MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY

HILLBILLY SKITS TO BUFORD STICKS

SUSTAINABLE HERITAGE TOURISM IN TENNESSEE

DISSERTATION

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OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR

PHD IN PUBLIC HISTORY

BY

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MURFREESBORO, TN

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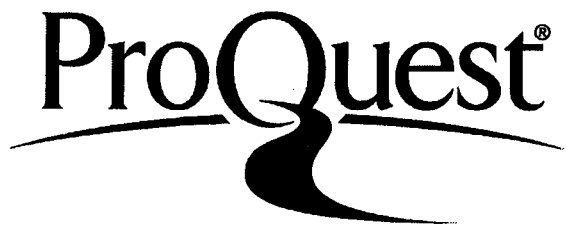

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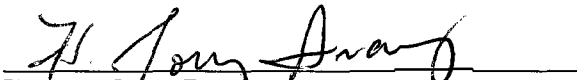

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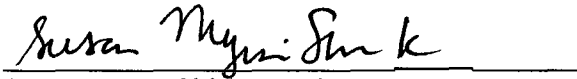

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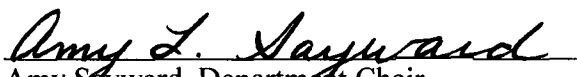

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me think through heritage tourism in an experiential way during our Sunday road trips to rural Tennessee towns on our way to amazingly scenic hiking adventures. Surely other hikers were puzzled by our passionate discussions about heritage tourism and roadside architecture while we were out in the wilderness.

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Finally, my family provided me with incalculable support and diversions (thanks Alex and Andrea, I love you).

ABSTRACT

This research frames the current Tennessee sustainable tourism initiative in the context of the increasingly overlapping fields of public history, folklore, and recreation. These fields often cover similar territory, but do not always engage in dialogue outside their disciplines. By delving into what each field has to offer, who can inform the development of the upcoming field of sustainable heritage tourism. Currently sustainable tourism is dominated by the "green" industry and ecological disciplines, but there is an increasing need for the insight that scholars of public history have to offer. Moving beyond an academic study, public historians need to move towards implementation and become a part of the larger discourse of best practices in tourism.

While there is a growing body of literature on the history of tourism and the history of specific heritage tourism projects, cross-disciplinary works that incorporate the fields of public history, folklore, and recreation into a discussion on sustainable tourism currently exist only in the gray literature. Just as this study will help to define sustainable tourism in terms of more than just environmental sustainability, it will provide insight into how a state-wide program can successfully support a diverse range of projects using specific examples from divergent geographic and demographic areas of Tennessee.

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REFRAMING HERITAGE TOURISM AS SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

BUILDING A CASE IN TENNESSEE

As heritage tourism becomes an ever more popular phenomenon, scholars and economic tourism professionals have an increased interest in understanding why this market is growing so quickly and successfully. Those in the tourism industry want to understand the process so that they can best capitalize upon and sustain that market. Historians and folklorists are interested in studying the evolution of culture and preserving the built and social environment. Local residents are interested in having a sustainable way of life while maintaining their sense of place. While each of these stakeholders brings much needed expertise to the practice of heritage tourism, each also struggles with the meaning and significance of heritage tourism. As communities look for ways to maximize their assets, they find a confusing array of advice from different types of experts. Rather than continuing with such a fragmented discourse, scholars have the opportunity to come together and synthesize their knowledge into a set of best practices through the growing field of sustainable tourism.

This study frames the ongoing Tennessee sustainable tourism initiative in the context of the increasingly overlapping fields of public history, folklore, and recreation as brought to light by specific case studies. These academic fields often cover similar territory, but their members do not always engage in dialogue outside of their disciplines. By delving into what each field has to offer, their members can inform the development

of the upcoming field of sustainable heritage tourism. Currently sustainable tourism is dominated by the "green" industry and ecological disciplines, but there is an increasing need for the insight that scholars of public history and public folklore have to offer. Moving beyond a purely academic study, public historians need to move towards implementation and become a part of the larger discourse of best practices in tourism. For communities, they need to provide practical strategies that have proven results. The trick is creating a study that meets the needs of each of these communities.

Developing Tennessee Case Studies

As part of my professional residency for the Ph.D. in Public History at Middle Tennessee State University, I worked with the Tennessee Department of Tourist Development as they created their concept of sustainable tourism for a state-wide initiative. As a result, I was involved in their public programming and public meetings on the subject, while also providing feedback and content in how they define sustainable tourism and how they implement it. Additionally, I have been engaged in sustainable tourism projects on behalf of the Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area and the Center for Historic Preservation at MTSU in East and West Tennessee that serve as the case studies for my dissertation and as examples of best practices for the Tennessee Department of Tourist Development. These projects include a toolkit for the Great Smoky Mountain's gateway communities; an African American heritage trail marketing plan for Cocke County; a site development plan for the Buford Pusser Home and

Museum; and a sites and sources guide for the Tennessee River Civil War driving tour and documentary.

While there is a growing body of literature on the history of tourism and the history of specific heritage tourism projects, cross disciplinary works that incorporate the fields of public history, folklore, and recreation into a discussion on sustainable tourism currently exist only in the gray literature. Just as this study will help to define sustainable tourism in terms of more than just environmental sustainability, it will also provide insight into how a state-wide program can successfully support a diverse range of projects using specific examples from divergent geographic and demographic areas of Tennessee.

This study is arranged topically with each case study illustrating a particular theme of current scholastic debate. The Buford Pusser museum in rural West Tennessee aptly portrays the myriad of issues that scholars debate, including the need for authenticity in heritage tourism and what authenticity really means. The Tennessee River Civil War driving tour and DVD project includes counties that are all listed by the state as being economically distressed, yet these same counties were able to come together, maximize the available resources, and create a product that is the epitome of a sustainable heritage tourism endeavor. The Cocke County African American heritage trail, which traces the rich African American heritage still present in the Appalachian Mountains, brings to the fore the issues of power and race that many heritage tourism projects have to face. Finally, the case study of Gatlinburg, still an often used cautionary tale of heritage

tourism gone awry, unpacks the consequences of commodification and suggests how to salvage tourism priorities.

Marketing the Southern Experience as Heritage Tourism

Heritage sites the world round link themselves to key concepts of national identity and regional exceptionalism as a way to market themselves. The issue of identity becomes a key concept in the issue of branding (if sites go that far in their marketing). In terms of American tourism, visiting the natural and historic landmarks was an integral part of the American experience and many saw it as their civic duty.[1] This long standing tradition began with the elite in the nineteenth century, gradually shifted to a more middle-class phenomenon at the turn of the last century, and finally opened to the working classes in the mid-twentieth century. Hand-in-hand with the expansion of the tourist experience to a wider socio-economic market came changes in transportation technology (horse to train to automobile) and an increased commodification of the tourist experience. Experiencing the latest method of transportation became a rite of passage, as did bringing back souvenirs from iconic American places.

In the last two decades there has been an explosion of research into the history of American tourism. In the last decade, historians have started to focus on how tourism took shape in the South and have begun to study how the southern experience differs from the national experience or that of other regions. Tourism as we know it today really

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[1] John F. Sears, *Sacred Places: American Tourist Attractions in the Nineteenth Century* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1989). Marguerite S. Shaffer, *See America First: Tourism and National Identity, 1880-1940* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2001).

began to take shape in the late nineteenth century and with the advent of middle-class automobile access, the twentieth century gave birth to modern tourism. Just as the elite tourists of the early American Republic saw natural and historic pilgrimages as part of their cultural education, middle-class Americans of the early twentieth century believed that visiting natural and historic landmarks was a productive use of their time.[2] The goals and motivations of those tourists of a century ago have much in common with the current heritage tourism movement.

Following a similar ideology, Southern tourism promoters took the general interest in cultural tourism and reshaped it regionally to market the "true" southern experience. Just as with nineteenth-century tourism in the West, railroads organized early tourism in the South as a way to serve their business interests. Later highway organizers followed a similar philosophy, although they took a more "Chamber of Commerce" approach and marketed as destinations communities that bought in to the booster organization, hence the tourist attractions along routes like the Lee Highway or the Dixie Highway.

The early works on southern tourism traced a rough outline of how the industry took shape. In the classic *Dixie Before Disney: 100 Years of Roadside Fun*, Robert Snyder discusses the way that tourism in the South evolved as the methods of transportation changed.[3] Different types of transportation catered to different types of

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[2] Cindy S. Aron, *Working at Play: A History of Vacations in the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 127-128.

[3] Tim Hollis, *Dixie Before Disney: 100 Years of Roadside Fun* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1999).

clientele (railroads primarily served elite consumers, and initially this was true of the automobile but that market gradually became available to the middle and then the working class), and as the different modes of transportation carved their path through the southern landscape they left in their wake all of the businesses that cater to tourists visiting natural and historic landmarks.

Those pathways also tended to create entirely fabricated tourist attractions, which tended to persist only if they remained on the main thoroughfare of the latest innovation in travel. Hence, the longevity of places like Rock City and Disney, which are accessible by highway, interstate, or airline (both of those manufactured attractions also had brilliant marketing campaigns, but physical accessibility is also crucial). Where his study is lacking is that even though he claimed it encompassed all of Dixie, it primarily focused on how tourism reshaped the landscape of Florida. Although Florida was historically a Confederate state, it is important to acknowledge that Florida was so commercialized in the past century to the point where it has transformed into an almost alien landscape. The result is that most southerners no longer recognize Florida as a fellow southern state.

Power Struggles in Southern Tourism

Harvey K. Newman's *Southern Hospitality: Tourism and Growth of Atlanta* is another contemporary study of heritage tourism, which focused on Atlanta, with its long tradition of conventions, and their role in economic growth.[4] The result was a business history that compared the hospitality industry areas in Atlanta's economy. That tourism

[4] Harvey K. Newman, *Southern Hospitality: Tourism and Growth of Atlanta* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1999).

was good business reaffirmed contemporary assumptions. Research about the intersection between tourism, economic growth, and cultural impact was lacking until Thomas W. Hanchett's *Sorting Out the New South City: Race, Class, and Urban Development in Charlotte, 1875-1975*. Hanchett's social history approach contextualized how cities the southern urban dimension and shed light on the impact of city planning (or lack thereof) and recreational development. Hanchett underscored the centrality of race as a powerful driving force: "The legacy of disenfranchisement resulted in tight control of local government by well-to-do whites, who put the federal dollars to work further sorting out the southern city."[5]

While cities in the rest of the country were forced into at least appearing to improve slum areas and provide recreational facilities to working class neighborhoods due to angry voting blocks, the southern legacy of political disenfranchisement of African Americans meant that southern cities trended in a different direction. Rather than engage in slum improvement, they removed African American neighborhoods in the name of urban renewal and utilized sprawl as a way to physically segregate cities that had once been very integrated. What the United Nations would define as ethnic cleansing (rendering an area ethnically homogenous by using force or intimidation to remove from a given area persons from another ethnic or religious group)[6], became known colloquially

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[5] Thomas W. Hanchett, *Sorting Out the New South City: Race, Class, and Urban Development in Charlotte, 1875-1975* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 12.

[6] M. Cherif Bassiouni, "Annex IV: The policy of ethnic cleansing," Final report of the United Nations Commission of Experts established pursuant to security council resolution 780 (1992), 28 December 1994.

as "black removal." In early southern cities, black neighborhoods adjoined white ones so that black workers could walk to the homes/workplaces of their white employers. But in modern southern cities, white elites sought to remove their black neighbors, which ensured that recreation areas would not be places of racial mixing. To ensure that African Americans would not come to whites-only parks, they racially cleansed the neighborhoods that were within ready access to any parks). Hanchett observed, "Southern elites had a relatively free rein to craft their cities in their own vision."[7]

Part of that vision was to marginalize minority cultures. Claude F. Jacobs found that tourist guidebooks to the spiritualist churches of New Orleans were specifically marketed to a white tourist audience and frequently mischaracterized African Americans and their traditions as overly primitive and worthy of a voyeurism on the part of Caucasian tourists.[8] In the mid-twentieth century, boosters for Gatlinburg, Tennessee, understood the tendency of the larger American culture to commodify groups seen as less evolved or more primitive and used that dynamic to their advantage. As part of a marketing campaign the "Travellin' Hillbillies" organized a bus tour and staged spectacles in cities by dressing and acting like a hillbilly stereotype and thus generating tourist interest to the Appalachian resort community.[9]

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[7] Hanchett, 261.

[8] Claude F. Jacobs, "Folk for Whom? Tourist Guidebooks, Local Color, and the Spiritual Churches of New Orleans," *Journal of American Folklore* 114, no. 453 (2001): 309-330.

[9] C. Brenden Martin, *Tourism in the Mountain South: A Double-Edged Sword* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2007), 141.

By analyzing public entertainment in Atlanta, historian Steve Goodson added significantly to Newman's earlier study.[10] As Goodson described the region:

> Race affected every aspect of the entertainment business in the South, just as it molded southern culture, politics, and economics. Audiences were strictly segregated, black performers were expected to remain firmly within 'their place' and any production that deviated from white southern racial norms was deemed antagonistic to civilization itself.[11]

Anthony Stononis found similar patterns in his study of the evolution of New Orleans as a tourist destination. City business leaders designed New Orleans tourism to support white supremacy. Stononis argued, "The image making associated with tourism served as a vehicle that enabled whites to popularize racial stereotypes while exaggerating the division between the races."[12]

Leon Fink, a labor historian, discovered the influence of race and class in public history through his involvement in the Textile Heritage Center in Cooleemee, North Carolina.[13] Fink was not prepared for the power struggles and the race agenda that he encountered in the local politics. His account turned into a cautionary tale of how heritage tourism can become a tool of white supremacy. The story crafted by the white stakeholders of the museum led to a nostalgic history of the mills that glorified the paternalistic owners, and only interpreted the white mill workers. To ensure that only the

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[10] Steve Goodson, *Highbrows, Hillbillies & Hellfire: Public Entertainment in Atlanta, 1880-1930* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2002).

[11] Goodson, 260.

[12] Anthony J. Stononis, *Creating the Big Easy: New Orleans and the Emergence of Modern Tourism, 1918-1945* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2006), 23.

[13] Leon Fink, "When Community Comes Home to Roost: the Southern Milltown as Lost Cause," *Journal of Social History* (Fall 2006): 120-145.

white mill village and its history were included in the interpretation, the historical society used its power to push a social agenda through the local government and arranged the town boundaries to exclude the segregated African American side of town.

Just as the museum negated the African American history and culture of the area, the historical society further assisted governmental efforts that made new African American residents know that they were not welcome and discouraged longtime African American residents from staying by denying public services to their neighborhoods, which were excluded under new town boundaries. The white elite and the white working class were a part of the official mill history of the area, but in developing that revised story they edited out the African American contributions and sought to drive those residents from the landscape. Fink's story at the time concluded with the backlash from the African American community. Members of the working class white community joined with their African American neighbors when the history continued to evolve more towards nostalgia for the paternalistic mill operators. Eventually their efforts led to these groups gaining a voice in the museum and having a chance to tell their stories.

It is possible to get wrapped up in the stories of racial injustice and how southern cities used tourism as yet another tool in perpetuating racially-based disenfranchisement. While that is undeniably true of tourism in the South, it is true for the rest of the United States as well.[14] Additionally, it tells the specific story of how tourism is often twisted by elites into consolidating their power. That story is not limited to the American South and

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[14] While there are a growing number of publications on this topic, in particular Cindy S. Aron's *Working at Play: A History of Vacations in the United States* gives a detailed account of the early roots of anti-Semitism in the American Northeast as well as racism against African Americans.

in all of the examples where tourism is used in that manner, the resulting economic and social disparity creates an unbalanced and unsustainable model of economic development which destroys communities. The social impact of tourism can move outside of the realm of simple racism and class warfare.[15]

Commodification and Authenticity

One of the specific challenges to authenticity is the trend towards commodification of the heritage tourism experience, one of the oldest traditions in American culture. Marguerite Shaffer argued "that tourism — both the production of the tourist landscape and the consumption of the tourist experience — was central to the development of a nascent national culture in the United States."[16] No sooner had places such as Niagara Falls become a tourist hot spot in nineteenth century America than vendors began to sell trinkets to visitors.

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[15] For further treatment on that topic, consult the following: Erik Cohen, "Authenticity, Equity, and Sustainability in Tourism," *Journal of Sustainable Tourism* 10, no. 4(2002): 267-275; Jeffery Sasha Davis and Duarte B. Morais, "Factions and Enclaves: Small Towns and Socially Unsustainable Tourism Development," *Journal of Travel Research* 43 (August 2004): 3-10; Gary Edson, "Heritage: Pride or Passion, Product or Service?" *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 10, no. 4 (September 2004): 333-348; Elizabeth Grant, "Race and Tourism in America's First City," *Journal of Urban History* 31, vol. 6 (2005): 850-871; William J.V. Neill, "Marketing the Urban Experience: Reflections on the Place of Fear in the Promotional Strategies of Belfast, Detroit and Berlin," *Urban Studies* 38, No. 5 (2001): 815-828; Benjamin W. Porter and Noel B. Salazar, "Heritage Tourism, Conflict, and the Public Interest: An Introduction," *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 11, no. 5 (December 2005): 361-370; Colin C. Williams, "A Critical Evaluation of Hierarchical Representations of Community Involvement: Some Lessons from the UK," *Community Development Journal* 40, no. 1 (January 2005): 30-38.

[16] Shaffer, 6.

While residents of Gatlinburg initially chose to commodify their own personas, it quickly got out of hand. The area became over developed, pushing out the residents who did not have the capital to run the large tourist developments. In his study of the effects of tourism on the Mountain South, Brenden Martin found that outside tourist developers objectified many tourist destinations in the region, commodifying the local way of life to the point that those destinations lost their identity and sense of place.[17] Much of the story he recounted was one of conflict and tension. People in these areas became caricatures and eventually wanted to reject these stereotypes, and yet continued to foster them in order to keep the tourist trade which often became the only way they could afford to live in their hometowns. They also had to sacrifice their traditional way of life and their landscapes and townscapes to meet the service needs of tourists. While tourism brought modernization and economic benefits, the negative impact of tourism led to a diluted sense of place and a devastating impact on the ecology of the mountains.

In addition to the historic and economic impact, the specific ecology of tourism continues to garner more and more attention. In *Ecotourism in Appalachia: Marketing the Mountains*, Al Fritsch and Kristen Johannsen analyze international and United States case studies that demonstrate the damage tourism can do to a landscape and then discuss ways in which ecotourism could be adopted in the Appalachians. While acknowledging the various pitfalls of further commodifying the ecology of a natural landscape, the model that they offer incorporates a wide variety of historic, natural, economic, and social resources in order to achieve a balanced and sustainable system. They see regulation as

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[17] Martin, *Tourism in the Mountain South.*

necessary in order to safeguard the resources and to make tourism a long-term business venture. In order to accomplish that, the tourism business would need to be diverse, steadily growing, and focused on bolstering the local economy and empowering local residents rather than edging them out.[18]

The need to focus on the ecology of the mountains seems obvious in light of the ongoing air pollution problems faced by the Great Smoky Mountains National Park and a casual read of any newspapers in the area highlights the continual debates about ridge top development, but both the Martin and Fritsch/Johannsen studies highlight the limits of local empowerment. In the Appalachian region, tourism brought a great deal of money to a select few and then constrained the economy in such a way that much of the rest of the populace was forced to stay in poverty. In Michal Smith's *Behind the Glitter: the Impact of Tourism on Rural Women in the Southeast* (1984), one of his primary case studies is of Sevier County, home of both Gatlinburg and Pigeon Forge. Smith described a tourism system that disrupted local culture, destroyed unique landscapes, and mostly created low wage, dead-end service jobs. In short, tourism tended to increase poverty for rural southern communities.[19] The demographics in his report are bleak. Nearly twenty-five years later, a few areas are finally starting to move away from this destructive model, but that movement is slow.

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[18] Al Fritsch and Kristen Johannsen, *Ecotourism in Appalachia: Marketing the Mountains* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 2004), 197-202.

[19] Michal Smith, *Behind the Glitter: the Impact of Tourism on Rural Women in the Southeast* (Lexington, KY: Southeast Women's Employment Commission, 1989).

The story of tourism in the American Mountain South is one of the commodification of hillbilly culture, but some scholars contend that there are cases where groups use commodification of their culture as a method of socioeconomic advancement. Carl L. Bankston III and Jacques Henry found that Louisiana Cajuns adapted their celebrations and ethnic identity to correspond with the modern work week and a transition of Cajuns away from where they had traditionally worked and lived.[20] They reshaped the way that they ritualized their past and adapted to the changes in the landscape, but along with that came the creation of ethnic-specific merchandise. The introduction of the merchandise created a situation where it was no longer a natural end product that became the driving force for tourism and the shaping force of ethnic identity. The more it became about the merchandise, the less the merchandise had a connection to the historic ethnic traditions. Bankston and Henry argued that there was a current need for consumers in the United States to purchase symbolically rich merchandise and participate in rich cultural events, even if those events and souvenirs are lacking in historic authenticity.

Each of these examples demonstrates the pitfalls of commodification and the inherent tension in trying to create an authentic heritage tourism experience in a capitalist society. There are excellent success stories where tourism does not kill the very culture and way of life that it is marketing. Many places use foodways as a way to celebrate

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[20] Carl L.Bankston III and Jacques Henry, "Spectacles of Ethnicity: Festivals and the Commodification of Ethnic Culture among Louisiana Cajuns," *Sociological Spectrum* 20, no. 4 (2000): 377-407.

diverse ethnicities and integrate tourists into the diverse cultures of an area.[21] Southerners love their food and it is often around the table of a restaurant or at a festival that the problems of racism can disappear. This is equally true for any other part of the country. People love food and it is a vehicle to build community. The example from the folklore community comes from the team of folklorists that used foodways as a method of sustainable and inclusive development for the Rivers of Steel National Heritage Area in Pennsylvania, but their stories hold true for many southern examples. The National Heritage Areas that are popping up everywhere in the United States seek to strengthen local communities and provide tourists with the opportunity to experience dynamic cultural treasures. While a part of the National Park Service, National Heritage Areas are each unique endeavors and they go about promoting and sustaining cultural tourism in different ways.

There is the possibility of a balance between the fantasy-inspired and the authentic-to-a-fault experience.[22] That balance is achieved by implementing some checks and balances into planning and continued management of heritage tourism projects.

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[21] Millie Rahn, "Laying a Place at the Table: Creating Public Foodways Models from Scratch," *Journal of American Folklore* 119, no. 471 (2006): 30-46.

[22] Royal Berglee, "Re-Created Heritage Villages of the Midwest: A Four-Stage Development Model," *Southeastern Geographer* 46, no. 1 (2006): 121-138. Jeffery Sasha Davis and Duarte B. Morais, "Factions and Enclaves: Small Towns and Socially Unsustainable Tourism Development," *Journal of Travel Research* 43 (August 2004): 3-10. Frik de Beer and Marinda Marais, "Rural Communities, the Natural Environment and Development – Some Challenges, Some Successes," *Community Development Journal* 40, no. 1 (January 2005): 50-61. Hyounggon Kim and Tazim Jamal, "Touristic Quest for Existential Authenticity," *Annals of Tourism Research* 34, no. 1 (2007): 181-201. Bob McKercher, "Attitude to a Non-viable Community-owned Heritage Tourist Attraction," *Journal of Sustainable Tourism* 9, no. 1 (2001): 29-43.

Outside and expert input can provide a reality check, but it is necessary for continued and widespread public involvement (of all socio-economic and racial groups) and emotional investment for heritage tourism to be a sustainable venture.[23]

Sustainability

Drawing on the older tradition of environmental history, the tourism movement has turned to look at the physical impact that it generates. Albert E. Cowdrey described the American South in his study *This Land, This South* as a place that used its natural resources without thought to the consequences. "The South tended to exalt, sometimes with a special anarchic heedlessness, the contemporary American standard of exploitation without limit."[24]

This holds true for the natural and historic environment and as those contexts change, the more ephemeral cultural landscape also changes. Some turn to heritage tourism as a way to celebrate ways of the past and to bolster the culture against the impact of external changes, but some point a finger of blame at tourism for being the source of rapid social change and the loss of local identity. The situation is always much more complex than just one industry or development being the source for all change or difficulties. In the Appalachian region, the extractive industries of mining and timber took a toll on the landscape and the workers they employed; the populace has continued

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[23] Erik Cohen, "Authenticity, Equity, and Sustainability in Tourism," *Journal of Sustainable Tourism* 10, no. 4(2002): 267-275.

[24] Albert E. Cowdrey, *This Land, This South: An Environmental History* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1983), 83.

to struggle with obtaining quality educational resources; and the areas are so remote that many other industries do not find it practical to relocate there.

A long tradition of travel writers portrayed different areas of the South as harboring a more primitive culture than other parts of the country. The South, according to them, was the last bastion of pure English culture or of pure evangelical Christianity. These stereotypes that they imposed upon southerners were possible because these same writers posited that the South was so economically and technologically behind the rest of the country. It was an area languishing and lost in time.[25] Early philanthropists came to the South to try and help the communities grow with the times through various economic vehicles, but rather than finding backwards hillbillies, they tended to find communities who were the agents of economic growth in their regions.

Brenden Martin observed that philanthropists such as the Pi Beta Alphas "discovered a region undergoing rapid economic and social changes with the coming of railroads, extractive industries, and tourism. From the perspective of many benevolent workers, it appeared as though the region's Old World lifeways depicted in the writings of local colorists and scholars were rapidly eroding."[26] What was actually happening was that it was becoming harder to impose the fictionalized persona onto southerners in light of the rapid changes in physical surroundings.

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[25] Lynn Morrow and Linda Myers-Phinney, *Shepherd of the Hills Country: Tourism Transforms the Ozarks, 1880s-1930* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1999), 23. Martin, 142-143.

[26] Martin, 144.

But who was making these changes? Despite folklore of southerners passively being swindled by carpetbaggers, most of these communities were actively making the changes to their own communities. In Ann Denkler's study of tourism in the Shenandoah Valley, she found that the rural communities were not passive, exploited consumers; rather they were the ones creating the sweeping and sometimes catastrophic changes.[27] Southerners were in fact participating in a dynamic that was playing out across the country: they were undergoing the rapid changes of modernization and then emotionally reacting to a loss of identity and sense of place. Martin cam to a similar conclusion in his study of southern mountain communities.[28] American communities everywhere often decided to invent a mythical past and reconnect to that through tourist experiences. "At a time when too much modernity seemed the root of modern difficulties, nostalgia infused the rural past with a patina of perfection."[29] Yet, even that dynamic is not so simple.

In New South era Atlanta, residents welcomed degrees of change, but they limited their embrace of public entertainment because they saw it as a challenge to their cultural identity as Christians. "The region pulsed with the values of evangelical Christianity, which was generally hostile toward commercial amusements, in particular those presented on stage."[30] It was not until the mid-twentieth century that Branson, Missouri,

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[27] Ann Denkler, *Sustaining Identity, Recapturing Heritage: Exploring Issues of Public History, Tourism, and Race in a Southern Town* (Lenham, MD: Lexington Books, 2007), 110.

[28] Martin, 144.

[29] Morrow and Myers-Phinney, 23.

[30] Goodson, 185.

(the other Mountain South) was able to find a way to embrace public entertainment as a method of popularizing religion.

According to Aaron K. Ketchel, "Popular religious stances have always guided local recreation, and promoters have ardently tried to position Branson as a place where faith flows out of church walls and into the very fabric of society and culture."[31] And perhaps it is this discovery that could be termed a uniquely southern cultural expression. The South was able to take the stereotype of being the Bible Belt, commodify that, and turn it into a tourism product that southerners then used to shape their culture.

In conjunction with the trend towards commodification, the modern era brought the byproduct of mass consumption: trash. In his study of tourism in New Orleans, Stononis examined a peculiar method of measuring tourism's impact: "In a telling development, local leaders in the late twentieth century measured the success of Marti Gras not simply by hotel occupancy rates or the tax revenues, but by the amount of garbage gathered by sanitation crews. Trash – the residue of consumption – provided the best, if still imprecise, means of estimating the success of the tourism industry."[32]

Along with the mountains of trash, came the "trashy" or the kitschy memorabilia to commodify that culture. The problem with both the mountains of trash and the preponderance of ever cheaper tourism products was an unsustainable tourism model. Even in 1984, Michal Smith determined that "local culture and the environment are

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[31] Aaron K. Ketchell, *Holy Hills of the Ozarks: Religion and Tourism in Branson, Missouri* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007), 230.

[32] Stononis, 25.

consumed rapidly, largely because the tourism product is sold so cheaply."[33] The environment and economic infrastructure could not sustain modern southern tourism.

And in the southern built environment "many observers have pointed out that southern Sunbelt cities seem to have embraced modern tendencies toward suburban sprawl to a greater extent than those of other regions."[34] This wholesale destruction of a sense of place is often at the root of historic preservation efforts. Communities across the South and across the country came out of the modern era with a desire to try and reclaim an authentic sense of place.[35] While the South led the country with the first historic zoning in elite historic neighborhoods such as Charleston or through the creation of Colonial Williamsburg, zoning is still a hard battle in much of the rest of the region. The reaction to the changes of the modern era, however, has led to new trends to introduce zoning in some southern spaces, and it has also created numerous grassroots historic and cultural preservation efforts.

Efforts like the Tennessee sustainable tourism initiative are beginning to become the norm of new tourism models. Unlike twentieth-century tourism, tourism in this new century must have a wide range of stakeholders and look to long-range planning that will bolster economic and community diversity. In terms of southern tourism, this means celebrating the many heritages that contribute to southern history and that requires tackling the tough issues of race and class. It also means that southern tourism can no

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[33] Smith, 3.

[34] Goodson, 260.

[35] Martin, 165.

longer be about finding the cheapest way to create a tourism end product. This requires a community stakeholders to make a commitment to shared authority and a competitive market (rather than a monopolized patrimony). In the words of Martin, "By heeding the lessons of tourism's history, communities can avoid the pitfalls of tourism and reap its potential benefits."[36]

Tennessee Tourism

Tourism in Tennessee has had a checkered past. While only Appalachia Tennessee is covered in Martin's *Tourism in the Mountain South*, the story is much the same for the rest of Tennessee. As with most industries in the state, tourism has had little governmental regulation or oversight, therefore the impact of tourism has been a mixed bag with a tendency towards being socially exploitive and resource exhaustive (be it cultural or natural).[37] This is sadly ironic because the Tennessee Department of Tourist Development began in 1936 as a division within the Tennessee Department of Conservation.[38]

While some communities are fighting against the old tourism infrastructure, reclaiming their communities, and focusing on sustainable models of economic growth and tourism, this is still not the norm. After the National Trust for Historic Preservation closed its demonstration period for their new Main Street project to begin the permanent

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[36] Martin, 165.

[37] Smith, *Behind the Glitter.*

[38] *Tennessee Blue Book 2007-2008*, http://www.state.tn.us/sos/bluebook/ (Tennessee Department of State, 2009), 257.

system, Tennessee was one of four states that instituted a state-wide program in 1983.[39] And while the program was initially successful, the state cut the program entirely in 1997 and it was not revived and re-staffed until 2006. This left many communities that were working towards sustainable heritage tourism without much of a support system.

Within the new sustainability initiative, several areas, such as Gatlinburg, have led the charge to institute zoning that will limit the degree of exploitation by outside developers. Tennessee Governor Phil Bredesen signed the Clean Energy Future Act of 2009 to implement statewide building codes. More than two-thirds of Tennessee counties do not have building codes and are therefore left to the mercies of developers who make a product cost effective for the developer as opposed to being the most cost effective for the consumer and the community in the long run.[40] While this is a state law, communities can opt out, but have incentives to adopt the act.

This process is similar to the Tennessee Sustainable Tourism initiative. Communities that have taken the initiative to introduce zoning in order to create smart growth or sustainable tourism (such as those that have taken the steps to become a part of the Preserve America program) are at the cutting edge and the Tennessee Department of Tourist Development is trying to institute programming that will encourage other communities to make a similar effort, but at the same time will not impose any requirements. The end result is that while there are some successful examples of sustainable tourism in Tennessee, they become success stories because of their own

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[39] Ann Toplovich, "Main Street Moves Ahead," *The Tennessee Conservationist* 50, no. 3 (1984), 2.

[40] Clean Energy Future Act, Tennessee (2009).

initiative rather than from a state government. Instead, many of these communities must make creative partnerships with entities that work closely with state and federal government, but are not directly a part of the oversight of programs such as the Tennessee Department of Tourist Development or Department of Economic Development.

Such an entity is the Center for Historic Preservation at Middle Tennessee State University, which also administers the Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area (a partnership division of the National Park Service). Each of the communities in these case studies are able to promote their strategies through the Tennessee Department of Tourist Development's statewide sustainable tourism initiative, but in order to plan a sustainable tourism system and implement sustainable heritage tourism projects, they have had to partner with organizations that provide direct assistance (ie, not Tennessee Tourism). Each of these case studies utilized a number of resources, but all of them utilized the Center for Historic Preservation/Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area.

CHAPTER 2

AUTHENTICITY IN WALKING TALL COUNTRY

THE BUFORD PUSSER MUSEUM OF MCNAIRY COUNTY

Nestled in rural West Tennessee, the Buford Pusser museum stands as a tribute to by-gone years of strife and turmoil in McNairy County. This now peaceful small town was once the base of operations for a sheriff who fought against a large crime syndicate that operated moonshine and prostitution businesses on the border of Tennessee and Mississippi. Leading the charge in reclaiming law and order was Buford Pusser, Sheriff of McNairy County from 1962-1970. Along with his hand-picked deputies, Pusser and his men took on the syndicate to create new opportunities for the residents of this area. In order to establish themselves as a long-term Tennessee institution, the Buford Pusser museum is embracing an ethic of sustainability.

Popularized by the *Walking Tall* films of the 1970s, a television series in the 1980s, and a film remake in 2004, Buford Pusser's name has the staying power of a Tennessee folk hero. After Pusser died in 1974, the home became a shrine for fans of the unconventional lawman and the family frequently hosted unexpected visitors. In 1987, the State of Tennessee acquired two properties that they deemed significant to the modern history of Tennessee: the Buford Pusser home and the Loraine Motel in Memphis (now the National Civil Rights Museum). The state turned operation of the home over to the City of Adamsville and the site has continued as a small house museum for twenty years.

As with many small house museums, the Buford Pusser Home and Museum began to lose sight of the story under the weight of numerous donations (from the authentic articles to the creative fan tribute pieces). Recently the museum has sought out services to refocus their interpretation and return to telling the compelling story of the Sheriff of McNairy County. Utilizing services of the Center for Historic Preservation at Middle Tennessee State University, the Tennessee State Museum, and the Tennessee State Library and Archives, the Buford Pusser museum management is taking steps to preserve its collection and tell an authentic story to a whole new generation.

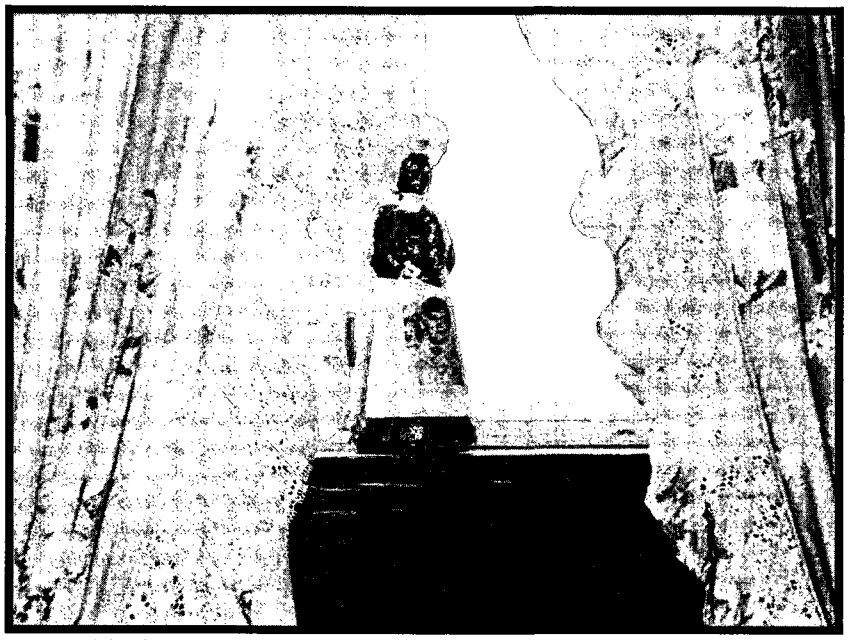

Figure 2.1. This fan tribute piece is a hand painted Aunt Jemima bottle that has a photograph of Buford Pusser applied to the apron. (Photo by author)

The revived look of the museum returns the home more to how it looked when Buford lived there. The new interpretation tells the personal stories of the Pusser family and the trials of a region under siege by crime in the mid-twentieth century. In addition

to updating the museum, they are expanding public programming and marketing so that visitors can get the full experience of "Walking Tall Country."

The Buford Pusser Story

Buford Pusser is a name that most Tennesseans and Mississippians still know nearly thirty-five years after his death. His story follows the well established pattern of other legendary American lawmen, such as Wyatt Earp and Elliot Ness, who used creative (and often brutal and extra-legal) means to fight against crime during periods of great social upheaval, Pusser initially gained a regional following while also a hero in law enforcement circles nationally during the 1960s. Through the power of song and then a blockbuster movie, he became a national legend in the 1970s. As with any historical figure who later became a legend, the line between the historically accurate and the mythically compelling sometimes overlap, but often the latter obscures the former.

While the songs about his life aggrandized his character and the movies emphasized the shocking violence, the actuality of Buford Pusser's life involved a great deal of grim circumstances and tough decisions. The 1974 movie about his life was criticized for its level of violence, but the true story involved so many more gory incidents than even Hollywood needed to tone down the story. Many of the retellings focus just on Buford the man, making him into an icon of moral authority, or turn his opponents into just a faceless force of evil. The truth was much more complex than that and Buford's battle to restore law and order by dismantling the power of the State Line Mob crossed the line into personal vendetta after the assassination of his wife. Sheriff

Buford Pusser and his deputy (and father) Carl Pusser struggled against W.O. Hathcock, Jr., owner of the Plantation Club, and his uncle Jack Hathcock, co-owner of the White Iris club with his wife Louise. After Jack's death, Louise Hathcock, known as Queen of the State Line Mob, and her boyfriend Carl Douglas "Towhead" White became Buford's archrivals. The continual strikes between each side were more than just a fight between the law and organized crime, it was personal. The battle between the Hathcocks and the Pussers created long standing enmity between those families.

Buford Hayse Pusser was born in 1937 to a farming family, Carl and Helen Pusser, in southwestern Tennessee. Buford was the third child in the family and spent his early years on the farm.[1] A combination of the economic stresses of the Great Depression and the unreliability of agricultural income led the family to sell the farm. Leaving the countryside of McNairy County, the family bought a home in Adamsville. Carl Pusser took work on an oil pipeline, which kept him away from home much of the time, and Helen Pusser worked at a factory in nearby Savannah, Tennessee. Helen Pusser was active in her labor union and perhaps served as an early example to her son of people standing up for what they believed were their rights.

Always reluctant to attend school, Pusser's early education was marked by poor grades and being continual bullying from other students. It was not until high school, when Pusser began to grow much larger than the other boys, that he discovered a love of athletics. Despite playing on both the basketball and football teams, Pusser's poor grades

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[1] Dwana Pusser, Ken Beck, and Jim Clark, *Walking On: A Daughter's Journey with Legendary Sheriff Buford Pusser* (Gretna, LA: Pelican Publishing Company, 2009), 43.

convinced him that school was not for him and he dropped out after his sophomore year to go and work on a pipeline in Oklahoma. Only at the continual urging of his mother, who insisted on serving as his tutor, did he agree to return and finish high school.[2]

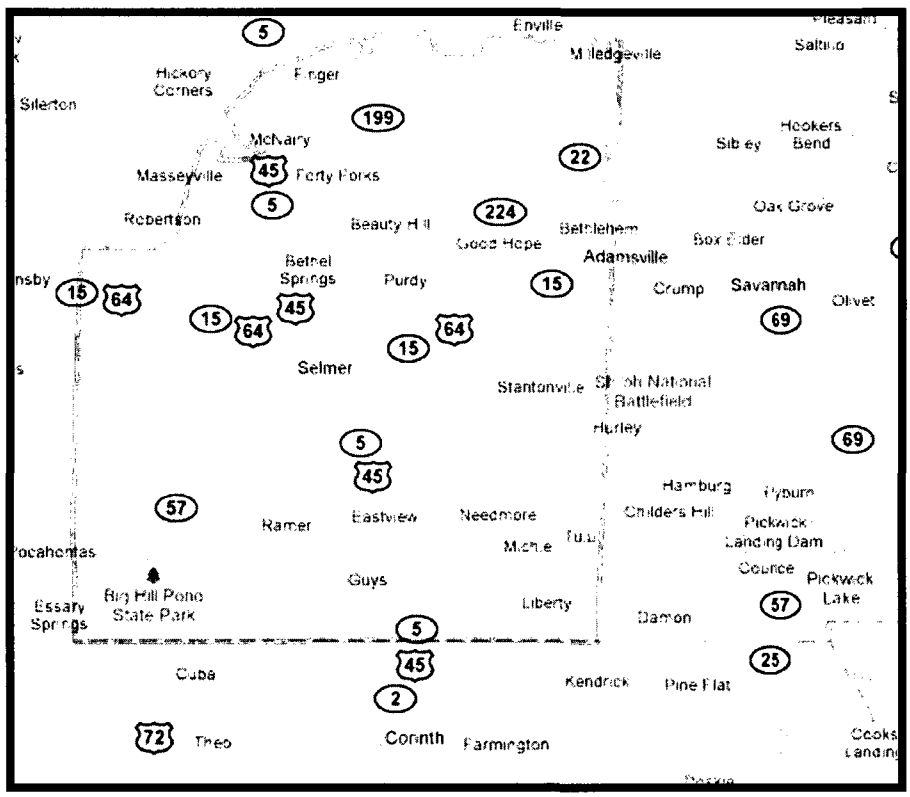

Figure 2.2. Map of McNairy County. (Google Maps)

During his teen years Pusser first visited the infamous "State Line." McNairy County's southern border doubles as the state line of Tennessee and Mississippi. The main route of commerce between Corinth, MS and Selmer, TN (the county seat of McNairy County) is Highway 45. The state line is about halfway between the two cities, and intersecting with Hwy 45 at that point is a stretch of road appropriately named "State Line Rd." Since this area is at the boundaries of several types of jurisdictions, businesses

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[2] W.R. Morris, *The Twelfth of August: The Story of Buford Pusser* (Nashville, TN: Aurora Publishers, 1973), 33.

of questionable legality sprouted along this roadway. In addition to being home to clubs illegally serving alcohol (Tennessee was still mostly dry even after the state legislature passed a local option in 1939, and Mississippi did not repeal prohibition until 1966), many of the clubs also offered gambling and prostitution. The businesses were a haven for criminals from across the South, in large part because those businesses were run by what locals called the State Line Mob, which had connections to the larger Dixie Mafia.[3]

As with any extremely unsafe venture, visiting the State Line became a rite of passage for area teenagers. When Pusser made his first visit with a few friends, they enjoyed the thrill of ordering illegal liquor while also being under age. Their trip quickly became terrifying, though, when Louise Hathcock publicly killed a sailor with a hammer after the man loudly accused the house of cheating him out of his money. No one dared to challenge her and Hathcock successfully claimed self defense.[4]

After high school, Pusser considered accepting offers to play football for a college, but academics were still unappealing so he decided to join the Marines. His training was cut short after he was hospitalized for severe asthma. After determining that his condition was too severe for him to serve in the military, Pusser was discharged and

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[3] Edward Humes, *Mississippi Mud: Southern Justice and the Dixie Mafia* (New York: Pocket Books, 2007). Chet Nicholson, *Dream Room: Tales of the Dixie Mafia* (New York: Oakley Publishing Company, 2009). W.R. Morris, *The State Line Mob: A True Story of Murder and Intrigue* (Nashville, TN: Rutledge Hill Press, 1990).

[4] Morris, *Twelfth of August*, 36-39.

returned to Adamsville.[5] Two weeks afterwards, he and a friend went to Memphis to visit Buford's sister and on the return trip they ran off the road. He had many cuts on his face and a severe back injury that required him to wear a brace for eight weeks after being discharged from a month-long hospital stay in January 1957. This brush with death had two outcomes: Pusser took employment with a local funeral home, and he returned to the State Line for another taste of danger.[6]

In a March 1957 visit to the Plantation Club, Pusser tried his hand at the game of craps. After winning several rounds, he spotted the houseman switching dice and Pusser demanded the original dice. Fairing better than the sailor had at Louise Hathcock's club, Pusser was only beaten, robbed, and then thrown out into the parking lot where he laid facedown in the rain. Although he suspected that they thought he was dead, Pusser was able to pull himself to his car and drove to the hospital. He received one-hundred and ninety-two stitches in his face and torso. Because local law enforcement was either in the pay of the State Line Mob or afraid of its power, there was little legal recourse and Buford did not immediately seek personal retribution.[7]

Carl Pusser gave up pipeline work and became the Adamsville chief of police in October 1957. Shortly thereafter, Pusser moved to Chicago to work at a factory that employed some of his friends from high school. By this time, he had attained his full height of 6'6" and 250 lbs., and his large frame made him rather intimidating. He took

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[5] Armed Forces of the United States Report of Transfer or Discharge, Buford Hayes Pusser, Honorable Medical Discharge, 1 August 1956.

[6] Pusser, *Walking On*, 63.

[7] Morris, *Twelfth of August*, 68-70.

up additional work as a bouncer and in 1958 he took a second job as a professional wrestler. He started taking night classes at a mortuary school, but the classes were prohibitively expensive and he quit.[8] He quickly filled his free time with the company of a young divorcee, whom he met at a wrestling match, and her two children. On December 5, 1959, he married Pauline Vance.[9] The following week, Buford enlisted the help of two McNairy County natives who worked at the Union Bag Company with him to help lay to rest the ghosts of his past.

On December 13, 1959, Buford and two friends had their timecards falsified to place them in Chicago while they were really traveling to the Plantation Club. After all other patrons had left, Buford used a fence post to beat W.O. Hathcock, Jr., unconscious and then he took $200 out of the register (the amount stolen off of him two years earlier). All three men had warrants issued against them, were arrested, and went to trial. Even though local law enforcement testified that they had seen the three men at the club that night, the jury was swayed by the defense' claim that law officials were corrupt and would give false testimony if ordered to by Hathcock. The jury's mistrust of law enforcement coupled with the timecard evidence ensured their verdict of not guilty.[10]

Pusser publicly held to the story that he was in Chicago for work that Friday and then on vacation with his family in Illinois for the rest of the weekend during the time period when he was allegedly assaulting Hathcock. In 1974, however, he admitted to a

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[8] Morris, *Twelfth of August*, 74-75.

[9] Pusser, *Walking On*, 64.

[10] Morris, *Twelfth of August*, 106-107.

reporter that he had actually beaten Hathcock and created a cover-up plot with friends.[11] Even the 1973 biography by W.O. Morris accepted his defense story as being authentic. Despite the public version of the story, many local residents knew the truth and it was this action that generated the image of Buford Pusser wielding a big stick in pursuit of justice.

Sheriff of McNairy County

Pusser continued to work in Chicago at the Union Bag Company for another year and then two events changed the direction of his life and that of his family. First, his daughter Dwana was born on January 9, 1961.[12] The Pusser family had a new child and they were raising her far away from either set of grandparents. Second, Carl Pusser injured himself by falling through the attic floor at his home, leaving him feeling too infirm to continue as police chief. At the end of 1961, Carl Pusser asked the city council to appoint his son for the rest of his term as Adamsville Police Chief, which they did. In 1962, Buford Pusser sought election in his own right as the Constable of the Third Civil District, more commonly referred to as the Adamsville Chief of Police (at that time, Adamsville could not afford its own police force, so it relied on the old state constable system).[13] He took up occasional wrestling jobs in Tennessee, still using his wrestling

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[11] John Shelton Lawrence and Robert Jewett, *The Myth of the American Superhero* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2002), 101.

[12] Pusser, *Walking On,* 70.

[13] Morris, *Twelfth of August*, 124-125. "Tennessee Constable," http://www.tennesseeconstable.com/, accessed 13 November 2009.

name of "Buford the Bull," and gained regional renown when he successfully pinned a black bear at a match in Savannah, Tennessee.[14] His local notoriety for besting the bear in part helped his campaign for constable.

As a constable, Buford was responsible for the part of McNairy County that contained Adamsville, but in order to stem the tide of crime coming into that area, he realized that he needed to work on a larger scale. After deciding to run for McNairy County Sheriff in the 1964 election, Buford raided his first moonshine still. He wanted to show voters that he would actively fight against organized crime in the area, unlike incumbent sheriff, James Dickey, whom many thought was in the pay of the State Line Mob.[15] Throughout the twentieth century, rural West Tennessee continued to be largely Democratic, particularly on the local level (regardless of conservative or liberal views of the politicians, they were mostly all members of the Democratic Party), so it was a radical move for Buford Pusser to run as a Republican against Dickey.[16]

Right before the election, James Dickey had a mysterious and deadly car accident. There were numerous theories that ranged from it being a simple accident, to Pusser being behind the accident (which he always denied), to the State Line Mob orchestrating the accident because they were afraid that Dickey would reveal his dealings with them if he lost the election.[17] The results of the investigation into his death were inconclusive,

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[14] Morris, *Twelfth of August*, 118-121.

[15] Pusser, *Walking On*, 71.

[16] Morris, *Twelfth of August*, 129.

[17] Ibid, 134

but even with Dickey out of the race, Pusser only won the election by a small margin. Buford received 3,288 votes, the deceased Dickey received 307, and rival George Weatherford received 3,040. Pusser's motto for the election and his first term as sheriff was "What's right is right and what's wrong is wrong, no matter who you are." While he expressed sympathy for the poor farmers who were making moonshine, he recognized that their efforts assisted the more sinister trade in illegal alcohol, prostitution, and gambling that plagued the county. Cutting off this source of income was not necessarily welcomed by some constituents, but many were ready to be free of the State Line Mob's influence. To help inspire trust in the residents of McNairy County, Pusser went out of his way to make himself accessible and easily recognizable to citizens. He had "I answer all calls" printed on his business cards and quickly gained a reputation for integrity.[18]

While his tactics gave him credibility among most residents, it had the unfortunate consequence of making him an easy target for criminal elements. The first attack occurred when he picked up a hitchhiker along Highway 45 and the hitchhiker stabbed Pusser twice. Pusser was not seriously injured as drove himself to the hospital. Many thought that the State Line Mob orchestrated the attack, but Pusser insisted that it was a random coincidence.[19]

The second attack on his person was more likely just the act of criminals who were desperate to get away rather than them carrying out a premeditated attack. Arriving on the scene of a suspicious house fire (believed to be started by a still on the premises),

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[18] Pusser, *Walking On*, 73.

[19] Morris, *Twelfth of August*, 137.

Pusser noticed a car nearby that was riding low and had two spectators. He asked to see in the trunk (most likely full of moonshine), the driver attempted to speed off and Pusser jumped on the hood of the car. While attempting to reach inside the driver's window to grab the keys in the ignition, the driver stabbed Pusser five times and then the passenger beat him in the head with a pipe wrench, and finally he was thrown from the car.[20]

Regardless of the intent of any of these attacks, they demonstrated the level of opposition Pusser faced in restoring law and order, and the degree of recklessness involved in his law enforcement endeavors. It also showed that this was more than a one-person sheriff's department could accomplish even with limited support from the constable system. While he had to destroy confiscated moonshine, the illegal liquor the sheriff's office confiscated was sold at state auction and those proceeds went to the county's general fund.

After numerous raids, Pusser requested that some of those funds be diverted to his department for equipment and staff. He hired his first deputy, Jim Moffet, with those funds in that first year.[21] By the end of that first year, he was able to hire a second deputy, Petie Plunk.[22] During his tenure as sheriff, he used the proceeds from auctions of contraband to expand what had been a one-person operation to a staff of twelve deputies and one full-time jailor.[23]

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[20] Ibid, 139-140.

[21] Ibid, 142.

[22] Ibid, 145.

[23] Pusser, *Walking On*, 86.

As the department grew, it became a greater threat to criminal enterprise and the level of violence escalated. Using his increased political clout, Pusser appealed to the Tennessee Commissioner of Safety to have new state troopers assigned to the area to replace the corrupt state troopers that refused to cease their graft (despite Pusser's direct request to them).[24] The commissioner complied and that meant that the State Line Mob no longer had control of any law enforcement elements within the county. The change of fortunes for the State Line Mob increased internal tensions. On May 22, 1964, Louise Hathcock killed her husband, Jack, and claimed self defense. With no witnesses to say otherwise, Hathcock was found not guilty and became the unrivaled leader of the State Line Mob with her longtime boyfriend, "Towhead" White, at her side. White owned the nearby Shamrock club and had strong ties to the larger Dixie Mafia, often acting as a hit man.[25]

On February 1, 1966, Pusser drove out to the state line to answer a call for help from two tourists who claimed that Hathcock robbed them and they were afraid for their lives. Pusser arrived with his deputies, and when Hathcock opened fire on him, he shot and killed her.[26] Although the courts ruled the shooting to be self defense, Towhead White wanted revenge for the loss of his lover. Imprisoned in Alabama for conspiracy to violate liquor laws, White escaped on January 1, 1967. The next day, Pusser chased after a speeding car on Highway 45 near the state line. When he walked up to the car to issue

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[24] Morris, *Twelfth of August*, 149-151.

[25] Pusser, *Walking On*, 95-96.

[26] "Suspect Held in Wounding of Sheriff," *Nashville Banner*, 4 January 1967, p.3.

a citation, the passenger shot him in the face, arm, and stomach. After the car sped off, Pusser dragged himself to his car, and drove to the hospital.[27] White was arrested in Alabama and was a person of interest, but there was not enough evidence to file charges against him.[28]

The Twelfth of August

A more successful attack, allegedly carried out by White and some of his colleagues, occurred on August 12, 1967. The Pusser family was preparing to leave for a vacation, so when Buford received an early morning call to meet a man claiming to be an informant on state line activities, Pauline insisted on riding out with him. She wanted to make sure that he returned for them to leave for their trip on time. They left the house at 4:30 a.m. and as they passed the New Hope Methodist Church, a car pulled out from behind the building. This car caught up with the Pussers, and as it passed, the people in the car opened fire. In the initial volley of gunfire, Buford caught shrapnel and glass in his face, but Pauline took a direct shot to her head. When Buford pulled over to try and help his wife, the attackers made another pass. This time Pauline's skull was shattered and Buford took a shot to his face that detached most of his lower jaw.

Thinking both were dead, the attackers drove off. Buford attempted to radio in for help, but with his injury he was unable to communicate where he was and so he tried to head to the hospital. After briefly parking at a home along the way (whose terrified

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[27] Wiley Brewer, "Pusser Shot After Stopping Speeding Auto," *Daily Corinthian*, 3 January 1967.

[28] "Suspect Held in Wounding of Sheriff," *Nashville Banner*, 4 January 1967, p.3.

residents would not open the door), he drove a little further and stopped in the parking lot of a grocery because he could go no further. Shortly thereafter, the driver of the bread truck, who was making his early delivery, called in that he had found a car with two dead bodies in it. When the ambulance arrived, they discovered that Buford was conscious and still alive. Realizing that his injuries were more than the local hospital could treat, they took him to the hospital in Memphis, and he remained conscious the entire way there.[29]

There was considerable turmoil after the attack. Pusser had attributed all previous attempts on his life to criminals who panicked, not as premeditated assassination attempts. He could no longer explain away the violence as coincidental. His previous hospitalization for being shot had made Tennessee newspapers, but the attack on New Hope Road made national headlines.[30] Tennessee Governor Buford Ellington offered a reward of $5,000 for information on the attacks, and the owner of the local Walgreens, Bill Smith, offered an additional $2,500, but no one stepped forward to claim the reward.[31]

Once released from the hospital, although he returned for multiple surgeries to reconstruct his jaw and mitigate the scarring, Pusser returned to his law enforcement activities as a very changed man. What happened to the alleged assailants is a bit of a mystery. Towhead White was shot in 1969, two of the other alleged assailants were

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[29] Morris, *Twelfth of August*, 175-177; Pusser, *Walking On*, 102-108.

[30] "Sheriff is Wounded, Wife Shot to Death," *New York Times*, 13 August 1967.

[31] Morris, *Twelfth of August*, 187.

found shot in 1970, and the final hit man was imprisoned for an unrelated murder. Pusser's official biographer reported in his 1973 book that each one of those men died just as the sheriff was gathering information to bring them to justice.[32] His daughter, in her 2009 book, claimed that she did not know what actually happened, but that his close friends (who did not supply any collaborative details) always said that her father took care of his own dirty work.[33] Although never related in public media of the time, the legend of his supposed revenge for his wife's death earned him greater renown in the law enforcement communities and among his fellow Tennesseans.

Pusser's story was so sensational that it began to garner popular culture tributes. In 1968, rockabilly singer Eddie Bond recorded "The Ballad of Buford Pusser."[34] The song was a regional hit and Pusser began to garner other awards and accolades. Between 1968 and 1970, he earned the titled of Outstanding Young Man of the Year from the Tennessee Jaycees, served as the honorary sergeant at arms of the Tennessee House of Representatives, received a public service award from a national police magazine, and was named National Police Officer of the Month by a detective magazine.[35]

His capacity for charity combined with his celebrity status to add to his legend. One of the more memorable charity events was where he offered to buck dance on live

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[32] Morris, *Twelfth of August*, 193.

[33] Pusser, *Walking On*, 118.

[34] *Box Office*, 30 July 1973.

[35] Morris, *Twelfth of August*, 207, 224-225.

local television if callers reached the hourly goal. Not only did they reach that goal, but far surpassed it and Pusser made good on his offer to dance.[36]

The initial wave of fame was tempered with a shift in Pusser's style of law enforcement. After the death of his wife, he took many more precautions. He carried more guns with him and the new weapons were more lethal. He discarded his shotgun for an AR-15, which is the civilian version of an M-16). He frequently traded cars, took different routes for patrol, and began wearing plain clothes rather than a uniform. He usually parked several streets away from his home and then would sneak into the house so that his enemies would not know when he was there, and had a friend stand guard on the porch with a shotgun while he slept.[37] This behavior was a total reversal of his early career where he took lengths to be as accessible and recognizable as possible. The new secrecy and unpredictable brutality impacted his local popularity.

In addition to supposedly killing three of the four assassins who killed his wife, Pusser greatly intensified his public battle against the State Line Mob. He teamed up with other county sheriffs in the region so that the State Line Mob would have no place of refuge. While the tactics were successful, his new (albeit well founded) paranoia and reclusiveness coupled with his growing celebrity status made his more extreme and brutal tactics less palatable to McNairy County residents. Although he had considered a possible gubernatorial run in 1970, Buford left the McNairy County Sheriff's Department on August 31, 1970, announcing that he did not have any plans for future public office.

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[36] Pusser, *Walking On*, 143.

[37] Ibid.,130.

County law only allowed for three consecutive terms, and Buford turned his attention to requests for him to become more of a national public figure.[38]

Walking Tall

When Bing Crosby Productions commenced filming *Walking Tall* in 1972, no filming took place in McNairy County. The McNairy County government, run by rivals of Pusser at that time, refused Bing Crosby Productions' request to film on location. Nearby Henderson and Chester Counties were more than happy to welcome the film crews, and McNairy County business and government interests resented their loss of revenue. Serving as the technical consultant for the film, Pusser developed a friendship with actor Joe Don Baker who played the role of the sheriff in the film. While not an immediate success in its limited local release in the winter of 1973, the film became a national sensation after a rebranding and re-release in the summer of 1973.

The film opened a wider world of celebrity and political connections for Pusser. His regional fame had come in handy when his house burned down (due to a faulty clothes dryer rather than the handiwork for an assassin) in 1971, Elvis Presley sent him money to assist with rebuilding.[39] Between Presley's help and insurance money, Pusser designed a home for his family that emphasized safety while also introducing some luxuries that his growing fame could afford them. In case of another fire or possible attack, the new home had multiple exits and Pusser built a super secure basement suite

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[38] Morris, *Twelfth of August*, 229, 238.

[39] Pusser, *Walking On*, 146-148.

for himself. Pusser also took pride in were his new Corvette, the Sub-Zero Refrigerator in the kitchen, and his new wardrobe of personally tailored suits. [40]

Just as his friendship with Presley was growing stronger (including at least one overnight visit to Graceland), some areas of Pusser's new home were reminiscent of Graceland's interior decorating. In particular, the furnishings in Pusser's bedroom and private, and in the new wing of the house designed specifically for visitors. In addition to taking on the look and lifestyle of a celebrity, Pusser was introduced to many more regional celebrities. One of the most frequently circulated pictures of him during this time is of Buford at Johnny Cash's house for a party in Buford's honor where Billy Graham was also a guest.[41]

His celebrity connections helped Pusser to expand his financial empire through more popular culture venues. By the second release of the film in 1973, Pusser had two tribute ballads about his life (one by Dave Hall and the other by Eddie Bond), and later that year Eddie Bond released an entire album dedicated to Pusser's exploits.[42] The funds for these enterprises helped to pay off the debt from his many hospitalizations and his wife Pauline's funeral, and then for the fifteen reconstructive surgeries he needed to repair his face.[43]

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[40] Ibid., 150.

[41] Ibid., 176.

[42] Eddie Bond, *Eddie Bond Sings the Legend of Buford Pusser*, 1973, Enterprise Music Label, ENS-1038.

[43] *Box Office*, July 30, 1973.

Rather than taking pride in a local man making good, McNairy Countians began to resent Pusser's growing fame. That feeling was further exacerbated by Pusser's harsher and sometimes violently erratic law enforcement techniques. They were suspicious of him embracing opportunities to capitalize on his life experiences, particularly when many people had suffered during the State Line Mob's reign and the subsequent warfare when the sheriff's department struggled to break up their operation (even if few had suffered or sacrificed as much as Pusser had). It was this line of rationale that inspired the county commission to reject the offer to make *Walking Tall* in McNairy County. Term limits only allowed sheriffs to hold two consecutive terms before they had to take a term off. During Pusser's off-term, local sentiment turned against him. So when Pusser ran for county sheriff again in 1972, he lost the election.[44] In the words of one McNairy Countian, "You didn't see him get re-elected, did you? Uh uh. He was too busy up the road making a movie, or whatever."[45]

Although his success began to limit his opportunities within the county, his new financial means and influential connections did help Pusser to enlarge his focus to stamping out organized crime on a state-wide scale. While friends were encouraging him to run as a Republican candidate against fellow McNairy County native, Democrat Ray Blanton, Pusser's primary interest was in law enforcement. He agreed to campaign for Blanton if he made Pusser the Tennessee Department of Safety Commissioner.[46] That

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[44] Lawrence and Jewett, *American Superhero*, 101.

[45] Larry Brinton, "Pusser His Own Victim?" *Nashville Banner*, 23 August 1974

[46] Pusser, *Walking On*, 258-259.

would have put Pusser in charge of all law enforcement operations in the state. While Blanton did become governor in 1975, Pusser did not live to see it.

After the success of *Walking Tall* and the growing interest in Pusser as a public figure, he agreed to star as himself in the sequel film called *Buford.* He attended a press conference on August 20, 1974, to announce the pre-production of the film. He then attended the McNairy County Fair, and on the way home, his Corvette left the road.[47] His thirteen year-old daughter, Dwana, came on the crash scene shortly after the wreck and pulled his body away from the burning wreckage and then he died in her arms. Officially ruled an accident, many rumors surrounded his death. A regular informant to the police had tried to call the Pusser home several times that day. When he finally got through to Buford's mother and told her that there was going to be an attempt on her son's life that evening, she thought it was a prank call and did not pass along the information to Pusser.[48]

Making of a Legend

While he had been a legend in the making during his life, the abrupt end to his exploits brought on a whole new wave of myth making. Tributes poured into the town of Adamsville and on the day of the funeral. Joe Don Baker, George Jones, Tammy Wynette, and Elvis Presley were all secreted into the house prior to the service. Presley stayed behind at the house, but the rest of the celebrities attended the funeral. President

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[47] "Buford Pusser, Sheriff Depicted in 'Walking Tall' Film, is Dead," *New York Times*, 22 August 1974.

[48] Pusser, *Walking On*, 194.

Richard Nixon called the house to express his condolences.[49] The pastor concluded his remarks by comparing Pusser to Christ, another man who had walked tall with his own kind of stick to carry: the cross.[50]

During his life, Pusser was compared to American folk heroes of the past, but after his death the comparisons continued. Due to the power of the movie, the two sequels in 1975 and 1977, a made-for-television movie in 1978, and a television series in 1981, he became a modern southern icon. Without a living person to anchor the myth in reality, Pusser's image was at the mercy of popular culture.

What Hollywood was able to capitalize was the trope of one person standing up against great injustice. "Buford Pusser was a real-life Tennessee sheriff who found in the contours of myth an opportunity to become a national legend of fearless integrity and opposition to evil."[51] When the film was first released in 1973, it earned an X-rating for violence and did poorly at the box office. It was re-released shortly thereafter with the tagline, "When was the last time you stood up and applauded a movie?" and became an almost overnight success.[52] By toning down the violence, providing the audience with a sense of agency, and emphasizing the folk hero trope, Pusser was embraceable as an American icon. In the words of Jon Landau of *Rolling Stone* (which declared *Walking Tall* to be one of the best films of the year), "Walking Tall asks us not if things are as bad

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[49] Ibid., 199-200.

[50] Lawrence and Jewett, *American Superhero*, 105.

[51] Lawrence and Jewett, *American Superhero*, 91.

[52] Laurent Bouzereau, *Ultraviolent Movies: From Sam Peckinpah to Quentin Tarantino, Revised and Updated* (New York: Citadel Press, 2000), 174.

as it shows them to be, but whether or not we are willing to pay the price this man did to set them right."[53]

Any good superhero needs an accompanying symbol and despite there only being one incident with a stick (which was prior to his law enforcement career), that was the image that Hollywood latched onto and has become synonymous with the Sheriff Buford Pusser brand from that point onward.[54] The reality that he "wore out more pistol barrels banging mean drunks over the head than the county would pay for" was less palatable.[55] By making him a modern-day Wyatt Earp, not only did Buford Pusser achieve brand status, but his initial film earned the staying power of a cult classic.[56]

The Buford Pusser Home and Museum

Opened in 1988, the Buford Pusser Home and Museum is located in the former residence of Buford Pusser in Adamsville, Tennessee. It is a ranch-style house situated in a small residential neighborhood. The building is one-story with a full basement, containing exhibit rooms, period rooms, and administrative offices. The main floor features the administrative offices, some exhibit spaces, and the family living spaces. The basement level contains Buford's bedroom and living space, a partial re-creation of

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[53] Jon Landau, "'Walking Tall' beats 'Dirty Harry,'" *Rolling Stone*, 26 April 1973, p. 66.

[54] Lawrence and Jewett, *American Superhero*, 100.

[55] Pauline Kael, "The Street Western," *The New Yorker*, 25 February 1974, p. 100.

[56] Bouzereau, *Ultraviolent Movies*, 173

his sheriff's office (from the county courthouse in Selmer), a gift shop, and the garage with three original cars (including the remains of the Corvette that killed him).

When guests enter the museum, they have the opportunity to watch an abbreviated version of a locally made documentary, which serves as the orientation film. Then visitors enter the house proper and tour through both floors, finally ending in the gift shop. Unlike many local history museums, this gift shop closely fits the mission of the museum and actually generates a great deal of revenue. Their most popular item is the "Buford Stick," a stamped axe handle meant to mimic the famed stick used by the sheriff in several scenes in the original *Walking Tall* film.

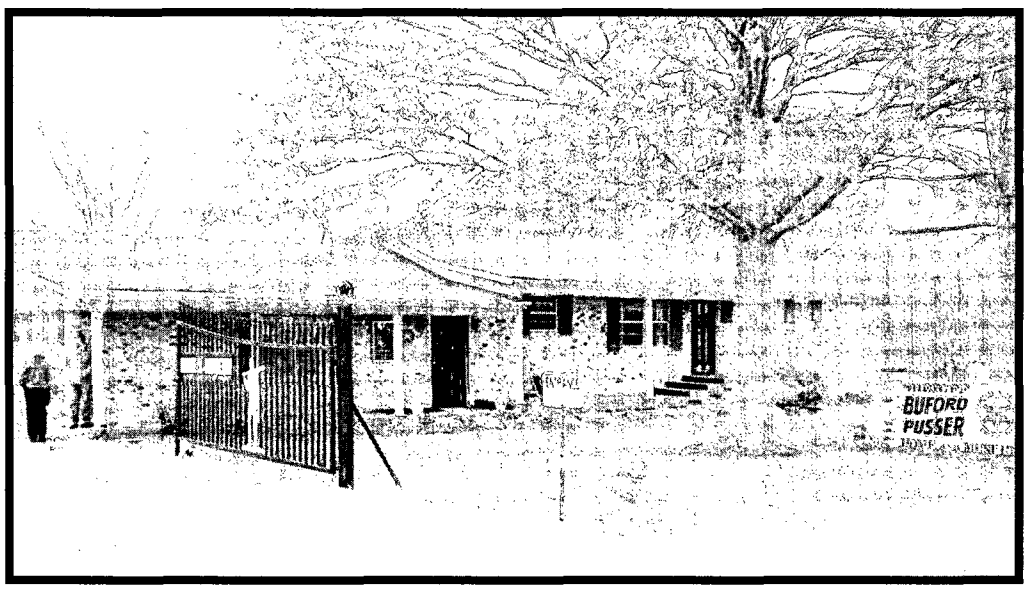

Figure 2.3. Buford Pusser Home and Museum in February 2007 (Photo by author)

The institution has evolved over the years and is currently a combination of a house museum that interprets the home during Pusser's life and as a repository for fan donated Pusser-related memorabilia. In addition to the museum itself, there is a nearby Buford Pusser Park, an annual Buford Pusser Festival that predates the museum, and an

annual walking horse competition known as the *Walking Tall Classic*. The museum has revived an old driving tour of sites related to Pusser's battle against the State Line Mob and now periodically offers guided bus tours, which have been met with much enthusiasm.

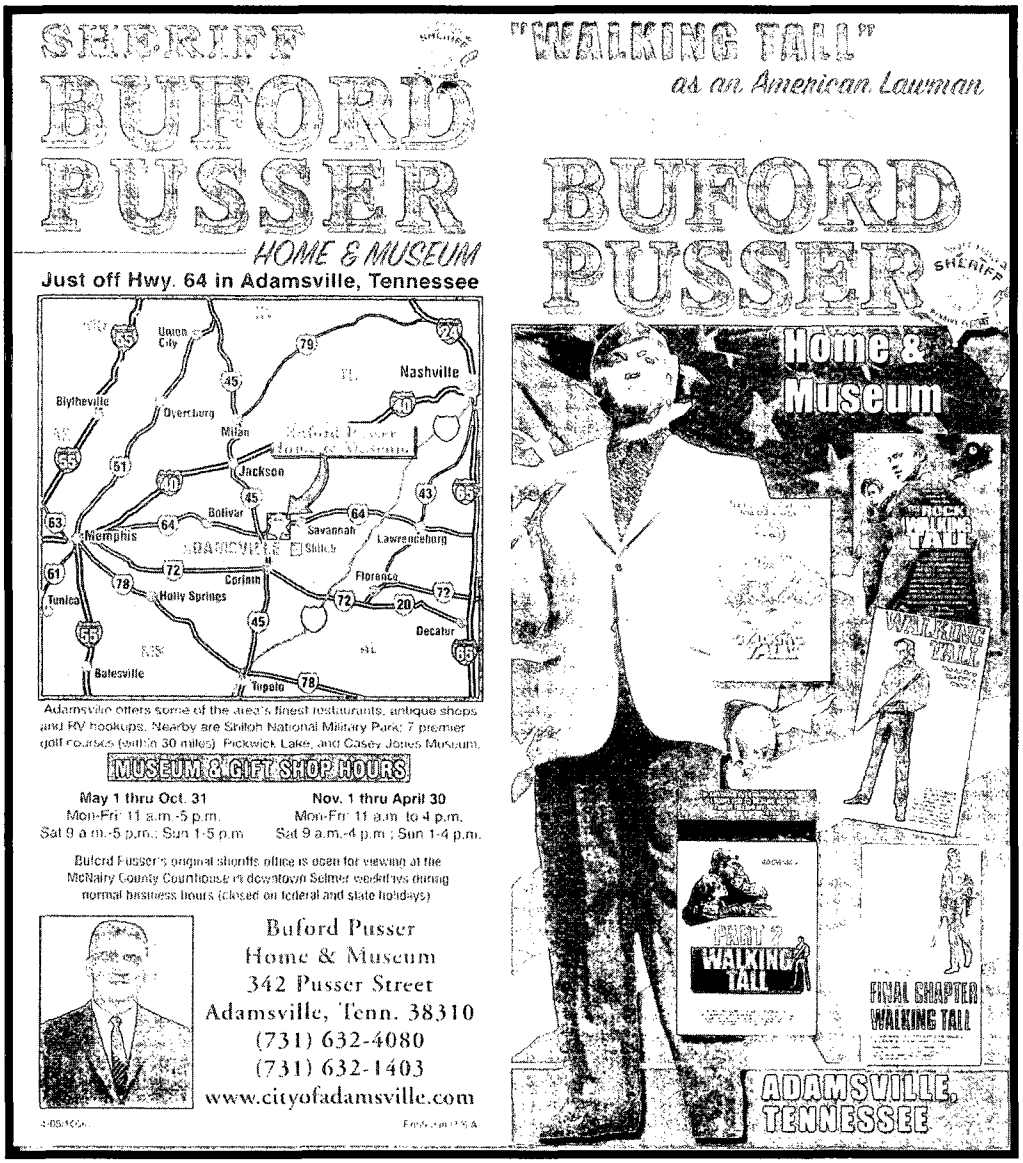

Figure 2.4. Buford Pusser Museum rack card.

In order to become a more sustainable organization, the museum changed its marketing aims to distribute news about the museum to a wider audience The museum had been subsisting on the fan base generated primarily by a film from thirty-five years ago. For many sites, that source of visitation would have run its course a long time ago, but each time a team from the Center for Historic Preservation at MTSU visited the museum, there were several visitors who worked in law enforcement and professed that Buford had a strong influence in their choice of career (this included two men who were Canadians and served in the Canadian Border Patrol).

The museum's marketing materials have prominently showcased images of Buford Pusser and have featured the branding "Sheriff of McNairy County," "Of *Walking Tall* Fame," and "Legendary Law Man." The multiple slogans may confuse the branding message, but they also serve to reach different audiences. The slogan that identifies him as the Sheriff of McNairy County makes him recognizable to people who knew him as a folk hero of the 1960s and 1970s; identifying him with *Walking Tall* draws attention to fans of American popular cinema and cult-classics; and the lawman focus reaches the large law enforcement fan base. In order to be more effective, the museum will need to be more purposeful in how they brand themselves.

A difficulty with both the interpretation at the museum and with all of its promotional pieces is that they try to tell an exhaustively comprehensive story rather than a manageable one. The result is a confused or completely obscured narrative. A problem with several of the marketing pieces is that they look dated and would benefit from professional editing. The current brochure tries to include too many pictures and too

much text. Although the brochure and recent documentary carry a certain local flavor, in order to compete with a savvy tourist audience, they need to increase the quality of all promotional pieces. While the website has a quality look to it, it also is packed with too much text and too many images (both historic and of the current museum displays). Ideally, the museum needs to choose a focused message that they disseminate through multiple marketing tools.

Creating an Economic Plan

West Tennessee is the least populous and most economically distressed of Tennessee's three grand divisions. Despite these hardships, its geographic location puts it closer to a large African American audience than both Middle and East Tennessee.

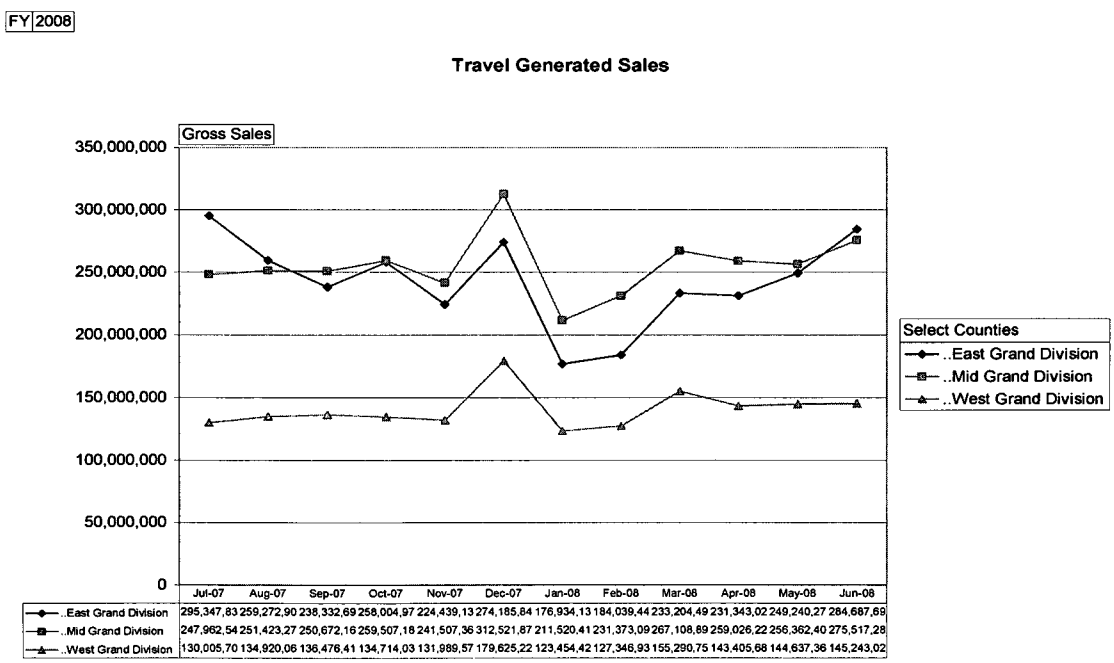

Figure 2.5. Travel Generated Sales in 2008 by Grand Division in Tennessee (Tennessee Department of Tourist Development)

Pusser hired an African American deputy and created an integrated sheriff's department in the midst of the Civil Rights era. The museum has not emphasized this story, choosing to display an autographed gift from proud segregationist Georgia politician Lester Maddox instead. Aside from the possible Civil Rights era story of a sheriff's department that chose integration rather than discrimination, Pusser's story of standing up to injustice at great personal cost transcends ethnic and cultural boundaries. West Tennessee already has several African American tourist draws. This part of Tennessee contributes a significant component to Civil Rights and Blues narratives telling the African American experience in the American South.

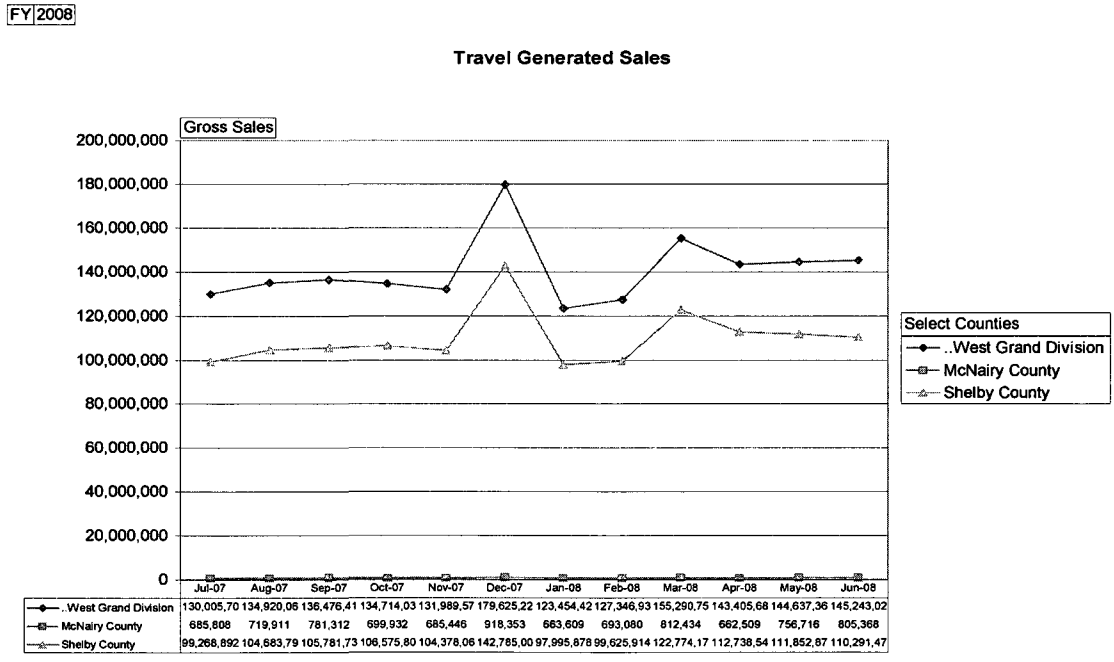

Figure 2.6. Travel Generated Sales in 2008 in West Tennessee, comparing the region, the Memphis-Shelby County metropolitan area, and McNairy County (Tennessee Department of Tourist Development)

Memphis and Jackson are the two major population centers in West Tennessee, and both feature major African American heritage sites and events. Both celebrate

Juneteenth (the popularized celebration of Emancipation as it was branded and celebrated in Texas). Jackson's annual Black Street Festival, which coincides with the traditional Tennessee celebration of Emancipation in August, has continually grown over the last twenty years. Lane College, a historically African American college in Jackson, struggles with dropping enrollment but still serves as a strong educational institution for African Americans with a long tradition of training leaders in West Tennessee. The most prominent attractions, though, are in Memphis: the National Civil Rights Museum, and Beale Street. If tourists ventured north of Memphis, they could also visit the Alex Haley (author of *Roots*) home in Henning.

Currently Tennessee has 1,020,558 African American residents.[57] And the Tennessee delta region is very close to America's traditional "Black Belt" region of the delta in the Deep South. In order to reach this sizable and significant audience, the Buford Pusser museum could either launch an expensive solo advertising campaign or make the most of its resources by leveraging regional partnerships and optimizing the potential of their story lines.

Considering the current finances of both the Buford Pusser Museum and McNairy County as a whole, the museum needs to look at economical and creative ways to reach this audience that they have not courted in the past. Even with the strong tourist draws in Memphis and Jackson, because tourism will be geographically limited, due to current economic strictures, the African American tourist audience would benefit from a wider selection of choices. The Buford Pusser Museum could consider providing promotional

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[57] US Census Bureau, 2008 estimate, quickfacts, http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/47000.html, accessed 10 October 2009.

materials at popular African American tourist venues in Memphis and Jackson, and should even consider Corinth, Mississippi, as another nearby population center with a sizeable African American population. While institutions and governing bodies tend to think in terms of state and county boundaries, these are largely irrelevant to tourists. Wide reaching partnership projects have the added benefit of being more sustainable and successful, as well.[58]

In addition to the African American market, the museum has other market segments that would be a natural draw. The museum easily falls into the category of a dark tourism (or thanatourism) site and current research points to growing visitation numbers to these types of sites.[59] The museum saw first hand the truth of that research after they distributed their current stock of rack cards to the Tennessee Welcome Centers located along the interstates, updating and streamlining their website, becoming a presence on Facebook, and sending out periodic e-newsletters. They also instituted some new programming like guided driving tours to coincide with festivals, a book signing for Dwana Pusser's release of *Walking On: A Daughter's Journey with Legendary Sheriff Buford Pusser* (2009), and tent cards placed throughout the house with excerpts from Dwana's book. They also began networking with other agencies, particularly the Center for Historic Preservation at Middle Tennessee, Tennessee State Museum, Tennessee Association of Museums, and the Tennessee Department of Tourist Development.

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[58] Erik Cohen, "Authenticity, Equity, and Sustainability in Tourism," *Journal of Sustainable Tourism* 10, no. 4(2002): 267-275.

[59] Richard Sharpley, "Shedding Light on Dark Tourism: An Introduction," in *The Darker Side of Travel: The Theory and Practice of Dark Tourism*, eds. Richard Sharpley and Philip R. Stone (Buffalo, NY: Channel View Publications, 2009), 6.

By moving outside of their walls and their county line, they were able to generate a great deal more interest and within just a few months, their visitation numbers skyrocketed. The partnership with the Tennessee Department of Tourist Development led to them being an integral part of the newly launched Discover Tennessee Trails and Byways initiative. Officially launched on November 3, 2009, the Walking Tall Trail is one of fifteen regional trails that cross the state.[60] In addition to being available as a printed tour, it is also featured on main tourism web portal for Tennessee.[61] These steps are continuing to build visitation capacity, but in order to sustain that movement, the museum will need to further enhance the experience at the site itself.

Guiding the Evolution of a House Museum

Visitors to cultural tourist attractions are looking for an integrity rich, informative, and exhilarating experience. A quality museum setting sets the stage for the most compelling experience as possible through an authentic setting. To do this, the Buford Pusser Museum needs to reevaluate their collections and how they display them. They do provide an intimate experience, which has generated return visitation and positive word-of-mouth marketing from satisfied patrons. For most of the rooms, the museum should only include genuine items and should arrange the rooms as they would have looked in Pusser's time. This will help to create a very purposeful sense of place that will

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[60] Tennessee Department of Tourist Development, "Discover Tennessee Trails and Byways Tourism Initiative Announced Today by Governor Phil Bredesen," press release, 3 November 2009.

[61] Tennessee Department of Tourist Development, "Discover Tennessee Trails & Byways," http://tnvacation.com/trails/, accessed 12 November 2009.

frame the entire visitor experience. More recent acquisitions mostly serve to take up space and end up distracting from the real artifacts.

This caveat also includes fan-donated items. Rather than incorporating them throughout the house, the museum would be more effective if they relocated those artifacts to the front room that welcomes visitors or put some of them in storage, periodically rotating which of them is on display. Visitors will have a more personal experience of Pusser if his house looks like it did when he lived there. Then the visitors can move from the front room where they are introduced to the full story of Buford, his family, and his fan following, to the real world of his home life.

The museum would also benefit from ending its general policy of open collections, all on display. Changing out artifacts periodically not only aids in their conservation, but draws visitors who will return to see something new. The display cases detract from the historic integrity of the home; they also damage the items stored within. For most of the cases, the lights are too bright, too hot, and the ventilation is poor. The wood cases are an additional concern because wood off-gases (releasing toxic fumes as part of a natural biodegradable process) and damages the items stored inside. Typically cases are not the best way for visitors to view or interact with artifacts, and they limit the options for interpretation or telling a cohesive and genuine story.

After initially setting up the exhibit cases twenty years ago, museum staff have added some items. In a few instances, the staff no longer remembered why certain cases were set up in a particular way or what the items were in the cases, but they were strongly hesitant to change anything. Those cases (mostly the ones containing items relating to

Buford Pusser's death and funeral) had become sacrosanct and no one opened or moved them in twenty years. In addition to those exhibit cases, the build up of artifacts and additional exhibit cases created a situation so that the museum staff could not explain why artifacts were grouped together in particular ways or even the purpose of several items. The museum must take a more active role in its interpretation and cease to treat the exhibit cases as repositories for holy relics that they should not disturb. Interpreters and docents must have an intimate knowledge of the resources of a site in order to create a sustainable legacy of quality interpretation.

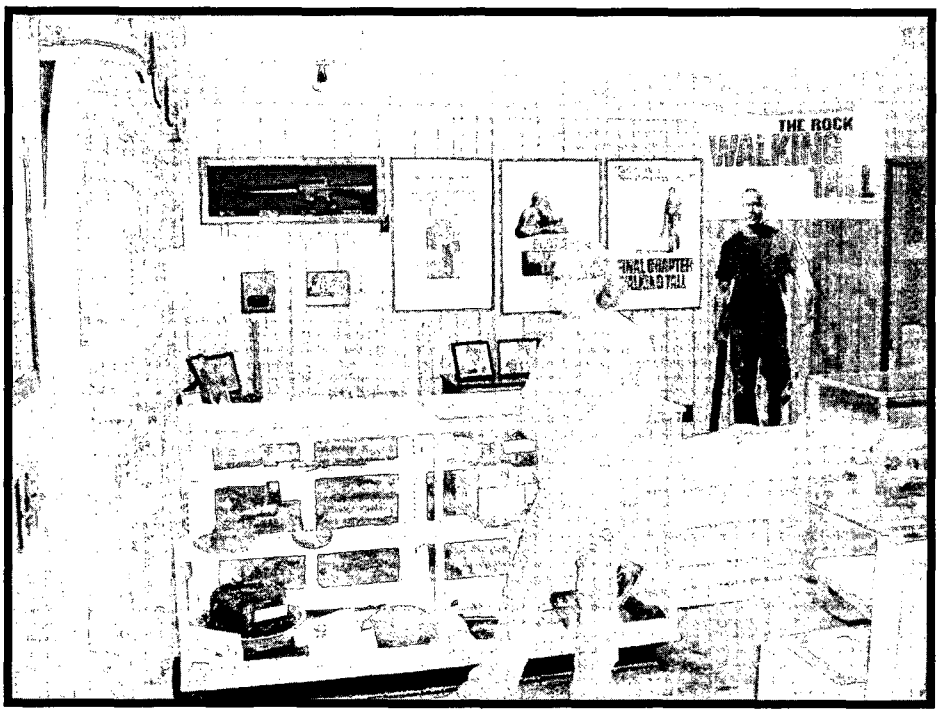

Figure 2.7. Center for Historic Preservation at MTSU student, Megan Akerstrom, completing an inventory of the exhibit cases in Buford's den area. (Photo by author)

This first step in that process is taking into account the basic preservation and conservation issues of the museum's collection. While there was a handwritten inventory of artifacts from when the museum opened, the inventory had not been updated since

then and there are significant discrepancies between the list and the reality. In April 2009, a team consisting of public history graduate students from Middle Tennessee, staff at the Buford Pusser Museum, and volunteers from the community gathered at the museum and created an itemized inventory within the collection. The inventory was room-based so that the staff could do a room-by-room inventory check periodically as a security measure.

By truly laying hands on all items in the collection, the team was able to more accurately assess some of the conservation issues. When the first team from the Center for Historic Preservation at Middle Tennessee visited in December 2007, they made a series of conservation recommendations. By going through the entire collection themselves, the museum staff was able to see the results of poor conservation techniques. While there are some general rules about artifact conservation and display that hold true for most museum settings, there are some specialized needs at the Buford Pusser Home and Museum. A museum needs to balance conservation concerns with making pieces of history accessible to the public. Nothing tells the story of history better than genuine artifacts and integrity rich settings, and the Buford Pusser Museum has both of those elements. This museum has two categories of artifacts in its collection: those that need limited use, and those that need to be used in order to maintain them.

For all items in the collection, there are some general conservation rules. Collections need a stable environment, and that means limited changes in temperature and moisture. The museum has already addressed this by installing modern HVAC systems. Artifacts need to have limited light exposure (both from the sun and electrical

lighting) and protection from the heat that light produces. For items that are exposed to sunlight, the museum needs to consider installing UV filters in the windows. The initial assessment showed that the interior lighting needed immediate attention to address more critical issues. Many of the lights were too bright, thereby bleaching the color from artifacts, and produced too much heat, in some cases melting artifacts. After that initial visit, the museum staff replaced the overly hot lights or totally removed lighting in some instances.

Figure 2.8. Floodlights installed in Buford's bedroom had melted several 8-track tapes beneath them. (Photo by author)

Limited use artifacts include all of the furniture and most of the artifacts in the museum's collection. In the past, some of the furniture was available for visitors to sit on. The wear and tear of constant use cannot be reversed on items such as the sectional couch. In general, guests should not use the furniture or handle the artifacts. Yet, just as use can wear on the surfaces, dust also has long term consequences. Harsh cleaning

products will deteriorate artifacts, but there are museum-grade vacuum cleaners that the museum could purchase to clean furniture and draperies.

In terms of how to handle artifacts, some conservators recommend using cotton gloves, while others recommend washing the oils off of hands and then handling artifacts. With gloves, the oils on hands are not a problem. Without gloves, a person has the tactile sensations that reduce the risk of tearing or breaking a delicate artifact. In either case, limited handling is the best course for ensuring the longevity of any artifact. And this is of key importance to museums, because an authentic artifact is much more compelling than a reproduction or a substituted period piece.

Although most artifacts degrade from usage, mechanical items need to run periodically in order to maintain their original functions, and hence their historic integrity. The vehicles at the Buford Pusser Museum and even the kitchen appliances belong to this category. These items tell their story best by performing their original functions. They also offer a more dynamic and intimate experience to visitors by allowing for some interaction. The cars could run in parades and be the ultimate traveling exhibit and promotional piece. Imagine the reactions from visitors when they are offered the opportunity to get a bottle of water out of Pusser's fridge.

Of course, the largest periodic use artifacts are the house and the grounds. The museum has taken steps to remove more recent beautification efforts that altered the appearance rather than enhanced the historic integrity of the site. For example, they removed two concrete lions that were on each side of the main gate because they were

recent donations, had no precedent in terms of yard art from the time the Pusser family lived there, and were actually a hazard for both vehicles and pedestrians.

Keeping in mind the museum's collection and its need to maintain continued health of those artifacts, the final step is to implement a story-based interpretation that is firmly grounded in the place and supported by the artifacts. This will be the final stage of the internal overhaul that the museum has undertaken. The museum would benefit from reorganizing their interpretation to better tell a complete, compelling, and comprehensive story about Buford Pusser's life and significance. This will increase the impact of the site and encourage return visitation. This interpretation could be theme-based using the following categories: Making the Main, The Sheriff Who Made a Difference, A Murder Changes a Family, A Legend in His Time, A Folk Hero for the Nation.

Then the museum should reorganize furniture and the look of rooms to reflect the new interpretation. The main entrance to the museum would serve as an orientation room (in keeping with the original purpose that Buford envisioned for that addition) where guests could view the orientation film, read interpretive panels, and view fan memorabilia. When guests entered the original part of the house (the den and kitchen), they could then enter the "real world" of Buford Pusser and his family. These rooms will work best if they have only genuine pieces and are be laid out reflect the original look. The ideal is to make it recognizable to Pusser if he were able to walk in and see it for himself. This would also mean removing most (if not all) interpretive signage within these spaces, in order to restore the intimate feel of a private home. The basement would then stand apart as Buford Pusser's private space and the perfect setting for

understanding why he became a legend. Removing hurdles that prevent creating a true sense of place is very important.

With the new setting, then the director and docents would have to implement the new interpretation. This is no simple task. "The thanatourism manager has to be a multitasking diplomat with a versatile range of social and cultural expertise."[62] More than just knowing what the site has to offer, the interpreters of a dark tourism site need to have the vision to develop unexpected partnerships and unleash all of the potential a site has to offer. "The role requires the surefooted tact of a funeral director, the sense of the past of a historian, and the educational insight of a school teacher, and sometimes the spin and showmanship of a celebrity publicist."[63]

Putting It into Perspective

Compared to many of its peers among historic house museums in rural Tennessee, the Buford Pusser House and Museum does an excellent job of promoting its location and its story. Good signage within Adamsville allows tourists and visitors to easily find the site. The museum's rack card is available at visitor centers in the region, and the site is expecting to see even more increases in visitation due to the Discover Tennessee's Trails program.

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[62] Tony Seaton, "Purposeful Otherness: Approaches to the Management of Thanatourism," in *The Darker Side of Travel: The Theory and Practice of Dark Tourism*, eds. Richard Sharpley and Philip R. Stone (Buffalo, NY: Channel View Publications, 2009).

[63] Ibid.

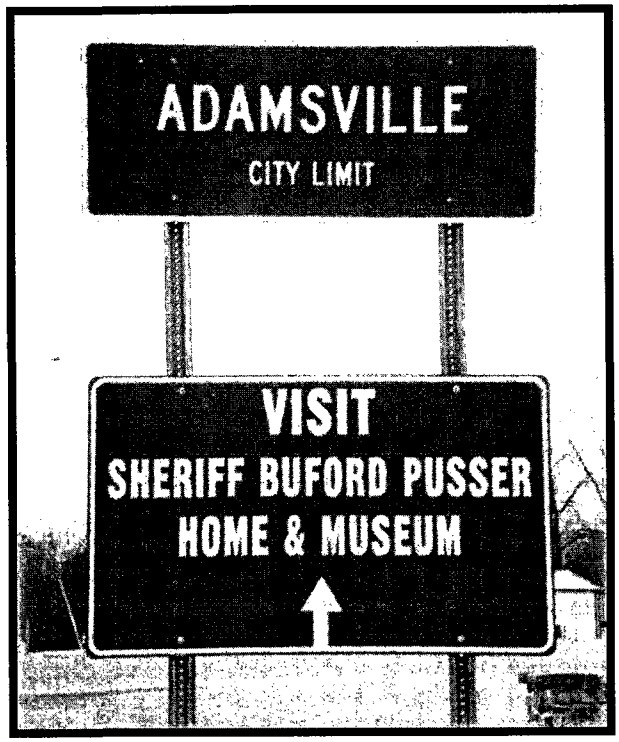

Figure 2.9. Sign at Adamsville city limit in February 2007 (Photo by author)

The Buford Pusser Home and Museum has the potential for being a cultural institution well into the twenty-first century. It has demonstrated staying power by continuing to be a tourist attraction as an operating museum for the last twenty years, and by drawing in fans nearly thirty-five years after the death of its namesake. This is probably in large part due to the themes that a story like Buford Pusser's inspire in our culture. "Dark tourism may provide new spaces in which not only is immorality (re)presented for contemporary consumption, but also in which morality is communicated, reconfigured and revitalized."[64] The sacrifices of one man, his family,

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[64] Philip R. Stone, "Dark Tourism: Morality and New Moral Spaces," in *The Darker Side of Travel: The Theory and Practice of Dark Tourism*, eds. Richard Sharpley and Philip R. Stone (Buffalo, NY: Channel view Publications, 2009), 71.

the deputies who joined his cause, and the community who supported him in standing up to violence and vice fit that dynamic perfectly.

All museums have the potential to grow and must constantly evaluate if they are meeting the needs of the public. This museum is actively making changes to reclaim a rich experience while strengthening their brand power by developing new audiences. During a time when most historic house museums are struggling to find their relevance in contemporary society, the Buford Pusser Museum could not be more relevant.

CHAPTER 3

AFRICAN AMERICANS IN APPALACHIA

COMPLICATING COCKE COUNTY'S HILLBILLY HERITAGE

The popular folklore and deliberate branding of East Tennessee's mountain folk depict the stereotypical hillbilly. This branding identity in large part stems from the work of anthropologists and literary figures in the late nineteenth century who were swept up on a popular fascination with ethnicity and the primitive roots of different cultures. Scholars within the new field of anthropology were fascinated with "primitive cultures and avidly collected artifacts, stories, and songs to document these allegedly disappearing peoples. Writers too shared a fascination about "the other," ranging from Estern European immigrants, to Africans, Asians, and Native Americans. Writers and anthropologists searched for a purer form to American culture in the midst of the diversity of the time.[1]

These cultural experts believed that the Appalachians were an area that was so remote, the resulting seclusion led to little cultural evolution for the communities sequestered there. These communities, the anthropologists and writers concluded, were bastions of a more pure and primitive form of Anglo-European culture. The scholars of the nineteenth century built a case for their discovery of prototypical white Americans through the study of music, foodways, speech patterns, and customs. Their evidence

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[1] At the same time, the field of history was playing a role by joining with anthropologists in museum settings to tell a very different story. For more on this topic, see: Ian Tyrrell, *Historians in Public: The Practice of American History, 1890-1970* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005).

pointed towards a strong Anglo heritage at the heart of the American way of life. Building upon this scholarship, authors gravitated towards the popular interest over these discoveries and a great many literary classics resulted from the case studies of white American mountain culture.[2]

There are several problems with the pure Anglo mountain culture concept, though, the largest being that it is almost entirely fictitious. The "reality" and "purity of their findings said more about them than the actual people. Even for the white residents of the mountains, their ancestry and heritage was much more diverse than simply the English or Scots-Irish labels these scholars inferred. Beyond simply ignoring the more complex heritage of white mountain residents, this mythos completely negated the long history and heritage of African Americans and Native Americans in the mountains. Even in spite of the effects of the massive out-migration of African Americans from the American South as part of the Great Migration of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, there were (and still are) significant populations of African Americans in the mountain south.

The landscape is rife with evidence of African American culture, but the consequence of over-simplifying the history of mountain communities is that the story told by African American landmarks is often only obvious to African American tourists or residents. To a larger tourist audience, that community is effectively unvoiced and the result is a much less enriched and complex experience for residents and tourists alike.

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[2] C. Brenden Martin, *Tourism in the Mountain South: A Double-Edged Sword* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2007); Lynn Morrow and Linda Myers-Phinney, *Shepherd of the Hills Country: Tourism Transforms the Ozarks* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1999).

While African American communities across the American South have tended to keep their heritage alive through deep commitments to their neighbors, families, and overall legacy, the communities in the Appalachian region of Tennessee have taken their sense of agency a step further. Because they have been invested in their story from the beginning, African Americans are actively engaging systems of government and commerce through heritage tourism and historic preservation programs. The result is not that they are reclaiming their story, but that they are reclaiming their place in the larger narrative of the region's history by making their heritage accessible to a wider audience.

Figure 3.1. This rural African American Cemetery in Cocke County has no interpretation and its story runs the risk of being lost. (Photo by Carroll Van West)

An excellent example of this dynamic is the newly created African American heritage trail in Cocke County Tennessee. This heritage tourism project began with one

adaptively-reused Rosenwald School, the Tanner School, and is in the process of expanding to integrate African American resources across the county. These resources already have strong social connections to the African American community they serve, but this approach opens new heritage tourism options for the entire county. Rather than just keep their story to themselves (because a white power structure had been uninterested or because it did not fit the popular preconception and branding identity of Appalachian culture), the African American community of Cocke County invested in expanding the longevity of their history by telling it to a larger public. The Cocke County Department of Tourism is interested in including African American tourism as part of its overall mission as a result of the activities of this motivated community.

Including this story will be a struggle for a number of reasons. Americans tend not to be very accepting of changes to popular conceptions of American culture and identity. This impulse is at the root of popular accusations of some media figures against academic historians as purveyors of historical revisionism. On a local level, the relationship between academic historians and the general public becomes increasingly complicated. Speaking on this dilemma, local history expert Carol Kammen said:

> Local history that is incorrect passes misleading information or generalizations into the general culture of a community. Inaccurate history or biased history moves into the culture of a place and is excised only with great difficulty — if at all.[3]

In addition, there are inherent hurdles when anyone tries to rebrand any popular item. White hillbillies, as the ancestral foundation for American roots, is still a popular brand that most businesses owners effectively leverage for their benefit. With the weight of a

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[3] Carol Kammen, ed., *The Pursuit of Local History: Readings on Theory and Practice* (Walnut Creek, California: AltaMira Press, 1995), 12-13.

successful product and the cultural inertia preventing large scale changes, the challenge of rebranding the mountains is considerable.

History of Tanner School

Education in Newport, the county seat of Cocke County, suffered the inequities of segregated schools like the rest of the American south in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Inadequate and overcrowded facilities, further exacerbated by minimal resources, were the norm.[4] Although the county had built two elementary schools in 1898 — one large brick building for white students and one small frame building for African American students, as a nod towards racial parity — they only built one high school in 1917, and it was strictly for white students. African Americans in the county could only earn an eighth grade education unless they were able to gather the resources for further education at private institutions elsewhere. This increased educational disadvantage only ensured an increased economic disparity in the long term.[5]

The African American community was not completely disenfranchised. In 1923 the community came together and voted for local politician John M. Jones for mayor of Newport based upon his campaign promise to build a new school for African Americans.[6]

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4 Robbie D. Jones, "Segregation and Interracial Cooperation in East Tennessee: Building Tanner High School at Newport, 1923-1948," 4-6, 14-15. James D. Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860-1935* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), 66-67.

[5] Issac Knox Rakestraw, "Negro Education in Cocke County" (MA thesis, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, 1956), 68.

6 Ruth Webb O'Dell, *Over the Misty Blue Hills: The Story of Cocke County,*

Due to the support of the African American community, which had managed to maintain its right to vote in the Jim Crow South, Jones won the election and the city passed a $100,000 bond for civil improvements. The money went towards an expansion of the white elementary school and the construction of a new elementary school for African American students, with additional funding from the Julius Rosenwald Fund. This school — originally known as Newport Consolidated School by the African American community and Newport Colored School within the white community — was constructed in 1924. the African American community named it Tanner School.[7]

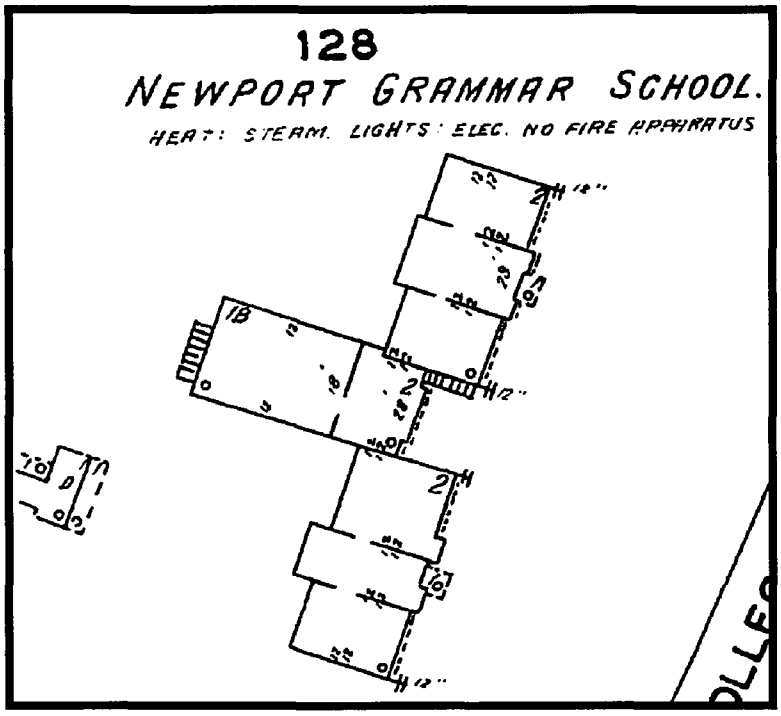

Figure 3.2. 1927 Sanborn map detail of the whites-only Newport Grammar School

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Tennessee (O'Dell, 1950), 241. Duay O'Neil, "The Road to Tanner Was Long and Arduous: Part II," *The Newport Plain Talk* Sunday, February 13, 2005, p. 9A.

7 Jones, "Building Tanner High School,"14-16.

While the local bond initiative was certainly instrumental in constructing Newport Consolidated School, the support from the Julius Rosenwald Fund was also crucial. Sears and Roebuck magnate Julius Rosenwald created a matching fund and architectural plans for model African American schools in the American South. This private philanthropy made a significant contribution to an increasingly marginalized African American populace in the American South from 1921 to 1931 through the construction of 5,300 schools across the American south. Of those schools, 373 were in Tennessee and 44 were in East Tennessee.[8]

Rosenwald School plans emphasized state-of-the-art facilities but also adopted a focus on industrial education as being most educationally and economically efficient for African American students.[9] Using the plans from the Julius Rosenwald Fund, the city of Newport compiled together $1,100 from the Rosenwald Fund, $1,200 from the Tennessee Board of Education, $300 from the local white community, $200 from the local African American community, and $7,450 from the local board of education (whose funds came from the $100,000 bond initiative). In addition to providing funds, the African American community provided additional resources. African American school teacher John Williams Rice sold a three-acre lot on Mulberry Avenue. to the city for the new school. Rice, owner of the town's brick factory, also donated the bricks for Newport Consolidated

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8 Mary Hoffschwelle, *Preserving Rosenwald Schools* (Washington, DC: National Trust for Historic Preservation, 2003), 3-5. Rakestraw, 68.

9 Mary Hoffschwelle, *Rebuilding the Rural Southern Community: Reformers, Schools and Homes in Tennessee, 1910-1930* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1998), 67.

School. Other local African American craftsmen donated their time and services to do most of the construction.[10]

The resulting structure had classrooms on the first floor and a kitchen with a cafeteria and boiler room in the basement. The classrooms, accessed by one hallway which ran the length of the building, with folding partitions dividing the rooms so that teachers could consolidate the space into a larger auditorium. Students could enter the school from one of the two entrances on the north side of the building; they would then enter the hallway and choose one of the classroom doors.[11]

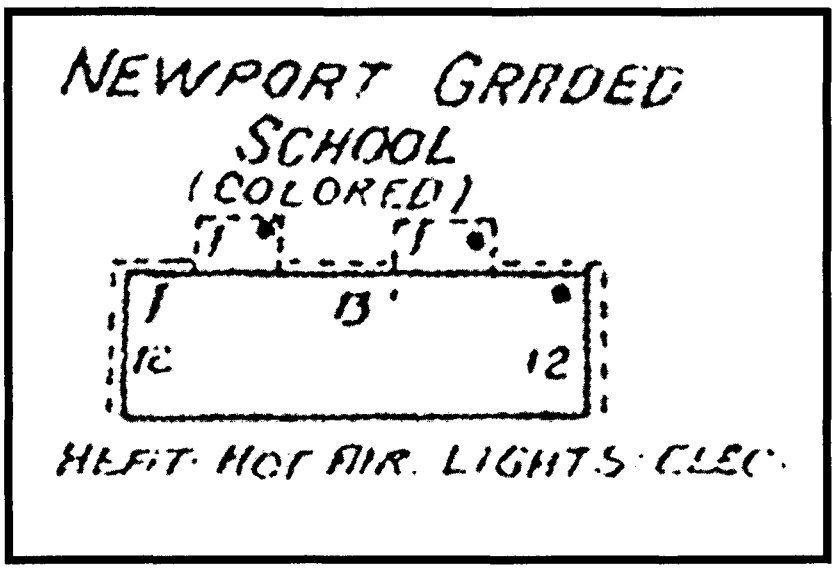

Figure 3.3. 1927 Sanborn map detail of Newport Graded School

The new school certainly had a much higher quality of facilities than the previous wood frame school, but the cooperative spirit between within the community was short-lived. The original agreement between the school board and the African American

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10 Julius Rosenwald Files, Fisk University Special Collections, Nashville, TN. Jones, "Building Tanner High School,"16-17.

11 *Newport Plain Talk*, June 24, 1924.

community called for the school board to fund additional teachers to add a new grade each year. When the school opened, it had four teachers and supposedly hosted a ninth grade class for the first time that the principal taught unofficially. The school board refused to hire additional teachers in order to supply a high school education to its African American students.[12] Local efforts towards nominal educational parity then stalled and little changed for the rest of the 1920s.

The next surge of improvements required the combined efforts of three individuals: Dr. Dennis Branch, Ben W. Hooper, and Dudley S. Tanner. In 1926, respected African American physician Dennis Branch accepted the position of principal at Newport Consolidated School. An alumnus of Memphis' University of Tennessee Medical School, he served as principal until 1931. In 1927, former Tennessee governor Ben Hooper joined the Cocke County Board of Education. As governor, Hooper had enacted statewide education reforms and as a board of education member he served as an advocate for the local African American community.[13] In 1929, white school teacher Dudley Tanner began serving as the state Rosenwald agent for African American schools. This triumvirate was able to find common cause and with their combined efforts, they fought against further marginalization of the African American community and were able to again initiate a series of improvements to African American educational resources.[14]

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[12] Rakestraw, 67. O'Dell, 241.

[13] Anne-Leslie Owens, "Ben Walter Hooper, 1870-1957," in *Tennessee Encyclopedia of History and Culture*, ed. Carroll Van West (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, Online Edition, 2002).

[14] Jones, "Building Tanner High School," 21-23.

This final addition came at a critical time because also in 1929, the majority of the Cocke County Board of Education had decided to release the services of the Jeanes worker for the area. Established in 1907, the Anna T. Jeanes Fund, also known as "The Fund for Rudimentary Schools for Southern Negroes," was administered by Booker T. Washington and Hollis B. Frissell and it supported rural African American education in the American south by providing funds for trained teachers, usually African American women, and these teachers became known as Jeanes supervisors.[15] The efforts of Branch, Hooper, and Tanner resulted in the Cocke County Board of Education deciding to retain its Jeanes supervisor in 1930.[16]

While lobbying for maintaining a Jeanes supervisor, this triumvirate was also busy securing funds for expanded facilities and then additional teachers at the Newport Consolidated School. In 1929 they had acquired an additional grant of $120 from the Rosenwald Fund for the addition of a library connecting to the main hallway of the Newport Consolidated School. Also in that year they orchestrated the construction of a frame annex that served as the economics classroom. They successfully sought another grant from the Rosenwald Fund for home economics equipment specifically for that addition.[17] Building on that growing inertia, in 1930 they not only convinced the board of education to retain their Jeanes supervisor, they also hired their first official high

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[15] Alice Brown Smith, *Forgotten Foundations: The Role of Jeanes Teachers in Black Education* (New York: Vantage Press, 1997), 9-10, 17-20.

[16] Hoffschwelle, *Rebuilding the Rural Southern Community*, 27-28.

[17] Rosenwald Files, Fisk. Rakestraw, 69.

school teacher for Newport Consolidated and one of the three classrooms was strictly for high school education.[18]

This series of successes caused the African American community to call for a renaming of the school and per their request, the school's name changed to Tanner Training High School.[19] While all three men were instrumental in reinvigorating African American education in the county, the community decided to honor Tanner for his efforts (the only man who did not live in the area). The enthusiasm for an African American high school and the strong need for that type of public education meant that while the school started with eighteen students, more found ways to be bussed in from around the county as word spread and halfway through that first year of having a high school, the number of students doubled. This rapid increase allowed for the school to acquire a second high school teacher halfway through the year. In 1931 the Tanner graduated its first high school student.[20]

The upward trend of African American education in Cocke County might have continued in this vein were it not for the crippling effects of the Great Depression. By 1933 the full impact of the depression was finally taking its toll. The Cocke County Board of Education reduced all teacher salaries by thirty-five percent, laid off several bus drivers (including the only two African American bus drivers), and eliminated all

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[18] Tennessee State Board of Education Minutes, "Report of Dudley Tanner, State Agent for Negro Schools of Tennessee," July 1929-May 1931, Tennessee State Library and Archives, Nashville, TN.

[19] Cocke County Board of Education Minutes, April 2, 1932.

[20] Jones, "Building Tanner High School," 26.

facilities improvements but was still on the brink of financial collapse.[21] The board resolved to avail itself of New Deal funding, but only made requests to maintain and improve white schools in the county. Just as with the previous decade, the marked improvements at the beginning of the 1930s had to last Tanner School for the rest of the decade. None of the African American schools received funding for any improvements while, despite desperate times, the school board managed to find funds to continue limited improvement on the white schools.[22]

By 1939, even with limited improvements to white schools, the educational infrastructure was in such a state of disrepair that the State Board of Education threatened to revoke the Cocke County school system's accreditation. The school board responded with a $90,000 bond initiative for physical improvements only for the white schools. The outraged African American community forced a joint meeting with the city and county school boards. After initially saying that it was impossible to find funds to make improvements at Tanner School, the boards said that they would work to find a solution.[23]

When the newly improved white schools opened in November 1940, the African American community sought the help of a higher authority and approached the county court. The court stipulated that the school board should allocate $10,000 for an addition to Tanner School in light of the $90,000 worth of improvements to white schools in the county. The county school board seemed to comply by approving funds for this project

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[21] Cocke County Board of Education Minutes, July 16, 1931; August 11, 1932; August 31, 1933.

[22] Rakestraw, 69.

[23] Cocke County Board of Education Minutes, October 14, 1939.

the following month, but then they took no further action. The city school board made a token effort at keeping up their side of this proposal in April 1941 by allocating $3,000 towards the addition if the county would match that amount. Despite the fact that $6,000 was much less than the amount stipulated just a few months prior, the county continued to take no action on Tanner School's behalf. Instead the county raised funds later in that year to do further improvements to the white schools in the county.[24]

The continued inaction by the city and county school boards, the consequences of a decade of neglect, and a continual increase in student enrollment finally created an untenable situation. In 1942, Tanner School had forty-eight students enrolled in the high school program, which still met in the one classroom allocated for that purpose in 1930. Due to disrepair and overcrowding, the State Board of Education removed its accreditation and declared that the school could no longer operate with those conditions.[25]

The African American community sought out the services of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. Working closely with local leaders, the NAACP crafted a five point petition which, among other things, called for a new high school and gymnasium. The petition, which contained sixty-five signatures from both white and African American members of the community, led to the county school board voting to hire an architect to construct a new high school for African American students

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[24] Cocke County Board of Education Minutes, January 22, 1940; November 23, 1940; December 12, 1940; April 17, 1941; October 7, 1941.

[25] O'Dell, 244. Rakestraw, 70.

in July 1942. True to form, though, they did not fund these improvements until October 1947, despite making improvements on white schools in the meantime.

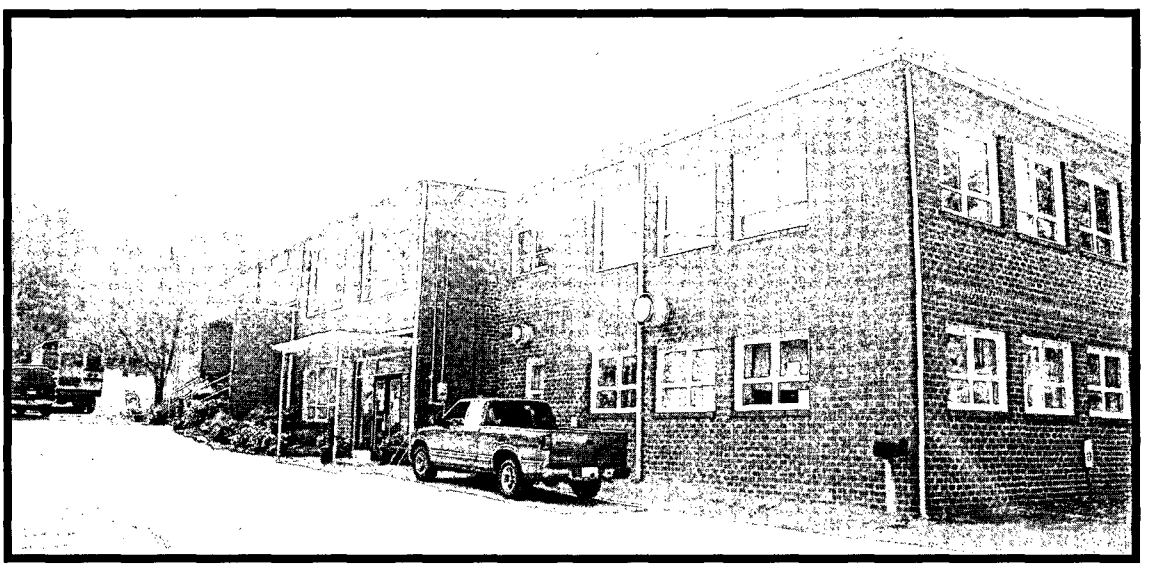

Figure 3.4. Tanner School in 2008. This side is now the main entrance and consists entirely of the later additions to the building. (Photo by Carroll Van West)

Unlike the process for the original construction of the school, a white carpenter and a white mason won the bid to create a high school addition to Tanner School.[26] The addition opened in 1948 and it included a new kitchen with cafeteria, a bathroom, and five new classrooms, only three of which were set aside for high school education. Just as the need for more high school classrooms had increased over the course of two decades, the total lack of improvement or expansion of facilities for African American elementary schools required that Tanner School use some of the new classrooms for that purpose.[27] It was not until 1954 that the school board finally provided funding for a gymnasium for Tanner School.[28]

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[26] Cocke County Board of Education Minutes, 23 October 1947.

[27] Cocke County Board of Education Minutes, April 20, 1948.

While attendance at Tanner School was as high as two-hundred and eighty-six in 1955, not everyone graduated and nearly half of the students left school early, often to find full-time work. Cocke County integrated its schools in 1966 and the final graduating class from Tanner School had only three students. All remaining students left Tanner to attend Cocke County High School and Tanner School closed its doors.[29]

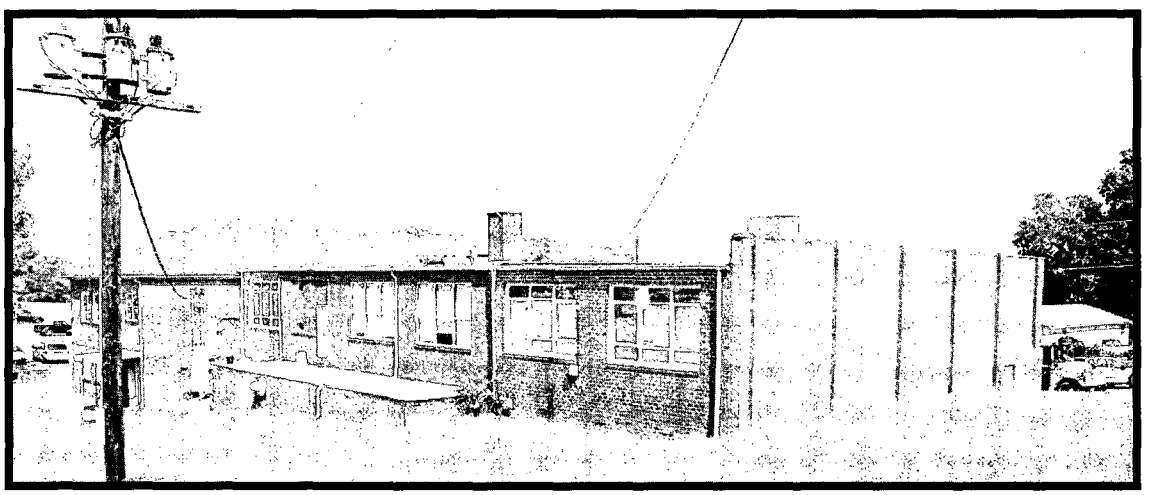

Figure 3.5. Rear of Tanner School in 2008. This side reveals a stretch of the original Rosenwald structure, which is closest to the viewer. (Photo by Carroll Van West)

Making a Case for Significance

As with many former African American schools, Tanner School eventually found a rebirth as a community services center. The building is now home to the Community House Cooperative of Cocke County, which was "chartered in 1995 as a nonprofit service entity by and for disadvantaged and disenfranchised people in Cocke County seeking to empower themselves to make positive decisions to take control of their lives. Its initial

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[28] Jones, "Building Tanner High School,"34.

[29] Jones, "Building Tanner High School," 39.

programs included information and arts activity provision, advocacy, counseling, conflict resolution and referrals to existing agencies."[30]

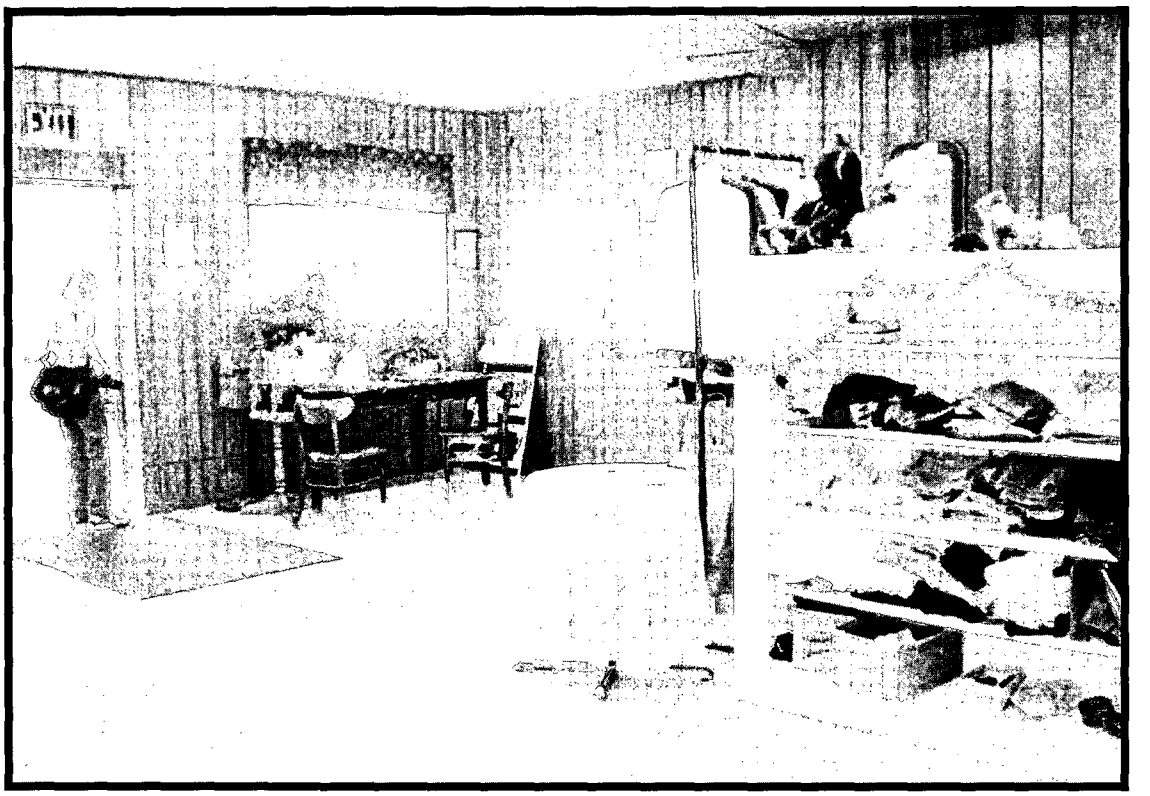

Figure 3.6. A community clothes closet operates in the current Tanner School building. (Photo by author)

This focus on community service and activism is very apt to the legacy of the site. More directly connected to the history of the site is the Tanner Committee, which collaborates with the Community House Cooperative and has played a key role in preserving local African American heritage, particularly through its efforts to preserve the Tanner School building. It is through their activism that only portions of the Tanner School have been demolished in recent years. This group requested that the Center for

30 Community House Cooperative of Cocke County, Tennessee, "About Us," http://www.chcinc.org/about.htm, accessed on August 5, 2009.

Historic Preservation at Middle Tennessee State University come and prepare a heritage development report for the site and for all publicly accessibly African American resources in the county.

Figure 3.7. Center for Historic Preservation students explored Cocke County African American resources with the community November 2008. (Photo by Elizabeth Moore)

The Center for Historic Preservation staff began with a survey of the resources to build a case for the historical significance of these properties. Its approach is very reminiscent of the process for preparing a National Register nomination, but this process is also becoming a part of how the sustainable tourism movement is successfully integrating historic preservation's concerns of authenticity and accuracy with the priorities of environmental sustainability and cultural conservation.[31]

[31] Erve Chambers, "From Authenticity to Significance: Tourism on the Frontier of Culture and Place," *Futures of Tourism* (August 2009): 353-359.

The Tanner school is an ideal location for telling the story of African Americans in Cocke County due to its location along the major thoroughfare connecting Newport to the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. It is also adjacent to the Cocke County Department of Tourism office, which doubles as the tourist information center for the county. The school's historical significance lends additional weight to its value as a heritage asset. The Tanner School was the site for community gatherings of various types. The county's neglect of its African American students became such a divisive issue that the African American community combined their resources to fight for their children.

These resources included the creation of the Tennessee Picnic, an annual celebration that coincides with regional celebrations of emancipation (which occur in early August in Tennessee). The remaining African American residents organized the first Tennessee Picnic as a way to bring back to Newport the African Americans who had moved away as part of the Great Migration. Locals wanted these former residents and descendents to return to their community and show their support for the preservation of their legacy. The first Tennessee Picnic was held in the late 1940s at Tanner School. After the successful efforts of the NAACP-assisted campaign to secure improvements to the school, the African American community wanted to call everyone together to celebrate overcoming such an obstacle.[32] In short, all of the other African American cultural institutions across the county pulled together to support and fight for the students

[32] Jones, "Building Tanner High School," 13.

at Tanner School. The struggle to provide for the future of each generation lasted for most of the twentieth century.

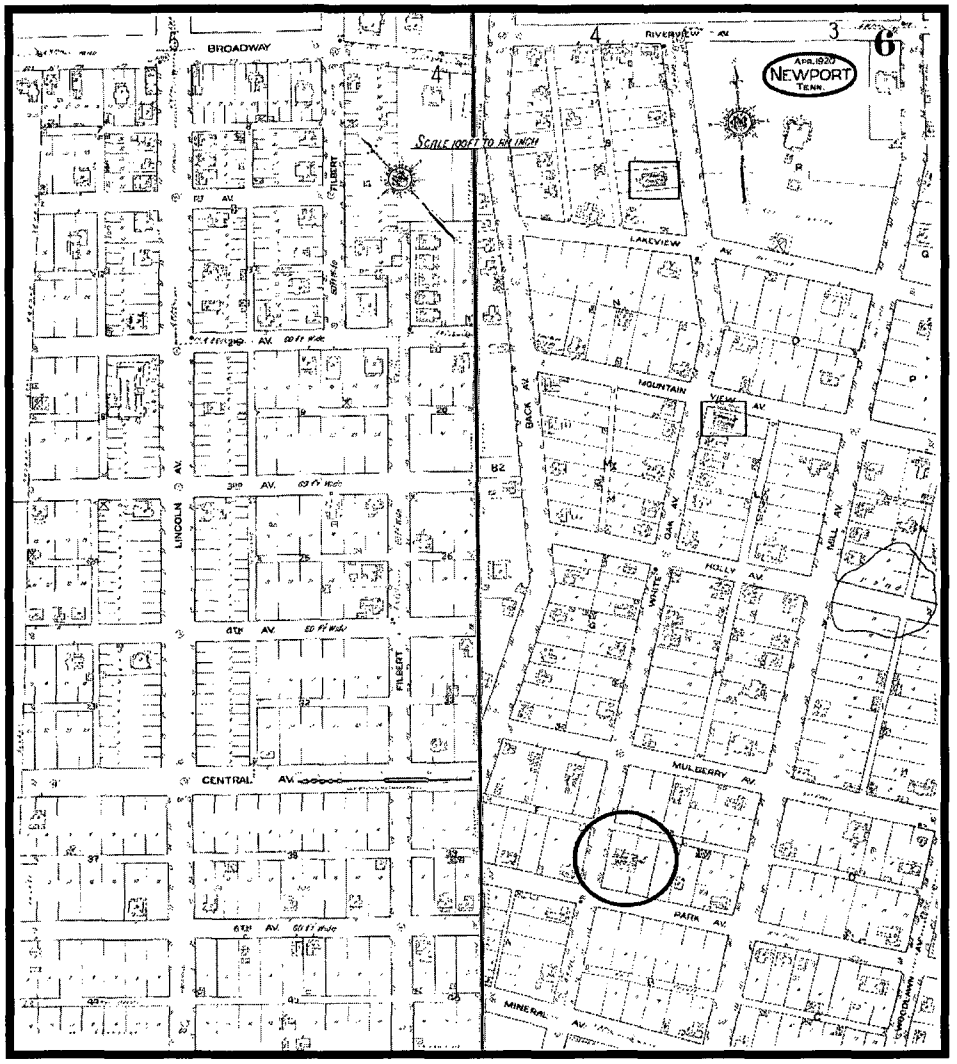

Figure 3.8. 1920 Sanborn detailed map of Newport's residential districts. The white neighborhood pictured to the left is actually to the east of the racially mixed Jones Hill neighborhood on the right. The circle, added by the author, highlights the original African American elementary school in Newport, which was a block east of the future Tanner School.

Never a majority in Cocke County, the African American population hovered at about ten percent for most of the last half of the nineteenth century. Starting with the 1890 census, though, the steady effects of the Great Migration became evident: the

African American population dropped by at least one percentage point each decade. The population finally leveled out in 1930 and hovered around three percent for two generations. Then in 1980 it dropped again to two percent. According to the 2000 census, the African American population remains at two percent. And while this seems to be rather small, the concentration of African Americans in Newport has always been higher than in the rest of the county.[33]

African Americans represented a stronger presence in Newport. This was in part due to the availability of domestic work for African American women and skilled trades work for African American men. African American stone and brick masons built many of the structures across the county, including working on regional TVA projects. Of the African American families who owned farms or worked as tenant farmers, many of them (particularly from the Dutch Bottoms community) relocated to Newport in 1942 when the Tennessee Valley Authority relocated over five hundred families (both black and white) in order to build Douglas Dam.[34]

Not only were they a higher percentage of the population of Newport, but they tended to live in mostly one neighborhood: Jones Hill. Rather than marginalizing this segment of the population, the concentrated localization created a stronger and more effective activist community. By being more numerous in the seat of local government and being a physically tighter knit community, they were able to initiate a considerable amount of change over time despite overwhelming odds. In addition to just living near

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[33] United States Census, 1860-2000.

[34] Robbie D. Jones, *Historic Architecture of Sevier County, Tennessee* (Sevierville: The Smoky Mountain Historical Society, 1997), 138-139.

one another, they also built several cultural institutions that served as meeting places and rallying points. These places — churches, schools, African American-owned businesses — served as the foundation for the wider African American population.

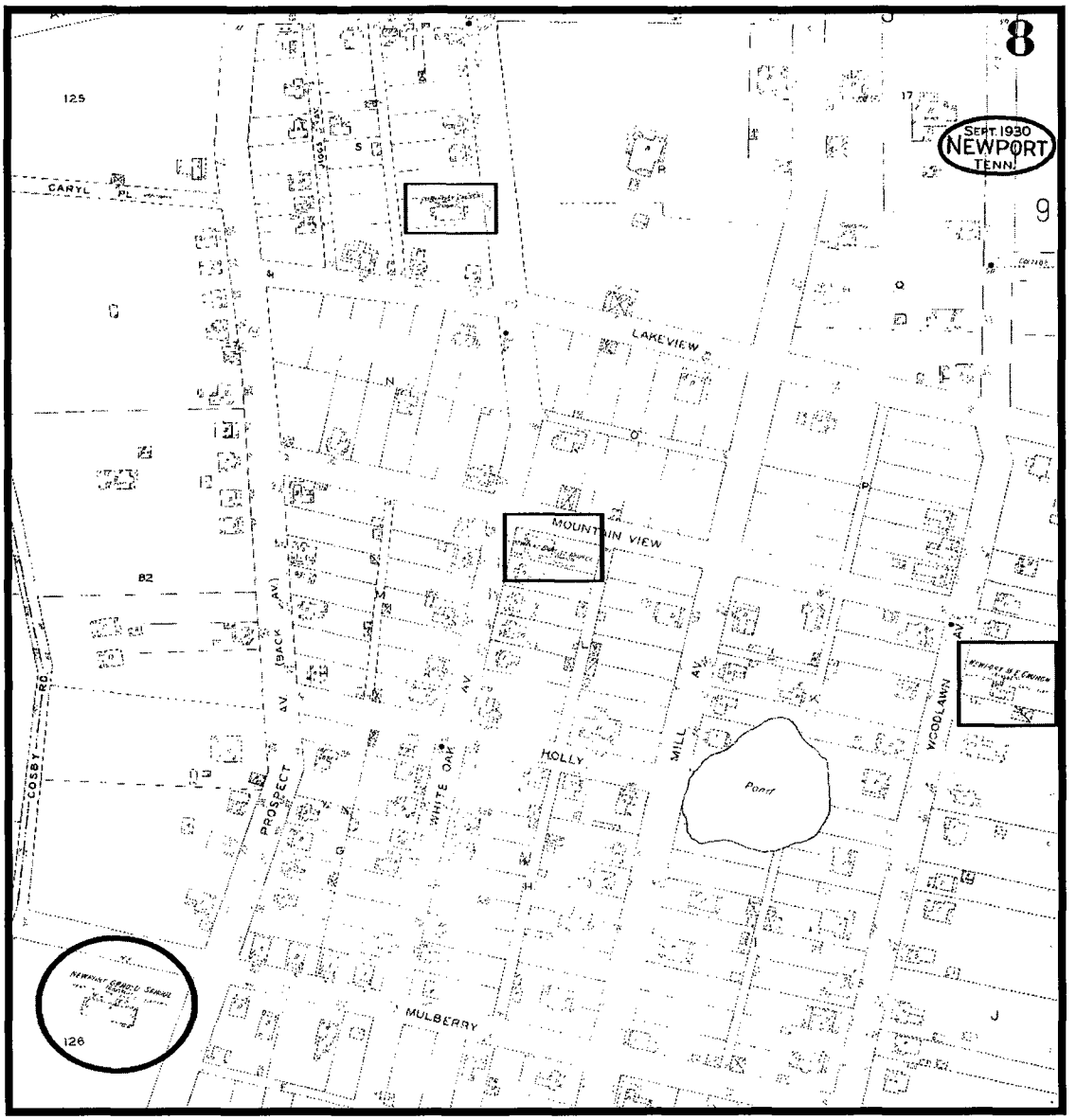

Figure 3.9 . 1930 Sanborn map of Jones Hill vicinity. Circle around Tanner School and squares around the three African American churches added by the author.

The dire state of unequal educational resources in the 1940s not only led the county's dwindling African American residents to call upon the NAACP, but they

eventually formed their own chapter in the 1950s. The larger cities in East Tennessee — Knoxville, Chattanooga, Kingsport, and Johnson City — who had more substantial African American populations were forming NAACP chapters throughout the early 1940s. It was in large part because of the mobilized African American populations in East Tennessee, that Newport residents were able to call upon outside resources and effect change in a system that had them so disenfranchised.

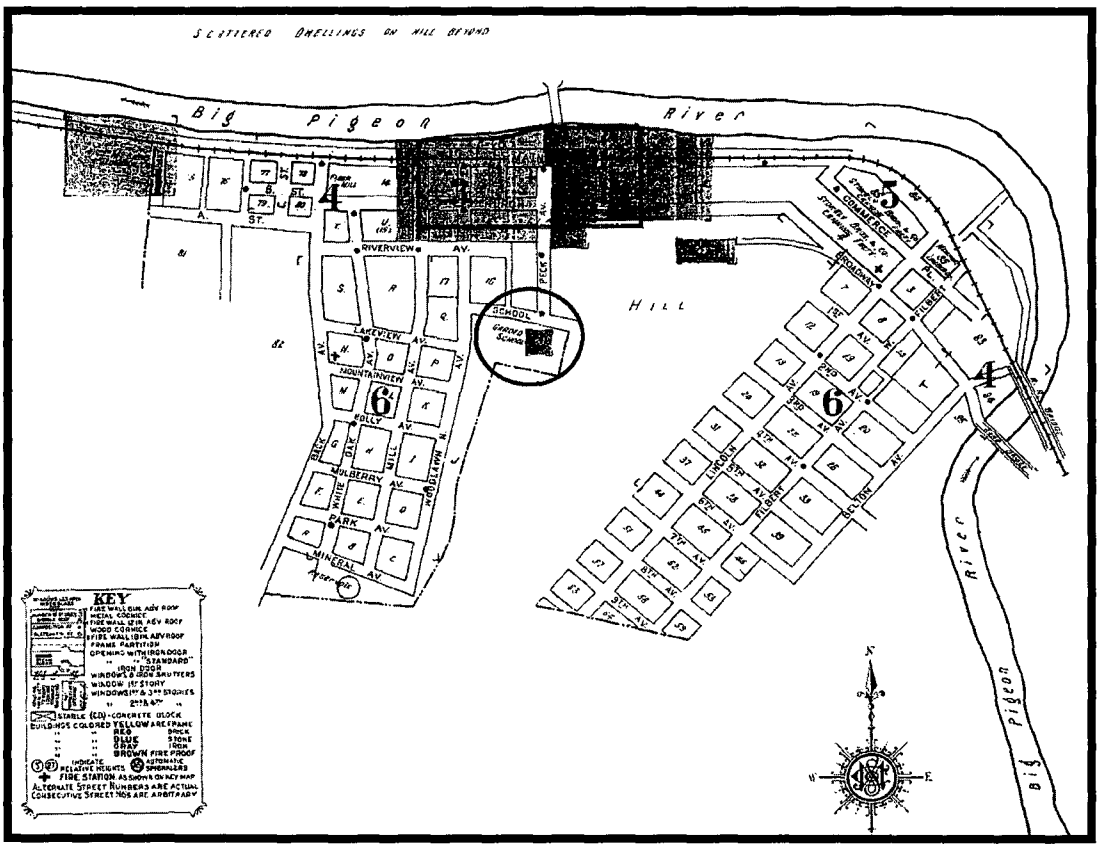

Figure 3.10. 1920 Sanborn map of Newport. Circle around the whites-only school added by the author.

A map can often illustrate powerful truths in ways that numbers or a narrative cannot. The 1920 Sanborn Fire Insurance maps of Newport demonstrated how geography helped to create a divided town. Two strips in this map are labeled with a "6,"

but the one on the right is a white residential neighborhood while the one on the left demarks the Jones Hill neighborhood. The circle on this map highlights the campus that contained the white elementary school, which was right across the street from the white high school. The city extended School Street during the 1920s run over the hill and it served as a conduit for the white students who lived on that side of the hill. More importantly, it demonstrates that when African American residents of Jones Hill went into town to do business, they would pass by the primary white educational campus located right at the edge of their neighborhood. That site would have served as a constant reminder that while no funds went to Tanner School (located in the southwest corner of the neighborhood), these white schools continued to have improvements.

This layout for the schools proved problematic for the Sanborn Fire Insurance Company as the city grew, though, because the schools that served the growing white neighborhood were not geographically associated with that place. This meant that in the detailed pages for each of the areas of town after 1920, Sanborn excised a section in the Jones Hill vicinity and included it in the detailed map page of the white side of town. The truly unfortunate part of this is that the detail on the white high school was repeatedly abridged to fit on this awkward layout, thus eliminating some of the evidence of privilege.

On the other hand, this awkward attempt at segregating the town of Newport shows how difficult it was to separate the living and working spaces of towns in the American south. Before urban renewal campaigns of the middle to late twentieth century, blacks and whites lived and worked along side of one another, which was part of

why social mechanisms of segregation were so much more obvious in the American South. In the rest of the country where the growing cities developed as segregated spaces, that physical separation negated the "need" for a white power structure to implement social segregation.

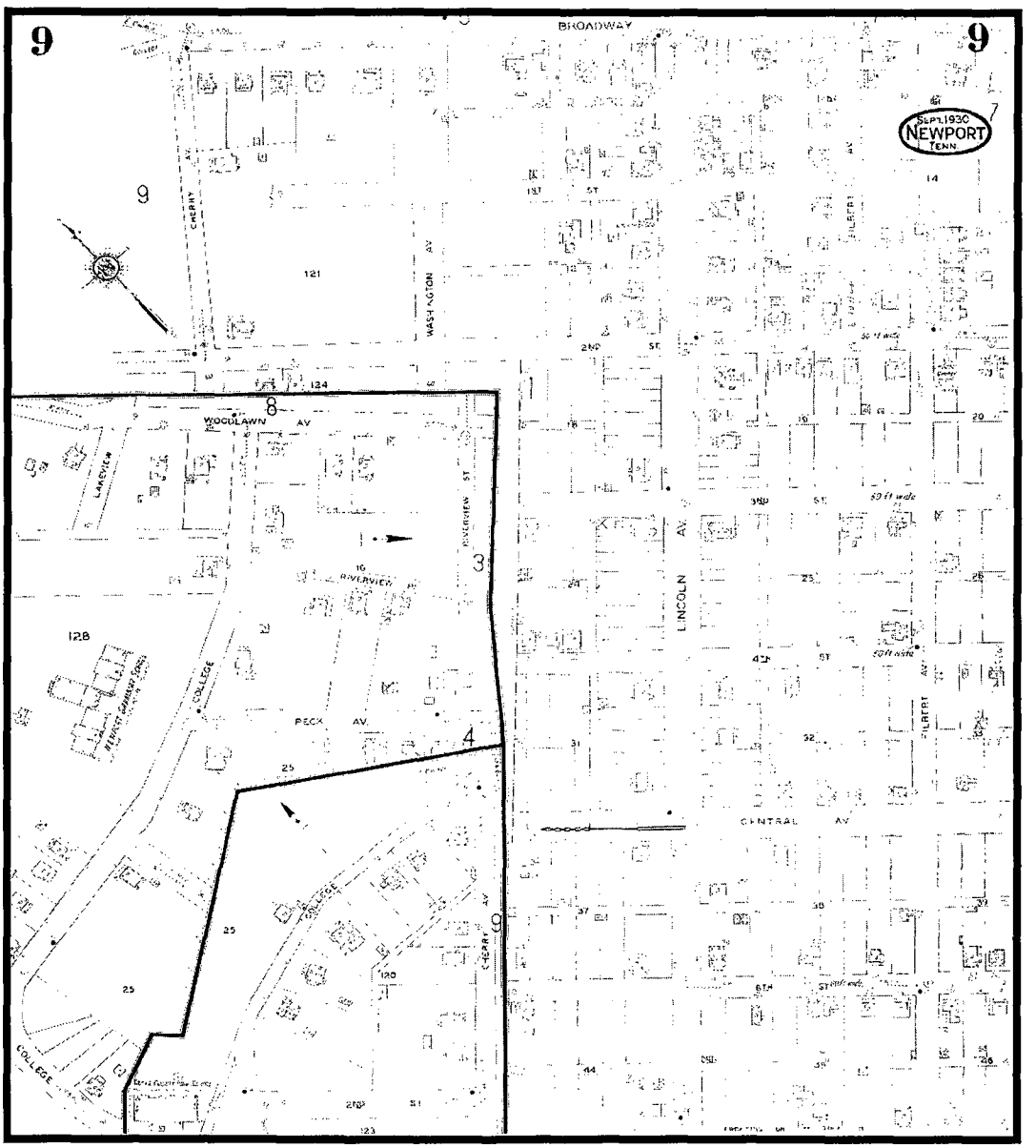

Figure 3.11. Sanborn detail map of white side of Newport in 1930, including the premier white elementary and high school located over the hill from that neighborhood. (Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps)

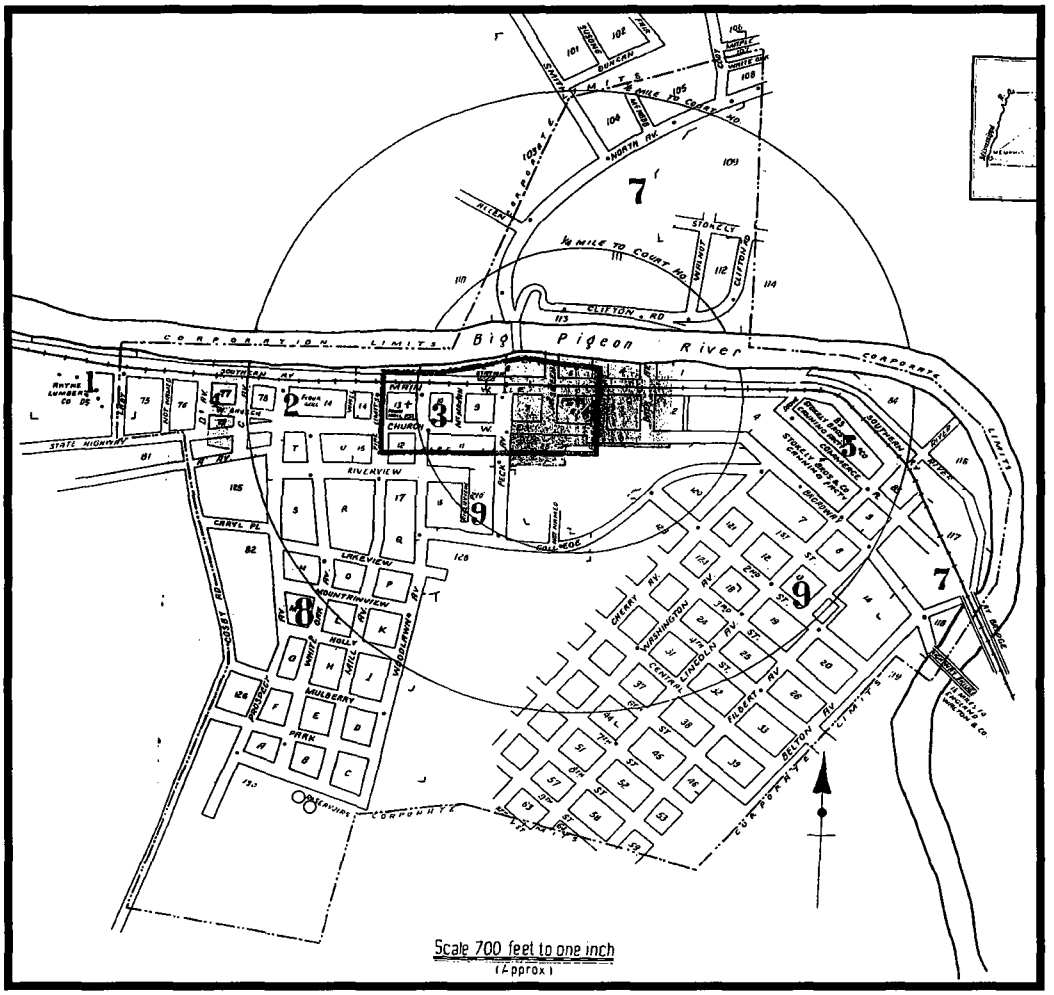

Figure 3.12. 1930 Sanborn map. Even though Newport continued to grow, the primary white educational campus continued to be platted with the all-white neighborhood over the hill. By 1927, the city had extended the road to connect it directly to the white neighborhood over the hill and had renamed it from "school" to "college."

Despite the convoluted attempts at visually separating the mixed-race, working class neighborhood from the more affluent white residential side of town, or the attempts to "forget" the African American community by Newport's continual financial neglect of Tanner School, the African American spaces are a vital part of the Newport townscape and the wider landscape of Cocke County. There is no way to separate out the African American spaces from the rest of Newport just as there is no way to edit out the African

American component to Cocke County's legacy and still be able to tell a story that makes sense and is complete. In order to move away from a problematic, overly stereotyped, and fictionalized past, Cocke County must address the entire story of its people and its places. The Newport-Cocke County Museum, run by the county historical society, currently tells part of the story, but the site of Tanner School has the potential to expand that story into something more significant and more complete.

Heritage Tourism Options

The Tanner School building is again serving the needs of the community by housing several non-profits that offer a wide variety of community outreach programs. The members of the community and programs in the building would like for this tradition to continue. A heritage use is an ideal function for the building because it ensures that Tanner School continues to be a place of gathering, education, and support for the community at large. While no longer serving the original purpose of the building, it continues the spirit of what African American schools meant to the wider community.

In addition to the current efforts, Tanner could also serve a much wider audience through heritage tourism programming. By inviting tourists to experience the heritage and legacy of Tanner School, it would increase the visibility of Tanner's mission while also strengthening it as a community institution. Through exhibits about Cocke County's African American heritage, Tanner would financially give back to the community through tourist dollars and socially by increasing the dialogue for a more comprehensive local

history. Indirectly, this heritage site would support social justice by celebrating a previously marginalized story.

While the exhibits and driving tours of African American resources in Cocke County would ideally be designed and marketed for all audiences, the African American tourist audience continues to be a largely untapped resource for the Appalachian region. For the heritage and cultural tourism industry, many destinations and sites are seeking to actively pursue African American tourists, since they are one of the three fastest growing markets in the travel industry and is ranked as the most stable and resilient market segment. Also of interest to cultural attractions, African American tourists are more likely to travel in groups and 73% of African American households travel yearly.[35]

Perhaps the largest trend setter for this phenomenon in heritage tourism is the city of Philadelphia. In 1988, the city decided to corner the minority tourist market and it is currently the top destination for African American tourists, bringing in $400 million annually. Aside from the tourist dollars this market brings in to the city, the way that they have reshaped themselves to be appealing to that tourist audience has increased diversity, cultural enrichment, and quality of life for all of Philadelphia's residents. All of those factors have created a more stable business community in Philadelphia, so the benefits are profound in both direct and indirect ways.[36]

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[35] Aisha Sylvester, "What's the Black Travel Market Worth?" *Black Enterprise* (January 2008): 54.

[36] Elizabeth Grant, "Race and Tourism in America's First City," *Journal of Urban History 31,* vol. 6 (2005): 850-871.

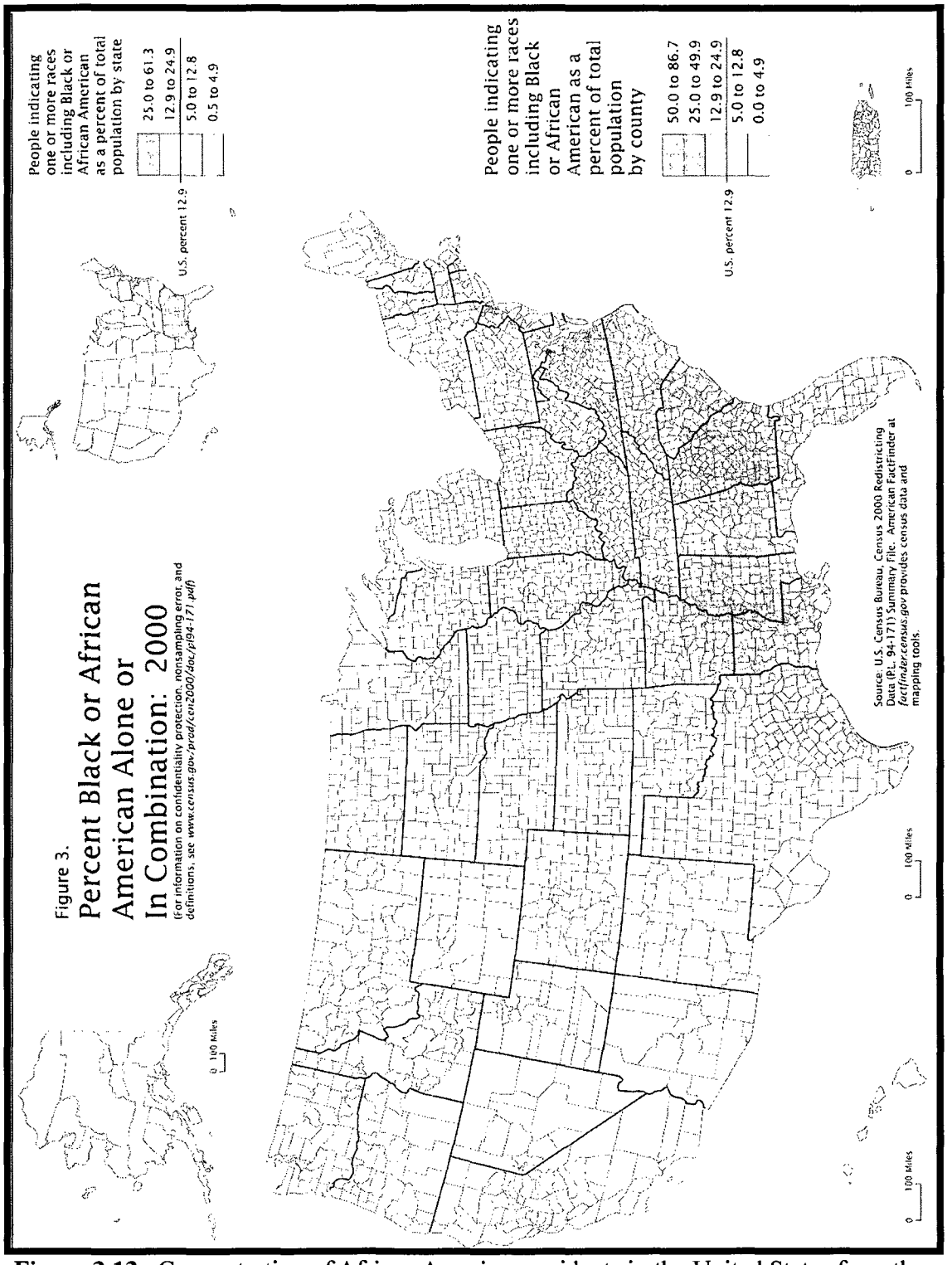

Figure 3.13. Concentration of African American residents in the United States from the 2000 US Census.

There are currently over a million African Americans in Tennessee and the majority of the African American population in the United States lives within easy driving distance. With an uncertain economy limiting the distance from home that people are traveling, African American tourists will most likely be looking to stay closer to home. Tennessee is ideally geographically situated in relation to the African American tourist audience. While current economic troubles and unstable gasoline prices may cause a decrease in other types of visitors, it could also increase the ease of marketing to the regional African American audience.

Building off of the success of the annual Tennessee Picnic celebration, a driving tour of nearby African American sites and an interpretive experience at Tanner School could widen an already established African American heritage tourist tradition in Cocke County. Rather than only being an annual event, like the Tennessee Picnic, using a part of Tanner school as a visitor center and the availability of a driving tour could make African American heritage tourism a year-long event.

An African American heritage tourism project in Cocke County should emphasize strong roots and true stories. Unlike other parts of East Tennessee, which are highly commercialized, the authentic setting and traditions of Cocke County strengthen the context for any heritage tourism programming.

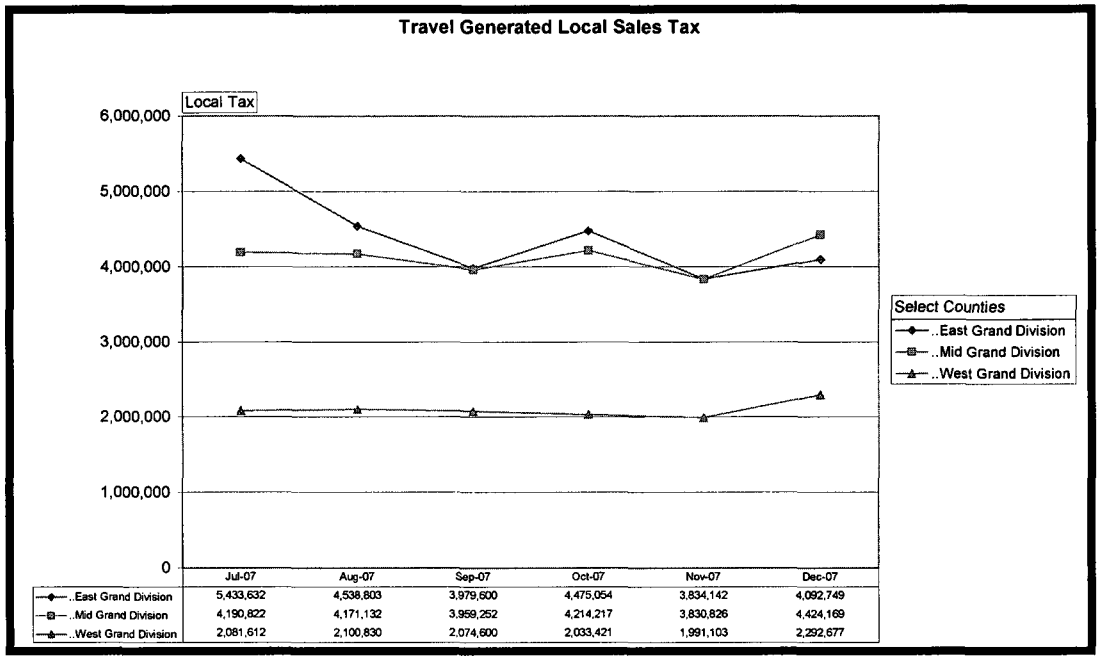

Figure 3.14. Local Sales Tax by Grand Division of Tennessee for 2008. (Tennessee Department of Tourist Development)

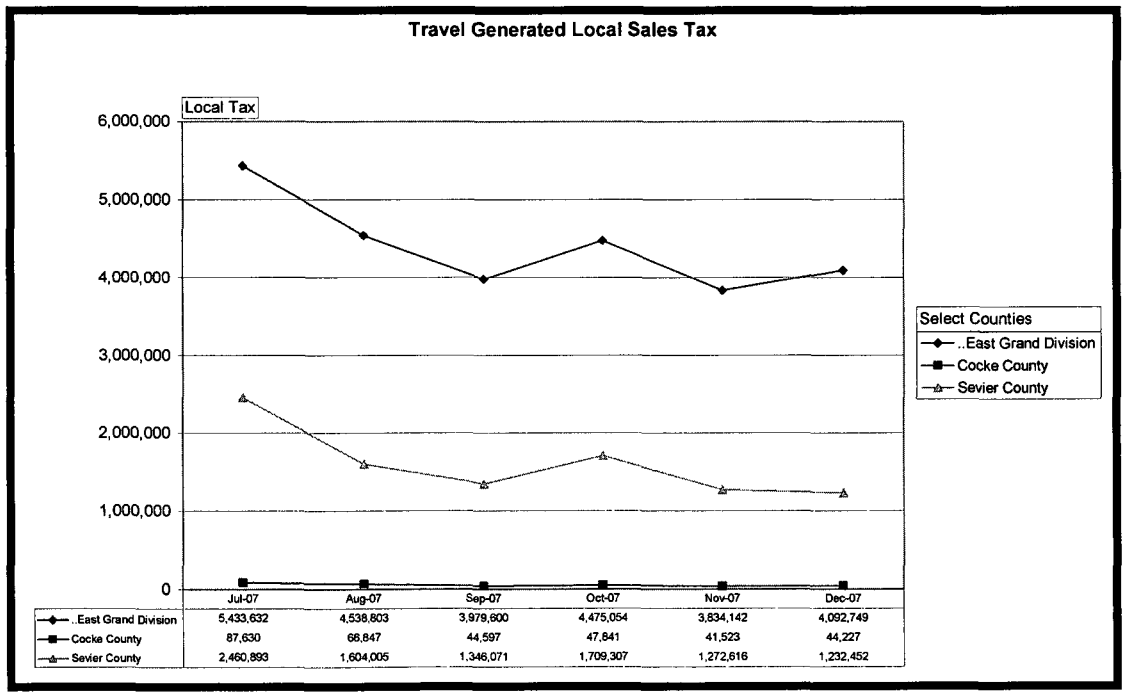

Figure 3.15 Local Sales Tax of Cocke County and East Tennessee for 2008. (Tennessee Department of Tourist Development)

Adaptive Reuse Plan for Tanner School

Ideally, Tanner School could host a small visitor center in one easily publicly accessible room. The best location for this visitor center would be one of the rooms that are on the first floor with a door near the parking lot. It is important that visitors are able to easily find the visitor center and that they do not need to walk far to get there. There is ample parking in front of the basement access doors, which also happen to face the road. Making it as easy as possible for visitors to find the property, as well as ease of entry will greatly increase the possible success of a visitor center.

While the Cocke County museum and visitor center is immediately adjacent to Tanner, the museum keeps infrequent hours, and in order to enter the building, a visitor needs to park relatively far away and then must climb uphill to enter the building. This will deter elderly and disabled visitors from even attempting a visit. Because of this problem, Tanner School has the opportunity to serve those visitors who might not otherwise be able to access the Cocke County visitor center and museum. In addition to this underserved audience, all other visitors will have the convenience of being able to visit two visitor centers in one stop. Rather than being competition, a Tanner School visitor center enhances services already available in that location. It is complementary to the story currently available to the public in addition to being more physically accessible.

Whichever room houses the visitor center, it is important to have easily visible signage that people can see from the road, and then signage on or next to the building itself that clearly directs visitors where to go. If the visitor center is in a room that is not immediately accessible by an exterior door, then there needs to be clear signage inside the

building directing visitors to the correct location. The point is to be as welcoming and visitor friendly as possible.

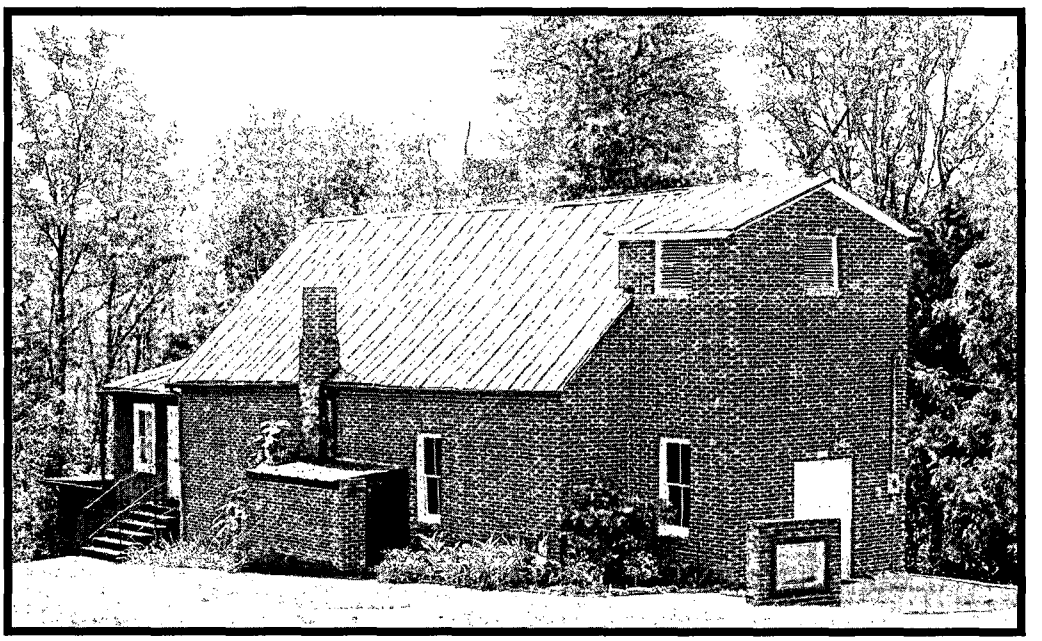

Figure 3.16. Exterior of Allen Chapel Baptist Church, in rural east Cocke County. (Photo by Carroll Van West)

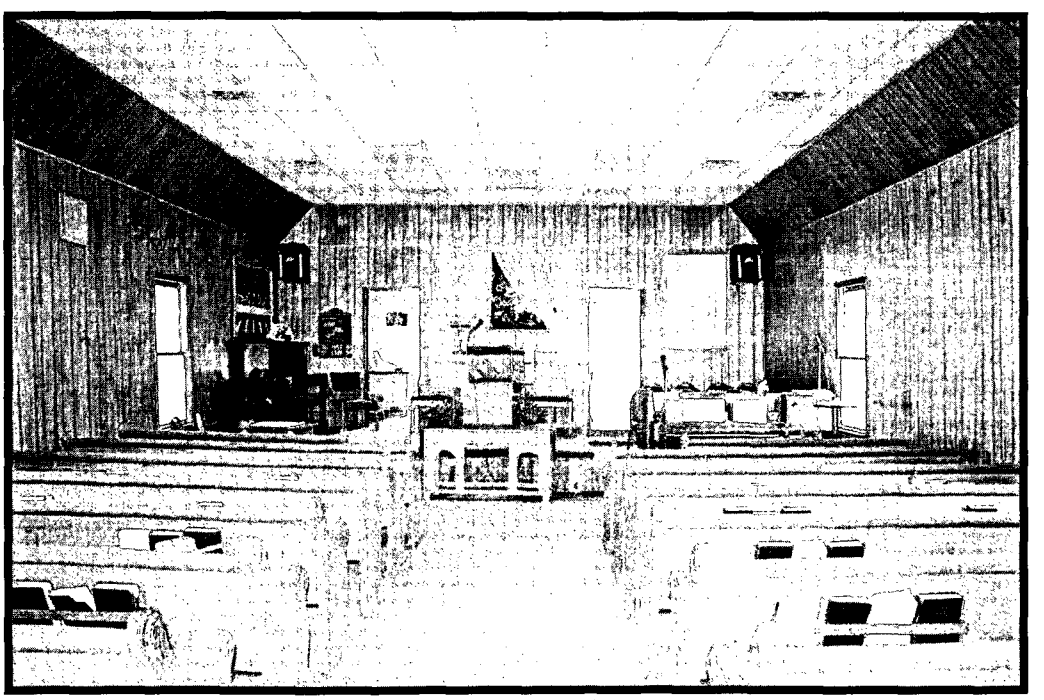

Figure 3.17. Interior of Allen Chapel Baptist Church. (Photo by Carroll Van West)

Because the visitor center would serve both tourists and residents alike, it would need to balance both of those needs. Ideally, the room would contain interpretive panels, most likely attached to the wall. These panels would discuss the history of the school, the African American heritage of Cocke County, and identify the sites that speak to that heritage. While the visitor center should probably avoid becoming a collecting institution, it could offer a few mementos from the past such as yearbooks that residents and visitors could read through.

Themes for the visit could include a history of Tanner School, the Tennessee Picnic, and a history of African Americans in Cocke County as told through the remaining African American heritage landmarks still in the county. While these are all large topics, it is important to keep in mind what makes a good exhibit: brevity. An exhibit is not meant to be a book on a wall. A good exhibit has simple sentences and short paragraphs, but a minimum of text. The best parts of exhibits are the stories told by pictures and other images. If visitors want more information on the subject, they can read a history of these topics. A quality visitor center orients guests with solid contextual information without overwhelming those visitors with too much information. Also, while the exhibits only provide a virtual experience of Cocke County's African American heritage, if there is ever a problem with reprinting a driving tour of the heritage sites in the county, this exhibit can always fill that gap.

In addition to these exhibit panels, the visitor center should probably also have ample chairs or benches for visitors to rest and for community members to gather. Because there are insurance, liability, and security issues when an institution decides to

accept donated items (which is why the Cocke County museum is often closed), it is probably wisest for Tanner not to accept any donated artifacts. If there are extra yearbooks that people do not mind if they go missing, then this might be an exception. Unlike the museum models of the past, which tended towards static displays and costly maintenance of artifacts, this visitor and cultural center should look into using items and interacting with the stories. The sacred relics are left on the landscape and those need to be preserved. But photographs and memory books can be reproduced so that all can share in them.

In this way, the exhibits could be enhanced with a "memory book." This could contain scanned historic photographs, yearbook pages, stories, etc. The memory book could then be available for alumni or descendents to flip through when they visit. It would also serve as a conversation piece when community members gather there to socialize. This approach has been very successful with the International Sites of Conscience as a way to grow from tragic or oppressive events, learn from those stories, and implement ongoing strategies to better the communities around them. In addition to this type of memory book, the visitor center could also have available paper and pencil for visitors to write down their memories and stories. They can also make available information for how people can contribute digital information (be it sending a story in email, sending in a digitized image, or creating a time when a volunteer could digitize items for those who want to contribute the likeness of their heritage treasures). In addition to inviting community involvement and participation in the exhibit space, these options are easily renewable, thus sustainable. If a copy of the memory book wanders off

or is damaged, it is not a great concern. The book was just digital to begin with (and should be stored on a CD and/or a computer); the staff can always reprint it or easily expanded it.

Sustaining through Reclaiming

Newport's concentration of African American resources, particularly both the physical and ephemeral items relating to Tanner School, in Newport make it the ideal place to initiate a purposeful cultural conservation program paired with a sustainable tourism ethic. Because there are also many resources dotting the rural areas of the county, a visitor center in Newport is further strengthened through having the opportunity to provide context to visitors and send them out to explore that significant landscape. Building off of the continual interest and participation in the Tennessee Picnic, an African American heritage trail could open the more complex story of Appalachian history to a wider audience and generate an interest in conserving and utilizing the built and natural environment that frames those stories. There are rich and powerful stories of a more diverse mountain heritage and currently there are still the people to tell it and many of the authentic places to tell it in.

CHAPTER 4

KEEPING IT REAL

HERITAGE TOURISM AS AUTHENTIC PUBLIC HISTORY

Sustainability is not a new concept. Sustainable tourism is also not a new concept. How we think about sustainability, particularly how it relates to tourism has changed in recent years and become a pressing issue. There is a wealth of research and thought on the subject by scholars, practitioners, and activists.[1] This wealth of knowledge, in turn, has increased education and sensitivity on the part of the general public, particularly the traveling public. Recent economic stresses, environmental problems, and social turmoil over cultural identity have brought about the discussion of sustainability. Much more than just a buzzword or a passing trend, sustainability has become a mainstream term and issue.

In 2008, the internationally influential English Heritage published *Conservation Principles: Policies and Guidance for the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment* , in which they asserted the basic principles for sustainability:

> The historic environment is constantly changing, but each significant part of it represents a finite resource. If it is not sustained, not only are its heritage values eroded or lost, but so is its potential to give distinctiveness, meaning and quality to the places in which people live, and provide people with a sense of continuity

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[1] The *Journal of Sustainable Tourism* has been in operation since 1993, and a whole host of similar journals have sprung up in the meantime

> and a source of identity. The historic environment is a social and economic asset and a cultural resource for learning and enjoyment.[2]

This definition concisely underscores a position that American organizations have reached in recent years largely due to two decades of collaborations between historic preservation, economic development, environmentalism protection, and tourist development. The National Trust's Main Street program, for example, grew out of a 1977 pilot project. When the National Trust officially promoted it as a nationwide program, Tennessee was one of the first states to participate.[3] A different example is how groups have coalesced around foodways initiatives.[4] In particular, this style of sustainable practice has found a home in the National Park Service's National Heritage Areas program, which was founded in 1984. While the Rivers of Steel National Heritage Area promotes sustaining the larger cultural legacy of western Pennsylvania, what has won them recognition is how they incorporated a public foodways model into their programming.[5] Foodways programs are not only sustainable and promote regional identity, but they tend to sidestep the pitfalls of projects the favor one socio-economic demographic over another.

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[2] English Heritage, *Conservation Principles: Policies and Guidance for the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment* (London: English Heritage, 2008), 67.

[3] Ann Toplovich, 'Main Street Moves Ahead," *The Tennessee Conservationist* 50, no. 3 (1984): 2-4.

[4] Patricia Atkinson Wells, "Public Folklore in the Twenty-first Century: New Challenges for the Discipline," *Journal of American Folklore* 119, no. 471 (2006): 5-18.

[5] Millie Rahn, "Laying a Place at the Table: Creating Public Foodways Models from Scratch," *Journal of American Folklore* 119, no. 471 (2006): 30-46.

However, sustainability and heritage tourism cannot subsist on one style of programming alone, even one as appealing as foodways. Tennessee's Department of Tourist Development initiated its sustainable tourism initiative with previous research and models at its disposal, but what made its program a success was the collaboration between experienced partners. The National Geographic Society, specifically their Center for Sustainable Destinations, initiated a partnership with the Tennessee Department of Tourist Development and the Great Smoky Mountains National Park after National Geographic issued a report about the troubling environmental and cultural erosion in both the park and its gateway communities. In particular, a National Geographic survey named the towns of Gatlinburg and Pigeon Forge as problem gateway communities.[6] This report detailed the problems with the park and the surrounding communities and designated the Great Smoky Mountains National Park as one of three national parks to earn the designation of "Rock Bottom." Not only did this scathing critique come out in print, but it is still available online.[7]

The Great Smoky Mountain National Park is the most visited national park in the country. The park and the attractions in Pigeon Forge, Gatlinburg, and Sevierville are Tennessee's largest tourism draws. National Geographic's report greatly concerned officials at the Tennessee Department of Tourist Development because tourism is the state's largest non-agricultural industry, and with a sales-tax-based economy it is

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[6] National Geographic, "National Park Destinations Rated," *National Geographic Traveler*, July 2005, http://traveler.nationalgeographic.com/2005/07/destinations-rated, accessed December 29, 2009.

[7] Ibid.

important to the larger state government that tourism sites remain productive. This report was important to the national park because it was preparing to celebrate its 75th anniversary. Being identified as a "rock bottom" park was not the sort of press National Park Service officials needed or wanted. The concern of these two groups led to a discussion between them and National Geographic which resulted in the National Geographic's Center for Sustainable Destinations to propose a three-year demonstration project to assist with rehabilitating the park's gateways. Instead of just labeling the Great Smoky Mountains as the second most blighted national park in the country, National Geographic wanted to be a part of a solution. National Geographic proposed a diverse model that would involve a variety of stakeholders and creative partnerships.[8]

After several conference calls, and a meeting at Maryville, Tennessee, the resulting coalition involved Tennessee Department of Tourist Development, Great Smoky Mountains National Park, Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area, and several divisions from the University of Tennessee. While institutions from North Carolina were a part of National Geographic's initial email exchanges, once National Geographic stepped back to let the partners create an initiative, the states decided to coordinate complementary initiatives rather than one large regional initiative.[9] On Tennessee's side, the coalition decided to produce a series of town hall forums in November 2007 at the Tennessee gateway communities. Tennessee Department of

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[8] National Geographic Center for Sustainable Destinations, "Great Smoky Mountains Geotourism Initiative: Healthy Communities, Healthy Parks, Healthy Visits," memo proposal, 7 June 2007.

[9] Cheryl Hargrove, email correspondence with Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area and Blue Ridge National Heritage Area, 29 March 2007.

Tourist Development, the Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area, and the University of Tennessee Institute of Public Service worked together on these forums. A second set of follow-up forums too place in February 2008.[10]

At these town hall forums, more than 400 community and industry leaders attended to discuss their concerns, possible opportunities, and to identify some workable projects they could complete within the three year National Geographic demonstration period. The forums proved a useful venue for community members to learn what was already going on in their areas and they served as incubators for grassroots initiatives. The attendees were encouraged by the promise of learning how to more effectively implement their projects at the upcoming Great Smoky Mountains Sustainable Tourism Summit in Knoxville, April 28-29, 2008. Tennessee Department of Tourist Development billed that conference as a gathering of experts and case studies that would specifically focus on these gateway communities in order to make them balanced and sustainable tourist environments.

As word of the summit spread, more possible partners wanted to participate in the Knoxville meeting. The summit became a two-day conference with thirty case studies, seventy speakers (including the Governor of Tennessee, members of Congress, and the Secretary of the Interior. The Tennessee Department of Tourist Development accepted all submitted material and produced a giant "tool box" of material, both pertinent and barely associated with sustainable tourism. Only one summit session placed a focus on the gateway communities. The participants of the earlier forums took that opportunity to

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[10] Tennessee Department of Tourist Development, "Sustainable Results," 18 July 2008.

voice their frustration. One audience member compared the multiple sessions, the huge tool box, and the influential talking heads as giving him two tons of feed and only one feed bag to fit it all into.[11]

The summit generated interest on the part of other communities across the state and created media buzz for the Tennessee Department of Tourist Development. The Great Smoky Mountains gateway communities started on their demonstration projects, but Tennessee Department of Tourist Development never followed up on progress in these communities. Instead they organized similar one-day summits across the state that served as informational and promotional venues. The department organized no follow-up projects in the gateway communities. Nor did the department take the next step for a continuing partnership with National Geographic. National Geographic's participation ended with the Knoxville summit because Tennessee Department of Tourist Development shifted the focus of the campaign away from demonstration projects and measurable results for a specific region to a statewide information campaign.

Some of these communities continued on with their grassroots efforts and implemented what would have been their demonstration projects. Some did this through grants from the Appalachian Regional Commission, others through partnerships with other Tennessee agencies. The projects involving the Center for Historic Preservation at Middle Tennessee and the Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area in these gateway

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[11] "Sustainable Tourism Town Hall Forum," video of session at Great Smoky Mountains Sustainable Tourism Summit, 29 April 2008, Knoxville, TN, http://www.tnvacation.com/sustainable/multimedia/, accessed on 7 March 7, 2010.

communities involved ongoing work with Gatlinburg and the African American communities in Cocke County.

Gatlinburg had already initiated changes in response to the condemning report from National Geographic in 2005. While Gatlinburg officials recognized that National Geographic's criticism identified a fundamental weakness in their tourism programs. Gatlinburg had long ago lost its initial image as a haven for authentic mountain culture and crafts or a place to experience the beauty of the Smoky Mountains. By century's end, the town's image was synonymous with kitsch and the erosion of natural and cultural resources. White the Tennessee Sustainable Tourism campaign helped generate local interest, Gatlinburg largely implemented their own changes. The Center for Historic Preservation at Middle Tennessee helped to reframe the Gatlinburg image through an inventory of historic resources. That inventory, led to a series of nominations to the National Register of Historic Places (beginning in 2007 and still ongoing) also provided by the Center for Historic Preservation. The city also adopted new architectural guidelines in 2008.[12] The new guidelines endeavor to accent the historic resources and

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[12] Susan Knowles and Carroll Van West, *Pi Beta Phi Settlement School*, National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form, Tennessee Historical Commission, Nashville, TN, March 2007; Susan Knowles and Carroll Van West, *Pi Beta Phi Settlement School Dormitories and Dwellings Historic District*, National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, Tennessee Historical Commission, Nashville, TN, March 2007; Susan Knowles and Carroll Van West, *Settlement School Community Outreach Historic District*, National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, Tennessee Historical Commission, Nashville, TN, July 2007; Carroll Van West, *Gatlinburg First United Methodist Church*, National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, Tennessee Historical Commission, Nashville, TN, July 2007; Kristen Luetkemeier and Carroll Van West, *Gatlinburg Historic and Cultural Resources*, National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form, Tennessee Historical Commission, Nashville, TN, October 2008; "Gatlinburg Architectural

shape new construction to enhance rather than overshadow those authentic resources. In addition to addressing the historic and cultural preservation issues, the city took steps to address their environmental sustainability through their "Gatlinburg Goes Green" campaign in February 2008, and took the first step towards viewshed issues in the "Hillside Ridge Taskforce Summary Report," in July 2008.

In nearby Cocke County, a concerned group of citizens asked the Center for Historic Preservation to help tell the African American story of their region. An intensive survey of resources in the county and an adaptive reuse recommendation for a former Rosenwald school led to a heritage development report for the county.[13] The community group has used that report to begin efforts to preserve those African American resources in the county, restoration of the former Tanner School building, and implementation of a Cocke County African American tourism campaign.

Despite the shift in focus for the Tennessee Sustainable Tourism initiative, the Center for Historic Preservation at Middle Tennessee and the Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area continued on as partners with the Tennessee Department of Tourist Development. They participated in all mini summits across the state and supplied a PhD student (this author) to serve as the liaison between them.

The Center for Historic Preservation at Middle Tennessee and the heritage area promoted its free services at the mini summits and continued to develop projects inline

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Guidelines," City of Gatlinburg, April 2008.

[13] Heather Bailey, Amanda Hall, Paul Hoffman, Katherine Looney, Katie Merzbacher, Elizabeth Moore, Carroll Van West, *A Legacy to Be Preserved and Celebrated: African American Heritage Resources in Cocke County, Tennessee* (Murfreesboro, TN: Center for Historic Preservation at Middle Tennessee, 2008).

with the demonstration projects that National Geographic had proposed. As time progressed, the Tennessee Department of Tourist Development began to shift its focus almost entirely to environmental issues and promoting models of green projects. Coincidentally, this shift happened as the Tennessee Department of Tourist Development began to work more closely with the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation. As a result, most historic preservation and cultural conservation work found a home in Tourism's Tennessee Civil War Trails campaign.

One of these Civil War–focused projects involved a consortium of counties that bordered the Tennessee River (Benton, Decatur, Henry, Henderson, Stewart, Perry, and Wayne counties) to develop a mini documentary and driving tour of Civil War sites in this area (available on DVD and through a dedicated website).[14] Despite all of these counties being categorized as "economically distressed" by the state, they were able to creatively pool together their resources for a quality production. They did this in part through a grant from the heritage area and one from the Tennessee Department of Tourist Development for promotional pieces.

The Buford Pusser Home and Museum had contacted the Center for Historic Preservation before the Tennessee Sustainable Tourism initiative came into being, but as their partnership evolved, the ethic of sustainability shaped the end results. As part of the capacity building at the museum, their staff is now actively engaged in heritage tourism programming. Their efforts resulted in the "Walking Tall Trail" as part of the *Discover Tennessee's Scenic Trails and Byways* program launched in late 2009 by Tennessee

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[14] Heather L. Bailey, "Tennessee River Civil War Trails Sources Guide," Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area, Murfreesboro, Tennessee, 2009.

Department of Tourist Development. Similar to a regional heritage area approach, that program identified central themes that would tie together regional historic, cultural, and natural resources. Inexplicitly, the Tennessee Department of Tourist Development forgot its own advice from the sustainable tourism summits: grassroots initiatives were the only effective method. Instead the new Discover Tennessee trail program was top-down tourism marketing at its worst. Officials developed these themes without consulting communities or audiences within these regions. While the campaign has great potential, the short deadline to create the trails, unwillingness to modify the themes, and Tennessee Department of Tourist Development's demand for enthusiastic participation has led to some understandable resentment across the state.

As the sustainable tourism concept continues to evolve in Tennessee there are mixed results. The grassroots campaigns that kept a tight, yet integrated, focus developed successful projects. On the other hand, the lack of consistent guidance from the Tennessee Department of Tourist Development makes it difficult for communities that are not already savvy to these concepts to take the first step towards creating a sustainable tourism project.

Lessons Learned and Guidance for the Future.

One of the major failings of the sustainable tourism initiative in Tennessee was the unwillingness of the Tennessee Department of Tourist Development to evaluate the quality of the case studies or guidance they received. Instead, the Department often flooded communities with too much information, often much of it not pertinent, and

ultimately created a very unfocused initiative. As public history continues to be engaged with heritage tourism, a number of case studies can inform what happened in Tennessee.

All quality scholarship and even effective community projects are grounded in solid and well tested theory. Ian Tyrrell's *Historians in Public* emphasizes: "Shotgun attacks on specialization over the next hundred years masked several problems and issues: narrow topics, specialized language, dull style, and loss of audience and narrative coherence."[15] While highly specialized products tend to be a failing of public historians who do not slow down to consider their public audience, this ended up not being the problem in Tennessee. Perhaps the Tennessee Department of Tourist Development thought that the heritage area's insistence of being selective about case studies and keeping focused on specific end products is what ultimately led it to be relegated to the Tennessee Civil War Trails initiative. While the Tennessee Sustainable Tourism initiative had its failings, some of the case studies that resulted from its campaign were successful. Other scholars have developed numerous case studies that show how powerful and effective public history work can be for communities and demonstrate how history can be relevant to diverse audiences.

Dolores Hayden's *The Power of Place* ties together community history and how communities construct identity by showing just how those communities honor and reinvest in their local heritage.[16] Hayden's case studies are interdisciplinary and

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[15] Ian Tyrrell, *Historians in Public: The Practice of American History, 1890-1970* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 25.

[16] Dolores Hayden, *The Power of Place: Urban Landscapes as Public History*, (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1995).

culturally complex, which makes them more sustainable and bring in a wider range of community-based support (be it social or financial). Hayden also emphasized the importance of collaborations between history and art groups. While the craft and art communities are pivotal in the Great Smoky Mountain gateway communities, they were equally important in other communities across the state. Interacting with history in a public space requires some form of creative expression in order for people to connect to it. Public spaces are ideally integrated spaces where many different walks of life co-exist and different historical narratives also exist.

Public history-focused studies of heritage tourism also have value. Marita Sturken's *Tourists of History* and C. Brenden Martin's *Tourism in the Mountain South* are two representative examples.[17] While most tourism professionals tend to err on the side of boosterism, most histories of tourism are dark and stress the failings of tourism and how it corrupts local authenticity. Sturken's look at tourism and consumerism at sites of recent national disasters delves into an area known in leisure studies as dark tourism. Her focus on the how Americans commercialized their trauma fleshes out a dynamic of heritage tourism that constantly raises its head heritage infused sites: how we go about remembering the past. Civil War sites, which are prominent in the southern tourism environment, have gone through several styles of reframing the past to make it more palatable to the tourist audience of the time. Many of those interpretations have very challenging authenticity issues.

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[17] Marita Sturken, *Tourists of History: Memory, Kitsch, and Consumerism from Oklahoma City to Ground Zero* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007). C. Brenden Martin, *Tourism in the Mountain South: A Double-Edged Sword* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2007).

Sturken examines "the ways that American culture processes, makes sense of, and smoothes over loss, and the consequences of what I see as the U.S. tourist relationship to history and global conflict."[18] Her interpretation of reenactments at the Oklahoma City site are not that they are designed to commemorate and keep alive the emotional tie to the bombing, but that repetition helps to deaden the pain of tragedy and becomes a psychological mechanism that helps individuals cope with the tragedy. It degrades the emotional clarity of the experience. She makes a similar argument for how Americans turn to consumerism as a way to commemorate great tragedies. It is almost like a form of emotional eating, but instead of eating away our emotions, we are consuming in a more global sense as a way to deaden our insights and emotions. Both the mechanisms of consumerism and commemoration help to distance us from the consequences, reasons, and impacts of tragic events and Sturken argues that this is the greatest tragedy of the whole dynamic.

While her study focuses on a particularly grim aspect of tourism, it does help to set the boundary for tourism at its worst and brings into sharp contrast one of the major pitfalls of heritage tourism. Brenden Martin does something similar in his history of tourism in the South's mountain regions. His analysis of how tourism shaped these mountain communities found that residents allowed their greed for the promised financial impact of tourism to social and economically disenfranchise the poor and non-whites while also pushing out authentic local businesses, craftsman, traditions, and historic and natural landscapes. Martin concludes: "By heeding the lessons of tourism's history,

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[18] Sturken, *Tourists of History*, 290.

communities can avoid the pitfalls of tourism and reap its potential benefits."[19] In short, what both of these studies do is shed light on the ways in which tourism can be culturally destructive. They are both lessons for communities and professionals in how not to construct heritage tourism ventures.

In a similar vein, Ann Denkler's focus of how different publics have interacted with local history through tourism provides insight into specific ways that public history can open history to a more diverse audience. Her *Sustaining Identity, Recapturing Heritage* moves away from the typical history of tourism and provides specific case studies and recommendations for how to make heritage tourism more equitable and also more accurate.[20] While the argument from elites controlling the tourism product and the historical narrative tends to be that accurate history is not good tourism, Denkler shows that quality heritage tourism is good social justice, has a wider economic impact, and is accurate history. Set in the Shenandoah Valley, much of her case studies focus on the racial disparities of heritage tourism. But rather than just being intellectually stimulating, her study reads like a heritage development plan, which the community could then take and implement quality heritage tourism. As is the goal of most public history ventures, Denkler's study both adds to the literature and is practical for a wide range of audiences. Her work had a strong influence on the heritage development report the heritage area crafted for Cocke County.

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[19] Martin, 165.

[20] Ann Denkler, *Sustaining Identity, Recapturing Heritage: Exploring Issues of Public History, Tourism, and Race in a Southern Town* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2007).

Personal Reflections and Learning Experiences

Working with the Tennessee Department of Tourist Development forced me to rethink just how to go about working within a non-academic but professional setting. Whereas academic settings required a certain set of professional terminology and called for lengthy written products, the professional tourism environment is almost word adverse. I drafted a sustainable tourism newsletter for Tennessee Department of Tourist Development and while officials appreciated the content, they also wanted me to boil down the material to a list of bullet points that accurately, but quickly described what the movement was about and what it had accomplished. On the one hand, that bullet list mindset helps to distill key concepts, on the other hand that mindset might be the culprit behind the sustainable tourism initiative losing its focus.

There are similarities with developing museum exhibits and tourism literature. In both cases, you want to convey an accurate story that intrigues an audience. And this means that you have to limit the number of words and just say what you have to say. If people want more information on a subject in a museum, you guide them to books to read (possibly in your gift shop) or sites they can visit to learn more. For tourist literature, the goal is to offer people information that encourages them to find out more and go and get that experience that you are talking about. While academic publications want words upon words, both museum and tourism publications want value-packed words and images that can keep the attention of a diverse audience.

What is the place of history in the concept of sustainable tourism? Despite many scholars bemoaning that Americans do not value history, Americans certainly invoke

history, heritage, and tradition (particularly in times of trouble). They use history to shape our identities and define our communities. Sometimes that contextualization takes on a more sinister aspect as people use history to justify their privileged status. One of the favored projects of leaders in small communities is to honor their pioneering ancestors as a way to solidify their sense of ownership and control of a community.[21] Often this comes at the cost of those who do not have power, hence why it has taken so long for the African American heritage in Cocke County to gain any sort of wider recognition.

Heritage tourism is important because it can serve as a vehicle to overcome those issues and build a stronger system. Quality heritage tourism allows a group to tell its story, honor its heritage, and contribute to the wider community. That type of diversity engages all of the groups within a community (as opposed to privileging a singular historical narrative) and creates a situation that is more socially equitable and financially sustainable. By making history interactive through heritage tourism, it allows people to feel like they have ownership in their community and a say in their identity. This approach to heritage tourism can also serve as a process of healing for dealing with particularly traumatic events or painful divisions within a community. When leaders adamantly refuse to let one group participate in heritage tourism (claiming that this group does not have a right to share their story or that their story is not the true history of the

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[21] For more on the dynamics of local history and its particular challenges, see: Carol Kammen, ed., *The Pursuit of Local History: Readings on Theory and Practice* (Walnut Creek, California: AltaMira Press, 1995).

area), then heritage tourism becomes a vehicle for enforcing divisions and sickening the social fabric of a community.

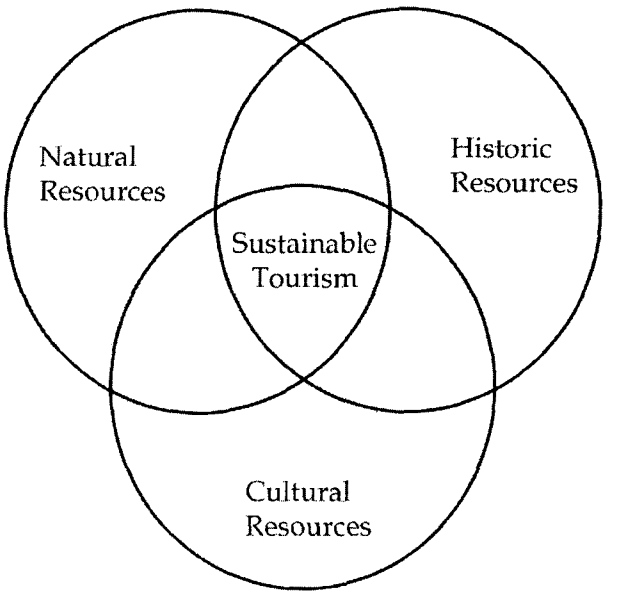

Figure 4.1. The initial model for sustainable tourism in Tennessee. (Diagram by author)

In terms of the place of heritage tourism within the framework of a sustainable tourism model, it makes sense to balance the health of the natural environment with the sustainability of the built environment, all of which create the setting for a sustainable and socially equitable cultural environment. Greening campaigns have scientifically measurable results that have helped environmentalism take the lead in sustainability models. Although the social impacts of creating a sense of place through historic preservation and increasing quality of life through cultural conservation have more indirect measures, they are no less important. The places in Tennessee that are truly making sustainability work for them are those that are developing an integrated model of sustainability and doing it through grassroots efforts. In particular, Williamson County (home to the town of Franklin) and downtown Chattanooga are at the forefront of

community initiatives in the state. In many cases they are doing this in spite of a well meaning but inconsistent state-level structure. Perhaps that helps to sustain the grassroots nature of these local campaigns.

In many of the academic histories on tourism, the authors tend to have a strong distrust of tourism or discount heritage tourism because of the dire consequences of many endeavors. While the Tennessee Sustainable Tourism initiative was challenging and in some ways disheartening, it did yield many successes that have directly benefited communities across the state. My research shows that heritage tourism is not an inherently evil tool, it is simply a tool. The difference comes in how communities utilize that tool and there are both successes and failures to illustrate this point.

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APPENDIX

GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAINS

SUSTAINABLE TOURISM TOOLBOX

Introduction

What is Sustainable Tourism?

The Tennessee Department of Tourist Development defines **sustainable tourism** as sustaining the environment, culture and heritage of a region while at the same time sustaining the economic growth through tourism. In other words, it meets the needs of the tourists and communities while also protecting and enhancing resources in the future. National Geographic's Center for Sustainable Destinations defines it as National Geographic defines its work as tourism that sustains or enhances the geographical character of a place: its environment, culture, aesthetics, heritage, and the well-being of its residents.

Sustainable tourism may just seem like yet another buzz word or industry fad, but it is really a new term for a tried and true method of economic and community development. Part of what has made it a successful strategy is its diverse nature. American history is full of stories of places relying on one type of industry and then going through extreme hardships when that industry falters: coal and timber in the Appalachians, iron in Pennsylvania and New York, automobiles in the Great Lakes. Sustainable tourism seeks to avoid those pitfalls by building on the diverse strengths already present in a community and consciously working to maintain a healthy balance.

Unchecked development can exhaust natural resources, displace local enterprises, and destroy local commitment to a place. Uncompromising conservation and preservation can stifle economic development, drive away younger job seekers, and keep a community from evolving with the times. The key is to recognize that places and people change and grow, and there are ways to plan for this growth that make it a long-term and stable investment in everyone's future.

Tourism is both an industry and a social phenomenon. In terms of the industry, communities need to address policy and planning. As a social phenomenon, communities need to learn what visitors are looking for, strive to provide a quality experience to those visitors, and also create an environment where locals feel at home in their own communities.

Sustainable Tourism in the Smoky Mountains

National Geographic, specifically their Center for Sustainable Destinations, initiated a partnership with the Tennessee Department of Tourist Development and the Great Smoky Mountains National Park after they issued a report about the troubling environmental and cultural erosion in both the park and its gateway communities. The resulting discussions

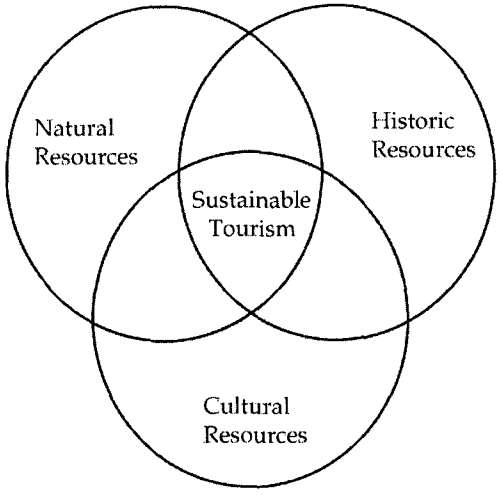
evolved into the Great Smoky Mountains Sustainable Tourism Summit of 2008 and then the larger statewide Tennessee Sustainable Tourism Initiative.

Since that time, many of the gateway communities have been working hard on implementing ecologically and culturally sensitive policies and projects as a way to increase the quality and strength of their tourism industry. The Smoky Mountains are already a destination that brings people from all around the world, so it is important to utilize that resource in the most effective way possible. While other places in the country must build attractions to draw in tourists, the communities in the Smoky Mountains have a priceless attraction that makes them a destination.

If the mountains are the primary attraction, then it is important to maintain the qualities that draw in tourists. Part of this is the natural aesthetic of the mountains. Another aspect is the culture that developed in this setting: the mountain traditions, folkways, and crafts. There are still many authentic places in the mountains and these will draw discerning tourists, while also increasing the quality of life for local residents.

Where to Get Assistance

This toolbox is designed to be a guide to resources for communities that want to conserve their natural, historic, and cultural resources as methods of economic development. Because these categories are interdependent upon one another, there is often overlap. Their very interdependent nature is what makes it so essential to balance each category in order to make sustainable tourism effective.



The natural setting is what drew the early settlers who adapted to life in the mountains, and it is what continues to draw tourists. Focusing only on natural conservation issues sets the stage for a place being falling into the trap of "green washing." The historic

setting for farms, homes, and communities is lacks meaning without their mountain setting. People could recreate an Appalachian village, but tourists have to go to the mountains to see the real thing. The cultural traditions (storytelling, old time music, mountain crafts) evolved from the diverse traditions of the settlers (Cherokee, African, German, Irish, English, Scottish, French). Those traditions continue to thrive and evolve in the natural and historic setting that created them. Each of the three categories rely upon one another, enhance one another, and set the stage for a sustainable tourism approach.

As the Tennessee Department of Tourist Development's focus on sustainable tourism continues to evolve, the partners and resources they have available will continue to grow. Please regularly check Tennessee's sustainable tourism website at http://tnsustainabletourism.com.

While the information in the sections on options for granting and guidance with the natural, historic, and cultural resources may be useful to many communities, some may need assistance with putting those ideas into practice. This toolbox will also feature a section on policy and planning. With these select resources, any community can begin to implement sustainable practices that will benefit their economic growth and quality of life for many years to come.

Planning

Tennessee Department of Tourist Development
http://tnsustainabletourism.com/

The State of Tennessee is committed to a Sustainable Tourism effort to preserve and protect our state's unsurpassed natural beauty while encouraging the growth of the tourism industry in Tennessee. The Tennessee Department of Tourist Development is committed to sustaining the environment, culture and heritage of a region while at the same time sustaining the economic growth through tourism. Through their Sustainable Tourism website, communities can find multiple resources and contacts to begin planning and implementing sustainable tourism projects.

Institute for Public Service
http://www.ips.tennessee.edu

The Institute for Public Service plays a key role in the public service component of the University of Tennessee by assisting city and county governments in Tennessee, and by training law enforcement personnel on a local, regional and national level. With offices in every region of the state, IPS also helps Tennessee manufacturers reduce costs and increase revenue. IPS helps companies, entrepreneurs, organizations, and cities and counties across the state access university expertise, resources and intellectual assets to help advance the economic well being of Tennessee and create and retain quality job opportunities.

Institute for a Secure and Sustainable Environment
http://isse.utk.edu/

The University of Tennessee's Institute for a Secure and Sustainable Environment (ISSE) seeks to promote the development of policies, technologies, and educational programs that cut across multiple disciplines, engage the university's research faculty and staff, and grow in response to pressing environmental and security issues facing the state, the nation, and the globe. In harmony with the National Academies' current emphasis current emphasis on sustainability science, ISSE has identified a nexus where its research and policy agenda can thrive and have the greatest impact. It exists at the convergence of three of the more critical factors influencing environmental health and sustainability: the carbon cycle and carbon sequestration, climate and natural systems response, and renewable bioenergy.

Through their multiple programs and initiatives, the ISSE can assist communities on both environmental and community planning.

Institute for Sustainable Practice
http://sustainability.lipscomb.edu/

The Lipscomb University Institute for Sustainable Practice's mission is to develop and advance the practice of Sustainability in Tennessee and the world. Sustainability principles impact the way that we live, work, and produce as a society. As such, the practice of sustainability has emerged to form a new profession by integrating many academic disciplines with relevance to many areas of discussion. The Institute hosts a Green Business and Living Summit & Expo, which provides business leaders at all levels with insight in developing and enhancing profitable and sustainable business enterprises and practices.

Appalachian Regional Commission
http://www.arc.gov

The Appalachian Regional Commission's Area Development Program and Highway Program address the four goals identified in the Commission's strategic plan:

- Increase job opportunities and per capita income in Appalachia to reach parity with the nation.
- Strengthen the capacity of the people of Appalachia to compete in the global economy.
- Develop and improve Appalachia's infrastructure to make the Region economically competitive.
- Build the Appalachian Development Highway System to reduce Appalachia's isolation.

Each year ARC provides funding for several hundred projects throughout the Appalachian Region in support of these goals. These projects create thousands of new jobs, improve local water and sewer systems, increase school readiness, expand access to health care, assist local communities with strategic planning, and provide technical, managerial, and marketing assistance to emerging new businesses.

Strategic planning is a creative, practical planning process for community change. It lays out a blueprint for change, helping a community determine where it is, where it wants to be in the next five to 10 years, and how it will reach its goals.

There is no one "cookie-cutter" strategic planning process that has worked for all communities and community groups. Different groups, including community-based and multi-county strategic planning organizations, have successfully used a variety of processes. The process you choose should be tailored to the characteristics and qualities of your community or organization.

National Geographic Center for Sustainable Destinations
http://www.nationalgeographic.com/travel/sustainable/index.html

The Center for Sustainable Destinations (CSD) seeks to help individual places use the geotourism approach to improve stewardship and attract the most beneficial, least disruptive forms of tourism. A partner in the Tennessee sustainable tourism initiative, they offer models for culturally sustainable tourism practices.

Resources:

- Geotourism Charter
- Geotourism Strategy
- Geotourism MapGuides

Their interest in the viability of the American National Park Service has also yielded a number of studies of how communities can maximize their proximity to a park. They developed a toolbox for communities that are gateways to any national park:

http://www.nationalgeographic.com/travel/sustainable/gateway_community_toolkit.html

Natural Resources

USDA Rural Development
http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/

The United States Department of Agriculture serves more than just farmers. To assist the rural areas where agriculture is a major industry, the USDA provides a wide range of community and infrastructure services. They offer the following types of grants and loans:

- Business Loans and Grants
- Cooperative Grants and Other Programs
- Single Family Housing Loans and Grants
- Multi Family Housing Loans and Grants
- Community Facilities Loans and Grants
- Electric Loans and Other Programs
- Telecommunications Loans and Grants
- Water Loans and Grants
- Community Development Programs

Their financial programs support essential public facilities and services such as water and sewer systems, housing, health clinics, emergency service facilities and electric and telephone service. They promote economic development by supporting loans to businesses through banks and community-managed lending pools. They offer technical assistance and information to help agricultural and other cooperatives get started and improve the effectiveness of their member services. They also provide technical assistance to help communities undertake community empowerment programs.

Land Trust for Tennessee
http://www.landtrusttn.org/

Our region has seen significant growth in recent years, and our communities continue to blossom, bringing new businesses and drawing new residents. But the very reason many people live in Tennessee - its rich history, green rolling hills, scenic landscapes, open farmland and rural back roads - must now actively be preserved or these precious unique characteristics will be lost.

The Land Trust, a 501 (c) (3) nonprofit organization, works exclusively with willing landowners to find ways to preserve forever the scenic and natural values of their land. Their main tool for ensuring this preservation is called a conservation easement, and it is an alternative to just selling the land for development. A conservation easement allows a willing landowner to achieve three important goals:

- keep ownership of the land,
- preserve the important assets of the land through customized restrictions on future development, and
- obtain certain tax advantages
-

Other conservation options may also be available. Working with the land trust, private landowners can protect the special qualities of their land, while meeting their important personal and financial needs.

National Park Service
http://www.nature.nps.gov/
http://parkplanning.nps.gov/parkHome.cfm?parkId=382

The National Park Service (NPS) has been charged with the trust of preserving natural and historic resources since its creation in 1916. For most of the 20th century, they have practiced a curious combination of active management and passive acceptance of natural systems and processes, while becoming a superb visitor services agency. In the 21st century that management style clearly will be insufficient to save our natural resources. Parks are becoming increasingly crowded remnants of primitive America in a fragmented landscape, threatened by invasions of nonnative species, pollution from near and far, and incompatible uses of resources in and around parks.

While many of the NPS resources are designed for parks, their reports and recommendations are useful for all communities, particularly those that border a national park.

For documents pertaining to the Great Smoky Mountains National Park:
http://parkplanning.nps.gov/parkHome.cfm?parkId=382

Historic Resources

National Register of Historic Places
http://www.nps.gov/nr/

The National Register is the federal government's official list of historic buildings and other cultural resources worthy of preservation. Along with providing recognition of a property's significance, National Register listing identifies properties for planning purposes and, in so doing, assures that federally funded or licensed projects will take these properties into account.

The National Register does *not* place any obligations or legal restrictions on the use or disposition of the property by the owner. National Register designation is not the same as historic district zoning or local landmark designation, which often requires maintenance and repair standards. National Register designation requires owner consent and does not encourage public access to the property.

The National Register Does

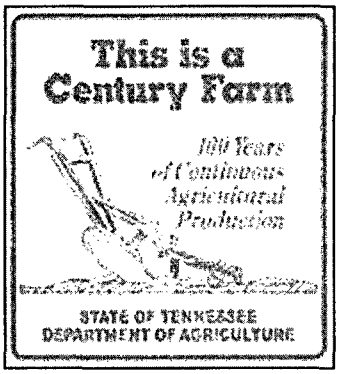
- Identify historically significant buildings, structures, sites, objects, and districts, according on the National Register Criteria for Evaluation
- Encourage the rehabilitation of income-producing historic properties that meet preservation standards through tax incentives, and discourage the demolition of income-producing properties through tax disincentives
- Encourage the preservation of historic properties by documenting the significance of historic properties and by lending support to local preservation activities
- Provide for review of federally funded, licensed, or sponsored projects that may affect historic properties
- Enable federal, state, and local agencies to consider historic properties in the early stages of planning projects
- Make owners (government agencies and non-profits, not individuals) of historic properties eligible to apply for federal grants-in-aid for preservation activities

The National Register Does Not

- Restrict the rights of private property owners in the use, development, sale, or demolition of private historic property
- Lead automatically to historic zoning
- Provide tax benefits to owners of residential historic properties, unless those properties are rental properties and treated as income-producing by the IRS.
- Force federal, state, local, or private projects to be stopped
- Provide for review of state, local, or privately funded projects which may affect historic properties

- Guarantee that grant funds will be available for any significant historic properties

Century Farms
http://www.tncenturyfarms.org/



The Tennessee Century Farms Program identifies, documents, and recognizes farms owned by the same family for at least 100 years. To date, over one thousand farms representing every county in Tennessee are certified. The Center for Historic Preservation at Middle Tennessee State University maintains the Century Farm database of information and photographs, most of which is based on applications supplied by the farm families. This database makes the history of these farms available on the Tennessee Century Farms Program website.

In addition to the state-wide recognition of the historic family farm, each farm also receives a complimentary sign from the Tennessee Department of Agriculture. The information gathered as part of the application process can also be used by the property owner for a National Register nomination or in an application for land conservation easements.

Preserve America
http://www.preserveamerica.gov/

This program recognizes and designates communities, including neighborhoods in large cities, which protect and celebrate their heritage, use their historic assets for economic development and community revitalization, and encourage people to experience and appreciate local historic resources through education and heritage tourism programs.

PRESERVE
AMERICA
Explore and Enjoy Our Heritage

Benefits of designation include White House recognition; eligibility to apply for Preserve America grants; a certificate of recognition; a Preserve America Community road sign; authorization to use the Preserve America logo on signs, flags, banners, and promotional materials; listing in a Web-based Preserve America Community directory; inclusion in national and regional press releases; official notification of designation to state tourism offices and visitors bureaus; and enhanced community visibility and pride. Preserve America communities also become eligible for a special set of grants.

Preserve America Matching-Grant Program
http://www.nps.gov/history/hps/hpg/preserveamerica/

Blount County, TN, became the first Preserve America county in the country. In addition to the recognition that they received as a part of this designation, they are now eligible for a wider range of federal grants for heritage tourism projects. Read more about their special designation on the Preserve America website:

http://www.preserveamerica.gov/09-04-07PAcommunity-blountTN.html

Save America's Treasures
http://www.saveamericastreasures.org/

Save America's Treasures is a national initiative that is dedicated to the preservation of "America's threatened cultural treasures, including historic structures, collections, works of art, maps and journals that document and illuminate the history and culture of the United States. It is a public-private partnership that includes the White House, the National Park Service, and the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

Save America's Treasures grants are available for preservation and conservation work on nationally significant historic properties and collections. Grants are awarded through a competitive process and require a dollar-for-dollar, non-Federal match (or cost-share).

National Trust Main Street Center
http://www.mainstreet.org

NATIONAL TRUST
for HISTORIC PRESERVATION®

The National Trust Main Street Center's mission is to empower people, organizations, and communities to achieve ongoing downtown and neighborhood district revitalization based upon the principles of self-determination, resource conservation, and incremental transformation represented through the comprehensive Main Street Four-Point Approach.

The Main Street Four-Point Approach is a community-driven, comprehensive methodology used to revitalize older, traditional business districts throughout the United States. It is a common-sense way to address the variety of issues and problems that face traditional business districts. The underlying premise of the Main Street approach is to encourage economic development within the context of historic preservation in ways appropriate to today's marketplace. The Main Street Approach advocates a return to community self-reliance, local empowerment, and the

rebuilding of traditional commercial districts based on their unique assets: distinctive architecture, a pedestrian-friendly environment, personal service, local ownership, and a sense of community.

Main Street Four-Point Approach

- Organization
- Promotion
- Design
- Economic Restructuring

Tennessee Main Street Program
http://www.tennessee.gov/ecd/comdev_mainstreet.htm

The Tennessee Main Street Program grew out of the national demonstration projects and has gone through many changes throughout the years. Just as the national program has evolved over the years, so the Tennessee program has shifted to meet the needs and pressures within the state. While the national program can offer models and guidelines, the state program can offer direct technical assistance and support.

Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area
http://histpres.mtsu.edu/tncivwar/

The Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area is a federal, state, and local partnership managed by the Center for Historic Preservation at Middle Tennessee State University. The goal of the heritage area is to preserve and interpret the stories, effects, and legacies of the Civil War and Reconstruction in Tennessee. The heritage area includes the entire state and features eight heritage corridors along river and railroad systems.

Tennessee is rich in sites, buildings, landscapes, and documented sources that tell the stories of the American Civil War and Reconstruction. Geographic location, along with strategic river and rail routes, productive farmlands, and industrial sites, made the state a crucial prize fought for by both armies. Every county in Tennessee was affected by the destruction of the land, loss of life, bitter divisions within families and communities, and political and social turmoil of the war years and the following decades.

The Board of Advisors of the Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area invites Tennessee's non-profit organizations, state agencies, local governments, communities, and educational institutions to develop Collaborative Partnership projects for this statewide network. Projects must contribute to the understanding of the Civil War and

Reconstruction in Tennessee. Collaborative partners must demonstrate their commitment to producing projects that are feasible, cost-effective, and lasting.

National Trust for Historic Preservation
http://www.preservationnation.org/

The National Trust for Historic Preservation provides leadership, education, advocacy, and resources to save America's diverse historic places and revitalize our communities. The National Trust for Historic Preservation is a private, nonprofit membership organization dedicated to saving historic places and revitalizing America's communities.

The National Trust can provide information on funding and technical assistance for both individuals and organizations.

Historic Preservation & Sustainability
http://www.preservationnation.org/issues/sustainability/

The National Trust believes that historic preservation can – and should – be an important component of any effort to promote sustainable development. The conservation and improvement of our existing built resources, including re-use of historic and older buildings, greening the existing building stock, and reinvestment in older and historic communities, is crucial to combating climate change.

Go to their special mini site to learn more about their sustainability initiative and get tips on how to green historic properties and communities.

Center for Historic Preservation
http://histpres.mtsu.edu/

The Center for Historic Preservation is a research and public service institute committed to the heritage development--the identification, research, preservation, interpretation, and promotion--of our historic environment. With the resources of a university and a network of national, state, and local partners, the Center responds to individuals, agencies, and organizations working toward preservation goals.

Covering all of Tennessee's 95 counties, the Center programs enhance a sense of place, pride, and identity through the documentation, interpretation, and preservation of historic sites, landscapes, and historical narratives that comprise the Tennessee experience. They administer a number of programs and offer technical services to individuals, communities, non-profits, and governmental agencies.

Programs Administered by the Center:

- Tennessee Century Farms
- Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area
- Tennessee Iron Furnace Trail
- Tennessee Rural African-American Churches
- Tennessee Slave Housing
- The Heritage Education Network

Technical Services:

- National Register Nominations
- Historic Site Surveys
- Heritage Tourism
- Building Conservation

Cultural Resources

Humanities Tennessee
http://tn-humanities.org/

Founded in 1973 through funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), Humanities Tennessee is dedicated to developing a sense of community through educational programs in the humanities across Tennessee. An organization that began with a focus on grant-making and cultural development of the state's museums and historical organizations has grown into a multi-faceted not-for-profit with two distinct focuses: studies of community history and cultural life and studies of language and literature.

They host and fund a wide variety of projects across the state that range from community history projects to literature to art. One of their more popular programs is a traveling exhibit from the Smithsonian that they fund every two years. Their primary focus with that program is to bring national quality exhibits and research to rural and economically distressed areas.

Humanities Programs:
- Tennessee Community History Program
- Digital Humanities Tennessee
- Grants and Awards Program

Literature Programs:
- Southern Festival of Books: A Celebration of the Written Word
- Tennessee Young Writers' Workshop
- Letters about Literature Program

Tennessee Arts Commission
http://www.arts.state.tn.us/

When the Tennessee Arts Commission was created in 1967, it was given a special mandate by the General Assembly to stimulate and encourage the presentation of performing, visual and literary arts throughout the state and to encourage public interest in the cultural heritage of Tennessee. Through a variety of programs, the Commission has encouraged excellence in artistic expression through the state's artists and arts organizations. That commitment has continued to expand through the years to ensure that the citizens of Tennessee have access to, and the opportunity to participate in the arts.

The Commission builds better communities by:

- Investing public dollars in Tennessee's nonprofit arts industry.
- Providing services to citizens, artists and arts organizations.

- Undertaking initiatives that enhance Tennessee 's cultural life.

These activities give Tennessee citizens a better quality of life, provide our children with a more complete education and attract tourists to our state. The Folklife and Arts Builds Communities programs would be most beneficial to gateway communities.

National Trust for Historic Preservation
http://www.preservationnation.org/

The National Trust for Historic Preservation provides leadership, education, advocacy, and resources to save America's diverse historic places and revitalize our communities. The National Trust for Historic Preservation is a private, nonprofit membership organization dedicated to saving historic places and revitalizing America's communities.

The National Trust can provide information on funding and technical assistance for both individuals and organizations.

Heritage Tourism
http://www.preservationnation.org/issues/heritage-tourism/
http://culturalheritagetourism.org/

The National Trust defines cultural heritage tourism as traveling to experience the places, artifacts and activities that authentically represent the stories and people of the past and present. It includes cultural, historic and natural resources. What are the benefits of cultural heritage tourism? Studies have consistently shown that cultural heritage travelers stay longer and spend more money than other kinds of travelers. Good cultural heritage tourism improves the quality of life for residents as well as serving visitors.

Pick Tennessee Products
http://picktnproducts.org

Market Development Division (MDD) is the agricultural industry development and marketing arm of the Tennessee Department of Agriculture. It is TDA's primary means to work with farmers, agribusinesses, commodity organizations and consumers. The current needs and priorities of clients served directly influences tasks and programs.

Part of the tradition of Tennessee life is farming and the types of local produce that make Tennessee distinctive. The Tennessee Department of Agriculture can provide resources to help

individual farmers and communities promote the agricultural traditions that are an essential part of Tennessee identity.