Welcome to the historic city of Loudon, Tennessee. This delightful riverside village is brimming with history and hospitality. Here you can wander the picturesque streets, stop for ice cream, or indulge your appetite with a hearty dinner. Hot coffee and cool conversation, a gourmet lunch with a side of history, friendly residents, and gracious Southern charm are just a few of Loudon’s amenities. With its feet firmly rooted in the past and its eyes steadfastly focused on the future, the town has much to offer.

I n 1790, families began settling on the northern bank of the Tennessee River in what is now present-day Loudon, Tennessee. The Trembley, Carnahans, and Blairs were among those early settlers. At that time, this area was still part of North Carolina and it would be six years—June 1, 1796—before Tennessee became the 16th state.

A townsite called the Atlas made up two blocks in 1834, but it wasn’t until the mid-1830s that steamboats made regular stops in the area. By then, James, John and Wiley Blair had established a store, building homes and selling homes in the little settlement, which they dubbed Blair’s Ferry.

Although members of the community didn’t build it together and imprisoned, the settlement wasn’t without its share of strife. In accordance with certain provisions laid out in the Tennessee Purchase of 1796, a Cherokee chief named Pathkiller laid claim to the property on which James Blair had established his home and ferry. Blair was ordered off the land, butPathkiller was still living and the property remained in the hands of Pathkiller’s family for many years.

With both cultural traditions and economic value, Blair’s Ferry prospered. Numerous large ferries and numerous small rowboats ferried passengers and goods across the Tennessee River, making it shorter and faster to get to Knoxville than by road. Before the invention of the steam engine, all a flatboat could do was float; it needed a person to push it using long poles, which is why the riverboats were called “sailboats” in the early 1800s.

In 1794, the first stagecoach over the Tennessee River arrived at the Wiley Blair Home which was located on Pond Creek and I was sent to ride the mare back home. Mrs. Blair had traveled from the river to the railroad. In 1858, the name of the town was changed to Blair’s Ferry, which would become the town of Loudon.

Loudon County was originally part of Roane County, which was created by an act of the Union as the 16th State on December 13, 1795. Tennessee, the area was Cherokee country. The town would be named for John Louden, a Highland County, Virginia, man who settled here in 1764. John Louden was one of those men whose deeds are recorded in Loudon.

The Atlas was the first steamboat to pass up the river by about 1836, according to a newspaper article. The steam engine revolutionized the shipping industry. Steamboats proved to be cheap, convenient and efficient for travel on the river. The first steamboat to pass upriver by the Tennessee River was the Atlas.

By this time, steamboats are stopping at Blair’s Ferry, which was located at the mouth of the Tennessee River. At the present time, this area was still part of North Carolina and it would be six years—June 1, 1796—before Tennessee became the 16th state.

James H. Carmichael was born in Roswell, Georgia, in 1770, and married Melissa Clementine Johnston of Loudon. They moved to the Catholic Church and the Carmichael Inn were built along the riverbank as upscale establishments.

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The Union troops destroyed the town of Loudon, and the railroad bridge over the Tennessee River was burned. Union troops again burned the Loudon railroad bridge on October 7, 1864, and the bridge was not replaced until 1865. The Loudon Bridge was of vital importance to the Union. It was either take a boat or ride a stagecoach over dirt and mud roads. However, it was in the second half of the 1800’s, riverboats declined in significance.

The Civil War ended on April 12, 1865. By this time, steamboats were stopping at Blair’s Ferry, which was located at the mouth of the Tennessee River. At the present time, this area was still part of North Carolina and it would be six years—June 1, 1796—before Tennessee became the 16th state.