

Bits & Pieces A timeline of Knoxville and the Project Area

1812

- James Kennedy's stately brick home was built on the south side of Pine east of First Creek. Kennedy owned and operated a saw mill on the creek.

1844

- Caledonia (Cal) Johnson was born into slavery on the Pless McClung estate on October 14. The estate was west of the project area on what became State Street.

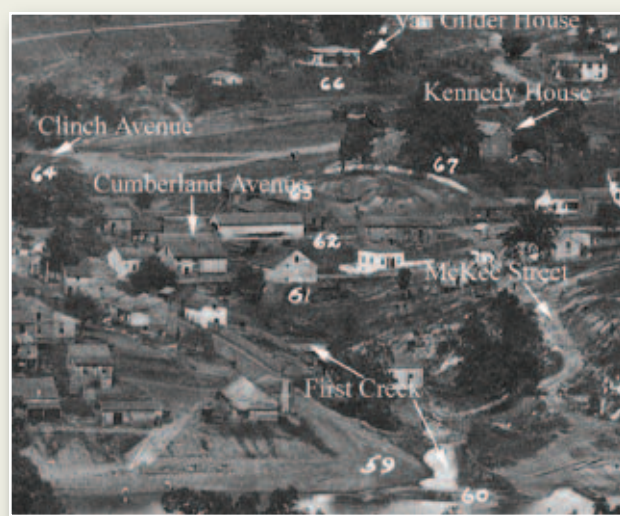
1859

- The area east of First Creek developed as a result of industries located along First Creek and the trading and shipping from the wharf at the foot of Gay Street. This satellite community was known as East Knoxville. It was incorporated by a legislative act on February 22, 1856.
- Church Street ended on the west side of First Creek. On the east side, the street was called Pine but the two streets were not in alignment.
- East Knoxville was home to William Brownlow, publisher of the pro-Union newspaper, *The Whig*, John S. Van Gilder, president of the Merchant's Bank and the prominent James Kennedy family.
- Union Army engineers dammed First and Second creeks and flooded the low ground around them to protect the center of Knoxville from Confederate forces.
- Cal Johnson secured a job retrieving bodies of slain soldiers from shallow graves and trenches after the Battle of Fort Sanders and took them to Bethel Cemetery.



1865

- The first known photograph of the project area was taken by Knoxville photographer, T. M. Schleier, from the south bank of the Tennessee River.
- Travelers coming into Knoxville from the east passed through East Knoxville and crossed First Creek below Kennedy's mill.



The project area in 1865 looking north (Schleier 1865). Courtesy Thompson Photo

- After the Civil War, East Knoxville was also called "Hard Scabble."
- The only bridges across First Creek near the project area were at Clinch and Cumberland Avenues.
- William Brownlow was elected Governor of Tennessee.

1869

- East Knoxville was annexed into the city of Knoxville under the terms of Ordinance #234 on January 9. Problems with street alignments and bridges where the two towns met at First Creek led to the decision to annex the community.
- At least two African American men lived in the area. Henry McClellan's residence was "on the creek west of Clinch" and George Israel Washington lived on the alley "near Church east of the bridge". The latter probably refers to the bridge at Cumberland Avenue.

1871

- A pictorial view of Knoxville was produced that was visually pleasing but somewhat inaccurate in its depiction of streets and buildings.
- John S. Van Gilder was the Mayor of Knoxville.

1883

- Cal Johnson, a successful businessman, was elected a city alderman of the 5th Ward and concluded his term in 1884.
- Knoxville's first city hospital opened.



Cal Johnson at the entrance to his park. The Van Gilder house can be seen in the background. Courtesy of the Beck Cultural Exchange Center, Inc.

1886

- A more accurate Bird's-Eye View of Knoxville was produced. The density of buildings reflects the period of growth and prosperity Knoxville enjoyed during the last quarter of the nineteenth century.
- The wooden bridges on First Creek were replaced by iron bridges and houses were being built in the project area known as Kennedy's Addition.
- The Bowery (located between State and Commerce, Union and Clinch) was an area rife with bordellos, saloons, cheap restaurants and two or three drugstores that sold cocaine and morphine at night.

1890

- Middle class white families owned and occupied the houses in Kennedy's Addition.
- At least two of the families were immigrants. The widow of Samuel Guggenheim was from Germany and John Schaad, a furniture maker, was from Switzerland.
- A saloon on the north side of Clinch Avenue west of First Creek was the first commercial business near the project area that was not a mill or water-powered factory on the creek.
- The first of Knoxville's streetcars was converted from animal to electric power. The system name was changed from Knoxville Streetcar Company to Knoxville Electric Streetcar Company.



Johnson standing next to the marble fountain he donated to the Cal F. Johnson Park. The fountain's current location is a mystery. Courtesy Beck Cultural Exchange Center, Inc.

1892

- City sewer lines were extended into the project area.
- The City's water supply was stored in a reservoir on the crest of Mabry's Hill on Payne Street. The Sarah Moore Green School presently occupies this location.
- Some of the houses in the project area, such as #220-#222 E. Clinch Avenue, had brick cisterns in the backyard to hold extra water for household use.

1897

- The Million Dollar Fire burned the east side of Gay Street from Commerce south to Union Avenue. It began on April 8 and continued to burn for days destroying an estimated \$381,500 in buildings and \$719,000 in merchandise.

1903

- The first African-Americans moved near the project area on the north side of Clinch Avenue: Adaline Parker at #201 and Eliza Sharp at #205. African Americans generally lived north and east of the project area during this period of time.
- Church Avenue was extended across First Creek to intersect with Pine. The portion on the east side was renamed East Church Avenue.



Knoxville Bus Drivers in 1934. Courtesy Knoxville Area Transit

- A livery stable / feed store was built on the last vacant lot on E. Church Avenue ca. 1900. Next door was a boarding house.
- Most of the houses on Clinch Avenue were renter-occupied.
- Clinch, Church, and Kennedy streets had been paved with a combination of small stones and tar or asphalt using a process called "macadamization."

1910

- All but one house on the south side of Clinch Avenue was renter-occupied.
- Occupations of renters on Clinch included meat cutter, carpenter, cabinet maker, farrier, driver, clerk and grocery man.
- The Church Avenue side of the project area had a more commercial character due to the presence of the livery stable, boarding house and a furniture repair/upholstery shop.

1914

- Five of the fifteen houses in the project area along East Clinch Avenue were occupied by African-Americans. One house was vacant.
- African-Americans living on Clinch Avenue were porters and laborers.
- Jesse Kellogg and his wife, Cora, resided at #224 East Clinch Avenue. He was a porter at the Elk's Home at the corner of State Street and Clinch Avenue. Cora was a laborer at the Farragut Hotel, one block west at Gay and Clinch.

1917

- In the project area, African-Americans occupied all the houses on E. Clinch Avenue with the exception of #202.
- Nearly all the single African-American women living there were without a job according to the Knoxville City Directory information.

1919

- Rioting erupted on August 30-31 after the murder of a white woman. Maurice Mayes, a mulatto who was a well-known political figure, was accused by the victim's cousin. Mayes was convicted by an all-white jury and executed in 1920. Evidence later emerged proving Mayes's innocence but the backlash against African-Americans in Knoxville forced them into an era of political and social repression that lasted another half century.

1920

- #202 E. Clinch Avenue was a boarding house operated by Stella Newman, the only white resident on that side of the block.
- Several of the African-American men had jobs with the L&N Railroad. Other men and women were cooks for the YWCA, Elk's Club and the Farragut Hotel.
- The Church Avenue side of the project area remained occupied by whites and commercial businesses.

1922

- Cal Johnson bought the five-acre Van Gilder property and paid for all the improvements to the land which included lights, sidewalks, a flagpole, bathrooms, swings and tennis courts. He also bought a marble fountain at a cost of \$1,250 and had it placed on the lawn between the house and the south entrance to the park. The Cal Johnson Park was for use by African-Americans and dedicated on September 21, 1922, Johnson's 77th birthday.

1930

- During the Great Depression, houses in the project area became multi-family as people took in friends, family and strangers in need of a place to stay. Two-story houses had different tenants on each floor and/or in the front and rear rooms.
- By 1930 African-Americans occupied all the houses in the project area on Clinch Avenue and people lived in the basements at #206, #232, and #234.
- African-Americans occupied three of the six homes on Church Avenue.

1937

- The Church Avenue Bridge was replaced by one that was higher and wider. This impacted the houses and businesses between Coleman and McKee as land was taken from the Kennedy-Hunter property to accommodate the increased width of the new bridge.

1948

- The once-stately Kennedy-Hunter House was demolished.

1950

- By 1950 some of the houses that had been divided into apartments lacked 100 percent occupancy and other houses were vacant.
- All the homes except #217 E. Church Avenue were occupied by African-Americans.

1952

- #222 E. Clinch Avenue had been divided into at least six apartments.
- #217 E. Church Avenue was torn down.

1955

- #225 E. Church Avenue was destroyed by fire.

1956

- Three of the apartments in #222 E. Clinch Avenue were vacant.
- Fred McGinnis, a bellhop at the Andrew Johnson Hotel, was living at #222 E. Clinch Avenue.

1959

- #220 and #222 E. Clinch Avenue were torn down as part of the City's slum clearance using federal Urban Renewal funds. The entire project area block had been demolished by 1960.

The Archaeological Process at the site of the Knoxville Transit Center Station

Conducted by The Archaeological Research Laboratory, University of Tennessee

Overview:

Federal law (Section 106 of "The National Historic Preservation Act" of 1966) states that federally funded projects must first be reviewed by qualified archaeologists to determine if any historic cultural resources will be affected. The primary purpose is to determine if a site is eligible for The National Register of Historic Places.

The steps followed were:

IDENTIFICATION

A. Archaeological Survey and Background Research of the Project Area (Photo A)

- Identification and location of archaeological resources through intensive survey and historical background review: What was there and is there a chance that some or part of it is still there?

B. Monitoring of Demolition of Greater Knoxville Chamber of Commerce Building in Project Area (Photos B - C)

- Demolition of existing building was an opportunity to see if anything from the past was still intact below and surrounding it.

C. Archaeological Testing and Evaluation (Photos D - G)

Excavation of a portion of the site to evaluate and decide if there is enough information to determine if the site is eligible for the National Register and if the site will be "adversely effected" by new construction.

EXCAVATION

D. Data Recovery (Photos H - K)

- Agreement is made as to how to recover important archaeological information. An archaeological team conducts the excavation, analysis, and distribution of information about the site: in this case, the city block.



Photo A



Photo B



Photo C



Photo D



Photo E



Photo F



Photo G



Photo H



Photo I

The project area (in red) over the course of time is shown in these Sanborn maps

1859



1917



1890



1917-1950

