 1.8 miles to a stop sign
13. Right - onto McDonald Road – A convenience store is at this stop sign but is closed on Sundays
14. Ride 1.2 miles
15. Left - onto North Mohawk Road
16. Ride 4.1 miles – A convenience store is on the left about halfway
17. Right - onto Pottertown Road
18. Ride 1.8 miles to starting point

Greene County’s Civil War Bike Trail

Greeneville/Greene County Tourism
115 Academy Street
Greeneville, TN 37743
(423)638-4111
www.VisitGreenevilleTN.com

Wheel Sports is a locally owned bicycle shop. Enjoy the Civil War Bike trail to the fullest with a bike rental! For reservations, call: 423-638-1570

John Solomon Armstrong, Owner/Operator

MAUD’s RED ROOF KITCHEN
3305 McDonald Rd
Midway, TN 37809
423-235-6775
http://www.facebook.com/maudsrk

Located on State Route 34B between mile marker 6 & 7.

Made possible by support from the Eastman Kodak Company and The Conservation Fund.
Traveling on the Bridge Burner Boulevard through rural western Greene County, this trail is typical of the countryside in 1861 that saw much of the bitter conflict between the “Old Government” (Union) and those who embraced the newly-created Confederacy. The community known as “Pottertown” where this trail begins was a Union stronghold with most of the pottery-making families supporting that cause; however, there was at least one family of potters who leaned toward the Confederacy. This division of allegiance was quite common throughout Greene County and East Tennessee from 1861 to 1865.

The old Harmon Family Cemetery is the burial place of three of the “Pottertown Bridge-burners.” It is now located in Mosheim (once known as Blue Springs) which was the site of a sizeable engagement between Union and Confederate forces on October 10, 1863. The foundation of the conflict was to gain control of the East Tennessee & Virginia Railroad passing through this area. The bridge over Lick Creek that was burned by Union sympathizers can still be seen today on this tour.

Leaving the Harmon Family Cemetery where the tour begins, bikers will travel across Gravel Woods Road where the schoolhouse for the (1880s era) M.P. Harmon pottery-making operation once sat on the left hand side, about 200 yards after entering the road.

The railroad crossing marks the 1856 approximate division of the land of Jacob Harmon, Jr., who owned the land between the cemetery and the railroad, and the land of C. A. Haun, who owned the land on the right after crossing the railroad. Both men were hanged by Confederate authorities in late 1861 for “bridge burning.”

Turn right on McDonald Road and travel through the flat country on the right, known since the 1770s as “The Swan Ponds.” The men who were still able-bodied after the Battle of King’s Mountain in late 1780 assembled here at this spot with Col. John Sevier. Their objective was to march to the Cherokee towns on the Little Tennessee River to destroy the winter food supply of the Indians, a successful attempt to avoid a planned Indian attack on the Watauga and Nolichucky settlements, weakened after the fight at King’s Mountain.

After riding through the well-kept farmland along Bible’s Chapel Road for about two miles, turn and ride a short distance to Concord Road traveling on to Concord Baptist Church which was organized in 1823. The cemetery here holds the remains of many early settlers of western Greene County, including the body of executed potter C. A. Haun, and many of his ancestors and family members. Several other Civil War soldiers are interred here.

On the right of November 8, 1861, a group of neighbors gathered at the home of Jacob Harmon to meet with Captain David Fry, who had just arrived from Kentucky. He came to the Harmon home with orders to burn the nearby Lick Creek Bridge of the East Tennessee & Virginia Railroad. The bridge was burned about 2 a.m. on November 8, 1861. The secret plan to burn several railroad bridges in East Tennessee had just been approved by President Abraham Lincoln. The president vowed to send an invading force into East Tennessee to protect the bridge burners and their families.

After leaving Concord Church, the old Thula Post Office and Store is on the left. This old store was run for many years by the Etter family and later by “Uncle Will” Douthat, who was the grandfather of “Hee Haw” comedian and singer Archie Campbell.

On the left, the community store building at the intersection with McDonald Road at Fairview Church. A turn here goes back through the rural area to Crosby Crossroads where the trail will turn left onto North Mohawk Rd and proceed to the small village of Mohawk. In the 1940s and ‘50s, Mohawk had an active grammar school, post office, depot, grain elevator, three stores and one of the largest Chevrolet dealerships in East Tennessee. Today only the post office remains. The second building on the left leaving Mohawk was once a thriving bank until its demise in 1929, a forerunner of the Great Depression.

The self-serve egg house is a great benefit to the community. Some customers stop-by on a regular basis and others just stop occasionally.

After leaving Mohawk on North Mohawk Road, bikers will soon cross Lick Creek, and a short distance later, the Lick Creek Railroad Bridge is visible on the right across the Lick Creek bottoms. It was here that the railroad bridge of the East Tennessee & Virginia Railroad was burned the morning of November 9, 1861. This act, in an attempt to aid the Union cause in East Tennessee, cost the lives of five local men who were hanged by Confederate authorities. It also destroyed most of the pottery-making families of “Pottertown” where this trip began.

Ride on to Pottertown Road where a right turn will lead back to the beginning point at Harmon Family Cemetery.

Farming has always been a very important part of life in this prime agricultural area of western Greene County. Burley tobacco and dairying were for decades, two of Greene County’s Civil War Bike Trail

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Farming has always been a very important part of life in this prime agricultural area of western Greene County. Burley tobacco and dairying were for decades, two of the mainstays that raised and educated families here, but now, for the most part, are no longer of prime importance. Poultry raising, grain and vegetable farming replaced a lot of that lost income. It seems life goes in cycles. In the early 1980s, Mohawk was a very important shipping point for poultry and eggs to New York and other eastern markets.

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