



THE COURIER

TENNESSEE HISTORICAL COMMISSION, NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE

FALL 2025



In This Issue: Tennessee's 51st CLG, Tennessee Wars Commission Welcomes
New Historic Site, Ralph's Donuts Listed in the National Register

From the Director

Dear Friends:

It has been the honor of my lifetime to serve the people of Tennessee as Executive Director and State Historic Preservation Officer of the Tennessee Historical Commission since 2007, and to have made a measurable impact for our conserving our state’s unique heritage. I will be leaving in November, and so as I close out my time here I want to reflect on some of the accomplishments over these past 18 ½ years.

Funding for preservation has been a key priority, and over \$30 million has been allocated from two new grant programs established during my tenure — the Civil War Sites Preservation Fund (CWSPF) and the Historic Property/Land Acquisition Fund (HPLAF.) Last Fall, the Commission awarded \$2 million to help restore 23 worthy preservation projects across the state from the HPLAF, and \$6 million from it is helping fund capital improvements at our sites. The CWSPF has granted over \$20 million to date and has helped save over 1,100 acres of hallowed battlefield grounds in rural places such as Shiloh as well as keeping greenspace in urban areas including Nashville, Murfreesboro, and Franklin. Places recently saved include the c. 1803 Brown’s Tavern in Chattanooga and the Salem Cemetery Battlefield in Madison County, which will be a new park for the area. The Tennessee Wars Commission (TWC) division of our office has led these efforts. In 2015, as part of my role with TWC the State acquired over 30 acres along the Elk River in Fayetteville and we partnered with the City and Friends and group to purchase Camp Blount and as a new park for the community. This is the site of the War of 1812-era encampment of Andrew Jackson and his Tennessee troops that helped result in our being known as the “Volunteer State.”

Our capacity has been strengthened through new programs and staff over the years, including a Cemetery Preservation

Program established in 2019. We created a new State Historic Cemetery Register as an honorary recognition for Tennessee burial grounds. Our communications and outreach has been improved by having dedicated staff, and this full color newsletter is but one example of the achievements in this area.

During my time over \$50,000,000 in capital project funding has benefited and transformed the THC State Historic Sites. The maintenance fund doubled during my time here, and our operating grants to the non-profits partners who operate the sites has increased several times. Since I started three new state historic sites were restored and opened to the public: the Hotel Halbrook in Dickson, Hawthorn Hill in Castalian Springs, and Sabine Hill in Elizabethton. We currently have four new visitor and event centers under construction that will position those sites to serve the public for the next few decades. In looking back at some of the most notable experiences at our sites, the February, 2008 tornado that hit Wynnewood in Sumner County stands out. I was closely involved with the restoration of this National Historic Landmark over the following four years. About a decade ago I led the acquisition of property next to the James K. Polk Home in Columbia formerly associated with the residence which today is once again part of the property and serves as a garden. The work to improve our sites continues. In White County, we’re completing the acquisition of 20 acres surrounding Sparta Rock House State Historic Site which will allow for new trails and the interpretation of the historic roadbed which passed near this former stagecoach inn and toll collection facility. The inn is also undergoing a comprehensive restoration.

On the Federal Programs side, Federal Historic Preservation Fund grants have made a measurable impact with survey, planning, and restoration grants. In just the past ten years alone, some \$10 million in grants have funded over 450 worthy

projects. During my time over \$800,000,000 in certified Federal Rehabilitation Historic Tax Credit projects have been administered by our office in conjunction with the National Park Service, including the Crosstown Concourse in Memphis which was Tennessee’s largest project to date. Our Certified Local Government Program now has 51 communities — up from 32 when I arrived — and all but a few of the municipalities in the state with historic zoning commissions are now enrolled. Approximately 40,000 Section 106 reviews have been completed since 2007. While the law allows for 30 days, the turnaround time for reviews in our office averages just two days.

These are just a few highlights. Everything I have noted is a reflection of hard work by our remarkable and talented team at the Tennessee Historical Commission, and I am grateful to have been a part of this dedicated staff, past and present. I also wish to thank the members of the Commission for their steadfast support and service over the years. Finally — and very importantly — my thanks to all of you across Tennessee and beyond who are interested in our history and in helping make sure our historic places continue to exist to enrich our communities and provide a sense of place in our ever-changing world. I will continue to serve the work of historic preservation, and I look forward to seeing you.

Sincerely,
Patrick

E. Patrick McIntyre, Jr.
Executive Director



Patrick McIntyre in Franklin, 2024.



The Historical Commission staff at the THC office in 2015.



McIntyre on 2nd Avenue, Nashville, January, 2021.



Patrick McIntyre at Wynnewood State Historic Site assessing tornado damage on the morning of February 6, 2008.

THE CITY BUILT ON A RIVER:

Loudon Becomes Tennessee's 51st Certified Local Government

By Dr. Lane Tillner, Technical Preservation & CLG Coordinator

Nestled within the switchbacks of the Tennessee River, as it winds its way through the state, the city of Loudon sits in the heart of Tennessee history. The land that comprises Loudon was once home to generations of Cherokee, during the Mississippian period, prior to increased European settlements and their forced migration in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

Following the close of the American Revolution, and the beginning of nationhood, new Americans began to explore and settle areas outside of the established states of the union. In 1790, six years before Tennessee earned statehood, white settlements began to occur within the boundaries of what would become Loudon County, along the banks of the Tennessee River, near present-day Loudon. These early families included the Blairs, Carmichaels, and Tunnells, emigrating from areas that had been North Carolina or the ill-fated State of Franklin.

As the eighteenth century passed into the nineteenth these early establishments formalized into towns in which business revolved around the river. A new mode of river transportation, steamboats, changed how the settlers interacted with the river and the surrounding landscape. Steamboats, offering commodious and economical means of transport and agricultural trade, first passed through the region in 1828. Around 1817, James Blair established a ferry service and storehouse, effectively gaining control of trade and traffic along the river. As such the community took on the moniker, Blair's Ferry. The Blair's Ferry Storehouse was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1977 and continues to serve as an extant reminder of Loudon's early history.



Blair's Ferry Storehouse, Listed in the National Register in 1977. The building is currently undergoing rehabilitation efforts. Photograph by Justin Heskey. October 2024.

Throughout the 1820s and 1830s, the settlement of Blair's Ferry continued to grow and prosper with the erection of churches, hotels, and stores. The Carmichael Inn, which had been established in 1810, remained the prominent resting place for travelers in the region.

Attempts to formally lay out a town occurred in the early 1850s by one of the Blair relatives, at which point the town was renamed from Blair's Ferry to Blairsville. However, this enterprise failed as no one bought any lots in the newly laid out town. Not long afterwards, the formal town plan remained, and the name was changed from Blair's Ferry and Blairsville to Loudon. This time, the town plan succeeded as plots were bought and the town saw growth.

Introduction of a rail line shifted the source of the economy in Loudon, but it did not completely end Loudon's reliance on the river economy. The railroad bridge was completed in 1855, which allowed for the extension of the railway and East Tennessee & Georgia Railroad, the East Tennessee & Virginia Railroad, and the later combination of these lines: the East Tennessee, Virginia, and Georgia Railroad. Attempts were made to destroy the railroad bridge, a strategic point of troop movement during the Civil War, and the bridge was ultimately repaired towards the end of the conflict.

Finally, in May 1870, Loudon County was established from portions of Roane, Monroe, and Blount counties, though it was originally called Christiana County before the name change in June of the same year. As the largest town with the newly established county, Loudon was selected as the County Seat, and the Loudon County Courthouse was built in 1872. Listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1975, the red brick courthouse was designed in the popular Italianate style of the late nineteenth century, and it remains a vital reminder of Loudon's history. With the establishment of the courthouse, a new commercial district began to grow.

Loudon moved into the twentieth century and continued to remain the center of political power in the county while retaining a mostly agricultural identity. New industries moved into the city, beginning with a hosiery mill in 1906 and others that followed. The Carmichael Inn, a legacy of the early settler families, was listed in the National Register of Historic Places until its relocation, and subsequent delisting, in 1987, when it was being prepared for use as the Loudon County Museum. Other symbols of that legacy, the Blair's Ferry Storehouse and the Loudon County Courthouse, are constant reminders of the history and development of this city on the river.



Loudon County Courthouse. The courthouse was undergoing restoration efforts and ADA upgrades at the time the photograph was captured. Photograph by Rebecca Schmitt, August 2024.

It is this vast history that Loudon has sought to protect through preservation efforts. The city first established local historic zoning and districts in 1991 and has continually sought to protect the individual and unique history of the city. May 20, 2025 marked as Loudon joined fifty other communities across Tennessee in the Certified Local Government Program.

The Certified Local Government (CLG) program, created by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 as amended in 1980 and 1992, is a preservation partnership to encourage local participation in, and cooperation with, state and federal preservation efforts. Administered at the federal level by the National Park Service and at the state level by the State Historic Preservation Offices-in Tennessee that is the TN Historical Commission-the program provides technical preservation assistance and financial incentives through the Federal Historic Preservation Fund (HPF) Grant to help local governments achieve their preservation goals and needs.



City of Loudon Historic District Marker: Loudon implemented historic zoning and local districts in 1991. Photograph by Rebecca Schmitt, August 2024.

As an active participant in the Certified Local Government program, the City of Loudon will have priority access to technical assistance, an active role in the National Register process, and precedence in the Historic Preservation Fund grant application.

Cities and towns interested in becoming a CLG must have a practice and policy of preservation demonstrated through the enactment of a historic zoning ordinance which creates a historic zoning commission and allows for design and project review of buildings located within local historic districts.

More information about the Certified Local Government program can be found on our website or by emailing THC.CLG@tn.gov.

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PRESERVED! THE REMAINING ACREAGE AT THE HEART OF THE FORT REDMOND STATE HISTORIC SITE, ADAMS, TENNESSEE

By Nina Scall, Tennessee Wars Commission Program Director

In November 2013, the State of Tennessee acquired the 16.83-acre, National Register-listed, Fort Redmond in Adams, Tennessee. Thanks to the forethought of the former Tennessee Wars Commission Program Director, Fred Prouty, the Tennessee Historical and Wars Commissions (THC/TWC) were able to preserve a linear parcel containing access to the Red River, the historic railroad cut, and a portion of the earthworks; however, approximately 1.18 acres remained under the ownership of CSX Railroad. The Historical and Wars Commissions have been hoping to protect this acreage ever since, and we are pleased to announce that we have signed a lease with CSX that protects the earthworks in their entirety.

Although this article focuses on the physical space, it is important to note the human dimension of this historic site. Specifically, the heroic actions of the 15th Infantry U.S. Colored Troops who were garrisoned at this site until the conclusion of the Civil War, sacrificing their lives by defending the railroads and their supply lines.

Positioned between the current CSX Railroad Bridge and the historic Edgefield & Kentucky Railroad Bridge trestles lies the nucleus of the Fort Redmond State Historic Site. This 7.5-acre core contains the circa 1861 circular earthworks, totaling 102 feet in diameter. Two names are associated with the site: Fort Redmond (Confederate) and Red River Blockhouse Number 1 (U.S.). The origin story of this site is cloudy due to conflicting accounts and a lack of tangible evidence; however, the current historical narrative details that the fort was constructed by Confederate forces who abandoned this defensive position when Forts Henry and Donelson fell in February 1862. Union troops seized the site, transforming the space into a stronghold, a single-wall blockhouse. This account has been challenged due to a lack of evidence supporting Confederate construction of the fortification, and an archaeological survey disputes the erection of a Union blockhouse at this location. In an attempt to clarify the site's use, this article references themes previously researched by THC's Bobby Cooley, State Historic Sites Coordinator, in his research paper titled *Investigating Fort Redmond State Historic Site* and includes a review of the historical context of railroads in connection to Civil War fortifications, and the links between Confederate tactics in disrupting Union supplies and Union tactics of fortifying railroad lines to supply their Western Theater Campaign.

The Red River site was constructed on the Edgefield & Kentucky Railroad, which was established between 1852 and

1859. This line spanned from the Edgefield Junction in modern day East Nashville to Guthrie, Kentucky. Few documents exist outlining the initial use of the railroad by Confederate forces however, at the outbreak of the Civil War, the railroads around Nashville were solely utilized for troop transportation and supplies, and the waterways up until this time, had a greater impact, thus construction of Forts Henry and Donelson commenced in the spring of 1861, protecting vulnerable water routes on the Tennessee and Cumberland Rivers near Kentucky. Contemporary Confederate reports do not support evidence of any railroad fortifications north of Nashville, demonstrating that the Red River site was not constructed in the early months of the Civil War. Additionally, no mention of Fort Redmond exists in the *War of the Rebellion: Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*.

For the Union Army occupying Tennessee, railroads were crucial lifelines for supplies and troop transport. Protecting these networks necessitated the construction of field fortifications, which was the case with the Red River site. Little is known about the fortifications specific to this line between 1862 and 1864, but it is important to note that the Edgefield & Kentucky line was considered a supplemental supply line during the early years of the Civil War and almost ceased operations in 1862. In 1864, the line expanded, connecting with the Clarksville & Louisville Railroad in Guthrie, forming the Nashville & Clarksville Railroad. Created as a primary supply route for Union forces, the Nashville & Clarksville line was vital for supplying Union steamboats that were unable to navigate the Harpeth Shoals when the water was low. At the conclusion of the war, the line was 52 miles long and contained five single-wall blockhouses with three additional blockhouse foundations present. In addition to blockhouses, redoubts and stockades were utilized to protect rail lines throughout Tennessee.

Through extensive historical research, Cooley has discovered that "there is no evidence, in any official Civil War record, that mentions a site named Fort Redmond, or that even suggests a fortification was constructed at the Red River site by the Confederates." Although the National Register nomination described the Red River site as a blockhouse and relied on comparisons to Union Engineer Col. William Emery Merrill's design and specification for a Civil War blockhouse, there is no physical evidence that supports this design type. The leading type of blockhouse built was one of square or rectangular design up until 1864, when, realizing their defensive limitations, Union

forces began constructing octagonal structures. The Red River site consists of "...two concentric rings of earth with a ditch in between. Within the innermost circle is a depression, which is surrounded by a small earthen berm. The site sits on top of a hill." It is clear to see that these conflicting design styles would not allow for a blockhouse to be built at this location, although historical accounts confirm the presence of a blockhouse at the Red River site. These inconsistencies have given rise to the theory that by the end of the war, this site contained multiple field fortifications constructed over time to accommodate the changing defensive needs. It is likely that "a circular redoubt or stockade was constructed between 1862 and 1863. Then, in 1864, the Nashville & Clarksville Railroad was established as a supply route, using the Edgefield & Kentucky line, and a blockhouse was constructed. The construction of the blockhouse likely occurred during the threat of guerrillas or Confederate General Lyon raiding the area." Post-war, blockhouses were dismantled and the timber sold off. This, combined with growth centered around Railroads and railways being rerouted or expanded, leaves few railroad field fortifications intact.

This was the case with the Red River site, which has been significantly altered by modern construction. The contemporary CSX line was completely rerouted around the earthworks, which could have destroyed other earthworks located on the site. The Old Highway 41 and modern Highway 41 have also caused extreme changes in the landscape. Multiple houses surround the site, and most of the land was artificially flattened throughout the process. It is amazing that any earthworks survive from the Civil War at this site. This history of construction around the landscape explains why other field fortifications were not originally considered.

It is the intention of the Historical and Wars Commissions to collaborate with CSX Railroad and Port Royal State Historic Park to stabilize and conserve the site, protecting this important cultural resource for future generations. Additionally, we hope to partner with the Tennessee Division of Archaeology to learn more about the site and to clarify both its interpretation and name. At this time, the property is not open to the public, but we hope to bring awareness to this unique historic site that contains both Civil War and transportation significance that is still present on the landscape today.

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 through October 31, 2025
- Tennessee Wars Commission Grant Fund accepting applications through November 21, 2025.



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DONUT YOU WANT TO BE LISTED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES?

Five Tennessee Properties Added or Approved to the 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:

Haywood County Farm and Cemetery

Listed May 28, 2025

(Brownsville — Haywood County)

The Haywood County Farm and Cemetery was listed in the National Register on May 28, 2025, for its social significance. In 1868, Haywood County purchased a farm of 150 acres four miles east of Brownsville for the express purpose of constructing a county “Poorhouse.” An asylum was later added in 1884. In 1915, the county constructed additional buildings to house prisoners. The property became known as the Haywood County Work Farm after this change. From 1915 to 1957, the elderly, mentally ill, and prisoners alike lived and worked on the farm. Their stories convey early concepts of caring for the rural indignant and southern prison reform in Haywood County. In 1957, the property transitioned to a convict only farm. Prisoners were housed there until 2011, when they and prison staff were



Image Courtesy of B. Yerian, 2023.

transferred to the Haywood County Justice Center. Today, the property is owned by the county and cared for by the Haywood Heritage Foundation and the Haywood County Farm Committee. The 1990 jail annex is currently used as archival space, and in 2023, both organizations spearheaded the installation of the Haywood County Farm Memorial Marker in the cemetery to honor those who died on the farm.

Omohundro Water Filtration Complex District (Additional Documentation)

Listed August 1, 2025

(Nashville — Davidson County)

The Omohundro Water Filtration Complex District Additional Documentation was approved by the National Park Service on August 1, 2025. Located in Nashville, Davidson County, the complex was originally listed in the National Register on May 13, 1987. The Additional Documentation supersedes the original nomination and provides updated information on the resources and history of the complex. Additional research revealed the important historical role the complex played in Nashville up to 1963. Following World War II, the economy in Nashville and Davidson County shifted primarily from one based on agriculture to one dependent on manufacturing, product sales, and services. At the same time, the actual population of Nashville declined as residents left the urban center to live on the outskirts of the city. They were joined in the suburbs by others who moved closer to Nashville in pursuit of economic opportunities. The general increase in population of Davidson



Image courtesy of Nick McGinn, 2025.

County and the growing industrial base created a large demand for water. When Nashville merged with Davidson County to create the Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County in 1963, bonds in the amount of \$5.5 million dollars was issued to improve the Omohundro complex. Tanks, renovated filtration plants, and other support buildings were constructed the same year. This improvement increased the capacity of the complex and allowed it to better serve the suburbs around Nashville.

Ralph’s Donut Shop

Listed August 1, 2025

(Cookeville — Putnam County)

Located on Cedar Avenue near Cookeville’s town square, Ralph’s Donut Shop was listed in the National Register on August 1, 2025, for its local significance as a donut shop. The building was constructed in 1950 and originally housed Grogan’s Grocery Store. Ralph and Evelyn Smith purchased the building and established Ralph’s Donuts in September of 1962. Both were natives of the Upper Cumberland region and learned about the donut business from Evelyn’s brother, who owned a shop in Dayton, Ohio. Ralph’s Donuts was originally open twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. This schedule, combined with excellent donuts and baked goods, transformed the business from local shop to community staple. College students from nearby Tennessee Tech University thronged the store in the evening and at night, while working and professional class



Image Courtesy of Dr. Rebecca Schmitt, 2024.

locals packed the shop in the morning and at lunch. The success of the store is apparent in the accolades and network of fans it accumulated over the years. Ralph’s Donut hats can be found as far afield as Portland, Oregon, and in 2015, Ralph’s donuts was voted the Best Donut Shop in Tennessee. In 2020, the current owners, John and Sandy MacDonald, purchased the shop. They pursued National Register listing to honor the history of Ralph’s Donuts and are dedicated to continuing its legacy.

Old Stone Creamery

Listed August 1, 2025

(Spring Hill — Maury County)

The Old Stone Creamery is located in Spring Hill, Maury County. Listed in the National Register on August 1, 2025, the Old Stone Creamery is a locally significant example of a nineteenth century dairy building. The building was constructed in 1870 by Campbell Brown and his cousin McCoy “Mark” Campbell, the latter of whom was the founder of the National Register-listed Cleburne Jersey Farm. Campbell and his descendants transformed their small operation into a dairy farm recognized across the state for its dairy production. The Old Stone Creamery possesses the character defining features of a nineteenth century dairy building. This includes its stone construction, below grade rooms, “wet room” and “dry room” arrangement, plaster interior, and floor-level trough. Additionally, the clipped gable slate roof and wood gingerbread detailing demonstrate subtle applications of architectural detail to an otherwise utilitarian building. The Old Stone Creamery



Image Courtesy of Dr. Rebecca Schmitt, 2025.

is now the namesake and logo of the Cleburne Jersey Farm, which is operated by descendants of the Campbell family. Milk produced onsite comes from the same bloodline of Jersey cattle bought by Mack Campbell more than one hundred years ago. The family is committed to the preservation of the building for future generations.

State Review Board Meeting

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 at 9 am CST on January 23, 2026 for our next meeting at 2941 Lebanon Pike Nashville, TN 37214.

HISTORICAL MARKERS

At its meeting on June 20, 2025, the Tennessee Historical Commission approved three historical markers: ***Dewitt Clinton Senter***; McMinn County; ***John Bell Hood At Loftin Hill***, Maury County; and ***Johnson City Senior Center***, 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.



NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES NEWS

By J. Ethan Holden, National Register Coordinator

Five Tennessee Properties Added or Approved to the National Register of Historic Places

Earles Drug Store

Listed August 1, 2025
(Kingsport — Sullivan County)

Earles Drug Store was listed in the National Register on August 1, 2025, for its local significance as an important business in Kingsport, Sullivan County. Dr. George W. Earles and Dr. J.A. Flora opened Earles Drug Store in 1941 at 120 East Center Street. The original store offered soda and luncheonette services on the first floor and medical offices on the second floor. As the population of Kingsport increased and Earles Drug Store grew in popularity, the need for a larger building became apparent. Janie Earles, who took over the business after her husband died in 1953, realized that a large, modern building with leasable offices would provide enough space for her business while also combining other healthcare services under one roof. Local architectural Allen N. Dryden, Sr., designed the new modern building that now sits on West Center Street. A large cafeteria and luncheonette that could seat 103 people occupied the first floor. Meanwhile, the second and third floors



Image Courtesy of Dr. Rebecca Schmitt, 2023.

housed medical offices. People could now visit one place and buy lunch and other supplies, receive medical care, and have their prescription filled. Even more importantly, the new building featured the first drive through window in Kingsport. This combination of modern conveniences and state-of-the-art facilities ensured the new Earles Drug Store became a staple in the Kingsport community. In 1976, the store moved to a smaller location on Center Street, and the building was purchased by the law firm Todd and Dossett in 1977. The current owner is participating in the Federal Historic Tax Credit program and the Tennessee Historic Development Grant program to rehabilitate the building for a new life of service to the community.

NATIONAL REGISTER DIGITIZATION UPDATE

By Dr. Rebecca Schmitt

In the Summer of 2024, Federal Program staff began to digitize the National Register of Historic Places files. While most of the National Register nominations have been digitized by the National Park Service or the National Archives, the THC's files contain even more information such as negatives, slides, print photographs, research, correspondence, grant files, and Historic Tax Credit files.

Digitizing the National Register (NR) files is part of a multi-phase, multi-year effort to make portions of Federal Program files freely available online. Over the last several years, NR staff previously digitized the entirety of the Information Files, which primarily contain NR eligibility determinations, property research, and photographs.

Once scanning of the NR files is complete, staff will be working on organizing the NR and Information files, which will be uploaded to an online digital archive. As of this update, staff have fully digitized 706 (approximately 32%) of the National Register files. While it will be some time before all of the files are freely available online, digitized files can be requested from staff by e-mailing National_Register@tn.gov.



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E. Patrick McIntyre, Jr.,
Executive Director & Deputy 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 N13MP9-1, 4926 copies, October 17, 2025. This public document was promulgated at a cost of \$1.30 per copy.

CALLING IN A FAVOR: THE HEROICS OF DIXIE THE DOG

By Bobby Cooley, State Historic Sites Program Coordinator

The year was 1907, and the setting was a small tobacco town in Tennessee. Here, life moved at a pace as gentle as the Red River that carved through the town in the heat of the summer. News traveled just as slow and was carried by word of mouth or a slow-moving wagon. All of that was about to change though. A whisper of the newest craze, the telephone, promised to connect neighbor to neighbor and town to town at the speed of light. You could share news, as it happened. Mallory Sawyer, a well to do businessmen and local tobacco Barron, was excited to hear this wonderful news. The Cumberland Telephone Company was driving the change, and Mr. Sawyer eagerly watched as the linemen tasked with stringing the wires came through town. It was not a simply or easy job, especially when they reached the banks of the Red River, halting their progress. On this day, the banks seemed further apart than the linemen remember, and the currents unforgiving. Was there rain upriver they didn't hear about?

Just as the men were scratching their heads and planning on how to tackle the new problems faced with the river rising, a flash of yellow and white bolted by them. It was Dixie, Mr. Sawyer's faithful dog. Dixie wasn't just any canine companion though; he possessed a loyalty to Mr. Sawyer as deep as the holler where he was found. Dixie's story began eleven years prior. He was one of seven pups discovered in the hollow of an old log nestled deep within the woods. Their mother, a wild creature with a touch of bulldog, had roamed the forests for years, surviving by her wits and the occasional unfortunate lamb or pig. However, some local boys stumbled upon the litter in the hollow log and the protective mother, fierce and untamed, confronted them. The outcome left the pups orphaned, and needing care. Among the orphaned pups was a small, yellow pup with a distinctive white patch on his chest, like a neatly pressed shirtfront. Mr. Sawyer took him in for the boys when they brought them to town, and to everyone's surprise the little dog showed none of his mother's wildness. Instead, he was the epitome of affection and loyalty, his tail a constant wagging metronome of joy. He also adored children, especially Mr. Sawyers little granddaughter, whom he guarded with a gentle vigilance.

On this summer day, that same gentle, determined spirit in the dog was about to play an unexpected role in the small town's history. Mr. Sawyer, seeing the linemen's predicament at the riverbank, had an idea. He knew Dixie's strength and willingness to listen and approached the men with an idea. The dog could swim the lines across, where they already had other men waiting to continue the line. The idea seemed crazy, but after Mr. Sawyer showed them a few of Dixie's tricks, the men were willing to give it a shot, and tied a sturdy rope around Dixie's neck, securing the heavy telephone wires to it, and sending him on his way. With a reassuring pat, Mr. Sawyer pointed to the opposite shore. Dixie, understanding the command with easy,



This is the Telephone Switchboard Office at Port Royal State Historic Park, with an early 20th century insulator in the foreground. The switchboard office was constructed in the 1920's.

plunged into the cool water and set off. The linemen watched in amazement as Dixie the dog, head held high, paddled steadily across the flowing water, the wires trailing behind him. Mr. Sawyer stood on the riverbank, guiding him with encouraging calls, his voice echoing across the water. Reaching the far bank, Dixie shook himself off, having successfully carried the telephone wires across the river. This remarkable feat was repeated over and over. The linemen, initially skeptical, were now cheering Dixie on, their hats raised in admiration for the brave dog. They had never seen anything like it. Dixie had single-handedly overcome the challenges of the river, bridging the divide and paving the way for voices to travel across the nation. Dixie's story doesn't just end with his heroic swim though. He was a familiar and beloved figure around the small town before, and especially, after this feat was accomplished. His honest nature became legendary. On two separate occasions, he accidentally found himself locked inside the local grocery overnight. Surrounded by tempting aromas and readily available treats, Dixie, with an integrity that would put many a man to shame, never fell to the temptation. He simply waited patiently for the morning, a silent guard of the store.

As with all good dogs, the town mourned the passing of this extraordinary dog a few years later. At the respectable age of eleven, Dixie's earthly journey had come to an end. He was laid to rest in the peaceful holler he was found, a place as tranquil and enduring as his memory. Mr. Sawyer, his heart filled with gratitude, and to help his young granddaughter overcome her grief, erected a modest monument to mark the spot where Dixie was laid to rest, a testament to the dog who helped bring the modern world to their small Tennessee town, one courageous swim at a time. Dixie, the four-legged hero, is now forever be remembered not just as a pet, but as a vital part of the town's history, a furry pioneer who helped connect their community to the wider world.

This story is adapted from a real news story of Dixie the Dog highlighted in the Nashville Banner during the summer of 1911. While many liberties were taken by the author, the story of Dixie swimming the lines across the river for the Cumberland Telephone Company, and his faithfulness to Mr. Sawyer, is based on the real account.

HELPING FAMILIES OVERCOME COMPLEX CEMETERY ISSUES

By Graham Perry, Historic Cemetery Preservation Specialist

The Tennessee Historical Commission is always pleased to help concerned citizens with their cemetery-related questions. Upon advice provided by our office, one such citizen, Ms. Carrie Louise Pinson, was able to generate a great deal of buzz around the Zion CME Church Cemetery in Shelby County, where several of her family members are buried. The issue at hand was that obviously no one had maintained the cemetery in years, and the church property was surrounded by recent encroaching development. The advice provided to Ms. Pinson included contacting the County Historian and Cemetery Committee member Jimmy Rout, CME church main office, Wright Property Management (the developer), Shelby County, Scouting of America’s Chickasaw Council, the Tennessee Department of Archeology, the University of South Florida, the Memphis Commercial Appeal and local news stations all of whom were essential players in addressing the dilapidated condition of the cemetery.

The results thus far have been a general cleaning of the cemetery for the purpose of a potential Ground Penetrating Radar survey, the location of more than 70 graves on both the church plat and the adjacent “common area” owned by Wright Property Management, and several highly publicized related news articles and television news stories. Ms. Pinson’s efforts are a prime example of what can be achieved when a concerned citizen investigates all existing avenues to bring attention to a neglected cemetery.

Map of Zion Hill CME Church Cemetery showing probable gravesites, as a result of survey conducted by Hannah Guidry and Ben Nance of the Tennessee Department of Archeology.

Cemetery Preservation Workshops this Fall

The Tennessee Historical Commission will be hosting three Cemetery Preservation Workshops this Fall, covering all grand divisions of the State. Check out the dates below for a workshop near you!

- Thomas Overton Family Cemetery in Old Hickory, TN, hosted with Metro Historical Commission and featuring Terry Minton
October 25, 2025 from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm CDT
- Old Friendship Cemetery in Chester County, TN, featuring Mike Alexander
November 8, 2025 from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm CST
- Oddfellows Cemetery in Knoxville, TN, featuring Jonathan Appell
November 21-22, 2025 from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm EST



Volunteer group photo featuring Ms. Pinson along with members of the Scouting America Chickasaw Council and other volunteers.



Cemetery maintenance work being carried out by local volunteers.



Cemeteries Recently added to the Historic Cemetery Register

There has been a noticeable uptick in applications for THC’s Historic Cemetery Register this period. Twenty-five cemeteries have been added to the register far surpassing any previous quarter, and the counties represented vary widely. For more information about the requirements please contact Graham Perry at graham.perry@tn.gov or visit the Tennessee Historical Commission website.

Branch Hill Cemetery, Knox County.
Listed May 15, 2025

Thompson Cemetery, Williamson County.
Listed May 22, 2025

Roadman Cemetery, Cocke County.
Listed May 23, 2025.

Bethel Springs African American Cemetery, McNairy.
Listed May 30, 2025.

Rucker Cemetery, Grainger County.
Listed June 2, 2025.

Easterly Family Cemetery, Greene County.
Listed June 11, 2025.

Old Baxter Cemetery, Cocke County.
Listed June 11, 2025.

Greenlee Cemetery, Grainger County.
Listed June 13, 2025.

Pleasant Hill Cemetery, Hawkins County.
Listed June 23, 2025.

Susong Family Cemetery, Cocke County.
Listed June 23, 2025.

Fairview-Flatwoods Baptist Church Cemetery, Jefferson County.
Listed June 25, 2025.

Mount Tabor Presbyterian Church Cemetery, Rutherford.
Listed June 25, 2025.

Bethesda Church Cemetery, Hamblen County.
Listed July 14, 2025.

Candies Creek Cemetery, Bradley County.
Listed July 17, 2025.

Honeycutt Cemetery, Morgan County.
Listed July 21, 2025.

Bent Creek Cemetery, Hamblen County.
Listed August 7, 2025.

Nathaniel Williams Cemetery, Crockett County.
Listed August 7, 2025.

Soldier’s Rest Cemetery, Davidson County.
Listed August 7, 2025.

Allen's Grove Cemetery, Williamson County.
Listed August 12, 2025.

Waters-Large Cemetery, Cocke County.
Listed August 12, 2025.

Webb Family Cemetery, Cocke County.
Listed August 12, 2025.

Lytle Family Cemetery, Rutherford County.
Listed August 12, 2025.

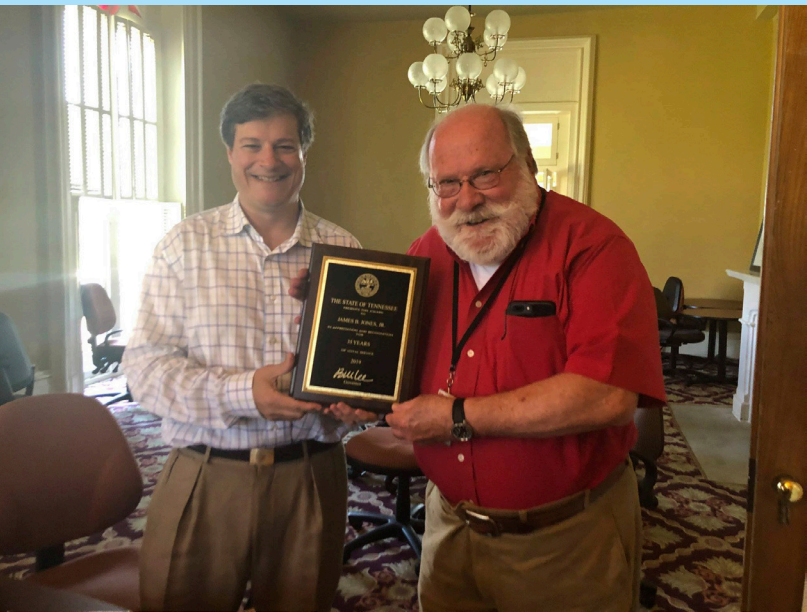
Rock of Ages Cemetery, Hamblen County.
Listed August 13, 2025.

Old Goodfield Cemetery, Meigs County.
Listed August 13, 2025.

McLemore Family Cemetery, Williamson County.
Listed August 14, 2025.

IN MEMORIAM

Former THC staff member **Dr. James B. Jones** died May 13, 2025 at the age of 77. He is survived by his wife Cynthia and his son and granddaughter. With a tenure spanning 35 years from 1984 to 2019, Dr. Jones was among the longest serving employees in the history of the agency. In the 1980s he served as the first Certified Local Government Coordinator after the program was established. He was a prolific author of many articles as well as multiple books, including *Every Day in Tennessee History*, published in 1996. In addition, Dr. Jones served as editor of the Courier for many years until his retirement six years ago. He also created and oversaw the Tennessee Civil War Sourcebook (available online at Tennessee State Library and Archives) <https://www.tnsos.net/TSLA/cwsourcebook/>, which is a lasting legacy and a wealth of information for researchers.

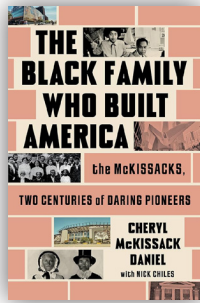


PUBLICATIONS TO NOTE

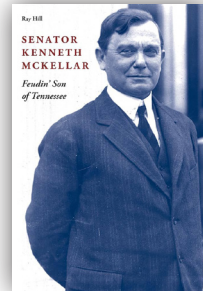
By Linda T. Wynn, Assistant Director for State Programs

Atria/Black Privilege Publishing, a division of Simon and Schuster has published Cheryl McKissack Daniel's book, *The Black Family Who Built America: The McKissacks, Two Centuries of Daring Pioneers*, tells the remarkable story of her family's legacy and their enduring contributions to the development of America. The narrative traces the family's roots back to the first Moses McKissack, seized from his home in West Africa and brought to America as an enslaved person. Despite being enslaved by a North Carolina plantation owner, Moses began to shape his path toward freedom from the very start. His determination and skill in building laid the foundation for future generations. From these humble and challenging beginnings, the McKissack family's story unfolds across two centuries. Each generation persevered, contributing to the growth and transformation of America while overcoming immense obstacles. Their legacy is one of courage, innovation, and a relentless pursuit of progress from enslavement to emancipation and beyond. Through perseverance, they established a foundation that enabled newer generations to achieve remarkable success and reach the highest levels in their field. Throughout Reconstruction and into the present day, the family's impact can be seen in numerous landmark projects across the United States. Their contributions include the construction and development of the Carnegie Library on the campus of Fisk University, the Morris Memorial Building, Capers C.M.E. Church, John F. Kennedy International Airport, and Philadelphia's Lincoln Financial Field. Each of these sites serves as a testament to the enduring legacy and influence the family has had throughout American history. From the first Moses McKissack to Moses III and Calvin McKissack, Deberry McKissack, his wife Leatrice McKissack to their daughter, Cherly McKissack Daniel, the current President and CEO of McKissack & McKissack, the firm has made an indelible impact on the country's-built environment. Daniel serves as CEO and president of McKissack & McKissack, the oldest minority and woman-owned professional design and construction firm in the nation. She continues her family's legacy, managing major projects in commercial, healthcare, education, and transportation sectors. Daniel is also active on various corporate, charitable, and community boards, and has been honored for her humanitarian work and advocacy for diversity.

The story of the McKissack family is more than an account of architectural achievement — it is a testament to resilience, the ability to overcome adversity, and the ongoing struggle for freedom and equality. Their journey, from Moses's beginnings to Cheryl McKissack Daniel's leadership, is a celebration of the enduring spirit that shaped their legacy and continues to inspire the construction industry today. **Hardback \$28.99.**



University of Tennessee Press has published Ray Hill's *Senator Kenneth McKellar: Feudin' Son of Tennessee*. This book traces the political career of Tennessee's longest senator, who served the people of Tennessee for forty-two years. Hill explores McKellar's early Democratic successes under Presidents Woodrow Wilson and Franklin D. Roosevelt, his unwavering support for the Tennessee Valley Authority, and his unwavering commitment to Tennessee and its citizens. A native of Reconstruction-era Alabama, Kenneth Douglas McKellar graduated from the University of Alabama where he earned the bachelor's, master's, and law degrees. A brief trip to Memphis, Tennessee, to visit his brothers resulted in West Tennessee becoming his permanent home and where he pursued his lifetime career. Interested in politics and civic affairs, McKellar was part of a group of young Democrats who organized the Jackson Club, and it was during these years that he formed his long political and personal association with Memphis political leader Edward H. Crump.



Woven into the fabric of Tennessee's political history, Kenneth D. McKellar's legacy is marked by his steadfast service and influence. His career spanned four decades, during which he shaped policy and wielded considerable authority within Congress. His tenacity and dedication earned respect from peers and constituents and influenced national issues during key moments through the mid-twentieth century. The Crump-McKellar partnership became one of Tennessee's most influential political alliances.

McKellar served as a United States Representative from 1911 until 1917 and as a United States Senator from 1917 until 1953. Because the Twentieth Amendment to the U. S. Constitution, often referred to as the "Lame Duck" Amendment (changed the dates on which presidential and congressional terms begin and end, from March 4 to January 20), he did not take the oath of office as Tennessee's junior senator until March 4, 1917. With Democrat majorities in the House of Representatives and with Southern Democrats in both houses of Congress enjoying their greatest influence in national affairs since before the Civil War, McKellar began his congressional career at an opportune time. As time went on, McKellar adopted more conservative positions on key policy issues. He disagreed with President Roosevelt regarding patronage, the operations of the Tennessee Valley Authority, and certain high-level presidential appointments. The split became such that only weeks before he died in 1945, President Roosevelt asked Crump to withdraw his support from McKellar in 1946, a request that Crump refused to honor.

In thirteen chapters, Hill, who served as deputy clerk for Charlie Susano, Knox County Circuit, Civil Sessions, and

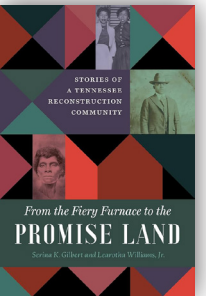
Juvenile Court, fills a significant gap in scholarship and sheds new light on the life and career of one of the state's most prominent political personages. A Democrat, he served longer in the United States Congress longer than anyone in Tennessee history. This account, which is the only full-length biography, draws on in-depth research, fills a significant gap in scholarship, and enlightens the reader on the life and career of one of Tennessee's prominent political figures. **Hardback \$34.95.**

The University of Tennessee Press also released a significant work titled *Tennessee Samplers Female Education and Domestic Arts, 1800–1900*, authored by Jennifer Core and Janet Hasson. This study delves into the art of samplers — embroidered pieces that serve as “first attempts at a new technique, color combination, or unusual material.” This volume provides detailed descriptions of nineteenth-century Tennessee samplers, highlighting their diversity and highlighting their role in female education and domestic arts covering a hundred-year period. The authors present a comprehensive catalogue and description of samplers from each of Tennessee's major regions — West, Middle, and East. Their approach allows for a detailed exploration of the distinct styles and characteristics found in samplers throughout the state. Core, the Executive Director of the Tennessee Historical Society and co-founder and director of the Tennessee Sampler Survey and Hasson, former curator of Belle Meade Plantation, and co-founder and secretary-treasurer of the Tennessee Sampler Survey, delve into the unique challenges and opportunities for women's education during the formative years of Tennessee's frontier. Drawing from a rich tapestry of oral histories collected from the descendants of frontier embroiderers, it illuminates how education was imparted, preserved, and valued in these communities. Sources such as family Bibles, diaries, and scrapbooks provide a window into daily life, learning experiences, and the transmission of knowledge, all of which played an essential role in shaping the lives of women on the frontier. This study provides an insightful snapshot into the lives of girls and young women in nineteenth-



century Tennessee. It highlights the significance of ornamental art as a defining aspect of their educational experience. *Tennessee Samplers Female Education and Domestic Arts, 1800–1900* serves as an authoritative record of the material culture created in the everyday routines of school rooms. It documents the artifacts and objects that emerge from educational environments, capturing their significance and context. **Hardback \$65.00**

Vanderbilt University Press published *From the Fiery Furnace to the Promise Land: Stories of a Tennessee Reconstruction Community* by Serina K. Gilbert, a descendant of the original Promise Land settlers and has led the efforts to preserve the history of her native Promise Land Community, and Learotha Williams, Jr., professor of African American, Civil War and Reconstruction, and Public History at Tennessee State University and coordinator of the North Nashville Heritage Project. A small hamlet west of Nashville, the Promise Land Community was established by those formerly enslaved at Cumberland Iron Furnace (placed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1988), originally purchased by James Robertson and later bought by Montgomery Bell. Promise Land early settlers included veterans of the United States Colored Troops, who purchased land and established African American-owned businesses. This small African American community experienced grew to approximately a thousand acres, more than fifty homes, several stores, three churches, and an elementary school. By the mid-20th century, only a handful of families remained. Today, the Promise Land community consists of a church and schoolhouse. Yet, because of descendants, it remains a community of friends, family, and those who continued to support each other. Narrating the chronicle of Promise Land through the remembrances of those who lived there, Gilbert and Williams share the history of a community that thrived and continues to flourish despite challenging impediments. **Hardcover \$29.95.**



TENNESSEE HISTORICAL COMMISSION

FALL 2025

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

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

- **Haunts at the Font at Cragfont State Historic Site**
October 18, 2025 at 6:00 pm to 10:00 pm CDT
- **9th Annual Legacy Event at the Clement Railroad Hotel Museum at Hotel Halbrook State Historic Site**
October 23, 2025 at 5:30 pm CDT
- **Haunting on the Mount at Rocky Mount State Historic Site**
October 24-25, 2025 at 5:00 pm to 6:00 pm EDT



SCAN FOR MORE
EVENTS



THE COURIER

14

FALL 2025



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TENNESSEE HISTORICAL COMMISSION STAFF

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

Ms. Miranda Montgomery
SHPO
miranda.c.montgomery@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

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

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

Ms. Kelley Reid
Section 106
kelley.reid@tn.gov

Dr. Rebecca Schmitt
National Register
rebecca.schmitt@tn.gov

Mr. Stevie Malenowski
CLG - West Tennessee
stevie.malenowski@tn.gov

Dr. Lane Tillner
CLG - East Tennessee
lane.tillner@tn.gov

STATE PROGRAMS
Vacant
State Historic Sites

Mr. Bobby Cooley
State Historic Sites
bobby.cooley@tn.gov

Ms. Caty Dirksen
THPA and Outreach
caty.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. Barbara Grissom
Administrative Secretary
barbara.grissom@tn.gov

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

ON THE COVER: City of Loudon water tower. Photograph by Rebecca Schmitt, August 2024.

