



# THE COURIER

TENNESSEE HISTORICAL COMMISSION, NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE

WINTER 2023



**In This Issue:** Restoration Project Completed at Chester Inn State Historic Site

Federal Historic Preservation Fund Grants Announced • Successful Cemetery Conservation Work

# THC COMPLETES MULTI-YEAR RESTORATION PROJECT AT JONESBOROUGH'S CHESTER INN STATE HISTORIC SITE

By Dan Brown, THC Historic Sites Program



The THC State Historic Sites Program recently marked the completion of a \$710,000 historic rehabilitation project with major maintenance upgrades at its Chester Inn State Historic Site in Jonesborough. The multi-year effort reconstructed historic elements, repaired damaged and deteriorated historic fabric, and improved mechanical systems in the structures. In addition, an innovative solution has reopened the long-closed front porch, and one of the most iconic historic buildings in Tennessee's oldest town is now safer and more accessible to the public. The Chester Inn's earliest section (to the right when facing the building) was built by Dr. William P Chester in 1797 and is one of the oldest frame houses in Tennessee. It was considered the finest inn on the frontier and in its early history hosted Tennessee's three US presidents- Jackson, Polk, and Andrew Johnson- as well as numerous other luminaries and dignitaries. Successive owners expanded the original Federal style structure and in the 1880s constructed the current ornate Italianate façade with porches and ornate balustrade railing. The property continued to operate as an inn and boarding house well into the 20th century. The interpretation of the site focuses on the 1880s period. The half-acre site has two multistory structures (approx. 5,000 sf each) facing their main street, one behind the other. The rear

structure (often referred to as the "Annex") is a modern historic reconstruction that supports the original historic structure on Main Street.

The day-to-day operations at the Chester Inn State Historic Site are managed by the Heritage Alliance of Northeast Tennessee and Southwest Virginia with a yearly grant from THC. Anne G'Fellers-Mason is the Executive Director and liaison with THC. THC performs all maintenance and repairs and develops capital projects to address major repairs and rehabilitations. The Heritage Alliance also manages additional local historic sites and promotes preservation in the NE Tennessee and SW Virginia region. They staff a professionally designed museum on the ground floor with an interpreted dining room and parlor on the upper floors. The museum hosts over 10,000 visitors annually with Heritage Alliance staff and docents guiding tours. The remainder of this building and the Annex structure are the administrative offices for the International Storytelling Center with their own adjacent modern performance hall, storytelling park, and gift shop. Chester Inn State Historic Site is an excellent example of the synergistic public/private partnerships that are the basis for the successful administration, operations, and development



of the THC State Historic Sites. This property is one of several that are centers of community as well as state and local heritage tourism resources. The Heritage Alliance and Storytelling Center are natural partners with THC and our Historic Sites program goals and objectives, resulting in a unique cultural resource for the state and local community.

THC Commission member Dr. William Kennedy is a founding member and officer of the Heritage Alliance and founder as well as the longtime former chair of the Jonesborough Historic Zoning Commission, which oversees the local historic district. Jonesborough is one of 50 Certified Local Governments (CLG) enrolled in the THC CLG Program. All aspects of this project were submitted to and approved by the Jonesborough Historic Zoning Commission prior to construction. Dr. Kennedy's extraordinary leadership has served as a foundation for the decades of successful preservation and redevelopment in the community. Jonesborough has been recognized as one of the best examples of small community preservation in Tennessee and the US, and Dr. Kennedy is largely responsible for these developments with his support.

In working with the Heritage Alliance and Dr. Kennedy, THC developed a multi-year approach to rehabilitating and professionalizing the site and its presentation for historical accuracy. The professional museum in the basement level was added by THC under a prior capital project and opened in 2011. The interior of the historic Inn was rehabilitated with period wallpaper, and professional paint analysis established the original colors that were identified with Munsell color charts for accurate repainting both interior and exterior.

Over time, the original upper-level windows throughout the structure and the c. 1880s open lounging porch with its decorative balustrade (note historic photo) deteriorated and were replaced in 1990 with a design by the firm Bullock Smith. Those replacements, based on historic fabric, were constructed of ponderosa pine, which deteriorated within only 10-15 years. The five HVAC systems from the 1990 project were low efficiency systems that had become obsolete, requiring monthly repairs. THC approached the needed rehabilitations approximately seven years ago, as the author began directing the Historic Sites Program. The upper-level windows and their casings, jambs, sashes, and sills were deteriorated and falling out of the building openings, exposing the wall structural elements and the interior to water intrusion. The upper-level ornate balustrade had collapsed and been removed. The rear porch was failing, guttering, and building drainage was malfunctioning, exterior paint was peeling and faded, and numerous exterior wood elements were missing and/or deteriorated. And critically, the second-floor main porch railing did not meet code requirements. As a result, this historically important community-use area, which had also been a favorite spot for tourists and locals to enjoy rocking chair respites had been closed off to the public for all access and uses for decades.

The first recent project began in 2016 with a high quality historically accurate replacement of the non-original upper windows. James Thompson with Centric Architecture was the designer. Thompson has been THC's State of Tennessee Real Estate Asset Management (STREAM) designated consulting architect for many years and through numerous projects. Spanish Cedar- a commercially available mahogany - was the wood used for the new windows. The entire window assembly was reconstructed with historically accurate mortise and tenon construction and reproduction blown glass panes that were imported from Germany. Carefully matched muntin profiles and dimensions ensured a museum quality rehabilitation. Paint priming on all six sides for the entire window assembly was completed. Utilizing mahogany combined with this thorough priming provides multiple generations of stable windows and exceptional protection for all exterior wood elements.

The final project started in 2020, focusing on reestablishing the ornate balustrade. Members of the project team included Ned Stacy, Tim Haggard, and Pete Lamon. Stacy was the designer for the firm Thompson and Litton. Haggard was the STREAM designated construction project officer. Lamon, owner of RG Lamon Construction was the low bid contractor for the project and had also completed the 2016 window project.



*Chester Inn team: Dan Brown, Ann Mason, Dr. William Kennedy, Tim Haggard, Pete Lamon, and Ned Stacy*





The reconstruction of the ornate balustrade was the visual centerpiece of the project and the most significant historic element to be reconstructed. THC was fortunate to have historic measured drawings in the State Historic Site files from the 1990 Bullock Smith project and have had Dr. Kennedy involved with the project back then as well. With the documentation THC was confident that a historically accurate reconstruction could be completed. Utilizing the same mahogany, priming standards, and detailed mockup; the balustrade was successfully reconstructed. In addition to reestablishing the balustrade, THC decided to reconstruct the two original access doors to what was the original

balustrade porch. Again, mahogany was utilized for the doors and screen doors (with bronze screens) along with our priming standards, and these unique historic elements were reestablished in the building. The reconstructed doors have glass panes as the upper panels in these four panel historically reconstructed doors which function as windows. It is the only known historically accurate reconstruction of its kind in the state.

The rear porch was a non-historic addition to the historic building that was completed when the annex was added, it was deteriorated and failing. A complex guttering and drainage system was integrated into the porch and the stairs and attachments between the buildings, all of which were not properly diverting water from the buildings with moisture intrusion into the lower level of the historic main building. The porch flooring was replaced and upgraded to Douglas Fir with appropriate six-sided priming. The removal of the porch exposed a complex “Rube Goldberg” assembly of guttering and water collection basins that were corrected and with additional re-scaping of the adjacent grounds (all coordinated with the TN Division of Archaeology). A long-desired correction to the water diversion issues between the buildings was achieved.

Other repairs to the buildings included general window repairs and reglazing; repair/replacement of deteriorated soffit, fascia, and clapboard siding; interior and exterior stair repairs; interior door repairs; replacement of all missing historic exterior decorative elements; a replacement of all five HVAC systems with high efficiency upgrades; a complete repainting of the exterior of both structures with Munsell matched historically verified colors; and finally a solution to the non-code compliant handrail on the historic front porch of the main building. If one looks carefully at the photo of the recently completed building, you will notice a thin line within



the porch dimensions at approximately 42". During the author's tenure as Deputy Director of the Vieux Carre (French Quarter) Commission in New Orleans, there were numerous issues with non-code compliant handrails on balconies throughout the Quarter. The VCC had developed a 42" metal handrail design guideline which canted an additional rail approximately 45 degrees from the historic handrail that met life safety requirements. The canting and proper painting of the added railing minimized any visual intrusion. THC adapted this design guideline to the Chester Inn porch railing and covered it with a black powder coating that helped it visually disappear and it meets life safety, and the historic porch is now able to be reopened to the public. This is the first known application of this solution in the state.

The latest restoration project is the capstone to many years of planning and efforts to return Chester Inn State Historic Site to premier historic condition--utilizing the best of historically appropriate materials applied to the Secretary of the Interior Standards. A number of unique challenges were creatively addressed and successfully resolved decades of efforts to protect and preserve this important historic site. The stewardship of this historic site has been maintained and remains in the capable oversight of THC and our committed public and private partners in the Jonesborough community - one more successful chapter in the storied history and care of this historic landmark.



# TENNESSEE HISTORICAL COMMISSION CALENDAR OF EVENTS

## FEBRUARY 2023

Introducing our new Event Calendar on the Tennessee Historical Commission website! Here you will find a comprehensive list of all our State Historic Site happenings, as well as other historic preservation events around our state. Check back frequently for an event near you!

- **2023 Nashville Conference on African American History and Culture**  
-- February 10, 2023, from 9:00 am to 2:00 pm CST
- **Maple Syrup Festival and Pancake Breakfast at Tipton-Haynes State Historic Site**  
-- February 11, 2023, from 8:00 am to 3:00 pm EST
- **Rock Castle State Historic Site Winter House Concert**  
-- February 18, 2023, from 5:00 pm to 8:30 pm CST
- **Almira's Book Club at Wynnewood State Historic Site**  
-- February 23, 2023, from 9:30 am to TBD CST
- **State of Franklin Battle at Tipton-Haynes State Historic Site**  
-- February 25, 2023, from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm EST



SCAN FOR MORE  
EVENTS



# CONSERVATION WORK AT THE BLEDSOE-BELOIT CEMETERY IN CASTALIAN SPRINGS

by Graham Perry

In October 2022, a successful restoration project took place involving two box tombs located at the Bledsoe Pioneer Cemetery at Bledsoe's Fort Historical Park in Castalian Springs. The issue at the cemetery, currently managed by the Bledsoe Lick Historical Association, was that the box tombs had partially collapsed with pieces broken and were in a dangerous condition for cemetery visitors.

The cemetery is of key historical importance to Sumner County and Tennessee History, as a tangible link to one of Middle Tennessee's earliest pioneer settlements. Revolutionary War Veteran Anthony Bledsoe was buried in this cemetery in 1788 after having been shot by Native Americans as he and a friend rushing back to the settlement to warn other residents of an impending attack.

Bledsoe Lick Historical Association hired CCUS Cemetery Conservator Mike Alexander for the project, which began on October 11th. A member of the Cemetery Conservators for United Standards (CCUS), Alexander is one of only a handful of cemetery conservators available for restoration work across the state. As one can imagine, conservation work is strenuous, time consuming, and requires specific supplies and tools and experience. THC is in the active process of locating more specialists who represent that they do cemetery restoration work.

Initially, THC was contacted by Bledsoe Lick Historical Association after another cemetery conservator was unable to complete the task. Historic Cemetery Preservation Specialist Graham Perry provided the association with THC's list of recommended conservators. After contacting Alexander, work began on October 11. Using a tractor and other forms of heavy

equipment, Alexander's team was able to gather the heavy limestone pieces, place them back into position, and secure them to avoid future collapses that could otherwise result in injury to patrons. The recent experience at the Bledsoe Pioneer Cemetery is a great example that while a cemetery may look beyond repair, they are often fixable by a certified cemetery conservator.



PHOTO BY MIKE ALEXANDER

*Box tombs as they looked prior to the repair, note they have sunken in the ground over time. Portions of the tombs were not initially visible and had to be recovered to complete the work.*



PHOTO BY MIKE ALEXANDER

*Box tombs as they appeared just after repair was completed.*



# THC AWARDS \$900,000 FEDERAL HISTORIC PRESERVATION FUND (HPF) GRANTS

By Holly Barnett



*Buchanan Log House, Nashville, Davidson County*

This Fall the Tennessee Historical Commission awarded nearly \$900,000 for Historic Preservation Fund (HPF) grants for historic preservation and archaeological projects throughout the state-- to bricks and mortar restoration projects and surveys and planning grants-- this longstanding program is one of the primary ways that the State Historic Preservation Office directly facilitates historic preservation in our state.

Federally funded matching grants provide 60% of project funds from the HPF with 40% of project funds from the grantee. Grants were competitive this year, with project funding requests totaling nearly \$1.2 million, significantly more than the amount of funding available. This year's selection included an archaeological conference, design guidelines for historic districts, rehabilitation of several historic buildings, a poster highlighting the state's archaeology, and surveys of historic resources.

One of the grant priorities is for projects that are in Certified Local Governments (CLG), a program that allows communities to receive additional training and access to the federal historic preservation program. Five CLG communities were awarded grants this year. Additional priorities include those that meet the goals and objectives of the office's plan for historic preservation. Properties that receive grants for restoration must be listed in the National Register.

The counties where the projects are located, grant recipients, funding, and descriptions are:

## **BRADLEY COUNTY**

### ***St. Luke's Episcopal Church, Cleveland***

\$25,000 will fund masonry repairs at National Register-listed c. 1873 St. Luke's Episcopal Church.

## **CLAY COUNTY**

### ***Clay County, Celina***

\$6,000 to continue the restoration of windows on the National Register-listed c. 1873 Clay County Courthouse.

## **DAVIDSON COUNTY**

### ***Buchanan Log House, Donelson***

\$9,076.00 has been awarded to the Association for the Preservation of Tennessee Antiquities (APTA) for the restoration of the National Register-listed c. 1807 Buchanan Log House.

### ***Friends of Two Rivers Mansion, Donelson***

\$30,000 to fund woodwork restoration on the exterior of Two Rivers Mansion.

### ***Metro Historical Commission (CLG)***

\$38,895 in support will help fund phase 2 of the countywide cemetery survey project.



## DICKSON COUNTY

### *Promise Land Heritage Foundation*

\$12,600 has been awarded to fund the window and door restoration at the Promise Land School

## GILES COUNTY

### *Land Trust for Tennessee, Elkton*

\$25,000 will help fund the stabilization of the National Register-listed Matt Gardner Homestead Museum.

## LAWRENCE COUNTY

### *City of Lawrenceburg (CLG)*

\$12,000 to update design guidelines, downtown survey, and National Register nomination.

## LOUDON COUNTY

### *Dunbar Rosenwald School, Loudon*

\$30,000 to for electrical work and gutter restoration of the National Register-listed Dunbar Rosenwald School.



*Blue Springs Church, Greene County*

## GREENE COUNTY

### *Blue Springs Historical Association, Inc., Mosheim*

\$22,740 to continue the restoration of the National Register-listed c. 1893 Blue Springs Lutheran Church.

## HAMILTON COUNTY

### *Christ Church Episcopal, Chattanooga*

\$25,000 to fund the exterior restoration of the National Register-listed c. 1906 Christ Church.

## HAWKINS COUNTY

### *Town of Rogersville (CLG)*

\$39,000 to fund the restoration of Rogersville's c. 1806 National Register-listed Powell Law Office.

## HAYWOOD COUNTY

### *Haywood Heritage Foundation*

\$7,200 to fund the preparation of National Register nominations.

## MADISON

### *Walter Brewer Bemis Community Center, Bemis*

\$15,000 to fund the window restoration of the former Bemis Rosenwald School

## MAURY COUNTY

### *City of Columbia (CLG)*

\$15,000 to fund the updating of design guidelines, downtown survey, and National Register nominations.

### *James K. Polk Memorial Association, Columbia*

\$7,344 will fund interior restoration projects at the James K. Polk Home.

### *Maury County, Columbia*

\$14,400 was awarded for the restoration of the c. 1904 Maury County Courthouse masonry.



## MONROE COUNTY

### *Monroe County, Madisonville*

\$25,000 to fund masonry restoration of the National Register-listed Monroe County Courthouse.

## SHELBY COUNTY

### *Davies Manor Association, Memphis*

\$22,800 will fund foundation restoration of the National Register-listed c. 1807 Davies Manor House Museum.

## SULLIVAN COUNTY

### *Sullivan County (CLG) Blountville*

\$25,260 to fund restoration of the National Register-listed c. 1790s Anderson Townhouse.

## WARREN COUNTY

### *The Black House, McMinnville*

\$26,928 to fund foundation and window restoration of the National Register-listed c. 1825 Black House Museum

## WAYNE COUNTY

### *City of Collinwood*

\$21,090 to fund the restoration of the National Register-listed Collinwood Depot

### *T.S. Stribling House, Clifton*

\$20,000 to aid the restoration of the National Register-listed T.S. Stribling House Museum

## WILLIAMSON COUNTY

### *Shorter Chapel AME Church, Franklin*

\$30,000 for the restoration of the National Register-listed Shorter Chapel.

## MULTI-COUNTY GRANTS

### *Tennessee Division of Archaeology*

\$1,440 to fund the Current Research in Tennessee Archaeology conference

### *Middle Tennessee State University, Department of Sociology and Anthropology*

\$3,541 for posters for Tennessee Archaeology Week.

### *Middle Tennessee State University, Fullerton Laboratory for Spatial Technology*

\$50,000 to digitize data for historic / architectural survey files and for survey data entry for computerization of survey files.

### *East Tennessee Development District*

\$35,000 to fund a preservation specialist staff position for the East Tennessee Development District.

### *First Tennessee Development District*

\$35,000 to fund a preservation specialist staff position for the First Tennessee Development District.

### *Memphis Area Association of Governments*

\$25,000 to fund a preservation specialist staff position for the Memphis Area Association of Governments.

### *Northwest Tennessee Development District*

\$36,000 to fund a preservation specialist staff position for the Northwest Tennessee Development District.

### *South Central Tennessee Development District*

\$50,000 to fund a preservation specialist staff position for the South Central Tennessee Development District.

### *Southeast Tennessee Development District*

\$50,000 to fund a preservation specialist staff position for the Southeast Tennessee Development District.

### *Southwest Tennessee Development District*

\$44,000 to fund a preservation specialist staff position for the Southwest Tennessee Development District.

### *Upper Cumberland Development District*

\$35,000 to fund a preservation specialist staff position for the Upper Cumberland Development District.



*Former Bemis Rosenwald School, currently Walter Brewer Bemis Community Center, Bemis, Madison County*



# WARS COMMISSION GRANTS: SAVING BATTLEFIELDS AND INTERPRETING MILITARY HISTORY

By Nina Scall, TWC Director of Programs

The Tennessee Wars Commission, a division of the THC, administers two grant funds each year that make key contributions to saving threatened battlefield properties provide an understanding of our state's military heritage from period of the French and Indian War through the end of the Civil War. These grants, the Wars Commission Grant Fund (WCGF) and the Civil War Sites

Preservation Grant Fund (CWSPF) support the Wars Commission's preservation initiatives and help to preserve and promote the structures, buildings, sites, cemeteries, and battlefields of Tennessee. The THC/TWC awarded \$641,372 in funding from the Civil War Sites Preservation Fund in 2022, and Wars Commission grants totaled \$114,220.

## Civil War Sites Preservation Fund

This year the Commission awarded funding to help ensure that two tracts in Chattanooga will be preserved forever. **The Braddock Tract at the Chattanooga and Wauhatchie Battlefields** will be preserved with the help of the American Battlefield Trust and the American Battlefield Protection Program. The 2.28-acre tract is in the core area of the Chattanooga Battlefield and the study area of the Wauhatchie Battlefield. Additionally, this tract is located within the study area of the Chickamauga Towns Battlefield, a Revolutionary War battlefield. The Braddock Tract is adjacent to the approximately 300-acre Reflection

Riding Arboretum & Nature Center, a recently acquired easement held by THC. Additionally, the Braddock Tract is also adjacent to the approximately 7.6-acre Burns Tract, which is the second acquisition of the 2022 grant cycle. The Tennessee Historical Commission will hold the conservation easement on both 2022 acquisitions. The American Battlefield Trust in Washington, DC was awarded \$292,500.00 towards this acquisition.

**The Burns Tract at the Chattanooga Battlefield** has been preserved with the help of the American Battlefield Trust and the

American Battlefield Protection Program. The approximately 7.6-acre tract is in the core area of the Chattanooga battlefield and the study area of the Wauhatchie Battlefield. Additionally, this parcel is located within the study area of the Chickamauga Towns Battlefield. The Burns Tract is adjacent to previously preserved lands and is positioned across Lookout Creek from a portion of the Lookout Mountain Battlefield that is already protected within Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Park. The American Battlefield Trust was awarded \$348,872.19 for the acquisition of this parcel.

## Wars Commission Grant Fund

**1. The American Battlefield Trust (ABT)** was awarded \$50,000.00 to create The Road to Freedom Project which will feature both a brochure and map as well as a mobile application that explores Tennessee historic sites across 24 counties associated with the Black experience during the Civil War era. This project will enable visitors to experience the power of place and uncover compelling stories of strife, growth, and community by surfacing concepts of empowerment and self-empowerment. Locations featured in the project will range from Civil War Trails interpretative signs and historic highway markers to museums, cemeteries, and battlefields with permanent installations related to Black history. This interactive experience will elevate the visitor experience, making these sites come alive by introducing voices of the past in the places that shaped American History.



*"Shaping a Nation: Tennessee Volunteers and the Mexican American War" 2022 exhibit at Columbia's James K. Polk Home.*



**2. The Beech Grove Confederate Memorial Association** was awarded \$500.00 to repair broken tombstones and to reset approximately 20 leaning and sunken tombstones that commemorate the soldiers who were reburied after the Battle of Hoover's Gap, the principal battle in the Tullahoma Campaign on June 24, 1863.

**3. The James K. Polk Memorial Association** was awarded \$11,200.00 to design and install a long-term temporary exhibit titled "Shape the Nation," on the 11th President, James K. Polk, and the Mexican-American War. The effects of the War on politics and the structure of America are massive and create an opportunity for further examination in an exhibit of this scale. The exhibit, open until August 2023, features artifacts and historic documents, from the Tennessee State Library and Archives the Polk Home, and The Tennessee State Museum, and contains interactive components for visitors of all ages.

**4. Middle Tennessee State University (MTSU)** was awarded \$30,385.00 to contract an assistant to thoroughly clean, stabilize, sort, identify, record, catalog,

and accession the artifacts recovered in archaeological excavations from 2017 to the present at the Bass Street community associated with Fort Negley in Davidson County. The Bass Street community grew out of the contraband camps and became the first post-Emancipation African American neighborhood in Nashville and provides a unique window into the lives of the Civil War and Reconstruction era African Americans in the southern United States. After cataloging the artifacts, the project will photograph, scan, and digitize the artifacts, making them available to the public via a website and in an exhibit located at the Fort Negley Visitor's Center Museum.

**5. Parkers Crossroads Battlefield**, Parkers Crossroads, a state-owned battlefield park, was awarded \$15,500.00 to purchase a reproduction limber to display alongside their two caissons with limbers on the battlefield. The battlefield park will explore the relationship between the field artillery pieces and the role artillery played in the battle at Parkers Crossroads. A limber is a two-wheeled cart designed to support the trail of an artillery piece or the stock of a

field carriage such as a caisson or traveling forge, allowing it to be towed. The limber was attached to a cannon or caisson and typically pulled by four to six horses and contained one chest. When the artillery piece was in action, its limber was stored at the rear of the firing line.

**6. Tennessee State Library and Archives (TSLA)** was awarded \$6,822.00 to hire an intern to support ongoing efforts to understand the impact of the Union Army occupation on Nashville from 1862 to 1865. By locating lists of the deceased published in Nashville newspapers during this period, staff will identify contrabands who were pressed into service by the Union Army to build Fort Negley as well as citizen prisoners, government employees, confederate soldiers, and members of the U.S. Colored Troops (USCT). Additionally, this information will be helpful for descendants and genealogical researchers as they investigate the history of their ancestors. All the information will be loaded into a new database that will be included in the Genealogy Index of the Tennessee State Library & Archives.

## HISTORICAL MARKERS

---

At its meeting on October 21, 2022, the Tennessee Historical Commission approved three historical markers and one replacement historical marker: The Homestead at Hardison Mill, Maury County; Approach to Shiloh, March 27, 1862, McNairy County; Freed African Americans Win First Inheritance Suit, Washington County; and Rugby, Morgan 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



*Reenactors at Parkers Crossroads work to attach a cannon to a limber for transport.*



# PUBLICATIONS TO NOTE

By Linda T. Wynn, Assistant Director for State Programs & Publications Editor

**Clearview Press, in Franklin, Tennessee,** published Paul Clements' *Tell Them We Were Rising: Individuals of Color Through Slavery and Jim Crow, in Nashville and Beyond*. A collection of twenty-two biographies this tome highlights the stories of noted African Americans in Nashville and the surrounding region. Building upon the decades of work by academic historians primarily from Fisk and Tennessee State Universities and the Nashville Conference on African American History and Culture's Profiles of African Americans in Tennessee, the author delves into and further expounds upon the recorded stories of those who, if not most, experienced enslavement (the author uses the terms slavery, Negro, colored [sic], and mulatto, upon which he expounds in the Afterword). Clements delves into the lives and contributions of individuals, who most historians that study, research, and write about the African American saga in Nashville and the state of Tennessee are familiar. The well-known African Americans highlighted include Peter and Samuel Lowery, Daniel Wadkins, Ella Sheppard and the Fisk Jubilee Singers, Dr. Robert Fulton Boyd, Henry Harding, the Reverend Nelson G. Merry, the McKissack Family, which Moses McKissack III and his brother Calvin established Nashville's first African American architectural firm, Sampson Keeble, the first African American elected to the Tennessee General Assembly and no narrative about African American history would be complete without noting The Napiers, whose son Attorney James Carroll Napier, a warrior for African American political and social justice, served on the Nashville City Council from 1878 to 1886, businessperson and a founder of Citizens Savings Bank, and a Register of the United States Treasury; Preston Taylor, a minister, businessperson, and philanthropist and Richard Henry Boyd, minister and businessman who established and served as head of the National Baptist Publishing Board and a founder of the

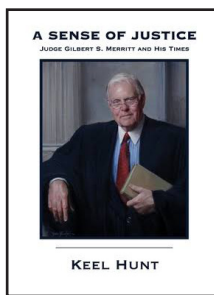
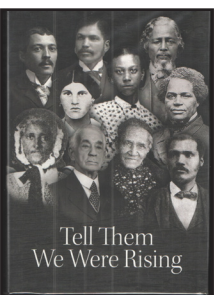
National Baptist Convention of America, Inc. These are a sampling of Nashville's African American citizens that Clements delves into their backgrounds and the contributions they made in spite of the obstacles of racial discrimination placed in their path. The book's title is taken from an 1870 banner "Tell Them We Are Rising" when some 1,500 African Americans marched through Nashville streets celebrating the passage of 15th Amendment to the United States Constitution that gave African American men the right of the franchise. A native Nashvillian and a graduate of Peabody College, who now resides in Williamson County, Clements has written several books including but not limited to *Between A Past Remembered and Chronicles of the Cumberland Settlements*. In this work, Clements demonstrates how the dehumanization of enslavement, the broken promises of Reconstruction, and the debasement of Jim Crow did prevent African Americans from rising above the hurdles placed in their path. This tome should be of interest to those wanting to increase their knowledge about individual African Americans in Nashville and beyond who made invaluable contributions to the place they called home. **Cloth, \$45.00.**

**West Margin Press, 1700 Fourth Street, Berkeley, California 94710,** published Keel Hunt's *A Sense of Justice: Judge Gilbert S. Merritt and His Times*.

A native Nashvillian, Gilbert Stroud Merritt attended Castle Heights Military Academy in Lebanon. In 1957, he earned a bachelor of arts degree from Yale University and three years later a bachelor of law from Vanderbilt University Law School. Following graduation from Vanderbilt University's Law School, Merritt remained at Vanderbilt's Law School serving as an assistant dean and instructor to 1961. The following year he earned a Master of Law degree from Harvard Law School. A mainstay in the judiciary and Tennessee politics, he served in the judi-



ciary for forth-four years and earned a reputation for fair rulings. Merritt's legal career included serving as U. S. Attorney for Middle Tennessee under President Lyndon B. Johnson and President Jimmy Carter nominated him for the United States Court of Appeals for the Six Circuit. In the 1990s President Bill Clinton considered him United States Supreme Court. It should not go unnoticed that Clinton ultimately nominated Ruth Bader Ginsburg. During Merritt's time as U.S. Attorney in Middle Tennessee in the 1960s, he appointed Carlton Petway, the first African American and Martha Craig Daughtrey, the first woman, to serve as assistant U.S. Attorneys for the Middle Tennessee district. In 1990, Daughtrey became the first woman to serve on the Tennessee Supreme Court. Three years later Clinton appointed her to the 6th U. S. Circuit Court of Appeals. Through family ties and political connections, Merritt associated with the Gores, the Ingrams, the Hookers, the Donelsons, the Forts and the Seigenthalers, some of the most noted luminaries in Nashville's history. Keel Hunt, an author and columnist has written other books including *Coup: The Day the Democrats Ousted Their Governor*, *Put Republican Lamar Alexander in Office Early*, and *Stopped a Pardon Scandal* (2013); *Crossing the Aisle: How Bipartisanship Brought Tennessee to the Twenty-First Century and Could Save America* (2018); and *A Landmark Repurposed: From Post Office ... - Frist Art Museum* (2021). Hunt's *A Sense of Justice: Judge Gilbert S. Merritt and His Times* is a combination of biography, politics, and history that "weaves the power of friendship, loyalty and the influence of history upon individuals and generations, and how communities of interest formed and evolved over time. . . and how it is all connected." **Cloth, \$34.99**



**University Press of Tennessee Press, Hodges Library 323, 1015 Volunteer Boulevard, Knoxville, Tennessee 37996-1000.** *Title IX, Pat Summitt, and Tennessee's Trailblazers: 50 Years, 50 Stories* by Mary Ellen Pethel examines the history of Title IX and its impact on women athletes. Pethel applauds the lives and careers of women like University of Tennessee Women's Basketball Coach Pat Head Summitt and player Candace Parker, who led UT to two consecutive national championships (2007, 2008), and named the Final Four's most outstanding player both seasons. Readers are introduced to or re-affiliated with Ann Baker Furrow, who in the 1990s, started UT's women's golf program and Teresa Phillips, who played basketball for Vanderbilt University, where she later served as an assistant coach. A rising coaching star, Fisk University's Associate Athletic Director, Harriett Hamilton hired Phillips as the women's basketball coach. Ultimately, she became the women's basketball coach at Tennessee State University and in 2002, TSU's athletic director, a position she held until 2020. In addition to highlighting these women along with the other women featured in the book expands the reader's understanding of Title IX that President Richard M. Nixon signed into law on June 23, 1972. Title IX benefited women and girls and provided them the assurance of equal opportunity in education that also included school-sponsored sports. Dr. Mary Ellen Pethel is an assistant professor in global leadership studies and honors at Belmont University. Project director of NashvilleSites.org as part of the Metro Historical Commission Foundation, she is the author of *Athens of the New South: College Life and the Making of Modern Nashville* (2017); *A Heartfelt Mission: The West End Home Foundation, 1891-2016* (2017); and *All-Girls Education from Ward Seminary to Harpeth Hall, 1865-2015* (2015). *Title IX, Pat Summitt, and Tennessee's Trailblazers: 50 Years, 50 Stories* is an enlightening narrative about fifty women, the world of sports, and the impact of Title IX and how it affected their lives and professions. **Paper, \$24.95**



# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES NEWS

By J. Ethan Holden

## Four Tennessee Properties Added to National Register of Historic Places

Four Tennessee Properties Added to the National Register of Historic Places

By J. Ethan Holden

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:

### Highlander Folk School Library Building

Listed October 5, 2022

(Monteagle – Grundy County)

Located near Monteagle in Grundy County, the Highlander Folk School Library Building is nationally significant for its role in the Civil Rights Movement and its association with prominent Civil Rights activist Myles Horton. Highlander was founded by Horton and educator Don West in 1932. During the 1940s and 1950s, Highlander hosted workshops and other events that were led, and attended by, important Civil Rights Movement figures, including Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Rosa Parks, Ralph Abernathy, Septima Clark, Diane Nash, Andrew Young, and John Lewis. Many of the School's events took place in the Library Building, which was



Highlander Folk School Library. Photo Courtesy of Phil Thomason, 2021.

constructed in 1949. The State of Tennessee seized the property in 1961 after a legal battle, and the library was sold to private owners in 1962. The Tennessee Preservation Trust purchased the property in 2014 and initiated a gradual restoration process that returned the building to its original design.

### Akins House

Listed November 3, 2022

(Vonore – Monroe County)

John Akins constructed the Cumbeland Plan-type house in 1921 for his son and daughter-in-law, Luke Akins and Elvavine "Vinnie" Williams, as a wedding present. After Luke died of tubercu-

losis in 1936, Virgle "Babs" Burchfield became the common-in-law husband of Elvavine. Under the stewardship of Luke, Elvavine, and Babs, the Akins House became an important part of the local moonshining industry. The Akins and other members of the community stored their moonshine in the property's smokehouse. Cars traveling along Citico Road stopped at the Akins House, picked up the moonshine, and transported it to Knoxville for sale. Babs was arrested for moonshining in 1949 and sent to Brushy Mountain State Penitentiary, where he served eighteen months. Elvavine sold the Akins House and land out of family in 1958 to pay off back taxes on the property. The current owner diligently maintains the house and preserves the history of the Akins family.

### Cemetery School

Listed November 2, 2022

(Murfreesboro – Rutherford County)

The Cemetery School is located on Mount Olive Road in the historically African American community of Cemetery, north of the Stones River National Cemetery and Battlefield in Murfreesboro, Rutherford County. Cemetery is a post-Emancipation rural community whose foundation is intimately connected to the Stones



Akins house. Photo courtesy of Rebecca Schmitt, 2019.





*Cemetery School. Photo Courtesy of Savannah Grandey Knies, 2022.*

River National Cemetery. Like other African American communities across Tennessee, Cemetery had to provide for the educational, religious, and cultural needs of its members because of Jim Crow segregation laws and threats of white violence. The nominated school building was constructed in 1941 by the National Youth Administration and replaced an earlier school built in 1874. In addition to educating the youth of Cemetery, the school also hosted community events such as singings, retirement parties, and celebrations of life. The last students attended Cemetery School in 1962, and in 1963 the school was consolidated with the all-black Smyrna Rosenwald School. The current owner is a relative and descendant of Cemetery community members and continues to maintain the property for future generations.

### **Audubon Park Historic District**

*Listed November 7, 2022*  
(Memphis—Shelby County)

Audubon Park Historic District is important for both its history and its landscape



*Audubon Park Historic District. Photo Courtesy of Angie Clifton Thiel, 2020.*

architecture. The land on which the district sits was acquired by the Memphis Park commission when politician “Boss” E.H. Crump persuaded the city to buy the land in 1947. At the time Audubon Park consisted of 360 acres and was rivaled in size only by the 335-acre Overton Park and the 427-acre Riverside Park. Audubon Park grew to include five distinct sections over the years: Audubon Golf Course (1951), Memphis Botanic Gardens (1949), Audubon Lake and Park (1959), Audubon Park Trails (1955), and Leftwich Tennis Center (1967). The Memphis Botanic Garden is perhaps one of the most well-known sections. Originally known as Audubon Garden before being renamed Memphis Botanic Garden in 1966, the early designs of the arboretum and gardens included 140 acres of Audubon Park. Now, the Garden consists of 96 acres and is a Level IV Arboretum, one of only four in the state of Tennessee. Since its inception, the Audubon Park Historic District has been an important of Memphis’ entertainment and recreational scene and is poised to continue this tradition for the foreseeable future.



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

Derita C. Williams, Chair  
E. Patrick McIntyre, Jr.,  
Executive Director & SHPO

Caty Dirksen,  
Editor, The Courier

Linda T. Wynn, Assistant Director  
of State Programs

#### 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 327324, 2,400 copies promulgated at a cost of \$1.16 per copy, 1/27/22.





STATE OF TENNESSEE  
 TENNESSEE HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
 2941 LEBANON PIKE  
 NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE 37214

PRSR STD  
 US POSTAGE  
 PAID  
 NASHVILLE, TN  
 PERMIT NO. 983

# THE COURIER

## TENNESSEE HISTORICAL COMMISSION MEMBERS

**Mrs. Derita Coleman Williams,**  
*Memphis, Chair*

**Mrs. Beth A. Campbell,** *Rock Island,*  
 Vice Chair for Middle Tennessee

**Mr. Sam D. Elliott,** *Signal Mountain,*  
 Vice Chair for East Tennessee

### EAST TENNESSEE MEMBERS

**Mr. Allen F. Carter,** *Athens*

**Dr. William E. Kennedy,**  
*Jonesborough*

**Dr. William Lyons,** *Knoxville*

**Mr. Ray Smith,** *Oak Ridge*

**Ms. Susan Williams,** *Knoxville*

**Mr. Hanes Torbett,** *Johnson City*

**Mr. Kelly Wolfe,** *Jonesborough*

### MIDDLE TENNESSEE MEMBERS

**Dr. Kent T. Dollar,** *Cookeville*

**Mr. Jeremy Harrell,** *Franklin*

**Mr. Kem Hinton,** *Nashville*

**Mrs. Doris McMillan,** *Franklin*

**Mr. Reggie Mudd,** *Gallatin*

**Mr. Dan Pomeroy,** *Brentwood*

**Ms. Ann Toplovich,** *Nashville*

### WEST TENNESSEE MEMBERS

**Mr. Brad Grantham,** *Bolivar*

**Mrs. Loni Harris,** *Jackson*

**Mr. Jim Haywood,** *Brownsville*

**Dr. Keith Norman,** *Memphis*

**Mrs. Beverly C. Robertson,** *Memphis*

**Mr. Don Roe,** *Jackson*

**Mrs. Laura Todd,** *Collierville*

### EX OFFICIO MEMBERS

Governor's Representative

**Mr. Alec Richardson**

Commissioner of Environment and  
 Conservation's Representative

**Mr. Gerald Parish**

State Archaeologist

**Mr. Phil Hodge**

State Historian

**Dr. Carroll Van West**

State Librarian and Archivist

**Mr. James Ritter**

## TENNESSEE HISTORICAL COMMISSION STAFF

**Mr. E. Patrick McIntyre, Jr.**  
 Executive Director/SHPO  
*patrick.mcintyre@tn.gov*

**Ms. Holly M. Barnett,**  
 Asst. Dir. Federal Programs  
*holly.m.barnett@tn.gov*

**Mrs. Linda T. Wynn**  
 Asst. Dir. State Programs  
*linda.wynn@tn.gov*

### FEDERAL PROGRAMS

**Justin Heskew**  
 Preservation Tax Incentives  
*justin.heskew@tn.gov*

**Dr. Ethan Holden**  
 National Register  
*ethan.holden@tn.gov*

**Vacant**  
 Certified Local Government

**Ms. Casey Lee**  
 Section 106  
*casey.lee@tn.gov*

**Ms. Peggy Nickell**  
 Survey and GIS  
*peggy.nickell@tn.gov*

**Ms. Kelley Reid**  
 Section 106  
*kelly.reid@tn.gov*

**Vacant**  
 Survey and CLG

**Ms. Rebecca Schmitt**  
 National Register  
*rebecca.schmitt@tn.gov*

### STATE PROGRAMS

**Mr. Dan Brown**  
 State Historic Sites  
*dan.brown@tn.gov*

**Ms. Katy Dirksen**  
 THPA and Outreach  
*katy.dirksen@tn.gov*

**Mr. Graham Perry**  
 Cemetery Preservation  
*graham.perry@tn.gov*

**Ms. Nina Scall**  
 Wars Commission  
*nina.scall@tn.gov*

### ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

**Mrs. Angela Campbell**  
 Secretary  
*angela.campbell@tn.gov*

**Ms. Ashlee Pierce**  
 Administrative Secretary  
*ashlee.pierce@tn.gov*

**Ms. Laura Ragan**  
 Grants Administrator  
*laura.ragan@tn.gov*

ON THE COVER: The Chester Inn State Historic Site located in Jonesborough, TN. Photograph by Anne Mason, Executive Director of the Heritage Alliance of Northeast TN and Southwest VA, December 19, 2022.

