

# NASHVILLE

## THE OCCUPIED CITY

This walking tour of Nashville's Civil War sites begins at the downtown Visitor's Center located at 501 Broadway and ends at Metro Government's Richard Fulton Campus, located at 800 Second Avenue South.



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## A Walking Tour of Civil War Nashville

METRO NASHVILLE HISTORICAL COMMISSION



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

[www.nashville.gov/mhc](http://www.nashville.gov/mhc)



## Introduction

Between 1861 and 1865, Nashville was at the epicenter of the American Civil War. The city's strategic importance as a river and railroad town made control vital to the outcome of the war. Following Tennessee's secession in June 1861, Nashville became a Confederate capital. Change was swift as factories in the downtown area retooled for war. Iron and plow works produced armaments, such as cannon tubes, sabers, rifles, and percussion caps, while other businesses made saddles, uniforms, and shoes for the army. Men were recruited to fill Tennessee's Confederate ranks.

Following the fall of Ft. Donelson in February 1862, however, Nashville was left undefended by a retreating Confederate Army and surrendered without a shot being fired. Federal gunboats and transports quickly lined the Cumberland River wharf as soldiers, railroad workers, and military supplies flooded the city. Occupation forces seized existing buildings, such as schools and churches, for use as headquarters and hospitals. New warehouses were constructed to stock armaments, food, and medical supplies. Barracks were erected to house thousands of Federal troops. A line of fortifications was built south and west of downtown to defend against any attempt by the South to retake the capital. The Federal Army worked tirelessly to make Nashville the most heavily defended city west of the Appalachian Mountains because of its importance as a major supply depot in their campaign to invade the Deep South.

The last major battle in the war's western theater took place in Nashville on December 15-16, 1864. Confederate General John Bell Hood attempted to recapture the city in a dramatic engagement in the hills and valleys south of downtown, as over 75,000 Federal and Confederate soldiers desperately fought for two days for control of the capitol. The decisive victory by the Union forces under the command of Major General George Thomas sealed the fate of the Confederates in the West.

This tour highlights Civil War sites in downtown Nashville. Few structures remain from the period. Those that do, however, are important landmarks that have withstood the test of time and give us a glimpse of one of the most important events in the city's historic past.

## 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.

## Touring

This tour route will take you past 19 different sites and historic districts. The tour was designed to follow a simple route and provide a variety of visual and historical experiences related to the Civil War in Nashville. It can be walked in approximately 90 minutes but a more careful study will take longer.

To fully appreciate the craftsmanship and materials found on the buildings, take your time and examine the details. At street level, many buildings have been "modernized" but are in near original condition above. For a better look at the upper levels of structures, you may wish to view them from across the street.

## Accessibility

Some of the buildings are open to the public. Check at the individual locations for hours, tour information (where applicable) and ticket prices. 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, exercise caution when deciding 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 local resident or visitor, 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](http://www.nashville.gov/mhc)

[www.NashvilleCVB.com](http://www.NashvilleCVB.com) or [www.visitmusiccity.com](http://www.visitmusiccity.com)

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# Occupied City Tour

This tour begins at the downtown Visitor's Center located at 501 Broadway (in the arena building) and ends at the Richard H. Fulton Campus; 800 2nd Avenue South. To begin the tour, exit the arena on Broadway and go right (E) toward the river. Stop #1 is on the right. The bold blue text after each listing will guide you to the next stop on the tour.

## 1. Federal Hospital No. 3

417-423 Broadway



Now housing the Ernest Tubb Record Shop and other businesses, this was the location of William Stockell's ornamental plaster and terra cotta business. Prior to the Civil War, Stockell had done the ornamental plaster work in the Union Bank, the State Capitol, and Belmont Mansion. During the occupation, this building was used as Hospital No. 3 in the Federal hospital system set up for the duration of the war. It had 250 beds in it.



TSLA (Tennessee State Library & Archives)

**Continue east on Broadway to First Avenue. Stop #2 is on the right.**

## 2. T. M. Brennan Foundry

First Avenue S. and Broadway

The Brennan Foundry was on the southwest corner of Broadway and present day First Avenue South. Francis Strickland had the ornamental iron work crowning the tower of the Tennessee State Capitol cast here in 1855. During Nashville's nine months as a Confederate city, Brennan cast cannon tubes for the Confederacy. The Tennessee State Museum houses three of them.



TSLA (Tennessee State Library & Archives)

**Cross First Avenue to Riverfront Park, Stop #3.**

## 3. The Cumberland River



TSLA (Tennessee State Library & Archives)

The river was the primary artery of invasion for the Federal Army and made Nashville a major supply depot following the city's occupation in February 1862. Two bridges spanned the Cumberland when the war began. One was a pedestrian suspension bridge, the longest of its kind in the country when it was constructed in the 1850's. The other was a covered railroad bridge. Both were burned by retreating Confederate forces when the city was captured, and both were rebuilt during the war.

**Cross First Avenue back to Broadway and continue to Second Avenue North. Turn right (N). Stop #4 is on the right.**

## 4. Morris & Stratton Building

218-220 Second Avenue N.



Morris & Stratton occupied this site in 1854 for their wholesale grocers business. During the Civil War, the building was used as a Federal hospital for sick and wounded Union soldiers. The old street number, 14, can be seen in the U. S. Federal shield on the cast-iron columns flanking the old entrance. A developer demolished the original building, leaving only the façade intact.



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**Continue north on Second Avenue North, cross Union Street to the Public Square, Stop #5.**

## 5. Davidson County Courthouse

Public Square



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Federal troops first reached Nashville on February 25, 1862, following the Confederate defeat at Forts Henry and Donelson. On March 4, 1862, the first Federal army dress parade was held on Nashville's Public Square. The present location of the Davidson County Courthouse comprised the entire square. Second Avenue, then named Market Street, went through the Square where the doors of the present courthouse are now. The courthouse occupied the eastern end of the square; the market house and city government buildings stood on the western side of the square.



Ohio Historical Society

Public Square, c. 1862

**Cross Third Avenue North on your left and continue west on Deaderick Street. Turn right (N) on Fifth Avenue North. Stop #6 is on the right.**

## 6. Cathedral of the Seven Sorrows (Now St. Mary's Catholic Church)

330 Fifth Avenue N.



This was the last church converted into a military hospital during the Civil War, holding services until the Battle of Nashville in December 1864. A requiem mass was 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 states that over 300 men died in the church during the few months left in the war.



Estate of Thomas Shriver

**Return to Deaderick Street and turn right (W). Continue to Stop #7 on the left.**

## 7. Tennessee State Museum

505 Deaderick Street

The Tennessee State Museum is located on the lower floor of the James K. Polk Cultural Center. The artifacts and interpretive exhibits cover 15,000 years of area history. One of the finest collections of Civil War artifacts in the country is housed here. Admission is free and open to the public Tuesday through Sunday.



Tennessee State Museum

**Continue west on Deaderick Street. Turn left (S) on Sixth Avenue North. Stop #8 is on the left.**



## 8. Felix Zollicoffer House

Sixth and Deaderick

The home of Felix Zollicoffer stood where the Polk Building and the entrances to the Jackson Theater of TPAC are today. Zollicoffer had served in the Second Seminole War. Subsequently, he was the Adjutant General of Tennessee, Comptroller, a State Senator, and served as a Congressman from 1852-59. He was a Whig and edited a Whig newspaper in Nashville. On January 19, 1861, he became the first general to die in battle in the western theater of the war.



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**Return north on Sixth Avenue North, pass Deaderick Street to Charlotte Avenue and cross Charlotte Avenue to Stop #9.**

## 9. Tennessee State Capitol

600 Charlotte Avenue



Two governments; one capital. The Tennessee State Capitol was used by Confederate Governor Isham Harris until he fled with the State treasury and archives to Memphis in February of 1862. On March 3, 1862, former Governor Andrew Johnson returned to the building, having just resigned



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his seat in the U. S. Senate to become Military Governor of Occupied Tennessee. In May 1862, Johnson called a meeting in the House of Representatives chamber in an effort to consolidate support of the Union cause in Tennessee. Captain William Driver's flag, "Old Glory", was one of the first flags to fly from the first Confederate state capitol to fall. The Sixth Ohio Infantry lined up on February 25, 1862 to honor "Old Glory" as it flew for one day over the Capitol. After the Battle of Stones River, the building briefly housed wounded and dying soldiers. William Strickland, who designed the building, and Samuel Dold Morgan, chairman of the State Building Commission over its construction, are both entombed in the walls.

**Continue west on Charlotte Avenue to the State Capitol's street level entrance. Turn left (S), cross Charlotte Avenue and the War Memorial Plaza. Turn right (W) on Union Street; turn left (S) on Seventh Avenue North. Stop #10 is on the right.**

## 10. James Polk Place

211 Seventh Avenue N.



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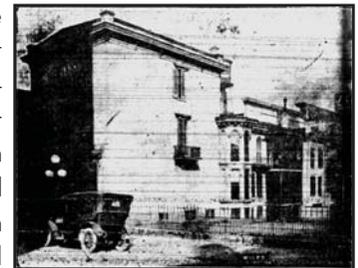
The home of former President James K. Polk stood behind the former YWCA building. Polk Avenue was the original drive leading up the hill to the house. The tomb of President Polk was located in the back garden of Polk Place, near the present corner of Seventh and Union. His widow, Sarah Childress Polk, continued to live in the home from 1848 to 1891. Mrs. Polk was a member of the Ladies' Soldiers' Friends Society. Their graves were moved to the State Capitol grounds in 1893.

**Return to Union Street and turn right (E). Proceed to Sixth Avenue North. Turn right (S), Stop #11 is on the left.**

## 11. Carter House

230 Sixth Avenue N.

The Daniel F. Carter house stood across the street from the present Hermitage Hotel. Daniel Carter was a banker, and when Nashville was conquered he refused to take the Oath of Allegiance to the United States. He was arrested in



Nashville American News Journal, Jan 12, 1913

his bank lobby and sent to prison. In 1864, General Ulysses S. Grant used the house as his headquarters.

**Continue south on Sixth Avenue North. Stop #12 is on the right.**

## 12. George W. Cunningham House

221 Sixth Avenue N.

The George W. Cunningham house stood here, where the Capitol Boulevard Building stands today. Generals Don Carlos Buell, William S. Rosecrans, William T. Sherman, Ulysses S. Grant, and George H. Thomas, all used it as their head-



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quarters. Rosecrans's chief of staff was James A. Garfield. Around 1930, it was razed for a surface parking lot.

**Continue south on Sixth Avenue North. Turn left (E) on Church Street. Stop #13 is on the right.**

## 13. Hospital No. 8 (The Downtown Presbyterian Church)

154 Fifth Avenue N.

Designed by William Strickland, the architect of the Tennessee State Capitol, this structure was seized in 1862 and used as a part of Hospital No. 8. The Masonic Hall was across Church



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Street, and across Fifth Avenue was the Cumberland Presbyterian Church. These buildings together served as one hospital containing 615 beds in total. In this building alone, there were 206 beds on two floors.

**Continue east on Church Street. Stop #14 is on the left.**

## 14. Maxwell House Hotel

Fourth Avenue at Church Street

Construction on the Maxwell House Hotel was begun in 1859 by John Overton, Jr., but the outbreak of war halted construction. The Confederates first quartered troops in the incomplete structure, dubbing it "Zollicoffer Barracks," in honor of Confederate General Felix Zollicoffer. Later, the Federal army used it as a prison for captured Confederates. On September 29, 1863, a staircase collapsed as prisoners were being moved to a lower floor. Several men were killed and seventy-five others injured.



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**Continue east on Church Street. Turn left (N) on Fourth Avenue North. Stop #15 is on the left.**

## 15. Judge Catron House

217 Fourth Avenue N.

John Catron served as associate justice on the U.S. Supreme Court from 1837 until his death in 1865. He traveled from Washington, D.C. to Nashville in 1861 to persuade state leaders to remain in the Union, but fled under threats from secessionists. He returned in June of 1862 when the Federal occupation allowed him to convene U.S. District Court in Nashville.



*TSLA (Herb Peck Collection)*



**You may continue the tour on foot from this point or return to your vehicle and drive to the Richard H. Fulton Campus, park, and complete Stops 16 through 19 from that location.**

**Return south on Fourth Avenue North, cross Broadway and continue on Fourth Avenue South. Turn right (W) on Peabody Street. Turn left (S) on Fifth Avenue South. Stop #16 is on the right.**

## 16. Captain William Driver House

501 Fifth Avenue S.

Originally a sea captain from Salem, Massachusetts, Captain Driver had sailed twice around the world and was responsible for coining the name, "Old Glory" for the U.S. flag. His flag, which had been sewn for him by his mother and the girls of Salem, flew on his many voyages and here in front of his house, on the Fourth of July and Washington's Birthday. When the Federal Army captured Nashville in early 1862, he greeted the



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troops with this same flag in hand. It was one of the first flags to be raised over a state defeated by the Union Army.

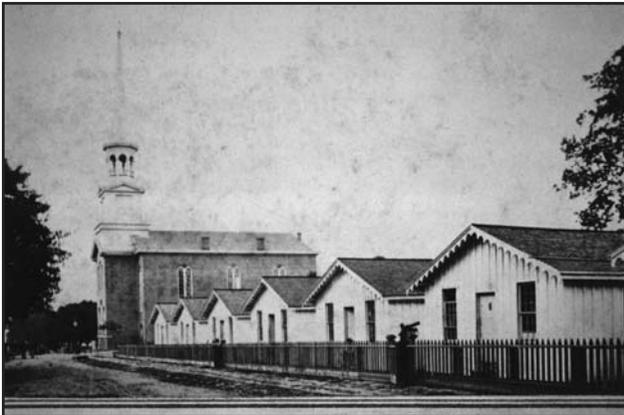
**Continue south on Fifth Avenue South. Stop #17 is on the left.**

## 17. Elm Street Methodist Church

410 Elm Street



Six Federal barracks stood adjacent to this building during the occupation. Thomas Green Ryman, for whom the Ryman Auditorium was named, was a member here. He sold fish to the Federal forces during the occupation.



TSLA (Herb Peck Collection)

**Turn left (E) on Elm Street. Turn left (N) on Third Avenue South. Stop #18 is on the left.**

## 18. Primitive Baptist Church

629 Third Avenue S.



Built around 1850 as a Primitive Baptist Church, the building was used by troops during the Occupation. It later was converted to a higher liturgical denomination, and the building was altered with its present Gothic inspired narthex and window above it.



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**Return to Elm Street, turn left (E) on Elm Street. Turn right (S) on Second Avenue South. Turn left (E) at Ash Street into Metro Nashville's Richard H. Fulton Campus. Stop #19 is straight ahead at the end of the drive.**

## 19. Hospital No. 2

Behind 800 Second Avenue S.



Adolphus Heiman designed this structure which was built in 1854 for the Literary Department of the University of Nashville. By 1855 the Western Military Institute had taken over the financially troubled school, and Colonels Bushrod Johnson and Richard Owen ran the institution. When the war broke out, all of the cadets in residence joined the Confederate army. One cadet, Sam Davis, was hanged in 1863 as a spy. Following the war, Generals Bushrod Johnson and Edmund Kirby-Smith ran the school for five years. This was used as a hospital during the Occupation.



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