

TENNESSEE HISTORICAL MARKER PROPOSAL GUIDELINES



Since its inception in 1948, the Historical Markers Program has erected over 2,000 markers commemorating Tennessee history. Marker subjects include but are not limited to sites, persons, objects, and events of local importance that are also significant in state and national history, ranging from the beginning to its present time in the areas of settlement, statehood, military education, politics, architecture, minorities, and culture.

Each marker proposal must include the following documents for consideration:

- Tennessee Historical Marker Proposal Form
- Proposed marker text
- Copies of the pages referenced from each bibliographic source
- Map indicating the desired marker location
- Letter of consent from the property owner (if applicable)

Marker proposals are reviewed by Tennessee Historical Commission staff for formatting and completeness before being forwarded to the Monuments and Markers Committee. The Monuments and Markers Committee will review the proposal for eligibility and accuracy. The Committee will submit their recommendations for approval to the Commission to consider and vote on during the next Commission meeting. Approved markers are installed approximately six to eight weeks after payment is received.

SUBMISSION DEADLINES

The Commission generally meets the third Friday of February, June, and October. The submission deadlines for proposed markers to be considered at each meeting are listed below.

February Meeting
November 30

June Meeting
March 31

October Meeting
July 31

ELIGIBILITY

Proposed markers should commemorate a person, place, object, or event with local importance and, whenever possible, significance and importance in the broad pattern of Tennessee or national history from its beginning to the present time including, but not limited to, the areas of settlement, statehood, military, education, politics, architecture, minorities, and culture.

Markers commemorating individuals still living should be proposed only in exceptional circumstances for those persons who have made unique contributions to the history of Tennessee. Such markers must be supported by an organization of substantial experience in matters of historical significance and approved by vote at three consecutive meetings of the Tennessee Historical Commission.

EXCLUSIONS

New markers commemorating the following subjects are not usually approved:

- County or state lines
- Specific land grants
- Unprotected archaeological sites
- Family homes, unless permission of the owner is obtained
- Cemeteries, unless historical personages of transcendent importance are interred therein
- Those which are solely of genealogical or a particular family's interest
- Those which are of primary significance in the field of religion or to a religious body, unless also significant in political, military, architectural, or the area's settlement history

LOCATION

Markers may be mounted to walls or erected near roadways or sidewalks in suitable locations that are not hazardous to public safety. If the desired location for a proposed marker is on private property, a letter of consent from the property owner must be submitted with the proposal.

COST

The relatively small budget of the Historical Markers Program cannot accommodate the large number of proposed markers received by the Commission. Marker sponsors must submit a check for the cost of the marker within ten days of the marker's approval notification. The check must be made payable to the manufacturer and delivered to the offices of the Tennessee Historical Commission to be submitted with the fabrication order.

Marker Design	Price
Marker with pole, same text on each side	\$2,685.00
Marker with pole, different text on each side	\$2,935.00
Wall marker (TDOT does not install Wall Markers)	\$2,530.00

MARKER TEXT

Markers are typically fabricated with a one-inch font, allowing for a maximum of 13 lines of text with no more than 41 characters and spaces per line. The marker text is typically the same on each side, allowing it to be easily read when pole-mounted and oriented parallel or perpendicular to a roadway or sidewalk. Marker text that continues from the front side to the back side may be approved if the marker will be readily visible on both sides (*e.g.*, with the marker being placed close to and perpendicular to a sidewalk). Marker text with a 5/8-inch font, allowing for 20 lines of up to 62 characters and spaces per line, may be approved on rare occasions if there is a compelling need and if placement of the marker is such that it can be easily read despite a smaller font (*e.g.*, mounted on a wall that can be viewed close up).

Proposed marker text should be succinct and accurate in demonstrating the marker subject's significance, uniqueness, and need for special recognition. The text must be submitted as it would appear on the marker along with:

- A line-by-line count of the characters at the end of each line,
- A cumulative total of characters at the end of the entire text,
- The desired marker location, and
- Footnotes indicating the bibliographic sources used to substantiate each fact.

Please follow the formatting conventions in the marker text sample on the next page. Proposed marker text deviating from this format will not be considered.

MARKER TEXT SAMPLE

William Edmonson
Ca. 1883-1951

Born c. 1883, William Edmondson, a native Nashvillian	54
and renowned primitive sculptor, worked exclusively in	55
limestone. ¹ In 1937, he became the first African-	49
American to be given a one-man show by the Museum of	53
Modern Art in New York City. ² His visions in stone are	56
now held in major museums throughout America. ³ In June	56
of 1981, for the opening of their new facilities, the	54
Tennessee State Museum honored him with a 125-piece	52
Exhibition. ⁴	11

Total: 440

Desired Location: William Edmondson Park, 17th Avenue North and Charlotte, Nashville, Tennessee

Sources:

¹Linda T. Wynn, William Edmondson ca. 1870-1951, (Nashville: Local conference on Afro-American Culture and History, Leaders of African American Nashville Series, 1986); Wynn, "William Edmonson: Inspired Sculptor," *The Courier*, Vol. XX, Nos. 1&2 (Nashville: Tennessee Historical Commission, October 1981 & February 1982); Georganne Fletcher, Ed. & Jym Knight, Curator, *William Edmonson: A Retrospective* (Nashville: Tennessee Arts Commission, 1981), 12.

²Fletcher & Knight, *William Edmondson: A Retrospective*, 12, Edmond L. Fuller, *Visions in Stone: The Sculpture of William Edmonson*, (University of Pittsburg Press, 1973), 24.

³Lois Riggins, Director of Tennessee State Museum, January 23, 1990.

⁴Fletcher & Knight, *William Edmondson: A Retrospective*, 11; Wynn, "William Edmondson: Inspired Sculptor,"⁵.

The Commission reserves the right to edit or change the proposed marker text. The Commission staff will notify you of and assist you with any necessary corrections or improvements. Common reasons for rejection of proposed markers include text with insufficient documentation, text exceeding the character limit, and text that does not meet the criteria for significance.

STAFF CONTACT

Completed marker proposals and all inquiries regarding the Tennessee Historical Markers Program should be sent to:

Linda T. Wynn
Assistant Director for State Programs
Tennessee Historical Commission
State Historic Preservation Office
2941 Lebanon Pike
Nashville, TN 37214
Linda.Wynn@tn.gov
615-770-1093

**STATE OF TENNESSEE
TENNESSEE HISTORICAL COMMISSION
HISTORICAL MARKER INSTALLATION AND OCCUPANCY AGREEMENT**

LANDOWNER NAME: _____

HISTORICAL MARKER SITE LOCATION ADDRESS AND GPS COORDINATES:

NAME OF MARKER: _____

The undersigned lawful landowner hereby authorizes the Tennessee Historical Commission and its agents, employees and/or contractors to go upon the above-referenced property for the purpose of installing a historical marker provided and authorized by the Tennessee Historical Commission.

Landowner expressly agrees and understands that this permissive occupancy includes the installation of the historical marker on the above referenced property and its on-going, indefinite occupancy of the above referenced property. The historical marker, nor view of the historical marker, may not be removed, altered, or hidden in any way without the prior written permission of the Tennessee Historical Commission.

Landowner agrees to hold the State of Tennessee and its officers, employees, representatives, contractors and/or agents harmless for any loss that landowner may suffer as a result of the installation or removal of the historical marker, or the presence of the historical marker on the property, resulting from any cause, including but not limited to highway construction, or highway maintenance.

IN WITNESS WHERE OF, the parties agree:

LANDOWNER SIGNATURE

DATE

ADDRESS: _____

TELEPHONE: _____ **EMAIL:** _____

TITLE OF HISTORICAL COMMISSION REPRESENTATIVE

SIGNATURE OF HISTORICAL COMMISSION REPRESENTATIVE

DATE

ADDRESS: _____

TELEPHONE: _____ **EMAIL:** _____

**STATE OF TENNESSEE
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
RIGHT OF ENTRY FOR INSTALLATION OF TENNESSEE HISTORICAL MARKER**

LANDOWNER NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

TELEPHONE: _____ **EMAIL:** _____

NAME OF MARKER: _____

This Right of Entry is granted by the above-named Landowner to the Tennessee Department of Transportation. The undersigned lawful landowner hereby authorizes the Tennessee Department of Transportation, its agents, employees and/or contractors to go upon the above-referenced property for the purpose of installing a historical marker provided and authorized by the Tennessee Historical Commission.

Landowner expressly agrees and understands that this permissive occupancy includes the installation of the historical monument on an area of the referenced property designated and described on the attached **Exhibit A**, which is incorporated herein. **[Exhibit A must describe the installation method and the area of the sign, including size of area, such as sq. feet with some descriptive reference.]** The Tennessee Department of Transportation will ensure that the installation location does not interfere with any utilities located within the designated location of the historical marker prior to installation. The Tennessee Department of Transportation will notify the landowner five (5) business days prior to installation.

IN WITNESS WHERE OF, the undersigned lawful landowner agrees:

LANDOWNER SIGNATURE

HISTORICAL COMMISSION REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

NAME AND TITLE OF THC REPRESENTATIVE:



TENNESSEE HISTORICAL COMMISSION



HISTORICAL MARKER PROPOSAL

FORM MUST BE COMPLETED IN ITS ENTIRETY

Proposed Marker Title: _____

Sponsor Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Email Address: _____

Are you or someone else willing to pay the marker's cost:

Yes _____ No _____

Co-Sponsor Name (if applicable): Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Email Address: _____

State Senator Name: _____

State Representative Name: _____

Desired Marker Location: _____

GPS Coordinates: _____

- Required Attachments:**
- Proposed marker text (see guidelines for formatting requirements)
 - Copies of the pages referenced from each bibliographic source
 - Map indicating the desired marker location
 - Letter of consent from the property owner (if applicable)

If you are going to have a marker dedicatory ceremony, it is highly recommended that you indicate the date of the ceremony, should your proposal be approved so THC members and staff can attend should they desire to do so.

When the Marker is installed by the appropriate Tennessee Department of Transportation Garage, please provide a digital photo of the marker within a week of installation.

Proposed Date of Marker Dedicatory Ceremony: _____

**Deliver completed proposal form and
attachments to:**

Revised 01-15-26

Linda T. Wynn
Tennessee Historical Commission
2941 Lebanon Pike, Nashville, TN 37214
Linda.Wynn@tn.gov
615-770-1093