



THE COURIER

TENNESSEE HISTORICAL COMMISSION, NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE

WINTER 2026



In This Issue: Early Travel in Tennessee, THC Welcomes new State Historic Preservation Officer, Tipton-Haynes State Historic Site Upgrades

From the Director: Tennessee Welcomes a New State Historic Preservation Officer!

Happy New Year!

I'm Miranda Montgomery, and as many of you know, I've been serving as the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) and Interim Executive Director of the Tennessee Historical Commission since last fall. As we begin a new year that also happens to be America's 250th anniversary, it truly is an exciting time in historic preservation. I encourage you to check out <https://tn250.com/> and to stay tuned in your local communities for special activities and events that celebrate unique Tennessee stories and places in honor of our 250th anniversary.



A little bit about me: I am a native of Brooksville, Kentucky, a rural community along the Ohio River, where I cultivated a deep love for rolling Appalachian foothills and the stories of those who inhabit them. I am a first-generation college graduate, having received a Bachelor of Arts from Kentucky Wesleyan College in 2001. The same year, I moved to Nashville to attend Vanderbilt Divinity School. After obtaining a Master's in Theological Studies, I enrolled in the University of Tennessee College of Law, where I obtained a Doctor of Jurisprudence in 2006. During my second year of law school, I came across an issue of National Geographic magazine with an article highlighting my future mentor, Julian Bibb, and his work in battlefield reclamation. From that moment over 20 years ago, when I was bitten by the preservation bug, I've had the great fortune to work on numerous preservation efforts across our state, ranging from battlefield preservation to conservation and façade easements.

As SHPO and Interim Executive Director, I'm looking forward to renewing our office's existing relationships and to building new ones across the state. Our office has a variety of tools that can assist preservation efforts in all types of Tennessee communities – no matter the size – and I'm ready to get to work fostering those connections to strengthen preservation throughout our state.

Whether it is working with our partners at our state-owned historic sites, working through complex tax credit transactions,



or everything in between, I find the role our team plays in protecting our state's irreplaceable, sacred treasures to be deeply meaningful, particularly when Tennessee is experiencing a siege of rapid change and development. Words cannot express the responsibility and the gratitude we feel to be trusted with such an important job. Thank you for reading and for your support – onward!

Best Regards,

Miranda

Miranda Montgomery

SHPO and Interim Executive Director

FEDERAL HISTORIC PRESERVATION FUND GRANTS ANNOUNCED

By Holly Barnett, Deputy SHPO and Assistant Director for Federal Programs

This Fall the Tennessee Historical Commission awarded 21 matching grants totaling over \$1.1 million from the Federal Historic Preservation Fund allocated to non-profits, municipalities, universities, and civic organizations across the state to support the preservation of historic and archaeological resources. This year's grant awards include a wide variety of historic and architectural projects, all listed below. Several will continue work on projects that have already seen much investment from local communities including grants that will help complete the Old Jail restoration by the Claiborne County Historical Society in Tazewell and continue work on the Powell Law Office restoration in Rogersville. Other grants will assist in funding preservation planners in six of the state's development districts, in facilitating archaeological surveys in our state parks, and a preservation plan for Chattanooga and Hamilton County. Several other grants are for restoration projects, for posters highlighting the state's archaeology, and for training historic zoning staff or commissioners.

A complete list of grant recipients and/or National Register listed sites of the projects include:

Claiborne County

Claiborne County Historical Society: \$13,800 for Old Jail final exterior restoration

Hamblen County

Friends of Bethesda Cemetery: \$25,000 to stabilize the Bethesda Presbyterian Church

Bradley County

City of Cleveland: \$75,000 to restore the Cherokee Hotel Lobby

Carter County

City of Elizabethton: \$60,000 to U.S. Post Office window restoration

Davidson County

Metropolitan Historical Commission: \$3,750 Dendrochronology research

Andrew Jackson Foundation: \$21,000 to restore First Hermitage Farmhouse and Kitchen Exterior

Cheekwood Botanical Garden and Museum of Art: \$35,000 to fund Phase 1 Window Restoration Project

Dickson County

Montgomery Bell State Park: \$10,000.00 for Laurel Furnace Worker's Cemetery archaeology analysis

Franklin County

The Museum of Power and Industry, Inc.: \$40,000 to restore interior of Lucas House

Hamilton County

Preserve Chattanooga, Inc.: \$48,000 for Preservation Plan for Chattanooga and Hamilton County

Henry County

Quinn Chapel AME Church: \$24,000 for Quinn Chapel balcony and interior restoration

Humphreys County

Johnsonville State Historic Area: \$37,000 archaeology analysis Four Cemeteries and Church Site

Jefferson County

Hopewell Presbyterian Church: \$45,000 for Hopewell Presbyterian Church window restoration

Knox County

Knoxville Botanical Garden and Arboretum: \$45,000 for Howell House steel lintel and masonry restoration

Loudon County

City of Loudon: \$54,000 for Historic Resource Survey of Loudon

Shelby County

Historic Clayborn Temple: \$60,000 for South Memphis Survey

Memphis and Shelby County Office of Planning and Development: \$9,150 to fund Technical Preservation Training and Workshops

Multi-County Grants

Middle Tennessee State University, Department of Sociology and Anthropology: \$8,000 for posters for Tennessee Archaeology Week for next two years

Middle Tennessee State University, Fullerton Laboratory for Spatial Technology: \$136,000 GIS services for historic/architectural survey for next two years

Tennessee Division of Archaeology: \$111,000 for Review and Compliance

East Tennessee Development District: \$60,000 to fund a preservation specialist staff position for the East Tennessee Development District

First Tennessee Development District: \$43,500 to fund a preservation specialist staff position for the First Tennessee Development District

Northwest Tennessee Development District: \$38,500 to fund a preservation specialist staff position for the Northwest Tennessee Development District

Southeast Tennessee Development District: \$54,000 to fund a preservation specialist staff position for the Southeast Tennessee Development District

Southwest Tennessee Development District: \$40,000 to fund a preservation specialist staff position for the Southwest Tennessee Development District

Upper Cumberland Development District: \$40,000 to fund a preservation specialist staff position for the Upper Cumberland Development District

ON THE ROAD AGAIN:

How Toll Roads Laid the Foundation for Smooth Travel

By Stevie Malenowski, CLG Coordinator

Smooth paved roads feel like a guarantee in modern life, but for most of American history, they were a rare luxury that could transform the fate of a town. Roads in 19th century Tennessee were often glorified trails: made of loose dirt, little to no grading, and unable to handle most inclement weather conditions. This left many rural Tennessee towns stranded from their neighbors and provided their citizens with limited access to markets. Many Tennesseans in the era turned to turnpikes to solve this problem. These were toll roads which sought to combat the poor public road quality by using state-of-the-art roadbuilding techniques to construct smoother and more reliable private roads. The turnpike era lasted nearly the entire 19th century and laid the foundations for the modern era of well-built public roads we know and love today.

In the early 1830s, Governor Newton Cannon viewed internal improvements as crucial to the development of trade in Tennessee. At the time, public roads in Tennessee were of dubious quality. One commenter from Lincoln County described the public road system as having “no smooth roads,” and claimed one could find “rails lying in suspicious proximity to the mud, as if a wheel might have sunk so far down as to need the help of the rails to get out.” Many rural Tennesseans were unable to reliably bring their goods to market on these poor public roads and grew increasingly interested in the prospect of private railroads and macadamized turnpikes. As was true elsewhere in America, non-macadamized roads in this period were simple dirt roads that quickly deteriorated and became impassable when faced with rain or ice. Macadamized roads, on the other hand, layered stones onto a roadbed, compacted them, and cambered the road so that rain would run off into side ditches. This new method revolutionized road-building in Tennessee and kick-started an era in which travel was made safer, more reliable, and more comfortable.

A bill was introduced in the 1835-1836 Tennessee legislative session by railroad lobbyists to answer the public’s call for higher quality transportation. The bill stated that Tennessee would provide 1/3 of the funds for “any and all companies” incorporated for the construction of railroads or macadamized turnpikes. The bill was ineffective, largely due to insufficient state aid, an issue that was spotlighted following the Panic of 1837. As a result, the Bank and Improvement Act of 1838 was born. The act established the Bank of Tennessee and created an annual subsidy to fund internal improvements, including the development of macadamized turnpikes, by increasing state aid in these private endeavors from 1/3 of total funds to 1/2 of total funds.

The 1838 Improvement Act was a hotbed for fraud. Many companies were incorporated, received state money, and never built a single mile of road. As a result, the Improvement Act had many detractors in the era who claimed it only lined the pocketbooks of conmen and needed stricter guidelines. Despite these claims, the act led to the creation of multiple turnpikes which functioned across Tennessee for decades, including the Nashville, Murfreesboro & Shelbyville Turnpike Company, the Gallatin Turnpike Company, the Lebanon & Nashville Turnpike Company, and the Nolensville Turnpike Company among others. The turnpike era in Tennessee had officially begun.

Toll gate houses were critical to both the operation and maintenance of these turnpikes. Most Tennessee turnpikes, as per their charters, constructed their toll gate houses every five miles along the route. The operators of the turnpike lived at the toll gate house and were given one simple task: collect the toll 24/7. Few of these toll gate houses still stand. Some examples of still standing toll gate houses in Tennessee are the National Register listed Conner House in Hamilton County (featured on the cover) and the National Register eligible Chick House in Lincoln County. Despite the quantity of toll gate houses constructed in the period, surviving examples are exceptionally rare, and are valuable resources for their community’s history!

Building these turnpikes were massive endeavors, even with the large amount of state aid available. Materials were expensive to bring to the remote destinations and dozens, if not hundreds, of laborers were needed. So, while the toll gate operators had a simple task, collecting the toll was crucial to funding these large projects. The Norris Creek Turnpike charter provides a glimpse at what these toll gates charged travelers: one cent for hogs or sheep, two cents for cattle, horses, and mules in a drove, five cents for cattle, horses and mules not in a drove, fifteen cents for buggies, 15 cents for a two horse loaded wagon, 25 cents for a four horse loaded wagon, 25 cents for two horse pleasure carriages, and ten cents for any other vehicles for the transportation of goods and produce. While the turnpikes helped farmers get their goods to market, they could also frustrate users by having them stop and pay at multiple toll gates on a simple route. For example, travelers taking the eighteen-mile journey from Franklin to Nashville had to pass through four separate toll gates to stop and pay four separate tolls.

The development of turnpikes ground to a halt with the onset of the Civil War. The impact of the war on the turnpikes cannot be overstated; tolls were not collected, troop travel eroded the surfaces, fighting bombed-out the routes, and the



The Chick House in Lincoln County, photo courtesy of Stevie Malenowski.

war diverted resources away from potential repairs. As a result, repairing existing roads became the priority in the years after the war, not building new ones. Many turnpike routes never fully recovered from the war and became projects that had the ability to bankrupt an upstart turnpike company attempting to repair them to their former glory.

The turnpike era came to a close when the automobile brought its “virus of unrest” to Tennessee. Adoption of the automobile was initially slow, with only ~350 automobiles registered across the state in 1905, but the number increased exponentially to 100,000 vehicles registered in 1920. As roads were primarily designed for foot traffic, carriage wheels, and bicycle tires at this point, the larger and heavier automobile stress proved to be more than existing roads could handle. Calls for better roads grew louder and louder, crystallized in the Good Roads Movement which swept Tennessee in the early 1910s.

The Good Roads Movement was a national Progressive Era bloc which pushed to improve rural road conditions and increase state and federal funding for road building. In Tennessee, the Good Roads Movement was highly vocal and had chapters in most major cities. These chapters pushed incessantly in the 1910s and early 1920s to spread awareness of poor rural road conditions. They hosted educational meetings, drove across the state in auto-parades to spread their gospel, published periodicals regarding road-related news, and lobbied legislators to increase road funding.

The motorists got their way, as Governor Austin Peay dramatically increased state funding for Tennessee highways between 1923 to 1926. Under Peay’s governance, the state highway network in Tennessee increased from 244 miles to over 4,000 miles and has since been heralded as “the greatest road

Continued on page 6



“Road to Fayetteville,” 1926, Looking Back at Tennessee

Photograph Collection, 1890-1981, 12964,

Tennessee State Library and Archives,

Tennessee Virtual Archive,

<https://teva.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p15138coll50/id/6478>, accessed 2026-01-09



ON THE ROAD AGAIN:

Continued from page 5

building era in Tennessee.” These roads were built according to new higher-than-ever state standards, spurred on by pressure from the Good Roads Movement. Along with state aid came a swell of federal aid, which rose from a national fund of \$5,000,000 in 1921 to \$100,000,000 by the end of the decade.

The newfound impetus to improve public roads spelled doom for the private turnpikes. One commenter in a Good Roads magazine wrote that Tennessee had been “criticized long enough and strong enough by the many tourists passing through the State who have had to pay tolls to travel over our roads, particularly those who have had to pay \$1.00 for the very doubtful pleasure of bumping over three miles of so-called ‘road’ in one of our communities.” As public road quality steadily rose to match or surpass private turnpike quality, most private turnpikes closed shop by the end of the 1920s. What remained was reminiscent of the Tennessee road network we have today: smooth roads, no tolls, and reliable transportation across the state.

Few emblems of this era still remain; turnpikes have been paved and turned into asphalt highways, toll gate houses have been converted to family residences, and the gates themselves have been destroyed. As such, those still standing like Hamilton County’s Conner House or Lincoln County’s Chick House are important monuments to Tennessee’s long gone turnpike era.



“Sumner County road equipment,” approximately 1910, Looking Back at Tennessee Photograph Collection, 1890-1981, 11889, Tennessee State Library & Archives, Tennessee Virtual Archive, <https://teva.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p15138coll50/id/7979>, accessed 2026-01-09.



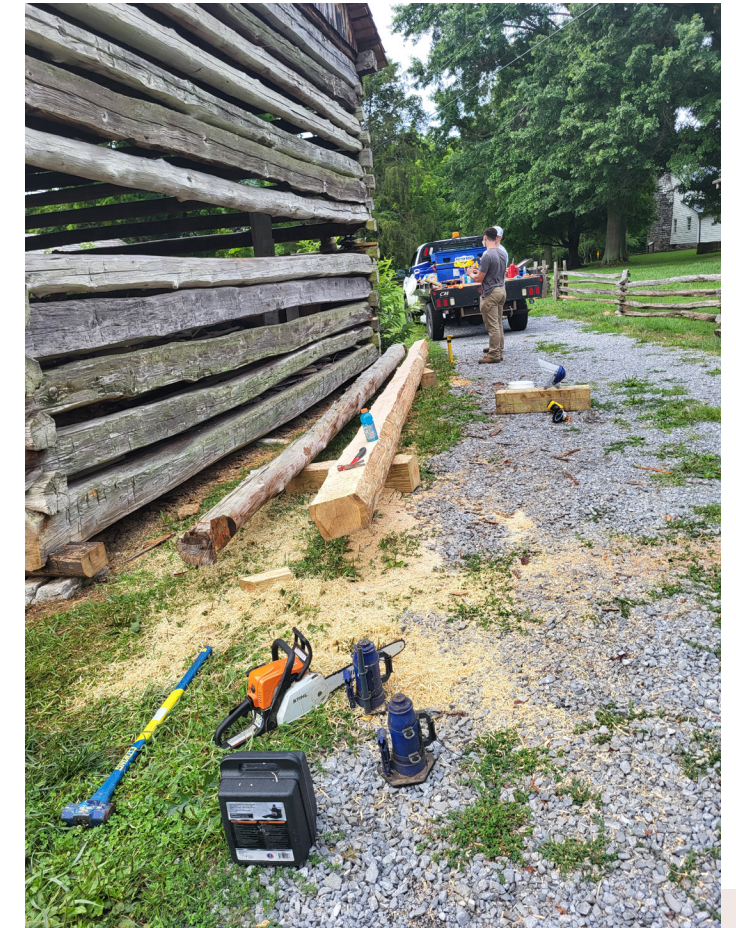
TIPTON-HAYNES STATE HISTORIC SITE CAPITAL PROJECT UPDATE

By Bobby Cooley, State Historic Sites Program Coordinator

We are excited to share the completion of the Tipton-Haynes State Historic Site restoration project. This monumental effort was focused on the repair of some of the sites most significant structures, ensuring their longevity and safety for years to come. The scope of the work included work at the Tipton-Hayne home, the museum and visitor center, the Andre Michaux building, George Haynes cabin, Haynes law office, and the sites farm structures, including the multiple barns, corn crib, and still house.

Each building underwent critical repairs to its envelope to protect against the elements, paired with careful interior renovations and finish restorations that honor their original character. These improvements were also supported by essential modern upgrades, including electrical repairs and a fresh coat of paint across the entire site.

Beyond the buildings themselves, significant enhancements were made to the surrounding landscape to improve both accessibility and the visitor experience. The site is excited to debut their upgraded picnic area and nature trail repairs to the public daily!



Log replacement on the dogtrot barn at the site



The kitchen of the Tipton-Haynes Home restored, showing original soot markings along the walls.



The new prep kitchen installed in the museum and visitor center to host events and private rentals.

Sources:

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“The Tennessee State Highway Department.” *Good Roads in Sunny Tennessee*. Nashville: Volunteer State Publishing Company, 1929.

Newspapers:

Fayetteville Observer

Lincoln County News

Lincoln Journal

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Nashville Republican

The Tennessean

Village Messenger

Four Tennessee Properties Added 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:

Cole-Boston-Dodds House

Listed December 18, 2025

(Newbern — Dyer County)

The Cole-Boston-Dodds House is located near Newbern, Dyer County, and was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on December 18, 2025 for its architectural significance. The house was constructed in 1904 during the period of growth brought on by the timber industry and the completion of the railroads. Available information suggests that the first owner of the house was Thomas H. Cole. The house is an excellent local example of the Neoclassical style. Popular from 1900-1920 and 1925-1950, the style commonly features a full-height porch with classical columns, symmetrical façade, and classical ornamentation. The Cole-Boston-Dodds house retains many of these important features. Its full length, two-story porch is supported by large, fluted redwood columns capped by elaborately carved Corinthian wood capitals. An ornate, Classically-inspired entry, symmetrical façade, porch balustrade,



Photograph courtesy of April Dodds, July 2024.

and bay windows further tie the house to the Neoclassical style. The current owners purchased the house in 2005. Since then, they have maintained and preserved the architecturally significant property and see listing as a way to honor its history.

Birchwood Elementary School

Listed December 18, 2025

(Birchwood — Hamilton County)

Listed in the National Register on December 18, 2025, the Birchwood Elementary School is eligible for its educational and social significance to the Birchwood community, which is located near Chattanooga in Hamilton County. The first Birchwood School was a wood building constructed in 1915. It initially housed two teachers and offered grades one through twelve. The building burned down in 1929 after its boiler overheated. The nominated building was completed in 1930, heralding a new era for both the school and the surrounding community. From 1930-1975, the Birchwood School was an invaluable part of the educational, social, and cultural life of Birchwood. Students attending the school had access to modern facilities and participated in extracurricular activities like newspaper, yearbook, and sports. The Birchwood School also hosted community events on its grounds and after-school classes for local adults. The last students left the school in 2013 after years of gradual school consolidation. Now, the Birchwood Area Society Improvement Club (BASIC) cares for the building and hosts important community events on its grounds. In this



Photograph courtesy of Rebecca Schmitt, April 2025.

way, the building continues to serve the community as it did historically.

Dunlop House

Listed December 18, 2025

(Clarksville — Montgomery County)

The Dunlop House stands near the commercial center of Clarksville, Montgomery County. Listed on December 18, 2025, the Dunlop House is locally significant as an excellent example of the Italian Renaissance architectural style. The house was constructed ca. 1916 for Joseph P. Dunlop and his family. Dunlop was the co-founder of the Rabbeth and Dunlop Mill Company, a well-regarded and prosperous business in Clarksville. In Tennessee, the Italian Renaissance style is typically defined by its rectangular massing, two-story height, hipped roof with clay or ceramic tiles, stuccoed exterior walls, elaborate windows, and symmetrical fenestration. The Dunlop House clearly embodies these characteristics and is one of the few, if not the only, example of Italian Renaissance architecture in Clarksville. Important architectural features include its hipped



Photograph Courtesy of Rebecca Schmitt, July 2025.

clay tile roof, wide overhanging eaves, brick exterior, original arched windows and doors, loggia, and ornamented grilles. The Dunlop House continues to be an important landmark and historical site in Clarksville.

Oneida and Western Bridge

Listed December 18, 2025

(Oneida — Scott County)

Listed in the National Register on December 18, 2025, the Oneida and Western Bridge played a critical role in the Scott County railroad industry and encouraged the growth of several towns along the O&W railroad line. The O&W Bridge was initially constructed sometime between 1847 and 1900 by the Nashville Bridge Company and installed at an unknown location. On August 5th, 1913, the Oneida and Western Railway was chartered by the Tennessee Stave and Lumber Company to extract coal and timber along the Big South Fork of the Cumberland River. This line plunged deep into the inaccessible and rugged terrain that defines the Upper Cumberland. One of the largest obstacles workers faced was crossing the Big South Fork River. This led to the purchase and relocation of the bridge to its current location in 1915. With the river conquered, growth quickly followed. Towns like Oneida, Verdun, Stockton, and Jamestown all prospered with the railroad complete. Service along the line finally terminated on March 2, 1954, after years of decline. The National Park Service assumed stewardship of the land around the bridge, while Scott County took ownership



Photograph courtesy of Jordan Hughett, May 2023

of the bridge. Now the bridge is open to the public as part of the Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area's hiking trail system. Both organizations play an important role in the preservation of the bridge.

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 for the following dates in 2026 at 2941 Lebanon Pike Nashville, TN 37214.

- May 15, 2026 at 9:00 am CDT
- September 18, 2026 at 9:00 am CDT

PRESERVATION IS A BATTLEFIELD

By Nina L. Scall, Tennessee Wars Commission Program Director

The Tennessee Wars Commission's mission is realized in part through civic and government engagement with advocacy, education, and technical support, remaining a primary focus for the War Commission. Commercial and residential development continues to be the leading threat to Civil War battlefields in Tennessee. In 2025, the Wars Commission received an unprecedented number of requests from private citizens, preservation groups, and the National Park Service for battlefield preservation assistance. Unfortunately, many of these requests arrived too late, as developers had already developed architectural plans and were collaborating with city planning departments, or had contracts in place with sellers, or were actively working to change zoning to accommodate new development types. In most cases, the Wars Commission has been unable to provide financial assistance due to funding limitations; however, the Director was able to provide advocacy, education, and technical support in a few case studies further highlighted in our Annual Report.

The William Alexander Officer Farmstead in Monterey, Overton County: A Tennessee preservation nonprofit alerted TWC to the imminent sale and development of the Officer Farmstead. The plantation has been National Register-listed since 2001, holding significance for agriculture, settlement, and military history themes. The house was constructed in 1835 by William Officer and his brother-in-law and is an excellent example of folk architecture. The two-story I-house features an "L" shaped plan, and today, contains Queen Anne Style/Eastlake influences. The expansive farmstead contains many significant outbuildings, with various construction dates, indicating the continued use and evolution of the plantation. Enslaved labor contributed to the success of Mr. Officer's plantation,



owning twenty individuals at the plantation's height. A historic cemetery on the property contains not only the remains of the original property owners and their descendants, but the remains of seven slain Confederate Texas Rangers who were killed in the Officer House in 1863 by Union forces, which was the result of conflicts between Confederate raiders and Union cavalry.

Incidents such as the Officer Farm killings were commonplace in the Upper Cumberland Plateau, where sympathies were frequently divided among the populace. Increasing resistance to Union occupation led to widespread guerrilla, or "partisan" warfare, pitting community members, neighbors, and friends against each other.

As of January 2026, the preservation organization continues searching for funding to purchase and restore the property. The TWC has a follow-up meeting with stakeholders to further discuss preservation opportunities.

To read other case studies and learn more about the Wars Commission's efforts in 2025, view the TWC 2025 Annual Report on our website.



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2941 Lebanon Pike
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Miranda Montgomery,
SHPO and Interim Executive Director

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 N59Q04-1, 4933 copies, February 19, 2026. This public document was promulgated at a cost of \$1.17 per copy.

CEMETERY PRESERVATION: *Cleaning Tips*

By Graham Perry, Historic Cemetery Preservation Specialist

This past Fall, the Tennessee Historical Commission sponsored three cemetery preservation workshops in all three regions of the State, featuring conservators Terry Minton, Mike Alexander, and Jonathan Appell. Terry Minton's workshop, co-hosted by Metro Nashville Historical Commission at the Thomas Overton Cemetery, was particularly interesting because the cemetery had been heavily damaged over the years. Most of the tombstones were fragmented and had to be reset and repaired. It seemed a daunting task, but the attendees were able to find the scattered pieces for three of the largest markers and were even able to fix a box tomb that had been broken into in the past. It should be noted that box tombs themselves, being symbolic in nature, do not contain bodies — human remains are buried deep in the ground like any other grave.

Simple repairs of broken tombstones is a task that, if done properly, anyone can learn to do. THC sponsored workshops are the perfect way to learn proper techniques, what tools are needed, and what bonding agents are appropriate for the repair. Our office recommends being cautious when buying cemetery cleaning materials, as virtually anything you can get at your local hardware store is not recommended because they are likely to cause damage to stone. The number one rule to headstone cleaning is "do no harm".

For cleaning, the recommended agent is still D2, but a new product called Endurance is also currently being tested. The beauty of these cleaners is that they can be applied directly to the stone and then left alone — a perfect technique for stones that show severe deterioration or that pose a safety hazard. The color of the stone will become more vibrant over time. On safer



Hands on repairs by attendees at cemetery conservator Terry Minton's recent workshop in Old Hickory at the Thomas Overton Cemetery.

markers, quicker results can be achieved with a little water, a soft-bristled brush, and some elbow grease. The sequence that should be followed in this case is to spray on the D2 and leave for several minutes, then spray the stone with water to activate the D2, work with a soft bristled brush in circular motions to a lather, and finally rinse the stone off with more water. If you want to know more, look for upcoming workshops on THC's website and social media.

The Historic Cemetery Committee's 5-year Cemetery Report was completed and is ready for review by the THC Board. Once accepted, it will be posted on the THC cemetery site. We are hopeful that this detailed report will serve as a tool for updating legislation. Many thanks to the members of the cemetery committee for their hard work in helping craft this document. Members currently include Dr. Beverly Bond, Loni Harris, Phil Hodge, Jimmy Rout, Fletch Coke, Linda Moss Mines.

Cemeteries Recently added to the Historic Cemetery Register

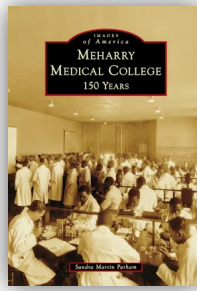
Shadtown Cemetery, Weakley County. Listed September 3, 2025.
Beth-Carr United Methodist Church Cemetery, Jefferson County. Listed September 3, 2025.
Sugar Creek Mission Cemetery, Giles County. Listed September 9, 2025.
Hoss Cemetery, Washington County. Listed September 10, 2025.
DBF Collier Family Graveyard, Weakley County. Listed September 12, 2025.
Mitchell Cemetery, Obion County. Listed September 12, 2025.
Vaughan Cemetery, Maury County. Listed September 12, 2025.
New Hope Methodist Church Cemetery, Weakley County. Listed September 16, 2025.
Saint James Community Cemetery, Greene County. Listed September 17, 2025.
Whiteside Cemetery, Hawkins County. Listed September 17, 2025.
Slate Creek Cemetery, Cocke County. Listed September 29, 2025.

Blue Springs Cemetery, Greene County. Listed September 29, 2025.
Kitts Cemetery, Grainger County. Listed September 29, 2025.
Condry Cemetery, Grainger County. Listed September 29, 2025.
Quarryville Cemetery, Hawkins County. Listed September 29, 2025.
Wesley Cemetery, Greene County. Listed October 2, 2025.
Officer Cemetery, Overton County. Listed October 16, 2025.
Mars Hill Cemetery, Knox County. Listed December 1, 2025.
Old Russellville Cemetery, Hamblen County. Listed December 1, 2025.
Cane Creek Cemetery, Obion County. Listed December 22, 2025.
Billie Thomas Burying Ground, Weakley County. Listed December 22, 2025.
Bowen's Chapel Cemetery, Dyer County. Listed December 22, 2025.

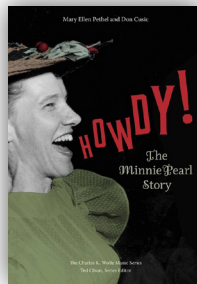
PUBLICATIONS TO NOTE

By Linda T. Wynn, Assistant Director for State Programs

Arcadia Publishing out of South Carolina published Sandra Martin Parham's *Meharry Medical College 150 Years*. Originally founded in 1876 as a department of Central Tennessee College, Meharry Medical College received a separate charter of incorporation in 1915. The college was named to honor five Irish brothers — Samuel, Hugh, Alexander, Jesse, and David Meharry — who contributed more than \$30,000 in cash and real estate to establish an institution dedicated to educating medical professionals to serve the Black community. By the mid-20th century, Meharry Medical College graduated approximately half the Black doctors in the United States. The college's evolution over successive eras reflects broader changes in American race relations. Nearly 150 years later, Meharry remains a significant medical institution, steadfast in its motto: "Dedicated to the worship of God through service to man." A follow-up to *Meharry Medical College*, which was a historical chronology dated by each president's administration, Parham, executive director of Meharry Medical College's Library and Archives and a board member of the Metropolitan Historical Commission, in *Meharry Medical College 150 Years*, documents graduating classes since 1877. **Paper, \$24.99.**



University of Tennessee Press, *Howdy! The Minnie Pearl Story*, by Mary Ellen Pethel and Don Cusic, professors at Belmont University, presents a comprehensive biography of Sarah Ophelia Colley Cannon, acclaimed for her stage persona Minnie Pearl. An influential American comedian and country singer, Cannon performed at the Grand Ole Opry for over fifty years and was a regular presence on the television program *Hee Haw* between 1969 and 1991. Born on October 25, 1912, in Centerville, Tennessee, she was the youngest of five children in the Colley family. Minnie Pearl's oft-repeated advice — "Take the backroads, not the highways" — reflects the unique path she forged throughout her career.



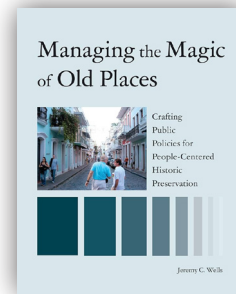
During the Great Depression, Cannon relocated to Nashville to study theater at Ward-Belmont School. Upon graduation, she joined a touring theatrical company, performing across the southeastern United States. Her legendary character, Minnie Pearl — a witty rural figure recognized for her signature greeting and straw hat with a price tag — was inspired by Mattie Burden. Over time, Minnie Pearl earned the title "Queen of Country Comedy" at the Grand Ole Opry and shared stages with notable artists such as Johnny Cash and Patsy Cline, establishing herself as an inspiration for future generations of

female performers.

Comprising of eighteen chapters, this volume provides insight into the interplay of country music and Southern politics, particularly examining how political figures leveraged the genre and its stars to influence regional sentiments. Minnie Pearl's relationship with George Wallace during the 1950s and 1960s illuminates the complex intersections of politics, race, class, and country music in mid-century America. While Wallace benefited from her appeal to Southern White audiences, Cannon's involvement underscores the economic and social pressures prevalent in that era.

Drs. Pethel and Cusic offer a definitive account of Minnie Pearl's life, thoroughly exploring her career and the context in which she rose to prominence. This work is essential reading for those interested in understanding both the artistry and enduring legacy of Minnie Pearl. **Hardback, \$29.95.**

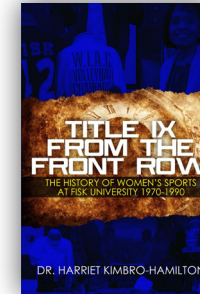
The University of Tennessee Press also published *Managing the Magic of Old Places: Crafting Public Policies for People-Centered Historic Preservation* by Jeremy C. Wells. From 1849 to the early 1980s, the United States historic preservation policy was influenced by fewer than one hundred elite White men from Europe and America. This traditional



approach often ignored the lively, personal connections that everyday people have with their heritage. Wells presents a bold new perspective on how historic preservation can be handled in the United States. The prevailing argument is that preservation policy should prioritize people, focusing on human experience and the deep, often abstract emotional connections individuals and communities have with historic places. Rather than emphasizing only the physical attributes of a site, this perspective considers how ordinary people form attachments to old places and the role those attachments play in shaping cultural identity and memory. Wells advocates for a major change in federal preservation policy by integrating community-based practices and insights from environmental psychology to value people's emotional ties to historic places. He argues that ignoring these experiential values risks making preservation irrelevant, as professional policies often dismiss lay perspectives. Drawing on social science research, the author proposes centering public experiences in preservation to make it more inclusive and impactful. Dr. Wells, a former associate professor with the School of Architecture at the University of Maryland and now an artist-scholar and the owner and principal investigator at Heritage Studies, LLC, situates his work within the expanding discipline of critical heritage studies. However, his distinctive emphasis on the psychological and emotional

facets of preservation sets his contribution apart. By placing public needs and experiences at the core of preservation efforts, Wells critiques the historical underpinnings of U.S. preservation policy and offers a bold agenda for reform focused on inclusivity and genuine public engagement. This volume is a must read for those engaged in the field of historic preservation. **Paper, \$29.95.**

In Due Season Publishing published Dr. Harriet Kimbro-Hamilton's *Title IX From the Front Row: The History of Women's Sports at Fisk University 1970-1990*. Dr. Kimbro-Hamilton, daughter of Negro Leagues player Henry Kimbro and a multi-award-winning athlete, has documented the history of women's sports at Fisk University. While attending Fisk as an undergraduate, she played on the inaugural women's basketball team and the women's tennis team. Her research into women's participation in sports resulted in a twenty-year history detailing



the development of women's athletics and the impact of Title IX at Fisk.

In June 1972, President Richard Nixon signed the Educational Amendments of 1972. Although the nearly 150-page bill did not mention terms like "gender," "athletics," "girls," or "women," its final sections introduced "Title IX — Prohibition of Sex Discrimination." Title IX serves as an amendment to the Civil Rights Act of 1964, establishing legal protections for equal opportunities in education. Over time, Title IX spurred major progress in women's athletics, increasing involvement and recognition at both high school and college levels. Dr. Kimbro's book, *From the Front Row: The History of Women's Sports at Fisk University 1970-1990*, blends historical account with her personal journey through collegiate sports. Her dedication to advancing opportunities for women in athletics is shown in her scholarship and advocacy for fair sports programs. Through her writing and experiences, Dr. Kimbro emphasizes both the progress achieved at Fisk and the persistent challenges female athletes faced in higher education. **Paper, \$15.00.**

TENNESSEE HISTORICAL COMMISSION WINTER 2026

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Spring into the new year with our State Historic Sites, check out their events on our website's calendar!

- **State of Franklin Battle at Tipton-Haynes State Historic Site**
February 28, 2026 from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm EST
- **Nashville Opera Presents "Opera Out Loud" at the Clement Railroad Hotel Museum at Hotel Halbrook State Historic Site**
March 7, 2026 at 4:00 pm CST
- **Easter Craft Fair at Marble Springs State Historic Site**
March 28, 2026 from 10:00 am EST to 4:00 pm EST
- **Living History Day at Sam Houston Schoolhouse State Historic Site**
May 30-31, 2025 from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm EDT



SCAN FOR MORE
EVENTS

HISTORICAL MARKERS

At its meeting on October 10, 2025, the Tennessee Historical Commission approved eleven historical markers: *Bradford Ryner Barn*, Bradley County; *Central High School*, Crockett County; *Gordon Chapel/Gordon Memorial United Methodist Church* and *Richland Creek Bridge*, Davidson County; *Tabernacle*, Haywood County; *Loretta Webb Lynn*, Humphreys County; *Jesse Baker Barn*, Jefferson County; *Georgetown Road*, Meigs County; *Sewart Air Force Base* and *New Providence Baptist Church*, Rutherford County; and *Capleville Church of Christ*, Shelby County.

Those interested in submitting proposed texts for markers can visit our website for the application. For questions, please contact Linda T. Wynn at Linda.Wynn@tn.gov or call (615) 770-1093.



COMMISSION MEMBER NEWS



Ben Silverman

Ben Silverman is a Director at Cooley Public Strategies, a public affairs firm based in Nashville. Prior to joining CPS, Silverman entered the Lee administration at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, serving as Personal Aide to the governor through the end of the reelection campaign and travelling to each of Tennessee's 95 counties in the process. At the start of Governor Lee's second term, he became Director of Boards and Commissions and was responsible for overseeing more than 1,000 appointments to statewide boards and over 100 successful legislative confirmations. Silverman is a native of Goodlettsville and is a graduate of the University of Alabama.



Tyler Sloan

Tyler Sloan is an Ex Officio member, serving as the Governor's Representative. He is the Director of Appointments in the Office of Governor Bill Lee, where he oversees the administration's board and commission appointments and works closely with state leadership and external stakeholders to support effective governance. Before being named Director, he served in the Governor's Office in External Affairs and other public service roles, contributing to civic engagement and strengthening relationships across Tennessee's executive branch. A Tennessee native, Sloan graduated summa cum laude from Tennessee Wesleyan University with a triple major in Religion/Philosophy, History, and American Studies. With a background in public service, nonprofit administration, and civic engagement, Sloan brings a strategic, people-focused approach to advancing statewide priorities and creating opportunities for all Tennesseans.

HISTORIC COUNTY COURTHOUSES RECEIVE REHABILITATION INCENTIVES

By Dr. Lane Tillner, CLG Coordinator – Survey and Research

Representing the civic, social, and political center of an area, courthouses hold a place of prominence within a county. As such, a special round of the Historic Development Grant Program (HDGP) opened in late 2025 historic courthouse rehabilitation projects. The HDGP is a program jointly administered by the TN Department of Economic and Community (ECD) and the TN Historical Commission (THC) to promote the rehabilitation of historic buildings across the state and simultaneously driving economic development. The HDGP is a matching grant that requires buildings to be listed in, or determined eligible for listing in, the National Register of Historic Places. All projects must meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, a set of best practice guidelines that allow for flexible alterations to historic buildings while maintaining and preserving the character and features that make a building historically significant.

From a competitive pool of thirty-three applications, eleven county courthouses, representing a highly rural majority, were awarded a grant for a total award amount of more than \$5 million.

Awarded courthouses include:

Chester County – Listed in the National Register in 1979, the Chester County Courthouse was built in 1913 and determined significant for its Classical Revival Style and its connection to local government.

Dickson County – Listed in the National Register in 1977 as a contributing resource to the Charlotte Courthouse Square Historic District, the Dickson County Courthouse was built in 1833 and is a two-story brick building with wings attached to side elevations and a central cupola. The courthouse, like the other contributing buildings in the district, conveys the architectural and historical significance of the county seat.

Giles County – Listed in the National Register in 1983 as a contributing resource to the Pulaski Courthouse Square Historic District, the Giles County Courthouse, built in 1909 and designed by architect Benjamin N. Smith, features the Beaux-Arts style.

Lawrence County – Designed by Hart-Freeland-Roberts, Inc., and built in 1971, the Lawrence County Courthouse has been determined eligible for listing in the National Register for its architectural significance as a prominent example of the New Formalism style applied to courthouses in Tennessee. A nomination is currently in progress.

Maury County – Listed in the National Register in 1984 as a contributing resource to the Columbia Commercial Historic District, the Maury County Courthouse was built in 1904-05 and features the Classical Revival style.

Morgan County – Designed by W. Chamberlain & Company of Knoxville in 1904 in the Classical Revival style, the Morgan County Courthouse has been determined eligible its historical significance to local government and civic operations. A nomination is currently in progress.

Pickett County – Listed in the National Register in 1995, the Pickett County Courthouse was built in 1935 and is locally significant for its role in Pickett County government. It is also significant for its interpretation of the Colonial Revival style through the incorporation of Tennessee-sourced Crab Orchard stone.

Polk County – Listed in the National Register in 1993, the Depression-era Polk County Courthouse was designed by prominent Chattanooga architect, R. H. Hunt, in 1937 and is architecturally significant for its Art Deco-influenced style as a lasting example of federal relief architecture. The construction of the building was partially funded by the Emergency Relief Administration of Public Works.

Scott County – Built in 1947, and replacing a previous courthouse destroyed by a fire, the Scott County Courthouse is eligible for listing in the National Register for its local significance to and role in Scott County Government. A nomination is currently in progress.

Weakley County – Built in 1949 and designed by prominent Tennessee architectural firm Marr and Holman, the Weakley County Courthouse has been determined eligible for listing in the National Register for its architectural significance as a Public Works Administration Classical Modern style. A nomination is currently in progress.

Our office is excited to work with these counties as they steward rehabilitation projects to meet the Standards and maintain the unique historic and architectural character of each building.



Lawrence County Courthouse. Photo courtesy of Nancy Brewer, Lawrence County Government.





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 State Librarian and Archivist
Mr. James Ritter

TENNESSEE HISTORICAL COMMISSION STAFF

Ms. Miranda Montgomery
 SHPO
 Interim Executive Director
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
Mr. 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. 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
 ASA II
angela.campbell@tn.gov

Ms. Barbara Grissom
 Administrative Secretary
barbara.grissom@tn.gov

Ms. Laura Ragan
 ASA III
laura.ragan@tn.gov

ON THE COVER: Conner Toll House, Signal Mountain, TN. Photograph by Ashley Allen, December 2025.

