

Homeplace 1850s Working Farm and Living History Museum

LAND BETWEEN THE LAKES *National Recreation Area*



Welcome to the Homeplace

As you explore the farm, notice features used for survival and conservation. Ask questions of our living history interpreters as they do their daily farm chores. You can even lend a hand and join in on the farm fun!

Map Legend:

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|----------------------|--------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|
| 1 Accessible Path | 7 Wood Shed | 13 Single Pen House | 19 Hog Lot & Crib |
| 2 Front Field | 8 Vegetable Garden | 14 Ox Barn & Cribs | 20 Tool Barn |
| 3 Restrooms | 9 Corn Crib | 15 Blacksmith Shop | 21 Build-a-Cabin Activity |
| 4 Mule Pen & Pasture | 10 Garden Crib | 16 Chicken House | 22 Orchard |
| 5 Double Pen House | 11 Stock Barn | 17 Crop Field | |
| 6 Smoke House | 12 Creek | 18 Tobacco Barn | |

Please help us preserve and protect the Homeplace.

No smoking is allowed on the farm site. Do not feed or chase the animals. Treat historic structures and artifacts with care.

Leashed pets are welcome on the farm. Please clean up after your pet.

Programs offered daily.
See schedule inside the Interpretive Center.



The Homeplace 1850s Farm is an example of an Upper South “yeoman” or middle class family farm. Built for the hot climate, many features identify this as a southern farm: separate animal barns and pens, breezeways, and covered porches to provide shade for both man and beast. Learn about these historic structures as you explore the farm.

The Homeplace map features are listed in alphabetical order:

Blacksmith Shop | Farms had small blacksmith shops to make or repair farm equipment. Common activities included creating nails, tools, and household items, sharpening plow points, repairing metal tools, and shaping horseshoes.

Chicken House | This log crib provides a safe haven for the chickens and ducks. At night, chickens sleep on the horizontal poles/roosts. Boxes on the left provide a safe place for the chickens to lay eggs. The ducks make nests and sleep on the ground; there they also lay their eggs. Our heritage breeds include Dominique Chickens and Black Cayuga Ducks.

Corn Crib | Corn dominated southern agriculture in the 1850s. Corn not sold was stored on the cob for winter use for people and livestock.

Double Pen House | The most notable feature of this single family home is an open, central hallway that separates two equal sized “pens” or rooms. Families used one pen as living space, while the other pen - the parlor - welcomed visiting guests. The open central hallway faced the prevailing winds and served as a cool, shady setting for the family and guests.

Fences | Farmers fenced fields and yards to protect them from free-ranging domestic livestock and wildlife. Many types were used including rail, paling or rived board, and split rail snake fencing. Rural fences were “horse high, bull strong, and pig tight.”

Front Field and Crop Fields | While corn was king, tobacco served as an important cash crop as well. Farmers also planted other vegetables for resale. Yeoman farmers cultivated on average 40 acres of corn, earning enough income to make them middle class. Living between the Cumberland and Tennessee Rivers and close to the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers impacted farm life here in Pryor Creek. These rivers provided easy access to send cash crops to urban markets.

Hog Lot and Crib | Typically hogs free ranged and foraged for acorns, chestnuts, and hickory nuts. In the fall, farmers placed hogs in enclosures like this one to fatten them up for the winter slaughter. Yeoman farmers helped make Tennessee the number one hog producer in the United States during the 1850s.

Mule Pen and Pasture | Weighing around 1,500 lbs., mules were the draft animal of choice for pulling heavy loads. All mules have a horse mother and Jack (donkey) father, making their offspring hardier and more disease and heat tolerant than horses.

Orchard | Every family would have an orchard to provide fruit on the table. Our orchard consists of a variety of heirloom fruit trees, including Bartlett pear, Horse apple, and Sheep Nose apple.

Ox Barn and Cribs | This four-crib barn offers shelter for oxen. The two front cribs provide relief from summer heat and contain mangers for feeding. The loft stores hay and straw, and two back cribs store corn fodder. Oxen are trained to work together with a yoke. Oxen typically weigh about 2,500lbs and do the heaviest farm work.

Sheep | Sheep usually ranged free and were mostly used for their wool - either sold or used on the farm. Our Border Leicester sheep can be seen around the farm either grazing or in a pen.

Single Pen House and Crib | Known as the “first generation” house, early settlers commonly built a one room or single “pen” log home. By mid-century, kitchens were added.

Smoke House | Laying away a supply of meat for the next year began shortly after the first frost. Dry salt curing preserved the meat, while the smoking process flavored it.

Spring | This was the water source for the original farm. The spring house was added for the museum and dismantled in 2015 in efforts to revive the spring. While we have been unable to bring back the spring, we are researching alternatives.

Stock Barn with Breezeway and Loft | This barn has three stalls and a tack room for storing harnesses, saddles, and feed. The upper loft is for hay storage. Some of our livestock include rare and endangered breeds.

Tobacco Barn | Tobacco and corn served as cash crops in this region. Dark-fired tobacco’s name comes from the curing process. Farmers “fired” and “cured” this 13-month crop by building smoldering fires in floor trenches of the barn. It was the only commercial type raised here. By the 1860s, tobacco was a major cash crop in the area.

Tool Barn | This barn provided sheltered workspace for farmers to build home furnishings and repair farm implements. Farmers stored tools and equipment in one of the tool barn “cribs” while plows, wagons, and buggies stayed under a barn lean-to or in a breezeway.

Vegetable Garden and Crib | Large gardens provided the main source of produce. Families ate fresh vegetables or preserved them for winter use. The nearby crib stores bean poles, hoes, and other garden tools. We plant heirloom seeds that date back from before the Civil War.

Wood Shed | Oxen pulled logs from surrounding forests to use for the fireplace and wood stove. Large logs were stacked outside, while stove wood stayed dry in the wood shed.



Volunteer with the Homeplace
E-mail: volunteer@friendsofbl.org

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