

CAPITAL CITY WALKING TOUR MAP

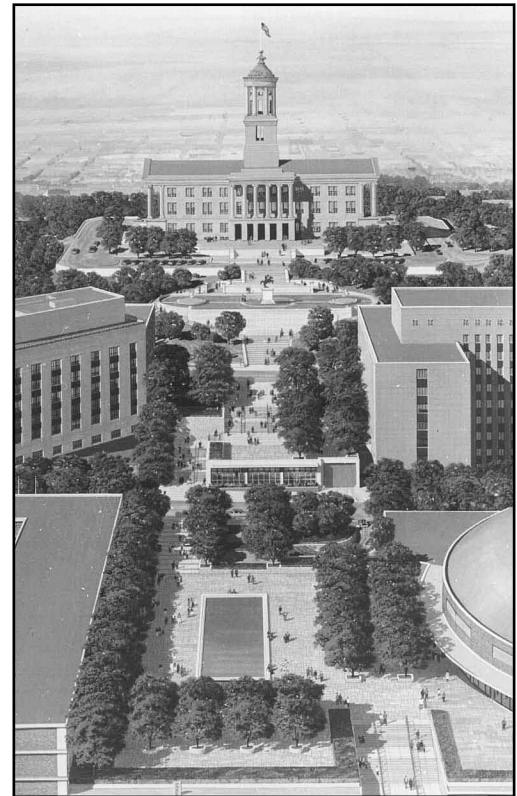
This walking tour of the Capital City begins at the Public Square and Davidson County Courthouse, at Third Avenue North and James Robertson Parkway, and ends at the Tennessee State Capitol.



METRO NASHVILLE HISTORICAL COMMISSION

DISCOVER NASHVILLE

NASHVILLE THE CAPITAL CITY



(TSLA)

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Sunnyside in Sevier Park
3000 Granny White Pike
Nashville, Tennessee 37204

www.nashville.gov/mhc

A Tour of Historic Sites Surrounding Capitol Hill

CIVIL WAR

MHC 150 YRS
SESQUICENTENNIAL

Introduction

For nearly the first fifty years of statehood, the capital of the State of Tennessee moved from Knoxville to Nashville to Knoxville to Murfreesboro, but in 1843, Nashville became the permanent capital by an act of the Tennessee legislature. The State Capitol Building was constructed in the early 1850s. By the time of the Civil War, Nashville was a prosperous Southern city, and important economically and strategically because of its location on the river and the railroad connecting it to both Louisville to the north and Chattanooga and Atlanta to the South. For three years, the city was occupied by Federal troops, and many of the houses were razed to fortify the city. The Battle of Nashville, in December 1864, was the last aggressive action of the Confederate Army. When the war ended, the city was in sad condition, but in the decades that followed, Nashville experienced a growth in population and renewed vigor in business and industry, especially in religious and music publishing.

This tour will take you along the route of some of the most important landmarks in Nashville and Tennessee political history. Walk the same routes and visit the same buildings that have been used by presidents, governors, soldiers, artists, entertainers, and everyday Americans for over one hundred fifty years.

The National Register and National Historic Landmarks

As part of the national effort to preserve the built environment, the U.S. Department of the Interior maintains the National Register of Historic Places. The National Register is a listing of the buildings, districts, sites, and structures significant in history and worthy of preservation. The listing provides certain protections for the buildings, and in some cases, tax incentives for rehabilitation.

Buildings of exceptional historic importance to the nation are designated National Historic Landmarks. This designation is more prestigious than National Register listing; fewer than 2,500 properties nationwide carry this distinction. Downtown Nashville has three National Historic Landmarks, including Downtown Presbyterian Church, the Ryman Auditorium, and the Tennessee State Capitol.

Accessibility

Most of these buildings are open to the public. Check with the individual buildings for hours, ticket prices, and tour information. When entering any state or local government building, be prepared to show identification and for a security check. Due to construction and routine street and sidewalk repairs, caution should be used when selecting which side of the street to follow. Always use crosswalks when possible and watch for cars pulling out of drives, parking lots, and garages. Be careful along uneven and steep sidewalks, streets, and curbs.

Parking

There are parking meters and commercial parking lots and garages throughout the downtown area. The Davidson County Courthouse has an underground parking garage accessible from either Gay Street or James Robertson Parkway. The Downtown Public Library has convenient garage parking that can be entered from either Sixth Avenue North or Seventh Avenue North.

Visitor Center

Whether you are a visitor or resident, plan to visit the Bridgestone Arena (Nashville Arena), at Fifth Avenue and Broadway. Inside the glass tower is the Visitor Center where you can find all the information you need to get around Nashville. The center has a great selection of free maps and brochures, and the staff at the information desk is knowledgeable and ready to assist. Call 615/780-9401 for more information.

While inside the Arena, you may wish to visit the Tennessee Sports Hall of Fame Museum. Call 615/242-4750 for more information regarding the Tennessee Sports Hall of Fame.

For more information, contact the Metropolitan Historical Commission at 615/862-7970. The Nashville Convention and Visitors Bureau can be reached at 615/259-4700, or 1-800-657-6910.

www.nashville.gov/mhc

www.NashvilleCVB.com or www.visitmusiccity.com

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Capital City Tour

Begin at the Courthouse (the bold blue text at the end of the listings will guide you to the next stop on the tour).



1. The Public Square and Davidson County Courthouse (1937)

THIRD AVENUE NORTH BETWEEN JAMES ROBERTSON PARKWAY AND UNION STREET



In 1784, a site of four acres was set aside in the original town plan for a public square and public buildings. This area served as the center of Nashville's public life for over a century. The city jail, stocks, City Hall, and Market House were all located here at one time, regularly bringing farmers, politicians, lawyers, and merchants to the square.



(TSLA)

In 1856, a fire burned the Davidson County Courthouse to the ground. Francis Strickland, son of the architect William Strickland, designed the courthouse built in 1857, which stood until the current courthouse was constructed in the 1930s.

The current building, the Davidson County Courthouse is one of the few buildings in Nashville to illustrate Art Deco detailing. It also carries reference to Greek Classical

architecture, seen in the Doric colonnade rising through four stories, which symbolizes America's political and cultural foundations. The restrained combination of Art Deco and Neoclassical architecture exemplifies the New Deal architectural style known as PWA Modern; the Public Works Administration funded several government projects in downtown Nashville. Rene Chambellan's sculptures on the exterior embody American principles such as loyalty, strength, and justice while murals in the lobby by Dean Cornwell represent Industry, Agriculture, Statesmanship, and Commerce. This building houses the offices of the mayor, city council, and county courts.

The Public Square, once central to Nashville's public life, was nearly lost over time due to road expansion and the closure and subsequent demolition of the retail establishments that formed the square. During the 2005-2006 rehabilitation of the courthouse and the construction of the Founders' Building to the southeast, the Public Square was reclaimed as greenspace. The Founders' Building provides a unique view of downtown along with interpretive panels and photographs depicting the history of the Courthouse and Public Square.

From the Courthouse, cross 3rd Avenue North to Charlotte. Continue west on Charlotte to Fourth Avenue North.

2. Historic Black Business District

This district serves as the focal point of African American business in Nashville prior to 1930. Before the Civil War, free blacks conducted business here, operating hack stands, barber shops, and bathhouses. Business continued after the war with the opening of banks, business and professional offices, printing and publishing houses, lunch stands, restaurants, and saloons. In 1904, Dr. R. H. Boyd, James C. Napier, and Preston Taylor founded the One-Cent Savings Bank and Trust Company, the first minority-owned bank in Tennessee. This bank, now Citizens Bank, is the oldest continuously operating minority-owned bank in the United States.

3. The Morris Memorial Building (1923-25)

330 CHARLOTTE AVENUE



Located in the Historic Black Business District, this neoclassical building illustrates the work of Moses McKissack. He, with his brother Calvin, founded McKissack and McKissack, a black architectural firm established in 1918 and one of the first organized and staffed by African Americans in the

United States. The National Baptist Convention, U.S.A., Inc. built the Morris Memorial Building in the mid-1920s for the Sunday School Publishing Board, serving the largest African American religious denomination in the world. The building is named for Reverend E. C. Morris, former president of the National Baptist Convention. It stands on the site formerly occupied by the Commercial Hotel, which housed a slave market before the Civil War.

Turn north on 4th Avenue North.



4. Municipal Auditorium (1962)

417 FOURTH AVENUE NORTH

Nashville's Municipal Auditorium replaced the Bijou Theater, built in 1904. By the 1920s, the Bijou catered primarily to African-Americans, hosting notable acts such as Bessie Smith and Ethel Waters. Bessie Smith's song "Back-Water Blues" is believed to have been written following her performances at the Bijou at the time of Nashville's Christmas Day flood in 1926. The Bijou was torn down in the 1950s as part of Nashville's urban renewal.



Constructed as Nashville's first modern auditorium, Municipal Auditorium is a multi-purpose facility, seating over 9,000. It has hosted sporting events including basketball, gymnastics, ice hockey, rodeos, and wrestling, as well as concerts (notably Herman's Hermits, Elvis, the Rolling Stones, KISS, and Widespread Panic), religious programming, trade shows, children's shows, and circuses. Designed by the firm of Marr and Holman, the concrete-domed auditorium opened in 1962.



Photo by Gary Layda

Turn west on Gay Street.

5. Cordell Hull Building (1952-53)

425 FIFTH AVENUE NORTH

This state office complex was named for Tennessean Cordell Hull, who served as Secretary of State under President Franklin D. Roosevelt, and was the first Tennessean to win the Nobel Peace Prize. Designed by the firm of Hart and McBryde, the Cordell Hull Building



(TSLA)

opened in the early 1950s to house the offices of a growing state government. This 17-story building houses the state departments of Health and Children's Services, among other offices. Each corner of the building features a sculpture grouping by noted sculptor Puryear Mims, depicting Tennesseans at Home, on the Farm, in Industry, and at War.

Continue south on 5th Avenue North.

6. John Sevier State Office Building (1937-40)

400 SIXTH AVENUE NORTH

Listed in the National Register of Historic Places 

Constructed by Woolwine and Hiron, the architects also responsible for the Davidson County Courthouse, this limestone office building exemplifies the PWA Modern architectural style of the New Deal, combining neoclassical architecture commonly used in American government buildings mixed with Art Deco detailing. The vertical bands and leaf-like motif along the cornice are characteristics of this neoclassical style. Sculptor Rene Chambellan created the brass entrance doors depicting the original state departments housed here. On the interior is a lobby of marble, terrazzo, and brass with murals by WPA artist Dean Cornwell illustrating the "Discovery of Tennessee" and the "Development of Tennessee."



(TSLA)

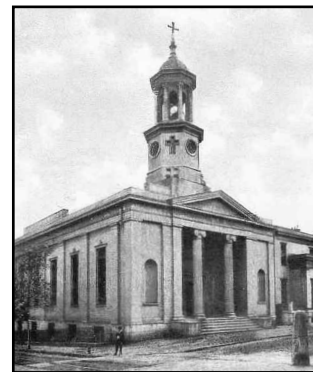
Continue south on 5th Avenue North; cross Charlotte Avenue.

7. St. Mary's Church (1845-47, 1926)

330 FIFTH AVENUE

Listed in the National Register of Historic Places 

Nashville's oldest downtown church, St. Mary's of the Seven Sorrows is the first permanent Roman Catholic Church built in Tennessee. Once credited to William Strickland, it is now attributed to Adolphus Heiman. The church was completed in 1847 in the Greek Revival style and served as the cathedral of Nashville until 1914 when the Cathedral of the Incarnation was built. Reverend Richard Pius Miles, the first bishop of Nashville, bought the land on which it sits for \$4,400 and continued to raise the \$47,000 necessary for construction. He is buried in a side chapel of the church.



During the Civil War, it was the last downtown church converted into a military hospital, holding regular services until the Battle of Nashville in December 1864, including a requiem mass held on January 28, 1863 "for the repose of the souls of the killed on both sides at the battle of Stones River." One source holds that over 300 men died in the church during its time as a hospital.

Asmus and Clark were the architects for a major remodeling in 1926. Among several twentieth century priests is Nashville-born Cardinal Samuel A. Stritch who, at that time, served as Chancellor of the diocese and later as Archbishop of Chicago. He became the first American appointed to the Roman curia by the Pope.

Continue south on 5th Avenue North; turn west on Deaderick Street.

8. James K. Polk Office Building (1976-1980) TN State Museum/TN Performing Arts Center

505 DEADERICK STREET

The James K. Polk building houses a variety of state offices along with the Tennessee State Museum and the theaters of the Tennessee Performing Arts Center.

The Tennessee State Museum, established by an act of the General Assembly in 1937, houses objects from Nashville's first museum which opened in 1817 on the public square. The exhibits span about 15,000 years, beginning with prehistoric peoples and cultures and continuing through the early 1900s. The museum houses temporary and permanent exhibits on Tennessee history as well as rotating exhibits of art and artifacts from around the world. Among them are a life-size reproduction of an Indian campsite, an 18th century Conestoga wagon, Tennessee quilts, Civil War objects and photographs, and items belonging to presidents Jackson, Johnson, and Polk, and other famous Tennesseans. The Tennessee State Museum is open to the public every day but Mondays and admission is free.

Housed in the same building as the Tennessee State Museum, the Tennessee Performing Arts Center hosts performing arts organizations, including the Tennessee Repertory Theatre. TPAC also holds an annual series of Broadway shows and other special performances in its four performance halls, the Andrew Jackson Hall, the Andrew Johnson Theater, the James K. Polk Theater, and the War Memorial Auditorium (across the street).

Turn south on 6th Avenue North to Union Street.



9. Hermitage Hotel (1910)

231 SIXTH AVENUE NORTH

Completed in 1910 and surviving as the last of Nashville's grand old hotels, this building was the home of many political campaigns in the early 20th century. The building was designed in the Beaux Arts Classical style by Columbia, Tennessee architect Edwin Carpenter and was named for the home of President Andrew Jackson. In 1920, it served as the headquarters of both suffragist and anti-suffragist groups meeting to lobby the Tennessee legislature, whose vote to ratify the nineteenth amendment was the last needed to give women the right to vote. The Hermitage Hotel enjoyed several notable visitors such as presidents Taft, Wilson, Roosevelt, Kennedy, Nixon, and Lyndon Johnson, and entertainers Al Jolson, Bette Davis, Gene Autry, and Bill



Cosby. In 2008, the Men's Restroom at the Hermitage Hotel was named "America's Best Restroom" by Cintas Corporation.

Travel north on 6th Avenue North to Legislative Plaza and the War Memorial Building.

10. War Memorial Building (1925) and Legislative Plaza (1971-1974)

SIXTH AND SEVENTH AVENUE NORTH BETWEEN UNION AND CHARLOTTE AVENUES

Built as a memorial to the Tennessee soldiers who died in World War I, the War Memorial Building was the first building constructed for state offices outside the capitol itself. Designed in the Greek Doric order by architect Edward Dougherty with McKim, Mead and White, this building has a Doric-columned atrium as its focal point. Engraved into the west and north walls



are the names of 3,400 Tennesseans who gave their lives in World War I. A statue entitled "Victory," by Nashville sculptor Belle Kinney and her husband, Leopold Schalz, sits in the center of the atrium. On each side of this atrium lie wings housing government offices and a large auditorium where WSM's Grand Ole Opry performed for a time before moving to Ryman Auditorium. The basement of War Memorial once housed the Tennessee State Museum; the Military Branch of the State Museum is still located here.

Legislative Plaza, outside to the east of the War Memorial Building, creates an open-air space for public events. Below ground is a labyrinth of government office spaces and committee rooms for the Tennessee General Assembly. Through the underground Motlow Tunnel, Legislative Plaza is connected to the Tennessee State Capitol. On the plaza stands a statue dedicated to the Women of the Confederacy, also sculpted by Belle Kinney, and a monument to the Tennesseans who served in the Korean War by sculptor Russell Faxon. Nashville sculptor Alan LeQuire created the monument honoring Tennessee's Vietnam Veterans in 1986.

Turn west on Charlotte Avenue to 7th Avenue North.

11. Snodgrass Tennessee Tower (1970)

312 ROSA L. PARKS AVENUE (FORMERLY EIGHTH AVENUE NORTH)

Originally constructed in 1970 as the headquarters for the National Life and Accident Insurance Company the National Life Building was at that time, Nashville's tallest building. Bruce Graham of the national firm of Skidmore, Owings and Merrill was the designing architect. In 1982, the building was renamed the American General Center following its purchase of the National Life company. The reinforced concrete building is clad in Travertine marble and features a large plaza along Seventh Avenue North. The state of Tennessee purchased the building in 1994 for office space, and in 1999 it was named the William A. Snodgrass Tennessee Tower. It now houses the offices of the Secretary of State and the Department of Tourist Development, among others.

Cross Charlotte Avenue and continue north on 7th Avenue North.

12. State Supreme Court Building (1936)

401 SEVENTH AVENUE NORTH

Another downtown example of the PWA Modern style, the State Supreme Court Building combines classically-inspired architecture with Art Deco detailing. The building was designed by Marr and Holman, who constructed courthouses in several Tennessee counties.



Begun in 1936 and costing over \$650,000, the four story building originally had offices for the Tennessee Supreme Court and Court of Appeals, the attorney general, legal staff, and a library. The courthouse is faced with Tennessee marble and rests on a granite base. Modern features of the building included an underground basement, elevator, and air conditioning. The State Supreme Court Building was considered important enough to be showcased in a 1939 publication on federally funded public architecture.

13. Tennessee State Library and Archives (1952-1953)

403 SEVENTH AVENUE NORTH

Constructed in 1952-1953, in part as a memorial to Tennesseans who gave the supreme sacrifice during World War II, the Tennessee State Library and Archives (TSLA) was the first permanent home for the state's government documents, and allowed the collections of the State Library to move



(TSLA)

from their haphazard storage in the State Capitol and other government buildings. Designed by architect Clinton Parrent, a Nashville architect who had worked on several academic libraries (including those at Vanderbilt, Fisk, University of Tulsa, University of South Carolina, and Davidson College), TSLA's Neoclassical design with restrained Art Deco detailing intentionally drew inspiration from the Tennessee State Capitol, the State Supreme Court Building and the War Memorial Building. Several panels along the exterior feature quotations and inscriptions from notable Tennesseans, including Governors Alfred Taylor, Robert Taylor, Isham Harris, Austin Peay, and Gordon Browning, and others from the Tennessee presidents, Andrew Jackson, James K. Polk, and Andrew Johnson. The interior of the building features terrazzo marble floors, brass light fixtures, marble wainscoting, and wood paneled offices. The terrazzo floor in the vestibule features a map of Tennessee.



14. Tennessee State Capitol and Capitol Hill (1845-59)

600 CHARLOTTE AVENUE



A National Historic Landmark, the Tennessee State Capitol sits on the highest hill in the central city. Designed in the Greek Revival Style by architect William Strickland who moved to Nashville from Philadelphia, it is his last and perhaps his finest work. Strickland began his career as an apprentice to Benjamin Latrobe, the first architect of the U.S. Capitol. He died in 1854, before the completion of the Tennessee State Capitol, and, according to his wishes, was buried in the walls of the northeast corner of the building. Built with Tennessee limestone, the building employs the Ionic and Corinthian orders, the two most highly regarded in Greek architecture. To match the elegance of the exterior, Strickland makes extensive use on the interior of cast iron, an avant garde building material of the 1840s, as seen in the highly decorative spiral staircase and library balconies.



During the Civil War, the Tennessee State Capitol was a focal point of activity. Although the state had voted to secede from the Union in June 1861, the city was occupied by Union troops in February 1862, becoming the first capital of a Confederate state to surrender. Andrew Johnson became the Military Governor of Tennessee (1862-1865), and the State Capitol served as his seat of government. Occupied by Union troops, and fortified with cannon and other artillery, the Tennessee State Capitol became known as Fort Johnson. Following the Battle of Stones River (December 31, 1862 – January 2, 1863), near Murfreesboro, many Nashville buildings including the State Capitol were used as hospitals for wounded troops. The State Capitol was also pressed in to service as barracks for Union infantry and artillery. One member of the Indiana troops wrote that the Capitol was “the finest building I ever saw.”

Also on Capitol Hill are various monuments including the tomb of President and Mrs. James K. Polk, an equestrian statue of President Andrew Jackson by Clark Mills, monuments to Civil War hero Sam Davis and World War I hero Alvin York, and six cedar trees planted to commemorate the six million Jews who died as a result of the Holocaust.

Guided tours of the State Capitol are available on weekdays; inquire at the Information Desk.