

INTRODUCTION

Fountain City is different from other Knoxville neighborhoods, in that it began not as a suburb, but as a resort. Its "fountain" was the underground spring emerging from Black Oak Ridge as a brook that forms the head of First Creek. Flowing five miles south through the center of Knoxville into the Tennessee River, it played a major role in the city's history.

The water's emergence from unseen underground sources, and the beauty of the resulting brook, drew the attention of event planners and travelers even before the Civil War, when it was a natural gathering place for evangelical "camp meetings," at which pilgrims would gather for days at a time, witnessing hymns and emotional sermons.

The general area had already been home to several settlers, some as early as the 1790s, among them John Adair (1732-1827), one of only two Irish immigrants to sign the Tennessee Constitution of 1796, making him one of the founders of the state.

Another early settler was James Conner, whose family name resonated with several generations after him.

Later, in 1885, the Fountain Head (or Fountainhead), as it had become known, attracted secular developers of a grand resort, the Fountain Head Hotel, one of the more luxurious of several "springs resorts" in the Knoxville area. Travelers from around the country would come to spend a weekend or the whole summer, enjoying the pure spring water, clean air, natural beauty, and freedom from the ills of the city. At the time, Knoxville hosted about 40 coal-driven factories, but none of them were in the Fountainhead area, and Sharp's Ridge may have shielded this Shangri-La from the smoke and noise of industry, and made it seem farther from town than it was. The hotel advertised unusual amenities, like hot and cold running water in the rooms, fine dining, and an Italian band serenading guests in the evenings. Eventually the hotel added a heart-shaped pool in front of the hotel. Eventually known as Fountain City Lake, or "the duck pond," it's all that remains of the resort.

Although the area had little business other than the hotel and some farms, the area developed the critical mass to suggest public transportation from downtown Knoxville, and by 1887 a "Fountain Head Railroad" was in the works. After some controversy and delay, it was completed as a "Dummy Line," a short steam-driven train, with a station near the site of the Fountainhead.

Perhaps thanks to the business surrounding the hotel, Fountain Head became significant enough to merit its own post office. Because there was already a Fountainhead, Tenn., in Sumner County, it became officially "Fountain City," or so goes the old story, though the term that had been used informally for a couple of years previously. Despite its name, though, Fountain City never incorporated as a city, therefore never had local government, specific boundaries, or a very clear idea of how many people lived there. A Knoxville-society Blue Book in 1894 listed only 70 residents, but an 1895 indicates an almost urban density of residential blocks, as if they were already expecting many more.

Fountain City Park, an informal gathering place in early days, became more like a formal park in 1891, surrounded by a forbidding fence, often with admission charged. Like Chilhowee Park, it was sometimes owned and operated in cooperation with the public-streetcar system that made it possible for Knoxville residents to get there. For several years in the 1890s and early 1900s, it was a popular gathering place for summer holidays, especially Fourth of July and Labor Day. Knoxville residents would board the Dummy Line downtown and spend the day there, witnessing athletic competitions, speeches, dancing, and fireworks. Perhaps the most surprising speaker at Fountain City Park was Indiana-bred Eugene V. Debs, the repeat presidential candidate for the Socialist Party, who gave a well-attended speech there in 1905; two photographs taken on that occasion are among the best-known photographs of Debs.

Holbrook Normal College, originally conceived as a southern branch of an Ohio college inspired by the work of Connecticut-born educator Josiah Holbrook, settled in Fountain City in 1893, as a progressive-minded institution for training teachers. At first hailed as one of the largest normal schools in America, Holbrook promised to increase Fountain City's population by about 3,000, and at least 50 houses were built in anticipation. It even acquired the Fountainhead Hotel, then only about eight years old, to house its first students. Little worked out as planned, and by 1900 the college was sold to a Baptist organization, later evolving into a state school before closing altogether by 1905, but in its short tenure, Holbrook trained hundreds of teachers, some of them influential in local history.

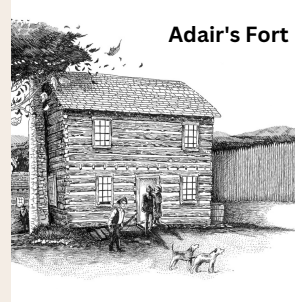
Fountain City supported an elementary school in 1902, and in 1906, Fountain City became the location of a major public high school for Knox County. Originally known as County High School, it became known as Central High.

Adjacent to Knoxville, but decisively separate, thanks to Sharp's Ridge, which formed Knoxville's northern city limits for many years, Fountain City grew in its own ways, attracting people who preferred to live away from the problems and distractions of the city. Among them were Carlos Campbell (1891-1978), the Chamber of Commerce chief who was among the founders of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, and attorney/naturalist Harvey Broome (1902-1968), co-founder of the national Wilderness Society. Some wealthy people lived atop Black Oak Ridge, like the family of Ellen McClung Berry, major UT philanthropist who lived in a mansion known as Belcaro, and public-spirited attorney John Webb Green, who became a major supporter of Fountain City Park.

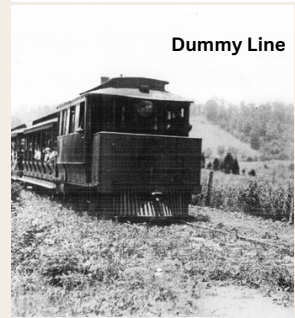
The Acuff family of Maynardville moved to Fountain City in 1919, settling for several years in a house on old College Street, near the park. Father Neill Acuff, a sometime practicing attorney, accepted a call to preach at Fountain City Baptist Church, a role he served for four years before becoming a deputy sheriff; he later returned to his law practice. Here in Fountain City, son Roy Acuff (1903-1992), about 16 when they moved, became a versatile and aggressive athlete at Central High, his first claim to fame. Acuff, who had struggled with school, graduated in 1924, when he was 20. His extraordinary career as the first truly national country-music star was then many years ahead of him.



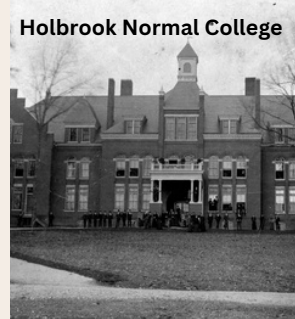
Fountain Head



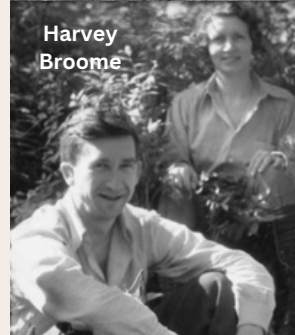
Adair's Fort



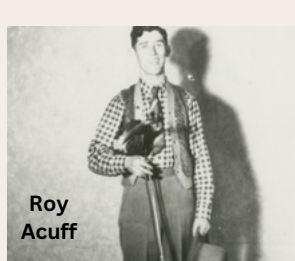
Dummy Line



Holbrook Normal College



Harvey
Broome



Even before Acuff's fame, Fountain City had some country-music cred. A family band who'd previously lived in Oklahoma settled here and became known on the radio as Ridgel's Fountain Citians. They made some recordings of religious and novelty country tunes at the St. James Hotel sessions in downtown Knoxville in 1929. Although not a major success as musicians in their time, they became better known in retrospect, when their recordings became widely available in 2016. Fountain City didn't become part of Knoxville until a controversial annexation in 1962. Although the massive annexation took in more than 50,000 new citizens on all four sides of the city, only in Fountain City was it greeted with strong resistance, and a mock funeral procession down Broadway.



Ft. City Annexation "Funeral"

Fountain City long boasted of its status as "the largest unincorporated community in America"—an assertion impossible to dispute, considering the numbers to compare would seem to require some sort of corporate boundaries and a definite population count. Some of Fountain City's boundaries are dramatically obvious: Black Oak Ridge on the north and Sharp's Ridge on the south. But its eastern and western boundaries are blurrier. Inskip, on the west, is often considered a separate community, but the historic formerly rural communities of Beverly and Smithwood, on the east, are usually counted as part of Fountain City, while the still-rural community of Gibbs is not.

Fountain City is mostly a residential district, and includes some of the most interesting homesites in Knoxville. However, due to the area's irregular topography and heavy traffic patterns, many of the most historic and most architecturally interesting homes are either hard to find or hard to see from the street.

PLEASE NOTE: BROADWAY AND TAZEVELL PIKE ARE BOTH BUSY ROADS WITH FEW PLACES TO PULL OVER, SO PLEASE EXERCISE CAUTION WHEN LOOKING FOR SITES ALONG THIS TOUR.

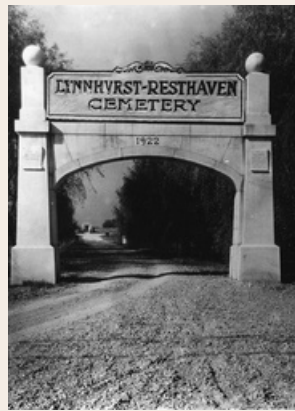
- *The tour will begin at the intersection of Broadway and Karnes Ave. and head North along Broadway.*



SHARPS RIDGE

The steep hills on either side are Sharps Ridge, which from 1917 until the annexation of Fountain City in 1962 formed the northern city limits of Knoxville. A 1929 proposal to make much of it a public park was finally realized in 1953 when it was dedicated as a memorial to those who died in the service during World War II. It was also a natural place for transmission towers, and in 1953, East Tennessee's first television signals, broadcast by WROL and rival WTSK, originated from towers on the ridge.

- *Cross under I-640 and continue straight on Broadway. The first intersecting road will be Adair Drive, take a left here.*



ADAIR DRIVE

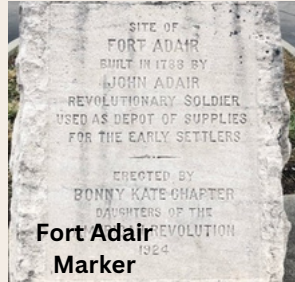
Although established in 1922, Lynnhurst Cemetery - 2300 West Adair Drive was already a notable burial site. Located on the property of Irish immigrant John Adair (1732-1827), it's believed to be where he and his wife, Ellen, were buried. An important political and cultural leader in early Knoxville, Adair assisted in the American Revolution and was one of only two foreign-born signers of the original Tennessee Constitution of 1796.

As a modern cemetery, Lynnhurst is the resting place for several citizens who are known far beyond Fountain City. One of its most surprising graves that of is a former U.S. senator from Idaho. Also a former mayor of Boise, James P. Pope (1884-1966), moved here with his wife when became a Tennessee Valley Authority director in 1939, and made Knoxville his home.

Also here is Billy Meyer (1893-1957), the Knoxville-born son of a German brewer who became a pro baseball player and manager of the Pittsburgh Pirates, for whom Knoxville's minor-league baseball stadium was named for half a century.

West of the cemetery is Adair Park - 1807 Adair Drive: A park was in the works here in the 1970s, but the demolition of some abandoned city greenhouses in 1993 opened the opportunity to create a large multi-use park here.

- *Back on Broadway, headed North*



"Fort Adair" - approx. 4833 N. Broadway. This spot has been described as the site of the original fortified home of Irish immigrants John and Ellen Adair, regarded as Fountain City's founding father and mother. Sometimes known as Adair's Fort or Adair's Station, it served as a supply depot for early settlers. You can view the two historical markers in front of the shopping plaza.

- *Continuing down Broadway, Gibbs Drive will be on the right and the Park Place site (Kroger) will be on the left.*



GIBBS DRIVE

Dempster-Francis House - 2805 Gibbs Road. One of the most conspicuous historic houses on Broadway is the "Dempster House," on the northeast corner of Gibbs, was built in 1924. Although George Dempster (1887-1964) was neither the first nor longest-termed resident of the house—records indicate he lived here only from 1928 to 1932—he's the best known, and his name has stuck to it. Son of British immigrants, Dempster worked on the Panama Canal project before he became Knoxville city manager, mayor, and inventor. Dempster envisioned the globally useful "Dumpster" in 1936, not long after he left this house, and named it for himself. A later, longer-tenured family, that of coal magnate Louis Francis, also had a brush with international fame. Mrs. Louis Francis, who lived here for many years, hosted a reception here at the house in May, 1955, for her niece, Jellico-born TV actress Ann Hillary, and her new husband, English author Frederick Knott, whose plays were the basis for two movie masterpieces of suspense, Dial M for Murder and Wait Until Dark.



Carlos Campbell House - 2837 Gibbs Drive. Longtime Knoxville Chamber of Commerce chief, Carlos Campbell (1892-1978) was among the younger founders of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, and chronicled its origin in the 1960 book Birth of a National Park, which he wrote while living here. It may seem remarkable that both Dempster and Campbell, prominent city leaders, lived outside of city limits and presumably didn't pay city taxes. Campbell moved into this bungalow around 1923, the year the Park movement started, and lived here for most of his adult life.

Park Place



Park Place Site - 5201 N. Broadway (Kroger). On the west side between Knox and Cedar Lane. Park Place, built in the early 1890s, was the palatial mansion of "Col." J.C. Woodward (1841-1913), an idealistic residential developer from Kentucky who saw potential in the development of Fountain City as a sort of healthful utopia, and became its first postmaster. Designed by Baumann Brothers, the Romanesque structure was one of the largest and most admired late-Victorian homes in the Knoxville area. The rambling three-story, 23-room home was known for its high tower, bay windows, stone carvings and unusual craftsmanship, with some contemporary influence from art nouveau styles. Although he became known for extolling the virtues of pastoral Fountain City, Woodward became more involved in Knoxville business, investing in downtown real estate and serving as president of Knoxville Business College. Woodward sold the suburban mansion in 1900 and established his main residence in a smaller house on East Fifth. Later, other families lived at Park Place, including coal industrialist J.P. Williams and his family. After the death of Mr. Williams in 1978, the family attempted to find a buyer for it. Ultimately the buyer was Target department store, who demolished it for a new store and shopping center in 1980. Target didn't stay in the location long.

- *Just past Gibbs Drive will be Cedar Lane on the left with Fountain City lake and Downtown Fountain City ahead of you.*

CEDAR LANE

James McMillan (1793-1866) planted the first of many cedar trees that gave this avenue its name. His daughter, Adeline, later lived at the Karnes house.

Karnes House, a.k.a. "Magnolia Manor." Howard Karnes house, ca. 1897, was occupied by that saddle manufacturer's descendants for more than 75 years. Karnes (1859-1932) was a leader in the horse-accessory business, originally based on Market Square, but also a major landowner in the Cedar Lane area. He lived here with his wife, Ida, and raised three children. Rehabbed as a B&B and event space in the 1990s, it then earned its "Magnolia Manor" monicker. It has recently been for sale as a private home.



Karnes House

- *Back on Broadway headed North, take a left on Hotel Road and you will be in what was once downtown Fountain City.*

DOWNTOWN

The small urban district of city blocks with sidewalks in the vicinity of Fountain City Lake (a.k.a. the Duck Pond) and Fountain City Park was the area of most interest in the late 19th century. The heart-shaped pond was built for the Fountain Head Hotel, which stood just behind it to the west. Now more than 130 years old, the big concrete-lined pond remains a favorite gathering place today, and even attracts fishermen; the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency stocks it each year with trout, but large catfish have also been reeled in from the pond in recent seasons.

The Roy Acuff family lived near there in the 1920s, and Acuff attended Central High, where he achieved his first fame as a football, basketball, and baseball star.

The terminal for the once-beloved Dummy Line, later the electric streetcar to downtown Knoxville, was at the foot of Fountain City Park. Other businesses sprang up along Hotel Avenue, whose name is a remnant of the 1880s Fountain Head Hotel days.

Hotel Avenue also the site of the Green Lantern Tea Room, which despite its name had a reputation as a bootlegging joint, a rarity in Fountain City, which prided itself on its freedom from alcoholic beverages. In an incident never acknowledged by biographers, Roy Acuff, not yet famous as a singer and fiddler, was shot here in an apparently illegal transaction in 1931, but seems to have recovered handily.

The Fountain City Art Center - 213 Hotel Road, often open to the public, is devoted to those learning the visual arts, and displaying their work. It's located in the former Fountain City Public Library, a modernist building built adjacent to the park in 1964. The library, a branch of Knox County Public Library, moved into a new, larger facility at 5300 Stanton Road, at the corner of Essary, in 2004.

- *Continue straight on Hotel Road. Veer right on Holbrook Drive, which will turn to Gresham Drive. Gresham Middle School will be on the left.*

Gresham Middle School / Old Central High School - 500 Gresham Road. opened in 1906 as Knox County High School, Central High was originally the main high school for all students who lived in Knox County outside of city limits, regardless of whether they lived in Fountain City or South Knox. The name Central may have been intended to push that idea, even if it was perhaps an odd name for a school in a northern corner of the county. Its first home was in the defunct Holbrook College, near Fountain City Park, but it eventually built this proper high-school building in 1931. The principal who oversaw the construction was Hassie Gresham (1877-1970), the beloved longtime English teacher at Central. Originally from Jonesborough, Gresham first saw Fountain City when she attended Holbrook College in 1902. Living in a modest house nearby, she became principal of Central High in 1919, and has been claimed to be the first female public-high-school principal in the state.

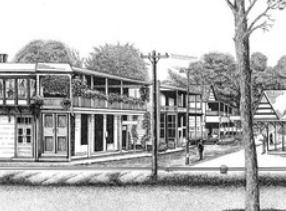
Another longtime teacher who knew this building well as Nannie Lee Hicks (1889-1979), a former student of Gresham's Central who became a history teacher with a perhaps unprecedented influence on local history, not just here in Fountain City, but across the region. She would assign her best students to do real primary research for papers, often interviewing older citizens; their work was so respected that many of their papers are on file at the public library, and occasionally cited in scholarly articles.

This building served as Central High for 40 years. When the high school relocated into a larger building some distance away (see Central H.S.), the building was repurposed as a junior high and renamed for its longtime principal, who had retired in 1947. Gresham was in her 90s when it was renamed in her honor, as Gresham Junior High.



Ft. City Lake

Hotel Avenue, 1910



Fountain City Art Center
Classes • Exhibits • 357 ARTS



Gresham Middle School



Nannie Lee Hicks

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- *Back on Broadway, you will notice Litton's across the street from the Lake.*

Close to the intersection of Essary Drive and Broadway stands Litton's - 2803 Essary Road. Litton's Market and Restaurant, which has received occasional national attention, especially for its hamburgers, is the best-known restaurant in Fountain City. Barry Litton opened the landmark in 1979, but it traces its lineage to the restaurateur's grandfather Eldridge Litton's grocery and meat market in nearby Inskip in the early '50s.

- *Continue North on Broadway. You will pass Fountain City Park on the left. Take a right on Jane Allen Drive, followed by an immediate left on Garden Drive.*

The corner of Broadway and what's now Jane Allen Drive was once the site of John I. Copeland's Garage - approx. 5530 Broadway. Broadway was once part of a national network of north-south routes known as the Dixie Highway. By 1920, it was not unusual for motorists from Chicago or Cleveland to be driving down Broadway on their way to Florida. Fountain City was exposed to passers by in a way that it had never been before, and a new industry rose along Broadway in taking care of automobiles.

Eccentric automobile dealer and mechanic John I. Copeland (1880-1951) opened a large garage on Broadway near Garden in the 1920s. A former farmer and teacher, and a lifelong bachelor, Copeland slept on elevated boards in the garage, most often with his five fox hounds. Extraordinarily unusual among service stations, Copeland's garage featured a large library. He also tinkered with radios, which interested him. If that weren't plenty, Copeland was a master fiddler, and one with a particularly eager pupil. After serious health problems ended his dreams of playing pro baseball in 1929, Roy Acuff learned to sing and play the fiddle, with help from Copeland, who as a teacher was also a dramatic orator and had a sense of stage presence. Acuff spent much of his time at Copeland's big garage. Some scholars who had interviewed Acuff have credited Copeland for launching Acuff's remarkable career.

- *Continue North on Garden. Garden Montessori School will be on the left, directly followed by Savage Garden.*

Savage Garden - 3225 Garden Drive. Although it's owned and used by a Montessori school and only rarely open to the public, Savage Garden, established around 1920 by English-born industrialist Arthur Savage (1872-1946), is one of the most surprising roadside sights in Knoxville. The Japanese-style garden with stylized pagoda designs was a popular destination for garden clubs of the 1920s and '30s; sometimes called "Mr. Savage's Garden," it was declared "most perfect in the city" in 1922. Despite its Asian theme, by the way, the first structure in the garden was reportedly the stone "Irish Tower." It inspired the name of Garden Drive.

- *Follow Garden Drive to Jacksboro Pike and take a right.*

You will pass the current Central High School - 5321 Jacksboro Pike. This large, modern building, built in 1971 on a design by Barber & McMurry, replaced Central's previous building in the "downtown" section of Fountain City. Central's recent alumni include baseball star Todd Helton and country-pop singer Kelsea Ballerini.

- *Continue straight on Jacksboro to Tazewell Pike and take a left.*

TAZEWELL PIKE

The complicated intersection at the corner of Tazewell, Jacksboro, and Sanders has served as Fountain City's second downtown for about a century. The old two-story brick building that forms an obtuse angle there has hosted groceries, barber shops, and specialty shops.

On the right you will see Pratt's Country Store - 3100 Tazewell Pike. The store has been in business by that name since 1985, but it has roots dating back to the 1920s, when a grocery was known as Pratt Brothers.

SMITHWOOD

Named for early settler John Smith (1795-1883), grandson-in-law of John Adair, Smithwood is the name of an unincorporated community once based near the intersection of Tazewell Pike and Jacksboro Pike. It was the official name of a U.S. post office here from 1886 to 1904.

To the left, behind the gas station, is Smithwood Baptist Church & Cemetery - 4914 Jacksboro Pike. Established in 1845, it's the oldest cemetery of any size in Fountain City. It's notable as the resting place of several refugees from yellow-fever epidemics in Memphis in the 1870s. Hundreds of patients were attracted to Fountain City's reputation as a health resort. Some of them survived; some did not, though whether their graves were ever clearly marked is not obvious. Most of the legible graves, several of which date to before the Civil War, are those of longtime Smithwood families.

The semi-pro Knoxville Reds baseball team moved their home field to a field in Smithwood in 1894, by which time fans could pretty easily ride the Dummy Line from downtown to see the games; however, they stayed only one year before moving back to town.

Charles L. Baum, son of a German refugee immigrant, established Baum's Flowers, a prolific florist shop, with greenhouses in Smithwood, operated a major rose-growing facility here in the very early 20th century, near where the Baums then lived. By World War I, Baum was moving most of his main operation to Bearden, where it settled until closing in the 1960s.



Copeland Family



Savage Garden



Central High School



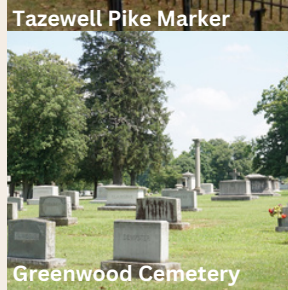
Pratt's Country Store



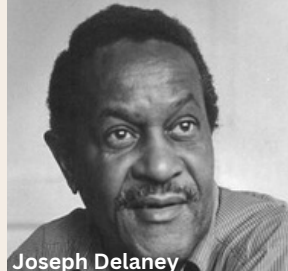
Baum's Flowers, 1908



Tazewell Pike angles in the direction of Tazewell and New Tazewell, Tenn., 40 miles away in Claiborne County. Those who use it as a busy thoroughfare might be surprised to know in terms of its existing homes, it's one of Knoxville's most historic streets, with several dating to the 19th century, and a few impressive ones dating to before the Civil War. However, some of the most architecturally interesting homes are difficult to view without trespassing, and Tazewell Pike, a quiet country road in living memory, has become a swift-flowing river of cars, and not necessarily tolerant of graceful sightseeing.



Greenwood Cemetery – 3500 Tazewell Pike. One of Knoxville's largest historic cemeteries, Greenwood was established in 1900. Leading the effort was wealthy dentist Reuben N. Kesterson, whose monumental obelisk, high on the hill, is obvious. It's the grieving Dr. Kesterson's memorial to his three-year-old son, who had died back in 1890. Dr. Kesterson inaugurated the cemetery by moving his son's grave here from Old Gray. Kesterson had visited Green-Wood Cemetery in Brooklyn, one of America's first large rural "garden cemeteries," and found its example inspiring.



As reported, the original marble obelisk broke upon its arrival by train—Kesterson promptly ordered a second—but enough of the original obelisk was intact to be purchased by the McClung family and mounted as a somewhat shorter obelisk for their own family plot. That plot's few stones tell a tragic story, including both Mrs. McClung and the mentally unstable grandson who shot her to death.

Greenwood is the resting place of several nationally prominent citizens, including Judge Edward Terry Sanford, Knoxville's only Supreme Court justice, whose interment was attended by only four Supreme Court justices because he happened to die the same day as his close friend Chief Justice William Howard Taft, who had his own memorials the same day. Those attending the burial at Greenwood in March, 1930, included new Chief Justice Charles Evans Hughes and judges Harlan Stone, James McReynolds, and Pierce Butler.



The cemetery is the resting place of Joseph Delaney (1904-1991), African American artist of note for his New York street scenes, and younger brother of abstract expressionist Beauford Delaney.

It's also the location of the lone grave of James Agee—not the journalist and novelist but his father, whose death in a 1916 car wreck on Clinton Pike was the subject of the author's Pulitzer-winning 1957 novel, *A Death in the Family*. Greenwood is an actual setting for a stirring and vivid scene near the end of the novel, as "Jay Follett's" burial at Greenwood is recounted by Rufus's "Uncle Andrew"—who is based on Agee's own uncle, artist Hugh Tyler.

- *Just after the cemetery take a right on Oakland Drive. As Oakland Drive intersects with Cabin Road you will see the church and the community center on the right hand side.*

OAKLAND



Oakland was a rural African American community between Tazewell Pike and Beverly Road. The Fountain City area has never had a large minority population, but this pocket just east of Greenwood Cemetery has been a traditionally Black neighborhood since at least 1890, a rarity in this area. It was once known as Slabtown, when it was a site of social events like picnics and dances

Organized around 1900, the Oakland School was a public elementary school for African American children. The last school building, a New Deal WPA project in 1936, is still there, credited to architect Frank O. Barber (ca. 1891-1941), onetime county architect, later employed by TVA. Well known during his short career, the Massachusetts native credited his success to the training of Charles Barber, of Barber & McMurry, but was not close kin.

Oakland Elementary School served the small African American community of Fountain City. Although Oakland usually had only 40-70 students, it sometimes won the county-wide award for best attendance. It was also home to a Boy Scout troop. It closed in 1964, as a result of annexation and desegregation, and once served as a children's museum. In recent years, it has been the Oakland Community Center.

Nearby is the historic Oakland A.M.E. Zion Church, now the Pillar and Ground of the Truth Ministries church. It was built in 1921, but the congregation is much older, originating in the late 1800s.

- *Head back to Tazewell Pike and take a right.*

Oak Forest Mansion – 5000 Hedgewood Drive at Tazewell Pike. A simple Victorian house across from Greenwood, was the home of Dr. Claudius Capps (1863-1951), physician and songwriter..



Jackson Mansion – 4003 Tazewell Pike. Built in 1885, and designed in an elaborate Queen Anne style by the Knoxville architectural firm of Stephenson and Getaz, who were English and French immigrants, respectively, this was the final home of railroad developer Richard C. Jackson (1809-1892). The superintendent of the once-extensive East Tennessee Virginia, and Georgia Railroad, Jackson was the namesake of downtown's Jackson Avenue.

The McMillan-Brewer Mansion – 4105 Tazewell Pike. Built around 1885, this elaborate Victorian with the corner cupola was the childhood home of Lillian McMillan Stuart, a.k.a. Dorothy South (1884-1964), a Broadway operetta star in her youth.

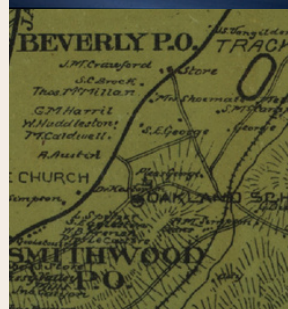


Crawford-Harrill Mansion – 4115 Tazewell Pike (Corner Beverly Road and Tazewell Pike). James Moses Crawford (1852-1941), Beverly postmaster, built this house in 1858. It's one of the oldest occupied private homes in Knox County. With trees now fully grown in front of the property, it will be difficult to see from the road.

BEVERLY

Nannie Lee Hicks, who was considered an authority on the Fountain City area throughout much of the 20th century, declared that "no one knows where Smithwood ends and Beverly begins, they are practically one and the same."

Beverly is a name that evolved in the late 19th century to describe an area along Tazewell Pike to the east of Fountain City. By 1895, there was a Beverly Racetrack, for horse racing. How long it lasted is unknown, but it's described as existing near the intersection of Beverly Road and Greenway Drive.



Beverly Hills Sanatorium



Beverly and Greenway: "Reeves' Roost." Although there's no trace of it now, the steep hillside on the northeast was once the site of Reeve's Roost, an outdoor beer resort that became nationally famous years after it closed. A Knoxville detective claimed, in testimony before Congress, that he observed Communists dancing naked in the woods up there in 1939. As bizarre as it seems, it was not completely far-fetched; there was indeed a small Communist cell at TVA, mostly made up of very young staffers, who had meetings in North Knoxville occasionally, and maintained contact with Communist organizations nationally. The testimony came out as a result of an unsuccessful attempt to prevent former TVA director David Lilienthal's appointment to the top job at the new Atomic Energy Commission.

Anderson-Gouffon Cemetery, 1921



Beverly Hills Sanatorium - 5321 Beverly Park Circle, established in 1924, was a country hospital / quarantine for tuberculosis patients on a 140-acre farm on Tazewell Pike, established through a major fundraising campaign led by the Civitan Club, with assistance from the new Community Chest. It was the main tuberculosis facility in the Knoxville area, and served thousands in its half-century of existence, and much discussed in Knoxville in the 1920s and '30s as a triumph of philanthropy. Before effective drug treatments, the lung disease was often treated with rest, good nutrition, and clean air. Beginning in 1951, it was replaced on site by a modern state facility called the East Tennessee Chest Disease Hospital. The original sanatorium was demolished in 1975—with a controversial controlled burn. About four years later, the Chest Disease facility began converting into a county-run general nursing home called Hillcrest Beverly, later known after further demolitions and rebuilding as Beverly Park Place.

Anderson-Gouffon Cemetery - 4802 Tazewell Pike. On a high hill in farmland on the south side of Tazewell Pike is the Anderson-Gouffon Cemetery. Although its 1811 date associates it with the earliest settlers, it was also a burial place of French-Swiss refugee immigrants, especially those named Gouffon and Truan, who began arriving in the area around 1850. This property was once the home of Auguste Gouffon, who built a simple frame house here in 1852, from which he ran a farm and became one of Knox County's first cheese manufacturers. His house lasted more than a century, and was torn down relatively recently, in 1990.

- [Main tour ends.](#)

SIDE TRIPS: BLACK OAK RIDGE AND WHITTLE SPRINGS

BLACK OAK RIDGE



Lucy Curtis Templeton

This ridge has been a coveted homesite for well over a century, with lofty views and a lush, quiet, mountainlike atmosphere that seems far from any city. For more than a century, affluent Knoxvilleans with no personal association with Fountain City have found it an agreeable place to build, whether a permanent home or a summer cottage. Among these financial or intellectual elite were several members of the prosperous, well-traveled and fashionable McClung family; maverick environmentalist Harvey Broome, who lived in a unique, comfortably rustic, wooden house on Mountain Crest Drive (see below); and discerningly outspoken newspaper columnist Lucy Curtis Templeton, whose popular News-Sentinel column, "Country Calendar," was often simply a description of what interesting birds and flower she saw in her backyard that day, in her terraced gardens surrounded by thick woods, at the far end of Curtis Street (it burned down only a few years ago).

At least four different McClung households lived in gracefully stylish houses, some of them mansions, along Walkup Drive and Belcaro, in the complicated hills west of Broadway. Belcaro is named for the largest and most famous of the McClung houses, the site of elegant parties in the 1920s and '30s.



Belcaro

An unmarked gate at **Belcaro Drive** marks the site of the Italianate mansion built by Hugh Lawson McClung (1858-1936), well-traveled attorney, banker, and educator, in 1923. Modeled after a villa in Tuscany, decorated with frescos by Hugh Tyler and surrounded by terraces and gardens, the home was a showplace, the site of frequent parties in the 1920s and '30s. McClung was so proud of it that Belcaro is mentioned on his 1936 tombstone at Greenwood. His daughter, Ellen McClung Berry (1894-1992), one of UT's major philanthropists (McClung Tower is named for her) later lived here in a smaller, separate house with a Roman temple-like design. Its Italian motif was not a stretch for the family: her husband, Thomas Berry, was closely related to Italian royalty, and the family spent time in prewar Italy. (Martha Berry Drive is an homage to his aunt, beloved founder of what's now known as Berry College in Rome, Ga. Martha Berry (1865-1942) never lived in Knoxville, but was a frequent visitor.)

After Hugh McClung's death, his survivors were beset with sometimes bizarre tragedies. His widow was shot to death in Florida by Ellen's schizophrenic son. Later, Ellen lost most of her fortune to a young schemer; as an elderly widow, Ellen, the only survivor of her once-wealthy family, lived alone in a small apartment in Jefferson City. Her story is told in the 2018 book *Bless Her Heart: The Life and Times of Ellen McClung Berry*, by Barbara Aston-Wash.



Ellen McClung Berry

Belcaro was home to other families before it was torn down by a later owner unexpectedly in March, 1996. The sudden demolition of Belcaro was controversial—the Romanesque house and its formal gardens had been a community point of pride, even down in the valley of Fountain City, where it was visible among the trees—and a bit mysterious. It was eventually replaced by a large, yellow Spanish-revival house that's now home to a still later owner.

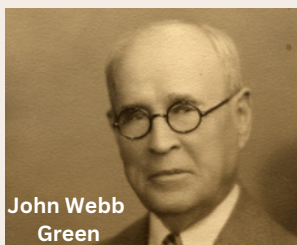
Belcaro Drive is named for the lost mansion, whose style has been imitated by other architectural projects in Knoxville and Morristown.



Ridgefield

Walkup Drive was home to other members of the McClung family. The unusual, rambling hilltop house known as Ridgefield might look something like a mansion, but it was the 1924 "summer cottage" of hardware merchant Charles J. McClung (1866-1932) and his wife, Anna. He was brother of Hugh L. McClung and Ellen McClung Webb, members of the old Knoxville family who all found appeal in life atop Black Oak Ridge. McClung died on vacation in Miami in 1932; his wife survived for 24 years, enjoying the views from this home until her death in 1956.

Built in 1922 by Mississippi-born attorney John Webb Green (1859-1957) in a classic federal style designed by the young firm of Barber and McMurry, "Ridgeview II" replaced a previous house known as Ridgeview. Green lived here with his wife, Ellen McClung, the daughter of merchant Frank McClung. (She was a niece of her neighbor Hugh Lawson McClung, of Belcaro, and a first cousin of Ellen McClung Berry). Their property here included orchards and vineyards.



Green left several permanent marks on Knoxville. At the foot of the ridge, Green became concerned about a 1920s attempt to subdivide what had been known as Fountain City Park; he led the successful effort to preserve it as a public park. Green also aided the effort to use the bequest of his wife, Ellen, to establish UT's McClung Museum as a memorial to her father, Frank H. McClung.

Green's success as an attorney attracted a cousin, Daniel Clary Webb, to form a partnership of Green & Webb. Daniel Webb's son was Robert Webb, founder of Webb School. Green & Webb's offices were in the Burwell Building, downtown on Gay Street. It says something about Green that he would have his chauffeur drive him to the Fountain City bus stop each morning to ride downtown and support public transit.



On the ridgetop east of Broadway is **Baxter Gardens - 3901 Sam Cooper Road**. A recent development, the 20-acre showplace with 15 themed gardens and 35 statues is the private home of Holston Gases proprietor Bill Baxter. The family began opening the gardens to the public in 2012, but only in April, in conjunction with the Dogwood Arts Festival. Unlike Savage Garden, none of it's visible from the road.

Harvey Broome Home - 5115 Mountain Crest Drive. One of Tennessee's most prominent naturalists, attorney, hiker, and co-founder of the national Wilderness Society, Harvey Broome (1902-1968) led a remarkable life, much of it in Fountain City. He grew up in Knoxville, but was a direct descendant of Fountain City founder John Adair, and his family owned a large farm in the country near Sharp's Ridge. Harvey and his wife, Anne, built a home there, on Broadway, in 1937. When threatened by commercial development on Broadway, Broome successfully moved that rustic house to Mountain Crest Drive, where he enjoyed the view of his beloved Smokies. Here he spent the last eight years of his life, witnessing President Lyndon Johnson's signing of the Wilderness Act in Washington. Broome died suddenly here, while working in his yard.

- *Whittle Springs is located on the south side of I-640 off of Mineral Springs Road.*

WHITTLE SPRINGS



On the eastern fringe of Fountain City, Whittle Springs began as another springs resort, a little bit later than the Fountain Head Hotel, but advertising medicinal mineral waters. By 1892, Georgia-born entrepreneur James M. Whittle was promoting its medicinal "Epsom-Lithia Waters," which he sold bottled in several states. Although the claims were later proven exaggerated, Whittle Springs became "a delightful summer resort," with a hotel opening in 1901, not long after the neighboring Fountain Head closed. Rebuilt larger and more stylishly in 1918, it boasted 125 rooms and several unusual amenities.

Located near what's now Whittle Springs Road and White Oak Lane, Whittle Springs Hotel lasted for more than half a century, used sometimes as a residential hotel; Cornelius Williams, elderly father of playwright Tennessee Williams, lived there for a time, as did Mother Maybelle Carter and her musically talented daughters. Whittle Springs was the location for Swing-era dances, sometimes with nationally known jazz orchestras, including those of Gene Krupa and Jack Teagarden.

The big, handsome hotel became the nucleus for its amenities, including what may have been the biggest swimming pool in Knoxville history, finished in 1919 and furnished with elaborate slides and diving boards; an "aviation field" for airplanes that made it briefly a rival with Island Home and Sutherland Avenue for Knoxville's most popular landing strip; an 18-hole golf course, probably Knoxville's first public full-size course; and in 1954, a modern, state of the art broadcasting studio for East Tennessee's most popular radio station, WNOX, with a 1,250-capacity auditorium. Mayor George Dempster hailed its opening as a major turning point in Knoxville history. A guest of honor was Gen. Leslie Groves, director of the Manhattan Project.

Although star-crossed in several respects—WNOX was disappointed in its application to host one of Knoxville's first television stations, and the live-radio era began dying almost as soon as the facility opened, the studio was for a short time, an exciting place, hosting the legendary live radio show Mid-Day Merry-Go-Round, and featuring shows by the young Johnny Cash, Bill Haley and the Comets, and locals like Don Gibson, who later claimed he wrote the Patsy Cline hit, "Sweet Dreams" in the Whittle Springs studio.

The hotel was torn down in 1964; after several failed attempts to save it, the once-ultramodern broadcasting studio was torn down in 2016. Today, all that remains of the Whittle Springs resort is the Whittle Springs Golf Course. Whittle Springs Middle School is very near the site of the hotel and studio.



Special thanks to the late Jim Tumblin, Fountain City historian, and to the book he left us, *Fountain City: People Who Made a Difference* (Celtic Cat Publishing, 2016), to the Knox County Public Library's Calvin M. McClung Historical Collection, and to our colleague, longtime Fountain City resident Nicole Stahl, who helped with research and directional advice.

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The Knoxville History Project is an educational nonprofit whose mission is to research and promote the history and culture of Knoxville.

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