

# Basic Sources for Information about Nashville History: A Selected Bibliography

Compiled by Carole Bucy

## 1. Pre-arrival of Europeans:

Crutchfield, James A. *Early Times in the Cumberland Valley, From its Beginnings to 1800*. Nashville: Williams Press, 1977. (TN Dept. of Archaeology Reports are excellent sources about specific pre-historic sites in Davidson County. In a few cases, we have some earlier reports from the Smithsonian and UT Archaeologists.)

Lewis, Thomas M. N. & Madeline Kneberg. *Tribes That Slumber: Indians of the Tennessee Region*. Knoxville: University of Tennessee, 1958.

## 1. 1763-1860:

Arnow, Harriet Simpson. *The Flowering of the Cumberland*. New York, 1963.

--- ---. *Seedtime on the Cumberland*. New York, 1960.

Clements, Paul. *Chronicles of the Cumberland Settlements, 1779-1796*. Nashville: self-published, 2012. This book provides a comprehensive set of primary documents, maps, and secondary sources.

Goodstein, Anita. *Nashville, 1780-1860: From Frontier to City*. Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1989.

This is our best-researched and most accurate history of antebellum Nashville. Her index is excellent.

Drake, Doug, Jack Masters & Bill Puryear. *Atlases of the Cumberland Settlements: Founding of the Cumberland Settlements, vol. 1; Thoroughfare for Freedom, vol. 2; The First Southwest, vol. 3*. Gallatin: Warioto Press, 2009.

In addition to a narrative, these three volumes contain an extensive set of maps as well as data from court records.

Winter, Donald L. *Tennessee Farming, Tennessee Farmers: Antebellum Agriculture in the Upper South*. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1994.

## 2. Civil War: (Certainly there are numerous other books, but these provide an overview.)

Durham, Walter T. *Nashville: The Occupied City, 1862-1863*. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2008 (previously published in 1985 by the Tennessee Historical Society).

--- ---. *Reluctant Partners: Nashville and the Union, July 1, 1863 to June 30, 1865*. Nashville: Tennessee Historical Society, 1987.

McDonough, James Lee. *Nashville: The Western Confederacy's Final Gamble*.

Hurst, Jack. *Men of Fire, Grant, Forrest & the Campaign that Decided the War*.

Ash, Stephen V. *Middle Tennessee Society Transformed, 1860-1870*.

## 3. 1865-1900:

Doyle, Don. *Nashville in the New South, 1880-1930*. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1985.

Waller, William, ed. *Nashville in the 1890s*. Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1970.

## 4. 1900-1945:

Doyle, Don. *Nashville Since the 1920s*. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1985.

Spinney, Robert G. *World War II in Nashville: Transformation of the Homefront*. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1909.

Waller, William, ed. *Nashville: 1900-1910*. Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1972.

## 5. 1945-1980:

Doyle, Don, *Nashville Since the 1920s*. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1985.

Erickson, Ansley T., *Making the Unequal Metropolis: School Desegregation and Its Limits*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016.

Houston, Benjamin. *The Nashville Way: Racial Etiquette & the Struggle for Social Justice in a Southern City*. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2012.

Squires, James D. *The Secrets of the Hopewell Box: Stolen Elections, Southern Politics, and a City's Coming of Age*. New York: Times Books, 1996.

Wills, Ridley II. *Lest We Forget: Nashville's Lost Businesses and Their Stories*. Franklin: Plumblin Media, 2013.

### General Histories:

Bergeron, Paul H. *Tennesseans and Their History*. Knoxville, University of Tennessee Press, 1999.

Burns, Frank. Davidson County (Tennessee County History Series). Memphis: Memphis State University Press, 1989.

Carey, Bill. *Fortunes, Fiddles, and Fried Chicken: A Business History of Nashville*. Franklin: Hillsboro Press, 2000.

Corlew, Robert E. *Tennessee: A Short History updated through 1989, 2nd ed.* Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1993.

Douglas, Byrd. *Steamboatin' on the Cumberland*. Nashville: Tennessee Book Company, 1961.

Drake, Doug, Jack Masters, and Bill Puryear. *Founding of the Cumberland Settlements: The First Atlas, 1779-1804*. Gallatin: Warioto Press, 2009.

Egerton, John. *Nashville: The Faces of Two Centuries*. Nashville: PlusMedia Inc., 1979.

Frank, Fedora S. *Beginnings on Market Street*. Nashville, Jewish Community of Nashville, 1976.

--- ---. *Five Families and Eight Young Men*. Nashville, Tennessee Book Co., 1962.

Johnson, Leland R. *Engineers of the Twin Rivers: A History of the Nashville District Corps of Engineers, United States Army*. Nashville: U.S. Army Engineer District, 1978.

Keyling, Christine M., et al. *Classical Nashville: Athens of the South*. Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1996.

Lovett, Bobby. *The African-American History of Nashville, 1780-1930*. Fayetteville, University of Arkansas Press, 1999.

Roseman, Jean. *Shalom Nashville: A Jewish History, 2010*.

Stritch, Thomas. *The Catholic Church in Tennessee: the Sesquicentennial Story*. Nashville: Catholic Center, 1987.

Wiess, Elaine. *The Woman's Hour: The Great Fight to Win the Vote*. Penguin Books, 2018.

West, Carroll Van, editor. *The Tennessee Encyclopedia of History & Culture*. Nashville: Rutledge Hill Press, 1998.

--- ---. *A History of Tennessee Arts: Creating Traditions, Expanding Horizons*. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2004.

Wills, Ridley II. Nashville Pikes series: Vol. 1 -- Franklin Pike and Granny White Pike, 2015.

Vol. 2 – Hillsboro Pike

Vol. 3 – Harding Pike

Vol. 4 – Charlotte, Clifton, & Hydes Ferry Pikes

Vol. 5 – Buena Vista, Whites Creek, Brick Church, & Dickerson Pikes

--- ---. *Nashville Streets & Their Stories*, 2012.

There are also several **older histories** that you may want to consider including:

**Clayton, W. W. *History of Davidson County, Tennessee with Illustrations and Biographical Sketches....*** Philadelphia, 1880 and then reproduced by Charles Elder - Bookseller in 1971.

This book covers the history of the county from 1780 to 1880. It was not originally indexed, but in 1973 Sarah McMahon Whitfield and June Cox Williams compiled a comprehensive index which is very useful. This book has over 10,000 names, but many of them are in the form of lists.

**Crew, H. W. *The History of Nashville Tenn., With Full Outline....*** Nashville: Publishing House of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, 1890. (Some refer to this history as the "Woolridge History" since J. Woolridge was the editor.)

This book has several topical chapters in addition to a chronological narrative. It begins with the Mound Builders and ends more or less with the Civil War. It does have a group of biographical sketches at the end which include a variety of 19th and early 20th-century men. It has an excellent Table of Contents but no Index.

**Goodspeed Publishing Company of Nashville and Chicago. *A History of Tennessee from the Earliest Times to the Present, Together with an Historical and a Biographical Sketch of [county names go here]***, The Goodspeed Publishing Co., Nashville TN, 1886-1887. Includes the histories of 82 counties, but the histories of Davidson County and twelve rural counties were never published. Can be accessed online through the TNGenWeb Project at <http://www.tngenweb.org/records/goodspeed.html>.

Note: There are numerous institutional histories of churches, colleges, and businesses.

The History Press/Arcadia Publishing has also published numerous photographic books about specific Nashville topics.

## Other Sources:

**Vertical files, Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, city directories and digitized *Nashville Banner* archives** (Nashville Room, Main Branch of Nashville Public Library)

**Metro Archives**, 3rd floor of the Main Branch of Nashville Public Library

**TN State Library & Archives (TSLA) Vertical Files**

**TSLA Pro-Quest service:** Indexed Nashville newspaper articles up to 1920. A member of the TSLA staff will show you how to use this program. This is an excellent way to find obituaries for people who died before 1920.

**Tennessee Historical Quarterly: numerous Nashville articles**

**Louise Davis, Hugh Walker, and George Zepp writings about various aspects of Nashville history.** These 3 long-time reporters for *The Tennessean* did excellent research. They are delightful to read.

**Equal Justice Initiative "Legacy of Lynching":** <https://eji.org/racial-justice/legacy-lynching>

**We Remember Nashville:** <https://www.weremembernashville.org/>

**Civil Rights Room, Nashville Public Library:** <https://library.nashville.org/research/collection/civil-rights-room>