

Tour starts at 1 Market Square



1. TENNESSEE WOMAN SUFFRAGE MEMORIAL STATUE

Like other cities, especially in the Perfect 36 state of Tennessee, Knoxville played a role in passing the Nineteenth Amendment. The city's progressives had anticipated suffrage since the 1880s, led by activists like **Lizzie Crozier French** (1851-1926), the educator who was one of Knoxville's leading intellectuals and the city's most prominent suffragist.

French is the central figure in the Tennessee Woman Suffrage Memorial Statue, erected at the south end of Market Square in 2006 to represent women's rights leaders from across the state, the figures chosen by the regional members of a statewide Suffrage Coalition. She's flanked by the other two, **Elizabeth Avery Meriwether**, of the Memphis area, and **Anne Dallas Dudley** of Nashville. The sculptor was Nashville's Alan LeQuire.

Established in 1854, Market Square has played an empowering role in the women's movement almost from the beginning. In an era when career choices for women were extremely limited, Market Square hosted multiple boarding houses--small hotels that served meals--and even in the 19th century, the proprietors of most of them were unmarried women. Women who had been trained only to cook and clean found these skills useful in catering to a market of both travelers and single residents who preferred to live in a family-style environment. From the 19th century up until the 1940s, Market Square often had as many as half a dozen competing boarding houses, and they became part of the 24-hour life of this urban place. Women often ran the farmers' stalls, too.

The local chapter of the Women's Christian Temperance Union was on Market Square, where a staff of volunteers would offer free cold water as an option to the offerings of the multiple saloons on the Square. By the late 19th century, activists would exhort the crowds to consider giving up drink.

At the Kern Building, at 1 Market Square, artists including Paris-trained professional **Adelia Lutz** would offer courses in painting. Much later, as a hotel, it was a favorite place to stay for Hollywood actress **Patricia Neal**, on her many return visits to her hometown; Connecticut-born author **Elizabeth Gilbert** stayed there for several months as she completed her international bestseller *Eat, Pray, Love*.

After 1897, Market Square included a central Market Hall that could hold an audience of 1,000, and was frequently a center of "mass meetings" about suffrage and other issues.

In late 1906, just after her 50th birthday, prohibitionist militant **Carrie Nation** visited to give a bold speech to a male crowd at the old Market Hall. Although she brought her famous hatchet, many were surprised and relieved that she did not use it on any of Knoxville's 106 saloons. One year later, the male voters of Knoxville chose to close the city's saloons. Nation was a suffragist, but never got to vote: she died long before the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment.

In October, 1914, hundreds attended a suffrage convention brought important national leaders, including Connecticut author **Grace Gallatin Seton** and Chicago attorney **Antoinette Funk**, who had been jailed earlier that month for making an unauthorized speech in North Dakota, to the Market Hall. Lizzie Crozier French spoke, describing the formation of the Knoxville Equal Suffrage League in 1910, and presided over the convention that included just a few men, including former Congressman Henry Gibson--at 76, he claimed to have been the first Knoxville to take a public stand for suffrage, as a newspaper editor back in the 1880s. Also speaking there was Anne Dallas Dudley of Nashville, so it was a rare occasion when she and French, two of the three women represented in the Tennessee Suffrage Statue, were here together on Market Square together in person, unbronzed.

Lizzie Crozier French spoke at the Market Hall more than 100 times, on a wide range of subjects, from city parks to the tuberculosis scourge to the League of Nations. In 1917, she supported a planned appearance by "militant" suffragist **Maud Younger**, who was finally barred from speaking here by City Commission, and spoke instead to a crowd on the courthouse lawn. (See Courthouse.)

French campaigned for public office here in 1923 (see left) when, at age 72, she ran for City Council. She lost narrowly, but the following year, several women were elected to office, including Annie Davis, our first female state representative and legendary as one of the founders of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, who was also a regular speaker at the old Market Hall.

-- Cross the street to the southwest corner of Market Street and Union Avenue --



Lizzie Crozier French





2. ARNSTEIN BUILDING

503 Market Street

Knoxville's "first skyscraper" when it was built in 1906, the Arnstein building was built by Max Arnstein, a German Jewish merchant who ran what was considered the city's finest department store, especially known for women's fashions from Europe. Helping him was his Texas-born wife, **Lalla**--who in 1924 became one of Knoxville's first female elected officials, as a member of Knox County Court, a legislative body with some judicial authority.

In 1913, Knoxville hosted the National Conservation Exposition at Chilhowee Park, the third of three big fairs there; they all involved women in notable roles, especially at the Fine Arts pavilion, which featured exhibits by impressionists **Mary Cassatt** and Knoxville's own **Catherine Wiley**. One of the highlights at the 1913 exposition was a speech by reformer **Helen Keller**. That fair drew one million people from across the country, prominently featured an exhibit by the Knoxville Equal Suffrage League. The Exposition was planned in its offices in the upper floors of the Arnstein Building.

-- Follow Union Ave east one block to Gay Street --



3. GAY STREET

507 S. Gay Street

Gay Street has been the favored avenue for parades since before the Civil War. Until the early 20th century though, parades had one thing in common: those who paraded were all men. For the Labor Day parade in 1913, the United Textile Workers, a female-dominant group, joined the Labor Day parade, and became perhaps the most impressive part of it.

At the southwest corner of Gay and Union, note the Art Wrap honoring **Catherine Wiley**, the suffrage-era impressionist who some considered the most talented Tennessee artist of her generation. She did most of her work in her Fort Sanders studio.

-- Turn right and follow Gay Street on the east side one block to Clinch Avenue. --



4. HYATT PLACE / FARRAGUT HOTEL

530 S. Gay Street

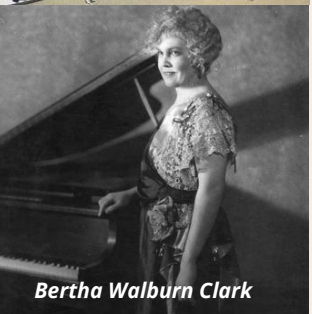
Named for the Union naval hero of the Civil War, the Farragut Hotel stands on the site of the childhood home of Lizzie Crozier French. It was built between 1917 and 1919, in the midst of the suffrage effort. French gave an unusual open-air suffrage speech on the construction site in 1917.

On Aug. 2, 1920, days before the critical vote in Nashville, **Carrie Chapman Catt**, president of the National American Woman Suffrage Association and one of America's most influential living suffragists, came to Knoxville and made her "headquarters" at the Farragut for a day when she conducted a series of interviews with an unnamed series of local politicians and activists. (At the time, two of Knoxville's three representatives had not committed to the suffrage cause.)

One of Catt's chief quarries was an undecided representative, W.K. Anderson, an attorney whose office was right across the street in the Holston Building. Catt's Farragut stay may have been successful. When the time came, Anderson and all three of Knoxville's delegates, including Joe Harris and Joe E. Wade, voted in favor of suffrage.

A few weeks after the vote, in October, 1920, legendary Colorado suffragist and journalist Ellis **Meredith** stayed here when she conducted meetings organizing female voters for the Democratic Party.

Later, the hotel witnessed an extraordinary example of women's cultural leadership. In the 1920s, violinist **Bertha Walburn Clark** used the hotel's ballroom as the home base for her "Little Symphony," which she built into the larger Knoxville Symphony Orchestra--one of the world's few symphonies founded and conducted by a woman. The KSO thrives today, believed to be the South's oldest continuously performing symphony orchestra.



Bertha Walburn Clark

-- Cross Clinch Avenue and head south on Gay Street --



5. TENNESSEE THEATRE

604 S. Gay Street

When it opened in 1928, the Tennessee Theatre was originally mainly a "motion picture palace" but also featured vaudeville and Broadway entertainers, including the sometimes-scandalous Fifi D'Orsay. Helen Hayes brought her historical drama *Mary of Scotland* here in 1935. The same year, the Ziegfeld Follies came here, on a rare tour, when their biggest attraction was comedian Fanny Brice, who performed in eight different skits that night. Standing-room tickets made that reputedly the most popular single performance in the Tennessee's history. Much later, in 1953, it hosted the world premiere of *So This Is Love*, a biopic about the life of East Tennessee singer Grace Moore, attended by singer Kathryn Grayson, who played the title role.

A few buildings past the Tennessee Theatre, on the left, is the Arcade Building, home to the Knoxville Journal in the 1920s, and one of those who worked here was columnist Patty Boyd, Knoxville's first full-time female journalist--who, at the time of her retirement in the '30s, was reputed to be the most senior female journalist in America.

-- Optional: Take alley east to First Presbyterian Church on State Street --



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCHYARD

620 State Street

First Presbyterian Church was Lizzie Crozer French's home church, though she later favored Episcopal churches, and also pioneered the Unitarian church in Knoxville. One of the churchyard's oldest graves, a flat stone near the southwestern corner, is that of Mary Grainger Blount (1761-1802), the notably strong-willed wife of territorial governor William Blount, whom she married in 1778, during the Revolutionary War in which he served, later to be a signer of the U.S. Constitution. Mary Blount is believed to be behind the style of the area's first proper frame house with glass windows, ca. 1792 Blount Mansion. She is the only woman whose name is honored by a Tennessee county--Grainger County--and she's further honored by the name of the county seat of Blount County: Maryville.

Also buried here is Margaret Cowan Humes Ramsey (1777-1854), an early career woman who after the death of her second husband, ran a hotel (see Lamar House / Bijou), and in 1817 was also the only woman in a committee that led the first public-library effort in Knoxville.

Also perhaps of interest to women's history is the fact that Dr. William J. Baker, who is buried here, led the team that performed, in 1856, what is reputed to be the first successful hysterectomy in medical history.

About two blocks to the north, by the way, was the site of Logan Temple AME Zion Church, on Commerce Street near State (current site of the northern end of Marble Alley Lofts) where in 1891, the national Afro-American League had its annual conference advocating for racial justice. Among the mostly male speakers was one surprise, a young journalist from West Tennessee named Ida B. Wells, who was there to insist that women could be part of the movement. She would later be known as America's leading African American suffragist. Logan Temple was torn down in the 1950s during Urban Renewal.

Return to Gay. Turn left (south) and walk to the next intersection (Gay Street and W. Church Avenue)



Margaret Cowan
Humes Ramsey

6. SITE OF FIRST WOMEN'S BUILDING

Gay Street at W. Church Avenue

In October, 1896, this block, probably in the vicinity of the Rowboat sculpture, was the site of the Women's Building, which unexpectedly became the most popular feature of Knoxville's first annual Free Street Fair and Carnival. The pavilion, prepared expressly for the three-day festival, featured musical performances and speakers including Atlanta socialite Passie McCabe Ottley, who would later be a notable suffragist; and author Mary Noailles Murfree, then at the height of her national fame. It featured fine art, granting what may have been the first of many awards earned by 17-year-old Catherine Wiley, the Tennessee impressionist whose career is honored with an art wrap at the corner of Gay and Union. It also included prize edibles from local kitchens, and artifacts including a 1777 music box, 18th-century statues, Roman coins, and antique images of the daughters of pioneer James White. But the single most-discussed attraction at the whole fair was a quilt embroidered with a poem by an elderly woman named Mrs. Evans, which included the stanza:

The time is fast coming
Please to take note
When the men will darn
And the women will vote.



Catherine Wiley

-- Continue south on Gay Street for one block to Cumberland Avenue --



7. LAMAR HOUSE / BIJOU THEATRE

803 S. Gay Street

The Bijou Theatre was built in 1909 into the back of the old Lamar House, an old hotel whose first proprietor, in 1817, was widow **Margaret Humes**, a progressive woman of her time who the same year was the only woman involved in an effort to start a public library in Knoxville. Later, English-born author **Frances Hodgson Burnett** had personal associations with the building, where her brother tended bar and another brother often performed in the ballroom. In the early 20th century, several cutting-edge women in show business performed at the Bijou, including Russian dancer **Anna Pavlova**, and **Tallulah Bankhead**, who came here in 1940 to try out a new play she hoped would make it to Broadway (it didn't). The outspoken singer and comedian **Sophie Tucker** the self-described "Last of the Red-Hot Mamas," gave a spirited ragtime show here in January, 1914. In the late 1930s, the Bijou became the longtime home auditorium to **Bertha Walburn Clark's** Knoxville Symphony Orchestra.

-- Walk one block south --



8. COURTHOUSE

300 W. Main Street

The Knox County Courthouse, the fourth and by far longest-lasting was here throughout the suffrage era. In late 1917, it witnessed one of the most dramatic events of the struggle, when nationally known suffragist **Maud Younger**, of the National Women's Party, spoke on the lawn. Considered a "militant," picketing President Wilson's White House, she aroused anxiety even from some suffragists, and in an unusual move, four of five city commissioners voted to deny her a platform at the Market Hall, where **Lizzie Crozier French** had proposed she speak. Afterward, plans for her to speak in the courthouse auditorium were nixed by the sheriff, and on a chilly November evening, she spoke on the courthouse steps to a crowd in the hundreds gathered outside.

In September, 1919, the courthouse held the voting booths for the second ward, so it's safe to say that some of the first women to vote in Tennessee voted in this building. (Before passing the Nineteenth Amendment in 1920, Tennessee had already allowed women limited voting privileges in 1919--just in presidential and municipal elections--so hundreds of Knoxville women voted in the municipal election in September of that year.) Women also voted here after the Nineteenth Amendment passed, in the presidential election of 1920, and in many thereafter. The building hosted voting until the early 21st century; the Knox County Election Commission is still headquartered in the same building.

In this building in October, 1930, a judge swore in Knox County's first female attorney, **Wilma Turner**. She probably never practiced, but was soon joined by several others who did, including **Amelia Strauss**, a strong voice for women's rights to serve on juries, and **Hattie Love**, who in 1938 would become Knoxville's first female on City Council. The courthouse east lawn, by the way, contains the remains of legendary pioneer woman **Bonny Kate Sevier** (1754-1836), whose fame for fearlessness sometimes rivaled that of her husband, Gov. John Sevier; she lived in Washington for a time, and entertained with **Dolly Madison**. She died in Alabama, 21 years after her husband, and was buried there, but in 1922, her remains were reinterred here.



Maud Younger



9. ANDREW JOHNSON HOTEL

The tall brick building that dominates the southeastern sky is the old Andrew Johnson Hotel, built in 1929 and once the tallest building in East Tennessee. A favorite of women's societies, the hotel hosted hundreds of notable women in its half-century of operation as a hotel, including **Amelia Earhart**, who stayed here in 1937, the year before her disappearance; and photographer **Margaret Bourke-White**, who stayed here for a time in the '40s, setting up a "dark room" in her hotel room. Its rooftop witnessed an unusual public debate between legendary public-library chief **Mary Utopia Rothrock** and Knoxville Mayor James Trent in 1930 about women's right to compete with men for the same jobs during the Great Depression.

-- Cross Main Street to the courtyard of the Howard H. Baker, Jr. United States Courthouse --



10. WOMEN'S BUILDING (GONE)

The Woman's Building stood on Main Street almost directly opposite the Knox County Courthouse. Built to be the Knoxville Pavilion at the Tennessee Centennial Exposition in Nashville in 1897, it was acquired by women's groups and moved almost 200 miles to downtown Knoxville, where it became a de facto art gallery, musical auditorium, and lecture hall. It was admired across the region. Opining that there was "perhaps no other such building in the South," a Nashville, Tennessean editorial went, "Every city should have a Woman's Building modeled after the Knoxville building..." From a distance the Woman's Building, as it was known here, looked like a marble temple, but it was actually built of wood. On Christmas night, 1906, it caught fire, perhaps as the result of celebratory fireworks, and burned down. It was so beloved that it was quickly replaced two blocks away by the somewhat less graceful Lyceum.



11. BELOVED WOMAN OF JUSTICE

Howard Baker, Jr. Courthouse Courtyard

The statue Beloved Woman of Justice, by New York sculptor **Audrey Flack**, is based on a Cherokee tradition of trusting a female elder with some judicial power, including the final say in judging capital crimes--a role most famously held by Cherokee leader **Nancy Ward** (1738?-1822?)--is represented by a sculpture in the courtyard of the Howard Baker Federal Building. It's open during weekdays; if closed, the large head is still visible through the gates.

-- Cross to the south side of Main, turn right, and head west past Walnut Street --

Somewhere in this vicinity, by the way, was the office and printing press of the *Knoxville Gazette*, the weekly. From 1804 to 1808, it was remarkable in that it was published by a woman, widow **Elizabeth Roulstone**. Little specific is known about her operation of the important paper, except that it reported much important legislation when Knoxville was Tennessee's capital. Some of the state's early legislation bears the credit, "Printed by Elizabeth Roulstone." She kept it in business until she remarried and moved to Middle Tennessee, still involved in publishing.

On the left, the First Baptist Church, built here in 1924, is notable among other things as the place where in the 1930s a choir girl named **Mary Costa** began her singing career. Later an opera and television star, whose singing voice is heard in Disney's 1959 animated feature *Sleeping Beauty*, Costa returned to her home town in the 1970s to help found the Knoxville Opera.

-- Proceed west on Main to Henley Street, turn left and walk one block West Hill Avenue --



12. MARY BOYCE TEMPLE HOUSE

Corner of Henley Street and W. Hill Avenue

The turn of the century house once owned by **Mary Boyce Temple** (1856-1929) is one of the very few homes still standing in the downtown area. Never married in an era when women were expected to, Temple was a resourceful woman with inherited wealth who devoted much of her energy to civic improvement. She moved into this comfortable house in 1921, at age 65, and spent only her final eight years here. However, this was an especially active period in her life, when she became, in 1922, the first president of the local chapter of the League of Women Voters--and when she became one of the most decisively influential preservationists in Knoxville history, when she initiated the movement to save Blount Mansion; Knoxville's oldest house is now the city's only National Landmark. She could not be called a militant suffragist, but obviously valued the vote. Recently renovated, the Temple house is now a private residence.



13. CHURCH STREET METHODIST CHURCH / FEMALE ACADEMY SITE

900 Henley Street

Church Street Methodist Church, Knoxville's grandest downtown church building, was built in 1930, and proudly retains its original name, even though for 90 years it has been located on the corner of Henley and Main. The church itself may be relevant to women's empowerment, because in 1935 it hosted the very first-ever concert of the Knoxville Symphony Orchestra, with founder **Bertha Walburn Clark** holding the baton. However, the site of the church includes the campus of an important institution, the former Knoxville Female Academy, founded just north of the present church building in 1827. It was important in the education of Knoxville women, including the suffrage generation, especially when women were forbidden to attend colleges like the University of Tennessee. **Lizzie Crozier French** and her allies revived it in the 1880s as the Women's Institute, and were involved with it until about 1910, years after women had been accepted at the university. The building, which later housed UT's law school, was probably torn down with the widening of Henley Street in the late 1920s.

-- Proceed two blocks north on Henley Street to Cumberland Avenue, and turn right --



14. SITE OF HOME OF LIZZIE CROZIER FRENCH (gone)

620 w. Cumberland Avenue

From when she was a young widowed single mother in the 1880s until her death in 1926, **Lizzie Crozier French** lived here. Later, three of her sisters, all educators, lived here until the last one died in 1938. The house is long gone, replaced with the plain side of this modern building which, incidentally, served as a studio for nationally popular artist **Peter Max** during the weeks he was in Knoxville exhibiting at the 1982 World's Fair. In French's day, this was a tree-lined neighborhood of single-family homes, and French hosted dozens of significant intellectual, literary, and political meetings at this site. Here by 1910 she was hosting meetings of the Knoxville Equal Suffrage Club (later League), the earlier New Thought Club, the Knoxville Writers Club, as well as some of the earliest known gatherings of Unitarians. The house had served as a dental office before it was torn down, probably in the 1950s.

-- Head east to the southwest corner of W. Cumberland Avenue and Walnut Street (current Post Office parking lot) --



15. LYCEUM BUILDING (GONE)

Corner of W. Cumberland Avenue and Walnut Street

The southwest corner of Cumberland and Walnut marks one of the most significant sites in the suffrage story. Established in 1908, the Lyceum was a fascinating mixed-used cultural building that served women both culturally and politically. Created by the major expansion of a former mayor's home, the Lyceum served as recital hall, art museum, and community gathering place, run mainly by Lizzie Crozier French and her allies. Here from 1908 to 1930, it hosted numerous suffrage lectures before the 1920 vote.

In September, 1920, a committee held by Lizzie Crozier French hosted a large congratulatory banquet to thank the legislators who had enabled suffrage. The keynote speaker was Harry T. Burn himself, but Knoxville's delegation of three legislators--W.K. Anderson, Joe Harris, and Joe Wade--who had all voted for suffrage were present, too, and two of them spoke. The evening included almost 20 speeches by both men and women. French's own speech outlined this story of several of her heroes, including **Susan B. Anthony**, who had not lived long enough to see the day. Six years later, the same hall was the site of Lizzie Crozier French's funeral. It was torn down soon after that for the construction of the new Post Office building.



16. PARK HOUSE

422 W. Cumberland Avenue

Across the street, on the southeast corner, is the James Park House, one of the oldest houses in central Knoxville, dating to the very early 1800s, and longtime home to the Park Family, including James Park, Sr., an Irish immigrant who became Knoxville's second mayor. In 1917, the house served during World War I as the headquarters of Tennessee's first local chapter of the Red Cross. It became a center for operations of hundreds of women who were providing bandages and clothing items for the soldiers in the trenches. Organizing it all was--despite her first name--a woman named **Henry Whitlow "Whittie" Logan** (1884-1965), organizer of the Red Cross here in this building who was then sent to France, where she ran a canteen that fed 1,600 soldiers a day during the final deadliest months of the war, earning a commendation from Gen. Pershing. She returned home to open a public health-care center here, and with her husband was also a significant suburban residential developer, extolling the virtues of suburban living even as she preferred her own apartment on Walnut Street.



17. ST. JOHN'S EPISCOPAL CATHEDRAL

423 W. Cumberland Avenue

On the north east corner of this intersection is St. John's, home church to many progressive women over the generations. Built in 1892 to replace an earlier church, St. John's has been associated with author **Frances Hodgson Burnett**; eccentric piano teacher and defiant solo hiker **Lou Krutzsch**, who had a studio in the Lyceum; and longtime *News-Sentinel* columnist **Lucy Templeton** (1878-1971) a newspaperwoman before she could even vote, who became the daily's literary editor in the 1920s. Lizzie Crozier French explored Christian Science and spiritualism, while often identifying herself as a Unitarian. But she was close to St. John's Episcopal Church in part because both of her politically active sisters, Lucy, a teacher at the Women's Institute, and Mary, a political organizer, were parishioners.

-- Head north two blocks to the southeast corner of Walnut Street and W. Clinch Avenue --



18. 4WCA

420 W. Clinch Avenue

The Knoxville 4WCA, founded in 1899 by pre-suffrage reformer **Florence K. Payne** to help endangered women get off the streets, built this current building in 1924. It included the Blue Triangle Tea Room, a favorite gathering place for women, for both social and intellectual meetings, including some led by **Dr. Ruth Stephens**, the history scholar who began teaching at UT in 1926 and later became the university's first female full professor. One young visitor became especially famous. Known as Patsy when she was at the 4WCA learning to swim in the 1930s, **Patricia Neal** (1926-2010) became an Oscar-winning actress, often portraying smart, assertive women. Her own experiences with disability due to strokes inspired her late-life philanthropy in founding the Patricia Neal Rehabilitation Center, which is about 15 blocks down Clinch to the west.

-- Proceed east one block to the southeast corner of W. Clinch Avenue and Market Street --



19. CUSTOM HOUSE AND FEBB & HARRY BURNS SUFFRAGE STATUE

The 1874 Custom House building held the region's main post office during the suffrage era, and it's safe to say this facility processed hundreds of letters from notable suffragists. Today the building is home to the East Tennessee History Center, and is custodian of one particularly famous letter from **Febb Burn** to her son **Harry**, advising him to do the right thing when the Nineteenth Amendment came to a vote in the state legislature in Nashville.

Representative **Harry Burn's** choice to please his mother and guarantee voting rights for all American women, on Aug. 18, 1920, was immortalized in bronze here in 2018. The statue, by Alan LeQuire of Nashville, is the nation's only sculptural commemoration of the final dramatic moment of the fight for women's suffrage in America. In 2019, *New York Times* columnist Gail Collins remarked that Knoxville was a remarkable example for the nation, erecting statues not to questionable military leaders but to women's rights. Knoxville may be America's only city with two downtown statues commemorating suffrage, and they're within sight of each other. One more block to the north brings us back to the Tennessee Woman Suffrage Monument, where we started. **END OF TOUR.**

THANK YOU TO THE FOLLOWING SPONSORS



This walking tour has been funded in part by a CARES ACT Grant through HUMANITIES TENNESSEE.

Vintage images courtesy of the McClung Historical Collection.

HISTORIAN LAURA STILL AND KNOXVILLE WALKING TOURS



Our partner, author Laura Still, of Knoxville Walking Tours, provided much of the research for this guide. She offers personal walking tours on multiple subjects, but has recently worked up a tour mainly about suffrage and its era, called "Misbehaving Women."

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