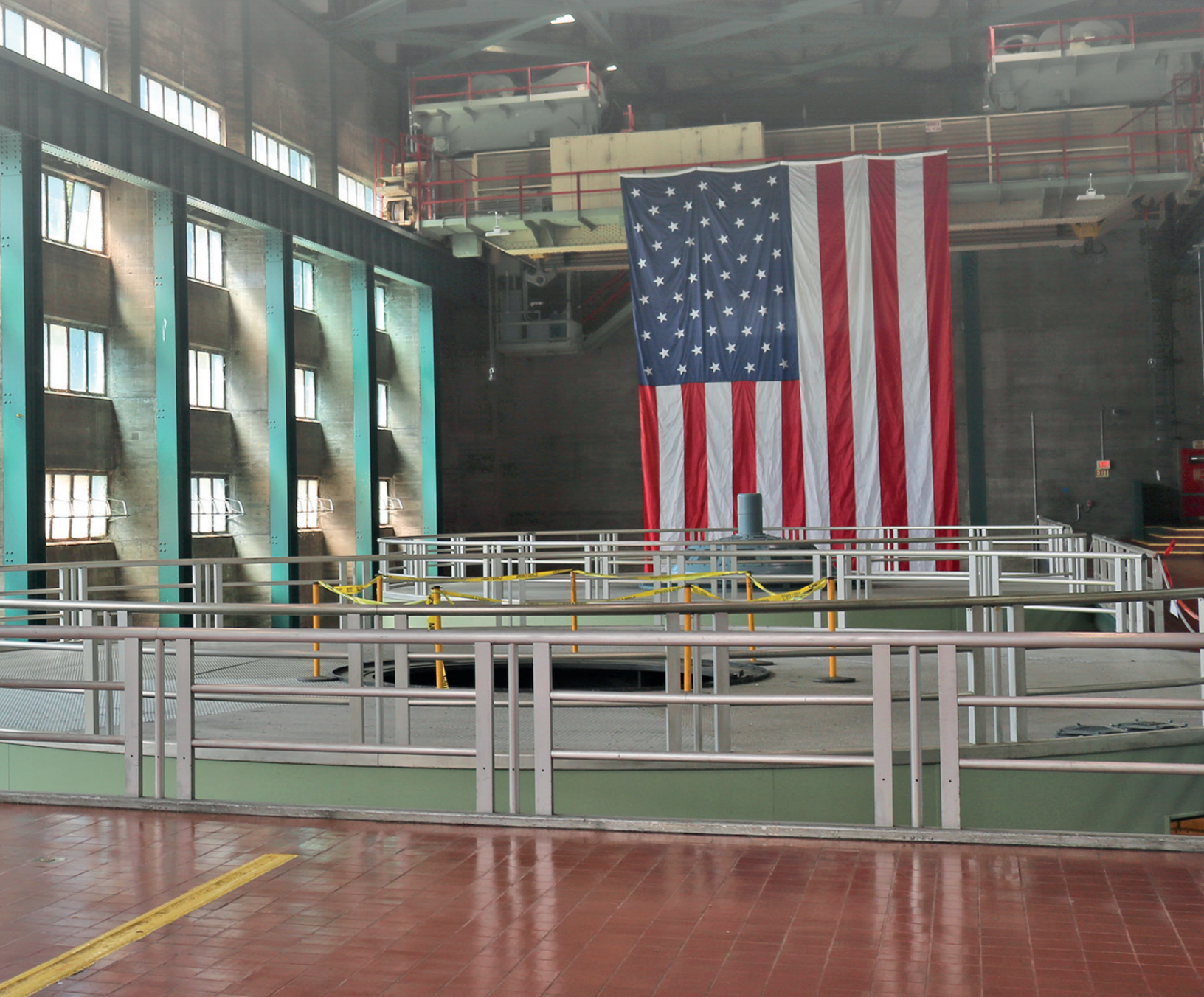




THE COURIER

TENNESSEE HISTORICAL COMMISSION, NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE

SUMMER 2025



In This Issue: Tennessee in its Big Dam Era, 2025 Certificate of Merit Awards Announced, Groundbreaking of Herbert Harper Visitor Center

TENNESSEE... IN ITS BIG DAM ERA

By Kelley Reid, Section 106 Coordinator



Figure 1 Norris Dam, featuring its central spillway Source: Tennessee Valley Authority

The Big Dam Era is characterized by large-scale government funding and design of hydroelectric power projects in the United States. In Tennessee, the beginning of this era coincides with the creation of the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) in 1933 and involved projects by both the TVA and the Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). Although this era lasted at least into the 1970s, this article will focus on the beginning of the era until the end of World War II.

Following World War I, many Americans were experiencing a time of prosperity. This led to a more individualistic attitude and less desire for interference from the federal government. The administrations over the next ten years made changes accordingly by rolling back pre-war social reforms and regulations. By the time the Great Depression hit in 1929, there were few government safety nets for those who had lost their jobs and savings. In response, Americans largely changed their opinion on government intervention over the next few years and were eager for assistance. When he was elected president, Franklin D. Roosevelt developed the New Deal program that was designed to provide jobs and relief to those in need.

President Roosevelt signed the TVA Act of 1933 on May 18 of that year, creating the Tennessee Valley Authority, a federal corporation. In the early 20th Century, even before the Great Depression, the Tennessee Valley region was one of the poorest areas in America. It faced severe economic, ecological, and social challenges, in large part due to the flooding of the Tennessee River, which destroyed topsoil — a devastating effect in an agricultural society. In 1933, during the Great Depression, President Franklin D. Roosevelt established the Tennessee Valley Authority. It would, he said, benefit “the general social and economic welfare of the Nation.”

Its first aim was to improve living and economic conditions in the seven Southeastern states the Authority served, by

providing affordable electricity, controlling the Tennessee River, and promoting soil conservation. Unemployment rates were particularly high in the region and crops had significantly dropped in value. Decades of poor farming practices further damaged the land making it harder for crops to grow. To make matters worse, many farms were suffering from significant erosion due to frequent flooding that washed rich topsoil away. Roughly once every decade, a catastrophic flood would impact farming areas, towns and cities. Teams at TVA set out to address these issues.

TVA began work on Norris Hydroelectric Project in Anderson County, TN in October 1933. The plan for this facility also included a planned town nearby where TVA employees would live and a freeway that connected Norris and the dam site to Knoxville. Norris is perhaps the best example of regional and town planning goals of the TVA architects and engineers.

The hydroelectric facility was initially designed by USACE but modified by Roland G. Wank who replaced the original design with a modernist, Streamline Moderne style. According to Avigail Sachs' *The Garden in the Machine*, “First, he rearranged the structural elements of the dam to produce a harmonious composition without undermining functionality. By locating the spillway in the center of the dam rather than on its eastern slope, he gave the dramatic waterway a central position in the view of visitors, while breaking the mass of the dam into a more complex, but still weighty, structure.” Modern architectural styles were not popular at the time but would become characteristic of many hydroelectric facilities built by TVA.

His colleagues, TVA Chairman Arthur Morgan and Earle Draper, along with their team, designed the town of Norris with just as much thought. The town was meant as a model for regional planning including modern houses, utilities, and community facilities. They employed ideas from the Garden City





Figure 2 Norris Dam Powerhouse Source: Hallie Hearnnes, Tennessee Valley Authority

Movement to create a walkable town surrounded by a protective greenbelt with central community spaces. In many ways, Norris embodied the future that TVA was striving to create for the Tennessee Valley although future projects were not carried out this scale.

The projects that followed were begun and constructed in quick succession with multiple projects under construction at once. Pickwick Landing Hydroelectric Project (Hardin County) was started in 1934 and completed in 1936, followed by Chickamauga Hydroelectric Project (Hamilton County) started in 1936 and completed in 1940, and Watts Bar Hydroelectric Project (Rhea and Meigs County) started in 1939 and completed in 1941. Watts Bar was the last of these projects begun before the start of World War II and was completed three weeks after the attack on Pearl Harbor.

Once the war began, the focus on power production in the valley was related to production to support the war effort. Watts Bar was one of several hydroelectric projects that supported the work underway at the labs in Oak Ridge. Although many resources were diverted to support the war effort, dam construction was deemed necessary to further support these efforts. However, some planned recreational facilities at these sites were delayed until the end of the war. Another four TVA dams were started and completed in TN during WWII. These facilities maintained the modern style shown in dams, powerhouses, and visitor centers built in the previous years. Notably, the focus on landscape design was lessened during this time although many of the same design principles were employed in the layout of buildings and design of visitor spaces.

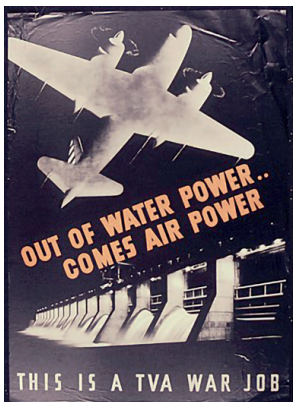


Figure 3 World War II era TVA poster Source: National Archives at College Park, College Park, Maryland

It should also be noted that the USACE was also constructing dams before and during war time, completing part of Dale Hollow Dam in 1943, but all other work on Dale Hollow, Center Hill, and Wolf Creek Dams was suspended until after the war.

The Tennessee River Valley was drastically changed by the installation of dams along the Tennessee River. While many dams had already been built by 1933, most of these dams were designed for small-scale energy production or flood control. Through the New Deal program, the entire Tennessee River Valley was altered to improve safety and livability. These modern facilities harkened change for the valley as a whole that would have been unlikely without the massive scale of planning sponsored by the federal government.



Figure 4 Watts Bar Control Building Source: Watts Bar Hydroelectric Project National Register Nomination Form

Thank you to TVA staff for their time and expertise in helping me put this article together.

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2025 CERTIFICATE OF MERIT AWARDS ANNOUNCED

By Caty Dirksen, Outreach Coordinator

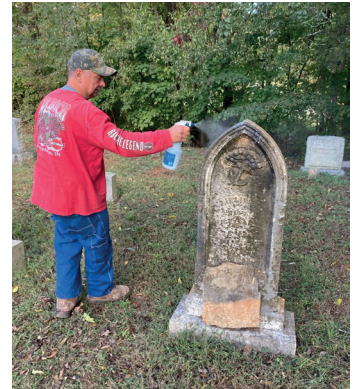
The Tennessee Historical Commission celebrates National Preservation Month each May by presenting Certificate of Merit Awards in recognition of exemplary work by individuals, groups, organizations, corporations, or governmental entities that further promote historic preservation or the study of history in Tennessee. Since 1975, THC's Certificate of Merit Program has solicited Merit Award nominations from the public. All nominations are judged by category.

The **Historic Preservation category** recognizes excellence in the preservation, restoration, or rehabilitation of a historic or archaeological site, preservation leadership, preservation planning, publications related to historic preservation, public programming, or research. The 2025 awards in this category goes to:

Bob Holliday, for the preservation of the African Methodist/Wyly Cemetery and Reagon Cemetery. Through GPR survey, these cemeteries were mapped, and burials will be able to be marked in future projects. Additional work was also completed to remove hazardous trees from the cemetery and a Cultural Resource Vegetation Plan was created for Johnsonville State Historic Park.

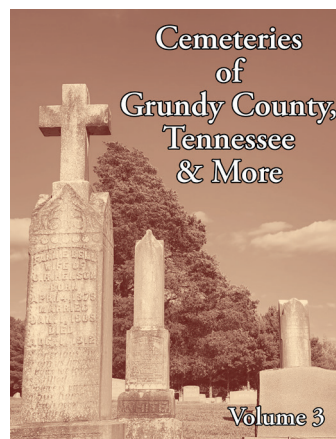


J. Channing Greene, for the preservation of numerous cemeteries around Newport, TN. Greene has conducted research on local cemeteries, cleaned headstones, removed vegetation, and placed flags on veteran's gravesites.



Serena Gilbert, for the preservation of the Promise Land Historic Site. Through a capital improvement project, Gilbert preserved the historic structure of the Promise Land School. In addition, through work with the Promise Land Heritage Association, Gilbert promoted the history of the community.

Metro Nashville Historical Commission, for the preservation of Sunnyside Mansion in Nashville. This 1853 Greek Revival home serves as offices for MNHC. In this project, structural damage was repaired, and outbuildings were repaired and reconstructed for public use.



The **Book or Public Programming** category recognizes notable achievements toward advancing the study of Tennessee history through certain types of books or public programming. The recipient in this category is the **Grundy County Historical Society** for their efforts to document all cemeteries within the county. This research tool has been compiled into a three volume book series.



BUT WHAT IS A CONSERVATION EASEMENT AND HOW DOES IT WORK?

By Nina Scall, TWC Program Director

Since its establishment in 1994 by the Tennessee General Assembly, the Tennessee Wars Commission (TWC) has served as the division within the Tennessee Historical Commission (THC) responsible for the preservation and conservation of Tennessee's military heritage from the French and Indian War (1754-1763) through the Civil War (1861-1865) era and sites associated with the Underground Railroad. This department focuses its efforts on coordinating planning and preservation strategies, promotes the conservation of structures, buildings, sites, and battlefields through land acquisitions, restoration endeavors, and easements.

Ok, TWC preserves military heritage, but what is a conservation easement and how does it save our history?

What is it? Conservation easements are legally binding agreements between the property owner and either a government agency or a land trust that limits certain property uses to protect the historical, cultural, archaeological, scenic, and open space values of the property.

Who uses these? Easements are tools that landowners and historic preservationists can employ to provide perpetual protections to property. Landowners can be private citizens, corporations, organizations, or government entities. By accepting to hold an easement, THC and TWC have determined that a property's historic significance and public benefit warrant its protection.

How does it work? Property owners voluntarily agree to certain use and development restrictions on the property which is recorded in the easement and on the deed. These easements run with the property, meaning they are perpetual in nature regardless of the owner.

What is the purpose of it? The primary purpose of a conservation easement is to protect the land in perpetuity from inappropriate change and to retain the natural landscape be it scenic and open space, forested, or farmland; to protect any archaeology, and to retain the historic and cultural values, feelings and association of the property for generations to come.

What are the benefits? There are a range of benefits some felt immediately some down the line and include:

Retaining Ownership, the property owner retains ownership and can continue to utilize their property.

Tax Benefits, landowners may be eligible for federal and/or state tax deductions for the value for the donated easement.

Environmental and Wildlife Protections, with an easement in place, the property will remain in its approximate state, protecting the resources present.



Nina Scall conducts easement monitoring at Fort Redmond

Future Generations, the perpetual nature ensures that the property will be preserved for generations to come.

The Wars Commission collaborates with property owners to protect the land under easement by performing routine site visits to monitor the property, ensuring there are no natural or unauthorized human alterations, inappropriate changes, or encroachments. Monitoring helps the TWC to build and maintain strong working relationships with landowners and managing parties. It provides an opportunity to document any changes in the property and to learn about future projects the landowner may want to undertake. Site visits afford the opportunity for the TWC to discover any potential easement deficiencies or violations, and to work with property owners to address these issues as well as allows the TWC to meet its preservation obligations through routine monitoring. In addition to eased properties, the TWC monitors war-related state-owned sites.

Currently, TWC monitors approximately 1,100 acres of battlefield and war-related properties and that number is anticipated to grow with the expansion of the easement program. Up until now, TWC only accepted conservation easements on battlefield properties utilizing a Civil Wars Sites Preservation Fund (CWSPF) award however, TWC can now accept easement donations from property owners on land associated with all the abovementioned conflicts. This opens a new preservation avenue for property owners to provide protections on significant historic sites, structures, and battlefields throughout the state.

Two Tennessee Wars Commission Grant Opportunities

The TWC is pleased to offer two unique grant fund opportunities to further Tennessee's military history. Visit our website to learn more about the grants and to apply!

- Civil War Sites Preservation Fund accepting applications August 11, 2025 through October 31, 2025
- Tennessee Wars Commission Grant Fund accepting applications September 1, 2025 through November 21, 2025.



NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES NEWS

By J. Ethan Holden, National Register Coordinator

Ten Tennessee Properties Added to National Register of Historic Places

The National Register of Historic Places is the nation's official list of cultural resources worthy of preservation. It is part of a nationwide program that coordinates and supports efforts to identify, evaluate and protect historic resources. The State Historic Preservation Office administers the program in Tennessee. The state's new listings are:

Central High School

Listed April 2, 2025

(Alamo — Crockett County)

Central High School in Alamo, Crockett County, was listed in the National Register on April 2, 2025, for its educational and social significance. From 1950 to 1970, Central School served as the only public high school for African American children in Crockett County. The first two high schools in Alamo burned in the 1930s and 1950. The current red brick building was constructed later that same year on Conley Road about a mile from the school's original location. Central High School was known for its academic excellence. In addition to core courses like English, Math, Social Studies, and Science, the school offered classes in French, cosmetology, home economics, and Building and Trade. Central High School also offered extracurricular activities and was well-known for their basketball program. After hours it became a center for community life, hosting fundraisers, community meetings,



Image Courtesy of Jessica Baker.

and field days for the surrounding elementary schools. The school building served brief tenures as an elementary school and junior high school after Crockett County desegregated in 1970. Today the building is owned by the Central High School Alumni & Associates and is known locally as the Crockett County Community and Family Resource Center. The alumni group and school continue to serve the community through programs such as YMCA, Save the Children Head Start, and summer camps.

Barber Cottage

Listed April 2, 2025

(Knoxville — Knox County)

The Barber Cottage is located in Knoxville, Knox County and was listed in the National Register on April 2, 2025, for its architectural significance as the work of a master architect. The cottage was constructed in 1912 and designed by the well-known and celebrated architect, George F. Barber. Barber mastered the "mail order" method of architectural practice. His most popular plans featured sprawling Queen Anne suburban homes, many of which still stand and are National Register-listed individually or in a historic district. In contrast, the Barber Cottage was designed to be a retirement home for George and his wife Laura. A restrained Craftsman-inspired Dutch Colonial Revival, the Greek front porch, wide Dolly Varden profile cladding, wide overhanging eaves, and simple dormer are a major departure from his elaborate Queen Anne homes. As such, the nominated house provides a unique glimpse into the mind of a master architect designing a house meant to suit his own family's needs and aesthetic sensibilities, rather than a product for mass consumption. The



Image courtesy of Greta Schmoyer.

current owner has worked tirelessly to restore and preserve this important part of Barber's architectural legacy.

Want to see properties be considered for listing in the National Register of Historic Places in person? Our State Review Board meets every January, May, and September to consider nominations for listing in the National Register. Come see us in 2025 on the following dates at 2941 Lebanon Pike Nashville, TN 37214.

- **September 19, 2025 at 9:00 am CDT**
- **January 23, 2026 at 9:00 am CST**





Image Courtesy of Rebecca Schmitt and Andrew Hackett.

“See Rock City” Barn

Listed December 23, 2024

(Crossville — Cumberland County)

Listed in the National Register of Historic Places on December 23, 2024, the “See Rock City” Barn near Crossville, Tennessee, has been part of Rock City Gardens’ advertising campaign since 1953. Then owned by the Ford Family and later the Buhaly Family, the barn exemplifies the design of “See Rock City” signs. The barn’s placement at the bottom of a hill where Tennessee State Route 68 curves ensured that it was eye-catching and therefore effective for marketing Rock City Gardens, a tourist attraction atop Lookout Mountain where visitors could “See 7 States.” This “See Rock City” barn was featured in an exhibit at the 1982 World’s Fair in Knoxville and is also on the cover of David B. Jenkins’ book *Rock City Barns: A Passing Era*.

“See Rock City” Signs in Tennessee MPS

Listed December 23, 2024

The “See Rock City” Signs in Tennessee Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPDF) was approved by the National Park Service on December 23, 2024. The MPDF documents the history of the advertising campaign for Rock City Gardens, a tourist attraction atop Lookout Mountain near Chattanooga. Frieda Utermohlen Carter and her husband, Garnet Carter, opened the Gardens in 1932. In 1935, the Carters began a roadside advertising campaign that brought the phrase “See Rock City” to American highways as far north as Lansing, Michigan and throughout the southeast and midwestern United States. They hired Clark Byers to paint signs on barns alongside roads which were leased for a small fee. By 1956, Byers had painted more than 800 signs throughout the country. However, a combination of several factors led to the destruction of the majority of the signs, leaving around forty



Image Courtesy of Claudette Stager.

extant today. The MPDF establishes the requirements for barns in Tennessee to be efficiently listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

Emory Place Historic District (Boundary Increase II)

Listed March 20, 2025

(Knoxville — Knox County)

The Emory Place Historic District Boundary Increase was approved by the National Park Service on March 20, 2025. The expansion captured a single building, the Boiler House for the Sanitary Laundry Building. Emory Place Historic District began developing into a social, commercial, and transportation center for North Knoxville residents around 1890. The arrival of Knoxville’s first streetcar line fueled commercial and residential development in the district. One of the new businesses was the Sanitary Laundry, sited on North Broadway adjacent to the streetcar line. Constructed in 1926, the laundry building was considered innovative for its machinery and overall design. The boiler house was an important part of the business’s operation. Connected to the main building through a series of pipes, the boiler house provided the heat and steam used in the laundry process. Plans are in place to take



Image Courtesy of Rebecca Schmitt.

advantage of the Federal Historic Tax Credit program to breathe new life into the complex.



Southern Bell Telephone and Telegraph Building

Listed March 10, 2025

(Morristown — Hamblen County)

The Southern Bell Telephone and Telegraph Building is located in Morristown, Hamblen County and was listed in the National Register on March 10, 2025. From 1929 to 1958, the Southern Bell building provided essential communication services to both Morristown and the broader county. Morristown was served by a variety of smaller, independent telecommunications entities in the area before Southern Bell acquired the People's Telephone Company of Knoxville in 1928. This acquisition made Southern Bell the sole provider of communication services in the area. Construction on the nominated building began a year later, and the inaugural call was placed on February 22, 1930. Local demand soon outpaced capacity, requiring the construction of an addition on the back of the building in the mid-1940s and 1950s. In addition to offering telephone services, Southern Bell was also an important part of the city and county's economy. The company created some of the largest tax revenues in Hamblen County in 1953. It also offered employment opportunities for locals, including the famous "Hello Girls" who served as switchboard operators. In 1958, Southern Bell constructed a new building to house the dial



Image Courtesy of Justin Heskew.

telephone system, thus ending the nominated building's tenure as the communication hub for Morristown and Hamblen County. The current owner plans on taking advantage of the Federal Historic Tax Credit program to transform the building into multi-family housing.

Pleasant Garden Cemetery

Listed April 7, 2025

(Chattanooga — Hamilton County)

Sited on the eastern side of Chattanooga near Missionary Ridge, Pleasant Garden Cemetery was listed in the National Register on April 7, 2025, in recognition of its local importance as an African American cemetery. The cemetery was founded in 1890 during the time of Jim Crow, a period of racial segregation, discrimination, and violence against African Americans. Prior to the founding of Pleasant Garden, local African Americans faced limited burial options. However, by the late 1960s, Pleasant Garden had grown into Chattanooga's largest African American cemetery. Those interred there were associated with major trends in African American history, including enslavement, community building, Jim Crow violence, and the Civil Rights Movement. Working class and prominent leaders alike rest in Pleasant Garden Cemetery. The cemetery is also significant for possessing a physical design characteristic of an African American cemetery. This includes its hilly terrain, nonlinear burial pattern, and vernacular handmade tombstones. Indeed, many of the tombstones present in the



Image Courtesy of Carroll Van West, Savannah Grandey Knies, and Stacey Graham

cemetery provide windows into the lives of the people it honors and the family that commissioned the tombstone, such as Otis "Hot Sauce" Washington and Bessie Smith's markers. The cemetery is currently under the stewardship of the African American Cemetery Preservation Fund (AACPF). This organization works tirelessly to maintain and preserve the Pleasant Garden Cemetery and other Chattanooga African American cemeteries for future generations.

HISTORICAL MARKERS

At its meeting on February 21, 2025, the Tennessee Historical Commission approved eight historical markers: *Kinzel Springs*, Blount County; *Hiram and Eveline Overton's Wagon and Blacksmith Shop* Davidson County; *Fort Hill at Waverly*, Humphreys County; *Lawrenceburg's First Church*, Lawrence County; *Haynes Peacock*, Maury County; and *Russell Lee Roy Pickett*, Hamilton County; *Tom Lee 1885-1952*, Shelby County; *Johnson City Post Office*, Washington County.

Those interested in submitting proposed texts for markers should contact Linda T. Wynn at the Tennessee Historical Commission, 2941 Lebanon Pike, Nashville, Tennessee 37243-0442, or call (615) 770-1093.



First National Bank Operations Center

Listed December 18, 2024

(Memphis — Shelby County)

The First National Bank Operations Center was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on December 18, 2024. Constructed in 1971 in the Court Avenue I urban renewal area in Memphis, the Operations Center is significant as an important example of the Brutalist style in Memphis, Shelby County. The style's name is derived from the French phrase "béton brut," which means raw concrete. Brutalism is known for its massive compositions and honest expression of materials, particularly concrete. The Operation Center's modular design was intended to express strength and modernity while also providing flexible office space for bank staff and the company's state-of-the-art computer system, which could read 41,600 characters per minute. The computers could also store the bank's entire record system, a major technological advancement at the time. This allowed the bank to



Image Courtesy of Maxwell Harm.

more securely and quickly serve its customers while also expanding its services.

Hurdlow School

Listed March 20, 2025

(Lynchburg — Moore County)

The Hurdlow School was listed in the National Register on March 20, 2025, in recognition of its local educational and social significance. The school is located on Wet Prong Road in the small community of Hurdlow near Lynchburg in Moore County. Like other rural areas across the state, students who lived in Hurdlow did not have access to facilities like their counterparts in cities and urban areas. Many of the early schools in the area were small, wood frame, single-room schools. The construction of the nominated building in 1949 represented a substantial investment in the educational life of students in the area. Hurdlow School offered modern conveniences like a fully operation and stocked kitchen, indoor plumbing, and electricity. Outside, students could play on a baseball field and basketball court. Grades 1-8 were offered at the school and students



Image Courtesy of Rebecca Schmitt.

learned reading, writing, mathematics, and science. After school clubs, including 4-H and choir, offered enrichment activities for students after hours. Hurdlow School was also the center of the community's social and cultural life. Pageants, fundraisers, visiting dignitaries, adult school, and fish fries were just a few of the events hosted in the building. The school closed in 1962 as part of Moore County's continuing school consolidation efforts. Hurdlow School is now owned by a member of the community who plans on ensuring the story and significance of the school is not forgotten.

James M. Pardue House

Listed March 21, 2025

(Sweetwater — Monroe County)

Located in Sweetwater in Monroe County, the James M. Pardue House was listed in the National Register on March 21, 2025, for its local architectural significance. The house was constructed in 1896 to serve as the home for James McClellan and Rebecca Pardue. James was an important member of the Sweetwater community, having first served stints in the Tennessee House and Senate in Nashville before returning to serve as the town Postmaster and director of Sweetwater city schools. The Pardue House is a great local example of the Folk Victorian style with prominent Queen Anne influences. The spread and popularity of the style was made possible by the expansion of the railroad system and rapid industrialization. This made acquiring construction materials and intricate wood detailing easier and cheaper for homeowners like James and Rebecca. Many of the style's hallmarks are visible on



Image Courtesy of Rebecca Schmitt.

the Pardue House. This includes the porch detailing, complex asymmetrical façade, wrap around porch, projecting bay windows, decorative gable field shingle pattern, and steeply pitched cross gable roof. Important interior features include an elaborate wood staircase and multiple original fireplaces. The current owner acquired the house in 2012. Since then, he has maintained the house and conducted historically-accurate repairs to honor its history and significance.



TENNESSEE HISTORICAL COMMISSION HISTORIC CEMETERY PROGRAM

- *The First Five Years*

By Graham Perry, Historic Cemetery Specialist

The fifth anniversary of the Historic Cemetery Program brings an opportunity to reflect upon a program that has grown in a short span of time to compare very favorably with similar programs throughout the nation. Aside from helping thousands of callers and emailers, the inaugural program coordinator Graham Perry has crafted Tennessee's cemetery map and has now compiled more than 27,000 cemeteries with known locations. In total, more than 34,000 known cemeteries are currently recorded in the cemetery database, from which the map is populated. Perry is working daily to obtain GPS pins for the remaining 7,000 that are unaccounted for and is appreciative of the input he has received from the public.

2025 marks the fifth year since the posting of the last Cemetery Report created by the Cemetery Committee. The report proposes recommendations to the legislature for changes to the state's often unclear cemetery law. The 2025 report will highlight new recommendations based on THC's experiences with the public. With all hope, some of these will be adopted and will help THC better serve callers regarding a plethora of complicated cemetery issues. Some of the more common problems that have surfaced over the years have been those dealing with family visitation, expectations for landowners and educating local law enforcement about felony desecration. As cemetery law education was not a priority prior to 2019, Perry has delivered important presentations to local groups and governments across the state hoping to bring awareness of the complexity of cemetery issues to the public.

While Tennessee addresses visitation in *Walter Hines v. Tennessee* (1911) — a precedent cited across the nation — Tennessee is one of only a few states that doesn't currently have visitation procedures specifically spelled out in its code. Surrounding states (Virginia for example) have that. In those cases, visitation by family members must occur at "reasonable times" and in a "reasonable manner," and they also convey that a landowner is not liable for accidents during cemetery visitation. In Tennessee, being that the **Family Burial Grounds Protection Act (TCA 46-8)** declares landowners have a "duty to protect" cemeteries on their properties, communication between the landowner and families is essential to ensure that a cemetery is protected, and that proper visitation is permitted.

There have also been numerous calls regarding cemetery repairs. Although Perry keeps a list of recommended vendors who do this kind of work, the list is uncomfortably short. It has been imperative to train more people to do this kind of work



Wessyngton, located in Cedar Hill, TN.

for themselves or even commercially. For this reason, THC has hosted multiple workshops across the state over the years, led by nationally recognized conservator Jon Appell, as well as local vendors. These have been well attended and have resulted in increased expertise among attendees. Perry is always on the lookout for qualified professionals to add to the recommended conservators list. To be added, a recommended professional must use best practices for historic marker repairs, which are more nuanced than typical fixes.

Another major component of the cemetery program has been the new Tennessee Historic Cemetery Register, which invites applicants to submit historic and other information for cemeteries for the purpose of receiving official THC recognition. Successful applicants can then purchase a sign with the THC logo and acknowledgement for the cemetery in order to draw attention to the cemetery's importance. There are currently 39 cemeteries listed on the register. For more information about the requirements please contact Graham Perry at graham.perry@tn.gov or visit the Tennessee Historical Commission website.

Cemeteries Recently added to the Historic Cemetery Register

Madisonville City Cemetery, Monroe County.

Listed January 14, 2025.

William Houston Hooper Family Cemetery, Hickman County. Listed February 19, 2025.

Moore Cemetery, Stewart County. Listed May 7, 2025.

Holy Innocents Episcopal Cemetery, Shelby County. Listed May 8, 2025.



IN MEMORIAM

Former Tennessee Historical Commission Board member **Mr. Ridley D. Wills** of Nashville died on January 16, 2025 at age 90. He served on the Commission from 1985 to 1990. As the author of 34 books mainly on historical subjects and a noted historic preservationist, in 2022 Wills was the recipient of the THC's highest honor, the Preservation Leadership Award.

Mr. Ernest Omar "Ernie" Bacon, 87, died on January 20, 2025. Bacon served on the Tennessee Historical Commission from 2015 to 2021. A longtime leader in historic preservation efforts in Franklin, Mr. Bacon was a former alderman who was instrumental in securing and preserving historic landscapes including the Eastern Flank of the Franklin Battlefield, and Harlinsdale Farm. He also served in key roles for Franklin's Charge, the Tennessee Preservation Trust, Historic Carnton Plantation and the Heritage Foundation of Franklin and Williamson County.

Dr. Kevin Smith, Chairman of the Tennessee State Review Board for the National Register of Historic Places, died on March 14, 2025. He was 61 years old. A distinguished and respected archaeologist, author, and professor at Middle Tennessee State University, Dr. Smith was largely responsible for the State of Tennessee purchasing and saving the Castalian Springs Mound Site in Sumner County. He led years of archaeological field schools at the site and made enormous contributions to knowledge of prehistory in the region. Dr. Smith also was also the guiding force behind the 2015 "Ancestors" exhibit at the Tennessee State Museum that brought together Mississippian Period Native American statues from public and private collections.

Mrs. Joanne Cullom Moore of Corona died on April 14, 2025 at the age of 90. Mrs. Moore served as a board member of the Tennessee Historical Commission for 31 years, from 1991 to 2022. Her tenure included being named the first chair of the Tennessee Wars Commission committee in 1995, and later serving as vice chair for West Tennessee. She was a past president of the West Tennessee Historical Society and a member of numerous historical and genealogical societies.

TENNESSEE HISTORICAL COMMISSION

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

SUMMER
2025

Celebrate Summer with our State Historic Sites, check out their events on our website's calendar!

- **Almira's Book Club at Cragfont State Historic Site**
June 26, 2025 at 5:30 pm CDT
- **Pouring over the Past at the Clement Railroad Hotel Museum at Hotel Halbrook State Historic Site**
July 1, 2025 at 6:00 pm CDT
- **Hawthorn Hill State Historic Site Tour**
July 12, 2025 at 4:30 pm CDT
- **Summer Songwriter Series at Rock Castle State Historic Site**
July 19, 2024 from 5:00 pm to 9:00 pm CDT



SCAN FOR MORE
EVENTS



Published by the
TENNESSEE HISTORICAL
COMMISSION
2941 Lebanon Pike
Nashville, Tennessee 37243-0442

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Public Comment Solicited

As the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), the Tennessee Historical Commission is soliciting public comment and advice on its administration of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA). Especially, we are seeking input on such matters as geographic areas or classes of properties which may be a priority for survey and/or registration efforts, criteria and priorities which should be established for Historic Preservation Fund (HPF) grants, and ways and means through which local efforts at preservation of historic properties can be most effectively assisted. The HPF is the federal fund appropriated under the authority of the NHPA to assist states in carrying out the purposes of the NHPA. Comments and advice on other areas and issues of a more general nature are also encouraged. Activities carried out by SHPO under the mandate of the NHPA include efforts to survey and inventory historic properties across the state and to nominate the most significant of them the National Register of Historic Places. Other activities involve programs to protect and preserve properties once they are identified by reviewing Federal projects to determine if they will adversely affect historic properties; administering the federal historic tax credit program; awarding and administering HPF grants; and providing technical assistance and advice to local governments which are attempting to establish local programs and ordinances to protect historic properties. The comments received will be used to structure the SHPO's annual application to the National Park Service for these funds. The public input and advice which we are soliciting now will help to set both general office objectives and to establish priorities and criteria for the review of grant applications. Comments are accepted throughout the year and should be addressed to Holly Barnett, Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer, Tennessee Historical Commission, 2941 Lebanon Pike, Nashville, Tennessee 37214. This program receives Federal funds from the National Park Service. Regulations of the U.S. Department of the Interior strictly prohibit unlawful discrimination in departmental federally assisted programs on the basis of race, color, national origin, age or disability. Any person who believes he or she has been discriminated against in any program, activity or facility operated by a recipient of Federal assistance should write to: Director, Equal Opportunity Program, U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, D.C. 20013-7127 Tennessee Historical Commission, Authorization Number MX2F75-1, 4,915 copies promulgated at a cost of \$1.07 per copy, 6/18/25.



STATE HISTORIC SITES SPOTLIGHT

By Caty Dirksen, Outreach Coordinator

Carter House State Historic Site

Built in 1830, the Carter House is a classic brick Federal style dwelling featuring stepped parapet end walls. On November 30, 1864, the home was at the center of the Battle of Franklin and served as headquarters for the Federal Twenty-Third Army Corps. The Carter family took refuge in the cellar during the battle and the home was heavily damaged. Evidence of the fighting that raged on the property remains, including bullet damaged furniture and structures.

The State of Tennessee purchased the Carter House to save it from demolition in 1951, entrusting its care to the Tennessee Historical Commission that same year. The Battle of Franklin Trust has managed and operated the Carter House State Historic



(Photographs courtesy of TN Photographic Services)

Site through an agreement with the Commission for the past 15 years.



Explore the Carter House State Historic Site through augmented reality.



Check out our other State Historic Sites in our digital brochure.



Breaking Ground on the Herbert Harper Visitor Center

On March 28, 2025, the Tennessee Historical Commission broke ground on the new visitor center at Carter House State Historic Site in Franklin. The groundbreaking ceremony marked the kickoff for the \$8.5 million State of Tennessee capital project. The funding for the building included \$6.5 million from Gov. Lee and the Tennessee General Assembly, as well as \$2 million approved by the Tennessee Historical Commission board from the THC's Historic Property Land Acquisition Fund. The event was well attended, with remarks by THC Executive Director and State Historic Preservation Officer, Patrick McIntyre; Battle of Franklin Trust CEO, Eric Jacobson; Franklin Vice Mayor, Jason Potts; Senate Majority Leader Jack Johnson; Representative Lee Reeves; TN Department of General Services Commissioner, Matt Van Epps; and Orcutt|Winslow architect, Sarah Dexheimer. Special thanks to our THC board members including Vice Chair for Middle Tennessee Doris McMillan, Reggie Mudd, and Dan Pomeroy for their attendance.



The new visitor center will replace the current one built in 1981-82 and will feature interpretive exhibits sponsored by the Battle of Franklin Trust. The facility is named after late former Tennessee Historical Commission executive director and Franklin resident Herbert Harper, who worked at the Commission for 37 years. THC is excited to see this project underway and to help improve the visitor experience at Carter House State Historic Site!



150TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE 1875 CIVIL RIGHTS ACT AND TENNESSEE'S PEREMPTORY ROLE IN ITS NULLIFICATION

By Linda T. Wynn, Assistant Director for State Programs

Shifting societal paradigms and expectations takes time to effectuate. However, Tennessee, the last state to secede from America and the first Confederate state to re-enter the nation after the Civil War moved expeditiously when in April 1865, it ratified the 13th and ratified the 14th Amendment to the United States Constitution on July 18, 1866. These two Amendments freed the formerly enslaved and made them citizens. The 14th, or citizenship amendment, nullified the Supreme Court's 1857 *Dred V. Scott v. Sandford* decision that denied the legality of African American citizenship. The Supreme Court's 1857 ruling stated that enslaved people were not citizens of the United States and, consequently, could not expect any protection from the federal government or the courts. By the time the 15th Amendment arrived in the state for ratification, legislators were in the process of trying to negate the new voting law giving African American men the vote. Consequently, they refused to ratify the 15th Amendment. After 127 years, on April 2, 1997, Tennessee finally ratified the 15th Amendment, the last of the original thirty-seven states in the Union that had not committed an act of support.

During Reconstruction, the U. S. Congress enacted laws to protect the rights of formerly enslaved people, often overriding President Andrew Johnson's vetoes. One such law was the Civil Rights Act of 1866, which declared that all people born in the United States were U.S. citizens and had certain inalienable rights, including the right to make contracts, to own property, to sue in court, and to enjoy the full protection of federal law. Congress overrode Johnson's veto on April 9, 1866, and elements of the Civil Rights Act of 1866 eventually became the template for the 14th Amendment. The Civil Rights Act began a gradual transformation of the federal courts into the primary forums for individuals to enforce their constitutional and statutory rights.

Seven years after the passage of the 15th Amendment to the United State Constitution that gave African American men the right of the franchise, the United States Congress passed the 1875 Civil Rights Act, the last of the major Reconstruction statutes, which guaranteed African Americans equal treatment in public transportation and public accommodations and service on juries. Passed two years prior to the end of Reconstruction by the 43rd United States Congress and signed into law by President Ulysses S. Grant on March 1, 1875, the Civil Rights Act of 1875, also known as the Enforcement Act or the Force Act required: "That all persons within the jurisdiction of the United States shall be entitled to the full and equal enjoyment

of the accommodations, advantages, facilities, and privileges of inns, public conveyances on land or water, theaters, and other places of public amusement; subject only to the conditions and limitations established by law, and applicable alike to citizens of every race and color, regardless of any previous condition of servitude." The second section provided that any person denied access to these facilities on account of race would be entitled to monetary restitution under a federal court of law. Although Tennessee is known for the enactment of the first "Jim Crow" law in 1881, the same year that the federal 1875 Civil Rights Act was signed into law, Tennessee passed a law that permitted discrimination in public places, as noted in Chapter 130 of the *Acts of Tennessee*.

In 1872 voters elected the first African American to the Tennessee General Assembly, Nashville barber Sampson W. Keeble. The apprehension of white voters about African Americans occupying positions of authority set the stage for Tennessee's first Jim Crow law. The same month that the 1875 Civil Rights Act passed on the federal level, during the 1875 Session of the General Assembly, Democrat R. P. Cole (Carroll, Gibson, Henry, and Weakley) introduced House Bill 527, which passed on March 23, 1875. Approved by both chambers of the General Assembly, the bill permitted hotels, inns, public transportation, and amusement parks to refuse admission and service to any person for any reason. Tennessee legislators passed a law that discriminated against approximately 25 percent of its population.

Other border states passed similar laws targeting African Americans' new constitutional rights and protections. Congressional passage of the federal Civil Rights Act of 1875 was an attempt to enforce and protect the rights and equality of African Americans. However, the 1875 Civil Rights Act set off a jurisprudence conflict between state and federal authority. The U.S. Supreme Court settled that conflict in 1883 when it found the Civil Rights Act to be an unconstitutional exercise of 13th Amendment powers. The Supreme Court declared the law unconstitutional in 1883. In a consolidated case, known as the *Civil Rights Cases*, the court found that the 14th Amendment to the Constitution granted Congress the right to regulate the behavior of states, not individuals. The decision presaged the 1896 *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision in which the Court ruled that separate but equal facilities for African Americans and whites were constitutional.

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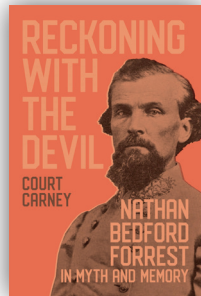


PUBLICATIONS TO NOTE

By Linda T. Wynn, Assistant Director for State Programs

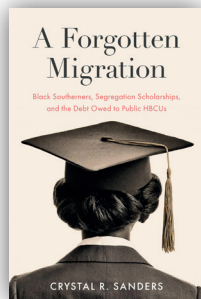
Louisiana State University Press

published Court Carney's *Reckoning with the Devil: Nathan Bedford Forrest in Myth and Memory* wrestles with the multifaceted legacy of slave trader, Confederate general and prominent Klansman Nathan Bedford Forrest. More than a hundred years after his 1877 death, the Confederate general's persona continues to resound with selected groups and exhibit wide-ranging interpretations that reflect the complex interaction of history, memory, and a challenged past. Carney, a professor of history at Stephen F. Austin State University, explores how historical lacunae and erasures continually reshape perceptions of Forrest as well as the Civil War. The author encompasses well-defined periods of Forrest's commemorations, from the unveiling of statues in Memphis in 1905 to his representation in literature and media and the controversies surrounding his monuments in the 2010s, which culminated with the 2017 removal of the Memphis statue, reflecting the evolving societal perspectives on symbols tied to intolerance. Forrest's significance lies in his capacity to encompass conflicting narratives — hero and villain, rebel, and patriot. Professor Carney contends that understanding Forrest's legacy is essential for comprehending the intricacies of the southern past and its enduring impact on American society. By exploring the fluidity of Forrest's image, Carney's work illuminates the nuanced interplay of history, memory, and the ongoing struggle to reckon with a tumultuous past. Carney has penned a critical and captivating volume that tracks the lifespan and legacy of Nathan Bedford Forrest across more than two hundred years. Considering the reality, sentiment, and evaluation, Dr. Carney draws out one of the South's — and nation's — most infamous characters and demonstrates how he continues to remain within present-day politics and culture. *Reckoning with the Devil* examines Forrest's role in different periods, including the present and the past. **Hardcover \$45.00**



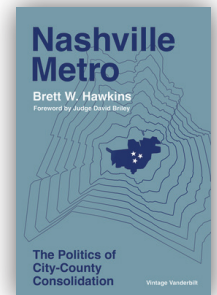
The University of North Carolina Press

published Crystal R. Sanders' *A Forgotten Migration: Black Southerners, Segregation Scholarships, and the Debt Owed to Public HBCUs*. This work conveys the little-known history of "segregation scholarships" awarded by Southern states to African American post-baccalaureate students wanting to pursue graduate education prior to the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision. Under the 1896 *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision, southern states, if they so desired, could provide African American students graduate possibilities by creating separate but equal graduate programs at tax-supported African American educational institutions of higher learning or by admitting African American students to historically white institutions. Many of those institutions of higher learning opted out of such options. Instead, they paid



to send African American students out of state for graduate education. Tennessee was no exception, as exhibited by William Redmond, Jr., a graduate of Tennessee Agricultural and Industrial State College (now Tennessee State University), who applied to and denied entrance to the University of Tennessee's Pharmacy School in 1935. The author of *A Chance for Change: Head Start and Mississippi's Black Freedom Struggle*, Dr. Sanders explores African American graduate students who moved to the North, Midwest, and West to further their educational pursuits with segregation scholarships, revealing the many challenges they faced along the way. After Supreme Court's 1954 unanimous decision in the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision, segregation scholarships began to decline, however, the desegregation of graduate programs at southern public universities was dilatorious. In illuminating this narrative, Dr. Sanders elucidates how efforts to preserve segregation led to the underfunding of public African American colleges and universities, furthering racial disparity in America's institutions of higher education. **Paperback, \$27.95.**

Vanderbilt University Press has republished *Nashville Metro: The Politics of City-County Consolidation* by Brett W. Hawkins with the Foreword by David Briley. Originally published in 1966, four years after the consolidation of Nashville and Davidson County in 1962, Hawkins, who passed in 2022, sought to answer a series of questions. This work provided a comprehensive record of what Nashville understood itself to be at the time. How did it happen? When fewer thoroughgoing reforms had failed elsewhere, how could Nashville accomplish a complete city county consolidation? Why in Nashville did the voters outside the central city support consolidation, when in area after area it is typically these voters who defeat reform proposals? First attempted in the late 1950s, why did the consolidation fail in 1958 and succeed in 1962? Hawkins wrote *Nashville Metro* to answer such questions. One benefit of the author's approach is how he conveys the conventional wisdom at the time and what the local papers reported and assesses it against what participants told him directly. On June 28, 1962, the charter passed in both the city and the county, despite fifty-five percent of African American voters rejecting the consolidation. Sworn in as the first mayor of Metropolitan Nashville and Davidson County on April 1, 1963, Beverly Briley was joined by African Americans Mansfield Douglas, John Driver, and Harold Love, Sr., who joined Looby and Lillard among the forty members of the first Metropolitan Council. The new foreword by Judge David Briley — former Nashville mayor (Seventh Mayor of Nashville and Davidson County) and grandson of the first metro Nashville mayor, Beverly Briley — offers a firsthand account of the realities of metropolitan government sixty years plus years later. On Vanderbilt University Presses Vintage Series, this tome is worth reading, especially for native Nashvillians and those who now call Nashville home to understand what the

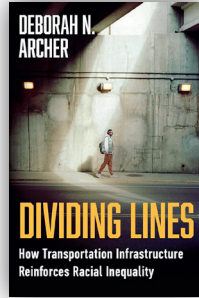


capital of Tennessee's metropolitan form of government is and why its citizens chose to reorganize and consolidate the city and county this way in 1963. **Paperback, \$24.95.**

W.W.W. Norton & Company, Inc. published *Dividing Lines: How Transportation Infrastructure Reinforces Racial Inequality* by Deborah N.

Archer. This work is an account of how transportation infrastructure — from highways and roads to sidewalks and buses — became a means of protecting segregation and inequality after the fall of Jim Crow. The placement of roads, highways, and bridges has often been used as an instrument to disrupt African American communities, like I-40 and other highway projects dislocated African American communities in Chattanooga, Knoxville, Memphis and Nashville, Tennessee. Twentieth-century transportation decisions maltreated those communities, shattered African American wealth, and destroyed cohesive African American neighborhoods across America.

Archer, an eminent legal scholar, president of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), tenured professor, and associate dean at New York University School of Law, makes evident that the success of the Civil Rights Movement and the fall of Jim and Jane Crow in the 1960s did not connote the termination of racial segregation. The dismantling of the status quo would not be easily disassembled. With the separation of the races no



longer legal, bureaucrats across the United States — not just in the South — turned to the transportation infrastructure to keep Americans divided. Prosperous white communities could no longer be “protected” by racial covenants and segregated shops, but a multilane road, with no pedestrian crossings, could be constructed along its border to make it challenging for people from a lower-income community to visit. Highways could not be routed through Black neighborhoods (as implemented between the late 1950s and the early 1970s,) based on the race of their residents, but those neighborhoods' lower property values — a legacy of racial exclusion — could justify their destruction. A new suburb could not be for “whites only,” but planners could refuse to extend sidewalks from African American communities into white ones. Drawing on numerous sources, including interviews with those who now live in the shadow of highways and other major infrastructure projects, Archer presents a sweeping, national account. She assesses the confines of current Civil Rights decrees that can be employed against explicitly discriminatory officials but are less efficacious in addressing deeper, more lasting, fundamental challenges. This volume fills the need in addressing transportation policy that has long been ignored in the decision-making and how the infrastructure — roads, bridges, and sidewalks impact those who reside therein those communities. Like Richard Rothstein's *The Color of Law*, *Dividing Lines* is the narration needed to restructure disintegrating concrete, tar, and steel that girds the infrastructure; and refresh a vision of the American future. **Hardcover \$29.99**

150TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE 1875 CIVIL RIGHTS ACT AND TENNESSEE'S PEREMPTORY ROLE IN ITS NULLIFICATION

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It took the Congress 74 years before it enacted the Civil Rights Act of 1957. The Civil Rights Act of 1957 established the United States Commission on Civil Rights and the United States Department of Justice Civil Rights Division (dismantled from its original intent this year). Later, the Congress passed far more effective civil rights laws in the form of the Civil Rights Act of 1960 and the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The Civil Rights Act of 1960 corroborated racially, discriminatory voter-registration practices and provided evidentiary proof used to succor passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Although some applauded the historical significance of the Civil Rights Act of 1957, historians fundamentally agreed with the opinions of its contemporaneous analysts, universally concluding that the 1957 act was deficient and unenforceable, except in a few rare cases. The Civil Rights Act of 1960 offered a new apparatus to acquire additional evidence. Four years after the passage of the 1960 Civil Rights Act and after the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King's 1963 March on Washington, the Congress passed, and President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the 1964 Civil Rights into law on July 2, 1964. A landmark piece

of the legislation, the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which was similar to the 1875 Civil Rights Act, outlawed discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origin in the United States. It prohibited discrimination in public accommodations, employment, education, federally assisted programs, and established the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission to enforce these provisions.

Notwithstanding, the Civil Rights Act of 1875 is noteworthy as the last major piece of legislation related to Reconstruction that passed Congress. These include the Civil Rights Act of 1866, the four Reconstruction Acts of 1867 and 1868, the Enforcements Act of 1870 and 1871 and the Constitutional Amendments adopted between 1865 and 1870. Provisions contained in the Civil Rights Act of 1875 were later readopted by Congress during the Modern Civil Rights Movement as part of the 1964 Civil Rights Act and the Civil Rights of 1968. Both the 1964 and 1968 Acts relied upon the Commerce Clause contained in Article One of the Constitution of the United States rather than the Equal Protection Clause within the 14th Amendment.





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ON THE COVER: Noris Dam in Anderson County, TN. Photograph courtesy of Hallie Hearnese, Tennessee Valley Authority.

