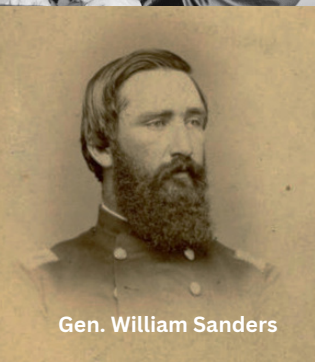
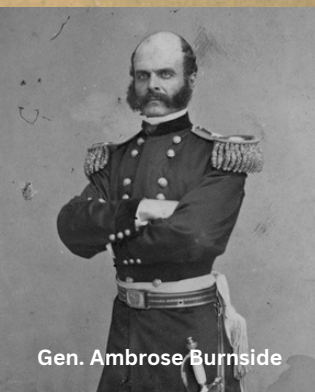




Capt. Orlando Poe



Gen. William Sanders



Gen. Ambrose Burnside

INTRODUCTION

Once farmland, later a battlefield, Fort Sanders developed after the Civil War as one of Knoxville's most convenient neighborhoods for the affluent. Only in the mid-20th century did it develop a reputation for UT student housing. But for 150 years, it has developed a reputation for creativity, nurturing several nationally known authors, and a few musicians and artists.

Generally, Fort Sanders, or West End as it was known for several decades, is regarded the area west of Second Creek (now World's Fair Park), east of the railroad tracks, south of Dale Avenue or I-40, and north of Cumberland Avenue. Some are old enough to recall when several square blocks south of Cumberland, from the Mountcastle Park and Melrose Place areas over toward the river, were regarded as part of Fort Sanders, but by the 1970s, UT's expansion has transformed that tree-shaded family neighborhood into an institutional setting with very few residential houses. Today, for practical purposes, "Fort Sanders" refers to the ridge parallel to Cumberland Avenue on its north.

It began as open farmland on the west side of Knoxville, which until 1897 ended at Second Creek. Part of the area was owned by the White family, members of the family of Knoxville founder James White, especially prosperous merchant Hugh A. M. White, who lived on Cumberland Avenue near what's now 13th street.

During the Civil War, Fort Sanders was Knoxville's largest earthwork built to defend the city. Commenced by occupying Confederates, it was enlarged and improved by Union forces under Gen. Ambrose Burnside in the fall of 1863. In charge of specifics of fortification was experienced engineer Capt. Orlando Poe who may have qualified as a genius.

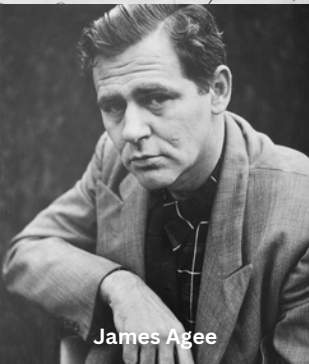
The big earthworks at the crest of the ridge was named Fort Sanders during the siege, in memory of young Brigadier General William Sanders (1833-1863), who had died at the Lamar House after being shot by a sniper on Kingston Pike in the defense of Knoxville on Nov. 19.

The Battle of Fort Sanders, on Nov. 29, 1863, came as the climax of a weeks-long Confederate siege of Knoxville by Gen. James Longstreet. Early on an icy morning, Confederates charged the fort from the northwest, and encountered numerous barriers, including deep ditches and tripwires unseen by previous reconnaissance. The battle lasted only 20 minutes but resulted in more than 800 casualties, lopsidedly on the Confederate side. It was such a disaster that Longstreet offered to resign. Confederates withdrew to the northeast, and never attacked Knoxville again.

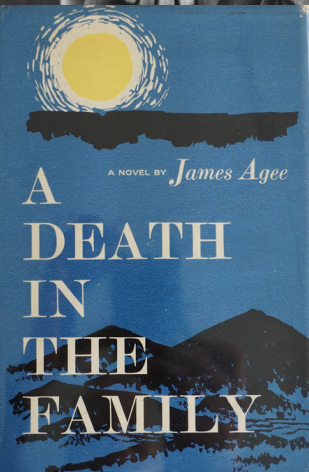
The war predated today's street grid—these were mostly just fields—but the fort itself was on the crest of the hill, in the vicinity of what's now 17th Street, originally a short street that led up to the ruins from Cumberland Avenue, known originally as Fort Sanders Street. Recent scholarship has suggested the actual fort's ramparts extended as far west as 18th Street.

White's Addition, as it was first known, saw some development in the years just after the Civil War, but home construction didn't catch on in a big way there until the 1870s, and much more in the 1880s.

It was the high Victorian era, but at that time, the term "Victorian" was not used to apply to architecture. The people of the Victorian era called this new elaborate style "Queen Anne," in a vague and puzzling reference to a much-earlier queen who reigned over Great Britain in 1702-1714. Her brief reign saw nothing like this late 19th-century approach to home design that included turrets and balconies and spindles and elaborate decoration. Despite the reference to a historical figure, this exuberant style was entirely new in 1880, and suddenly popular with the affluent. Although too many houses have been lost to neglect, fire, and reckless development, Fort Sanders is still one of the best places to find multiple distinctive examples of Queen Anne architecture in the Knoxville area. Although specific architects have been confirmed for only a few of these houses, several are credited to Baumann Brothers, Knoxville's first real architecture firm formed by Joseph and Albert B. Baumann, Sr., sons of German immigrants, who are known for several large buildings still standing downtown today.



James Agee



Catherine Wiley



The neighborhood was outside of Knoxville's city limits until it was annexed in 1897. For about eight years before that, it was incorporated as a suburban town known as "West Knoxville," with its own government. By 1880, both before and after annexation, it was often known as West End, apparently a deliberate allusion to the fashionable district in London.

The streets of the neighborhood have changed twice. Originally, all the streets had individual names, beginning from the east: Morrow, Scott, Blount, John, Ann, Dickinson, Temple, Fort Sanders. Around 1890, when it was a separate town, the streets were given ordinal numbers, apparently inspired by Manhattan's grid. They became First through Fourteenth, beginning on the eastern border of the town, near Second Creek. After annexation, that scheme became confusing, partly because Knoxville already had numbered avenues, First through Ninth, on the north side of town. In the mid-1920s, the numbering was changed, to reflect each block's distance from Knoxville's north-south axis, Central Street, and to reflect the addresses already given to the houses here. Hence each numbered street increased by eight: 3rd Street became 11th Street, and so on. The previous numbering scheme was still visible in brass identifiers on a few streetcorners here until the early 21st century.

When the term "Fort Sanders" was used, it was always in regard to the ruins of the actual fort, which remained a tourist attraction for at least 40 years after the war. An 1890s attempt to make it a military park came to naught, but the old ruins were central to an extraordinary Blue-Gray Reunion in 1890, and sometimes used for militia maneuvers as late as 1906. Knoxville grew rapidly, tripling in size between 1870 and 1900, creating financial pressure to develop land so close to downtown. Little by little, the fortifications were developed away, and the last of the ruins had apparently disappeared altogether by about 1925.

Although it was easy walking distance from downtown for most able-bodied people, the neighborhood was served with an electric streetcar, known as the Highland Avenue line.

Several professors lived in Fort Sanders, but most residents had no association with the university. Only a few hundred students were enrolled, and many of them lived in dormitories on the Hill. A few wealthy people lived here, especially on the "uphill" north side of Laurel Avenue, at the top of the ridge. Most West End residents were moderately prosperous businessmen and their families. As James Agee noted of the Highland Avenue neighbors of his youth, ca. 1915, "The men were mostly small businessmen, one or two very modestly executives, one or two worked with their hands, most of them clerical, and most of them between 30 and 45." His novel *A Death in the Family*, based on his memories of the Fort Sanders neighborhood, does not even mention the university.

Cumberland Avenue west of 17th Street, not yet known as the Strip, developed in the 1920s and '30s, mainly to serve walking traffic from the high-density neighborhood.

After 1920, UT's student population, no longer fully accommodated on the Hill, began to grow into the thousands, and later tens of thousands. After 1960 or so, it's likely that more than half of the neighborhood's residents were students.

West End became better known as Fort Sanders in the 1950s, influenced by the Fort Sanders Elementary School, built in 1956, combining the student populations in the old Staub School, located on UT's newly expanding campus, and the antiquated Van Gilder School, which stood for decades at 1300 Highland.

In 1970, an Urban Renewal proposal would have cleared a 21-acre part of the neighborhood—everything east of 15th (James Agee Street)—for new inexpensive apartment housing. Fortunately, it was not approved.

But since then, the old battlefield has been the site of opposing forces, with very strong development pressures from the university and hospital, and also spirited defense of the old neighborhood. While dozens of historic homes have been lost, many remain, occupied by residents and in better condition than they were 50 years ago.

One constant in Fort Sanders is its reputation for breeding artists. Author James Agee is most famous, but the same neighborhood was also the early home of National Book Award winner Joseph Wood Krutch, Pulitzer-winning historian Bernadotte Schmidt, pioneer businesswoman and novelist Anne Armstrong, architectural artist Hugh Tyler, impressionist painter Catherine Wiley—and "Men In Black" creator Lowell Cunningham, among many others, including musicians, who created lasting work here.

This tour was written by Jack Neely.

The tour starts at the Fort Sanders pillars at 11th Street and Clinch Avenue.

WEST CLINCH AVENUE

This 1100 block of W. Clinch Avenue was once the site of the Joel Tyler home, which is where author James Agee was born in 1909 and also where he lived in the mid-1920s, during a year and a half that he attended Knoxville High School. The house, on the upper north side of the street, was torn down more than fifty years ago, and is now just part of a condo complex.

Schmitt House (1201 Clinch Ave). If this 1896 house, on the northwest corner of Clinch and 12th, looks a bit odd, it's only because its porch wraps around to the interior of the block. This house was built for, and on, another corner. It was the home of UT math professor Cooper Schmitt and his family, and originally stood at the southwest corner of White Avenue and 13th Street. It's notable as the home of Prof. Schmitt, who died in 1911 after collapsing during a lecture on the Hill and is memorialized with a plaque inside the Austin Peay building. It may have a better claim to fame as the childhood home of his remarkable son, Bernadotte Schmitt (1886-1969), a Rhodes Scholar who later became a nationally known historian. The younger Schmitt's 1930 book about the causes of World War I, *The Coming of War: 1914*, won the Pulitzer Prize for History. For that book, he interviewed, among many other leaders, the exiled Kaiser Wilhelm.

The house was moved whole in 2015, in a herculean effort by developer Carl Lansden after UT acquired its original property for new construction, and is now once again a residence. Although Fort Sanders is associated with the youth of several nationally known authors, including two Pulitzer winners and one National Book Award winner, this is the only one still standing.

1202 Clinch Avenue. Although much modified, with modern windows and siding, the house across the street at 1202 has been claimed to be one of Fort Sanders' oldest, dating to 1876, although only a little of its ornamental detail remains. The house is connected to the story of successful inventor-industrialist Weston Fulton (1871-1946), because it was the home of his bride Barbara Murrian's parents, and the site of Weston and Barbara's 1910 wedding. Fulton reportedly lived here for some time, as he was planning the Fulton Sylphon factory that made him a very wealthy man. Fulton's later, better-known homes, including the legendary palatial Westcliff on Lyons View, have been demolished. This is his only known remaining home.

The modern building at the southeast corner of 13th and Clinch is the site of the long-gone Victorian adolescent home of **Anne Armstrong (1872-1958)**, the future novelist (*The Seas of God*) and business executive who was turning 13 when she moved to Knoxville with her family in 1885. Although her early years in Knoxville were horrific in some ways—her beloved brother drowned, her beloved father was permanently disabled in a disastrous train wreck, and her first husband was cruelly abusive—she always remembered Knoxville fondly, and regarded "West End" as a sort of suburban Eden, one of her favorite places in the world. It all inspired her final book, unpublished until 65 years after her death, *Of Time and Knoxville*.

The 1400 block of Clinch Avenue was once known as "Widow's Row," the site of a reported nine houses built by affluent widows, some of whom had previously lived in larger houses. One example, at 1401 Clinch, is that of **Mary Ijams**, widow of educator Joseph Ijams, who was superintendent of Tennessee School for the Deaf for 16 years until his unexpected death in 1882. Mary was the mother of illustrator/ornithologist Harry Ijams, famous for the family sanctuary that became the major nature center known by his name today. The 1892 detail of the Baumann Brothers original design is muted by modern siding, but the structure remains intact.

Another, at 1417 Clinch, was the home of M.G. Payne, widow of Confederate veteran, former New York haberdasher, onetime Knoxville mayor **Reuben Payne**, who died unexpectedly at age 52 in 1896. His widow built the house at 1417 Clinch Avenue in 1903.

But before you get to that one, have a look at the more elaborate one next door at 1415. The **R.T. DeArmond House**, at 1415 Clinch, stood for more than a century diagonally across the street at the southeast corner of Clinch and 15th (James Agee) from its construction in 1894 until the 1990s. Used for years as a counterculture church, the DeArmond House became a cause celebre when its owner sought to demolish it to expand a parking lot. The house is intact, which is remarkable, but lost its corner perspective in the move, and, with its wraparound porch now facing only another house, is not as noticeable as it once was.

Continue west on Clinch Avenue





The elaborate house wedged into that block was built in 1894 to be the home of **Richard T. "Dick" DeArmond** and his wife. Mr. DeArmond is a somewhat mysterious figure to historians, once tried for murder in Newport and found not guilty, but popular in Knoxville, as the "custodian" who served some clerical duties and managed the county courthouse and grounds at the time the current "old courthouse" was built. He played a role in the exhumation of John Sevier from his original grave in Alabama, and his grand reburial on the lawn. He became a popular Republican politician who had served in several public roles, from railroad postal clerk, to jailer, to deputy U.S. marshal, to state legislator, earning respect from newspapermen in Nashville and Chattanooga. He was said to be "well to do" at the time he built this house, and until an unnamed financial adversity in 1896. After spells of going missing, and being "violent and unmanageable," he was declared insane and institutionalized at Lyons View in early 1897. He was by then so feared by judges that a rumor of his escape caused an order to adjourn court and lock the courthouse. DeArmond seemed to recover after an extended trip to Texas, then died suddenly while visiting his mother in September, 1898.

Turn left onto James Agee Street and go south one block to White Avenue.



At White and James Agee (previously 15th Street) is one of Fort Sanders' oldest houses, even if it was not precisely a house. It's a carriage house, all that's left of the 1876 **William Wallace Woodruff mansion**. A Union officer from Bardstown, Ky., Woodruff (1840-1926) settled in Knoxville after the war and became a prominent hardware merchant, industrialist, and philanthropist. His large store building, rebuilt after two major fires, still stands on Gay Street. Not long after his 1926 death, UT acquired his house and demolished it for construction of Hoskins Library (see below). The carriage house reflects the Second Empire style of the brick Woodruff mansion.

Hoskins Library, an extravagant approach to the Collegiate Gothic style, was designed by Charles Barber, of Barber & McMurry, to be UT's main library, a purpose it served for almost 40 years. Nationally known literary scholar and grammarian John C. Hodges, for whom the modern library is named, kept his office in this building. Completed in 1932, the building is known for its medieval touches, like the castellated parapet tower—originally the location of the international Audigier Art Collection—with stone staircase and multiple arches, cathedral windows visible on the eastern side, and even faux gargoyles. Artist Hugh Tyler, uncle of author James Agee, created the unusual colorful interior stencil work. It's a large building, but was intended to be much larger, with an interior courtyard; Barber's design was curtailed by the Great Depression.

The primary studio of impressionist artist Catherine Wiley, shared by her locally notable sister, Eleanor, was located near the northeast corner of White and 14th for many years in the early 20th century.

The low modern building on the northwest corner of James Agee and White has served many purposes over the years, none more famous than the Carousel, Knoxville's most durable gay nightclub, which opened here by 1975 and lasted into the 21st century. It was known for its countless drag shows.

Return to Clinch Avenue.



Most of the block bounded by White, James Agee (15th), Clinch, and 16th was once known as the "Rose Hole," an undeveloped crater-like depression, perhaps a large sinkhole, which is visible in 19th century maps of the area. It was proposed as a city park by 1917, and was for a time known as Eighth Street Park (Eighth was what's now known as 16th Street). By the 1930s, it was better known as the Rose Hole, and was a site for informal football games, some early soccer games, and what may have been Knoxville's first softball games—as well as extravagant UT football pep rallies with large bonfires. The name probably began as a joke on California's **Rose Bowl**, by the 1950s local garden clubs were planting roses on its steep banks. The construction of the Masonic Lodge at its western end in 1955, with a downstairs public cafeteria (originally Byerly's) called for most of the Rose Hole to be paved for parking, ending its informal sports era. In the early 21st century, it became the site of a towering white residential building that removed any suggestion of the old sunken athletic fields.

Turn left on Clinch Avenue and go west one block to 16th Street.



The **New York Highlander monument**, honoring the division that defended Fort Sanders from an all-out Confederate assault on Nov. 29, 1863, is the largest Civil War monument in the neighborhood, interesting in that it depicts in bas-relief Union and Confederate soldiers shaking hands. It was erected in 1918, when there were veterans alive to witness its dedication. It stands very near what would have been the southern ramparts of Fort Sanders. The poem carved on it is an obscure bit of verse celebrating unity and conciliation by Irish-born New York newspaperman Joseph Ignatius Constantine Clarke; this carving may be its best-known use.

Proceed west on Clinch Avenue to the first house on your left.



William Rule House, 1604 Clinch Ave. A former Union officer originally from South Knox County, William Rule (1849-1928) was a Knoxville journalist for some 60 years, beginning as an editor for the legendary "Parson" W.G. Brownlow. Rule may be best remembered nationally as the original editor and mentor of Adolph Ochs, founder of the modern New York Times; they were lifelong friends. Much respected, Rule was twice elected mayor, and wrote the authoritative Standard History of Knoxville, Tenn., the first book-length history of the city, published in 1900. A few years after the Civil War, when he was still a young man, Rule became one of the first residents of the neighborhood originally known as White's Addition, and lived the rest of his long life in West End. He lived in three or four houses in the neighborhood, all since demolished, before moving into this house around 1914. He died here of a sudden attack of appendicitis in 1928, when at age 89 he was still the working editor of the *Knoxville Journal*.



Just downhill from Rule's house, at the southwest corner of 16th Street and White Avenue, is one of Fort Sanders' oldest structures, dating to the 1870s. Originally part of the Cowan estate, which included one of Knoxville's biggest mansions, it was a cottage occupied by a professional gardener, variously described as being English or Irish. The elaborate garden that surrounded that cottage was central to several elegant entertainments, as in 1880 when the Cowans welcomed Thomas Hughes, former Member of Parliament, specifically celebrating his popular book, *Tom Brown's School Days*. Subject of a recent renovation, the Gardener's Cottage is now owned and used by UT.

1620 Clinch Ave. The house at 1620 Clinch was the longtime home of pianist Evelyn Miller (1909-2006). The first featured soloist to perform with the Knoxville Symphony Orchestra at its first concert in 1935, the elegant lady was best known as a piano teacher, launching the careers of several professional musicians, including Tony-winning Broadway conductor Don Pippin. She moved into this house around 1956 and continued to live here with her grand piano in a comfortable corner room until the mid-1980s, when most of her neighbors were UT students. She is the honoree of the Evelyn Miller Young Pianist Series.

Optional: Cross 17th Street



Most of the neighborhood west of 17th Street was built in the 20th century. Many of its homes are more than a century old, but perhaps not quite as striking from the street as the Queen Anne creations on the eastern half of Fort Sanders.

The Ronald McDonald House, at 1701 Clinch, is a home for families staying with critically ill children undergoing treatment at nearby Children's Hospital and Fort Sanders Medical Center. The 1906 brick house was originally the home of Prof. William W. Carson. A Mississippi-raised Confederate veteran, Carson was a former mathematics professor at Davidson College who founded UT's civil engineering department.

One house of historical interest stands at 1803 Clinch. Built between 1912 and 1918, it's the Georgian Revival home of Patrick Roddy, constructed as he was enjoying the early success of his regional Coca-Cola bottling empire.



Just beyond and across the street at 1816 Clinch is the Albert B. Baumann, Sr., house, dating to 1922. The architect who was member of both Baumann Brothers and later, with his son, A.B. Jr., Baumann & Baumann, Albert B. (1861-1942) enjoyed one of the longest careers in architecture history, beginning in the midst of Victorian extravagance, and ending in the modernist era. Baumann is believed to have designed the house, which has been called Jacobethan Tudor in design. Baumann was in his 60s by the time he moved in, but was active as an architect for his 20 years here.

Fort Sanders Hospital. First announced in 1919, Fort Sanders was Knoxville's first large privately run hospital, following the city-run Knoxville General, off North Central, by about 20 years. Manley & Young designed the original three-story brick building with 65 beds in an "old English" style. The same duo would later design the Medical Arts Building downtown. The location was chosen for its fresh air and quiet, qualities scarce in much of the city at the time. It opened just west of 20th Street in early 1920.



It was a 189-bed hospital in 1954 when it became Presbyterian Hospital, with that church taking substantial responsibility for it. The move was made, reportedly, to insure its permanence. Since 1996, it has been run by the large Knoxville-based nonprofit, Covenant Health.

If you stay on east side of 17th street, turn right.

Across the street you can see the Confederate Monument.



The Confederate Monument. Erected in 1914, with both Union and Confederate veterans in attendance, and much smaller than the nearby Union monument, it memorializes the 129 Confederate soldiers who died here during the 20-minute siege. It's the largest loss of life at one place and at one time in the history of Knox County. Since the 20th century the monument has often been vandalized, and was the focus of a large demonstration about Confederate monuments in 2017, during a national wave of objection to monuments glorifying the Confederacy. Some were surprised to find only this chunk of stone, Knoxville's only Confederate monument in a public place, hardly bigger than some single graves. The verses quoted on it come from a poem "Bivouac of the Dead" also quoted at the (Union) National Cemetery.

The large brick apartment building on the east side of 17th Street is Fort Sanders Manor. Built in 1922, the complex honors the fort on whose site it's built. The interior of the stylish apartment building featured courtyard gardens, and the building originally included a tea room. Architect Charles Barber, who relished the medieval, seems to have had some fun with the fort connection, including a representation of a fortress tower on the east wall. The building has often housed featured actors in plays at Clarence Brown Theatre.

Turn right onto Laurel Avenue and proceed east one block to 16th Street.



Laurel Avenue, the highest street in Fort Sanders, was probably also the richest. The neighborhood's largest houses were up here, and larger still on the uphill side of Laurel, although many of them have been lost over the years.

Laurel Theater, 1538 Laurel Avenue. Run by the nonprofit Jubilee Community Arts, Laurel Theater at 1538 Laurel Ave. is a nonprofit-run theater specializing in folk music, old-time, ethnic and other roots music and folk dancing; it also hosts occasional community and cultural meetings, and is the headquarters of the Tennessee Folklore Society. Many of the concerts here are recorded for broadcast on public radio. It was built in 1897 as the Fort Sanders Presbyterian Church, on a George Barber design, described as "within the lines of the fort," which may have been discernible then. The church had been meeting in a public-school building on Highland for about a year before they built this structure. They raised money with summer "lawn fetes" featuring ice cream and fresh strawberries. Spanish-American War soldiers who had been training nearby raised money to donate an unusual Memorial Window depicting soldiers of both sides of the Civil War in stained glass. Installed on the west-side window, they were much admired in 1898, but destroyed in a fire in 1982. The rest of the building survived, and was eventually renovated, though without the stained glass. Since then, the building has served mainly secular purposes, once the subject of a regionally broadcast weekly show called "Live at Laurel."

Laurel Theater

Proceed east along Laurel Avenue.



1539 Laurel Avenue / Laurel High School. Perhaps the sort of secondary education one would expect in Fort Sanders, the nontraditional Laurel High School opened as a preschool during the counterculture era and evolved into a private high school in 1972, emphasizing the arts and individual students' needs until it closed in 2011.

1537 Laurel Avenue. The large and unusual wooden house with a style described in the 1970s as "ample scale irregular Queen Anne massing" reminds some people of a church, others of a steamboat. R.R. Swepson (1825-1902), previously a street railway developer in Richmond, then a diversified industrialist in Knoxville, built the house in 1888 on a Baumann Brothers plan. Despite its size, Swepson was a lifelong bachelor.



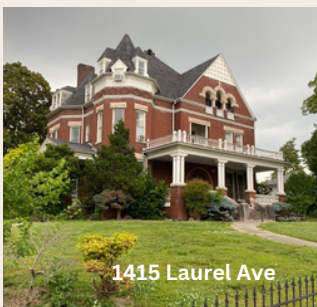
1511 Laurel Ave

1511 Laurel Avenue. This 1910 house built by mantel manufacturer George Helm boasts a "formidable double portico" stained-glass windows, and expert interior woodwork, especially the mantel pieces. Helm reportedly built this house partly as a showcase for his mantels, and finished in time for the 1910 Appalachian Exposition. It was used in the filming of the 1963 film *All the Way Home*, based on James Agee's *A Death in the Family*, and starring Robert Preston, Jean Simmons, John Cullum—and Michael Kearney as the child, who returned to this site more than 50 years later. The interior and exterior of the house were used to depict a mortuary. Other houses used in the shooting have been torn down.



James Agee Park

James Agee Park. To honor the writer who immortalized Fort Sanders, a committee involving city, university, and various lovers of literature from singer-songwriter R.B. Morris to elderly novelist and columnist Wilma Dykeman convened to establish James Agee Park on what had been a gravel parking lot. The park was dedicated in 2003, with Agee's daughter, DeeDee, on hand. It has since been a gathering place for various events, including a centennial reading of Agee's "Knoxville: Summer 1915" in 2015. Agee lived about one block north of here (See 1500 block of Highland.)



Martin Luther Ross House, 1415 Laurel Avenue. One of the best examples of home architecture in Knoxville is still standing at the corner of Laurel and James Agee, the large brick Martin Ross house, designed by Baumann Brothers and completed in 1893. A candy manufacturer and food wholesaler, Ross (1850-1899) served as West Knoxville's last mayor, in 1896-97, while he lived here, and also more than one term as president of Knoxville's Chamber of Commerce. But as it happened, he lived here only a few years before his sudden death here at the house in 1899 at age 48, of an apparent heart attack. His family relinquished the house, which was converted into apartments in 1916, said to be "an excellent example of sensitive adaptive use," and one of the first apartment buildings in Fort Sanders. Images of the house has been used as a symbol of Fort Sanders, in prints and even T-shirts. (Ross's son, William Cary Ross, co-founded Cherokee Country Club, and built one of the first houses for the affluent on Lyons View, and called it Rostrevor; it's no longer standing.)



1403 Laurel Avenue. A huge 1886 Victorian house, described by a 1970s Knoxville Heritage preservationist walking tour as "perhaps the most unusual house in the area," for its playful Queen Anne style, was destroyed in a fire that killed one of its tenants, a Venezuelan UT student, in October, 1980.

It was replaced, very deliberately, by UT art professor Phillip Livingston, who chose the design for this much smaller house on the site, in a style meant to honor the historic setting without seeming to imitate a genuine Victorian house. He and his wife lived here for several years; it's still a private residence.

***Proceed east on Laurel Avenue one block and turn left onto 13th Street.
Go north one block to the northwest corner of 13th Street and Bridge Avenue.***



310 13th Street. When people think of historic Fort Sanders, they'll think of big Victorian houses, not necessarily small commercial buildings. But the two-story brick building at 310 13th Street is more than a century old, and appears to have served as a grocery of some sort for that entire time. It's the only surviving retail grocery in a neighborhood once served by four or five. It's had several names over the years; in 1936, it became an A&P, but a few years later was the J&G, later simply "the 13th Street Grocery." A couple of generations remember it as "the 13th Street I.G.A." Decades before the term "convenience store" existed, it served the same purpose. The upstairs has usually been a residence.

Note: Nearby at 1221 is an 1894 Queen Anne built by Marcellus S. Little. Originally from Campbell County, Little was an important wholesale clothier, cofounder of Powers, Little & Co., who had worked with the architects Baumann Brothers at his place on Jackson Avenue before getting them to design this house. He retired in 1901, turning his store over to his brother, Frank.

***Go one block farther north on 13th Street and turn left onto Highland Avenue.
Then one block west to James Agee Street.***



James Agee Street leads to the 1500 block of Highland Avenue, which was the childhood home of author James Agee, and the main setting of his autobiographical novel, *A Death in the Family*, which won the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction and has been translated into a Broadway show and four motion pictures, three of them made for television, including a PBS Masterpiece feature in 2002, starring Annabeth Gish and John Slattery (though unlike the first movie based on the book, it was not shot in Fort Sanders, but in Franklin, Tenn., which has more fully preserved neighborhoods). Fort Sanders is also the setting for Agee's separately written piece, "Knoxville: Summer 1915," which was famously interpreted for orchestra and voice by composer Samuel Barber.



Ironically, Agee's actual house, a frame house on the north side of Highland, was slated for demolition just as production started for the Agee-based 1963 movie *All the Way Home*, starring Robert Preston. Producers wanted to use the house for the film, but a developer who'd bought it, with an eye toward building modern apartments, said he couldn't wait that long and pay his bills on time. It was one of two houses demolished for an apartment project that was once known as James Agee Apartments, but is now called **Fountain Place**. It has been credibly claimed that young Cormac McCarthy, about 29 at the time and unpublished, salvaged some material from the rubble and used it in an art piece.

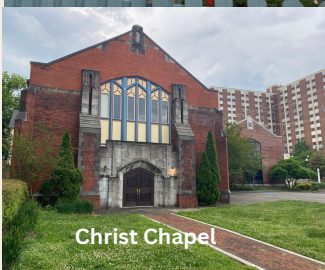
Proceed east to the 1400 block of Highland Avenue.



The 1400 block of Highland, much of it built in the late 1880s, is also notable for the fact that much of it is still there, at least on the north side of the street. The house at 1415, with three stories of porches, was home to John J. Craig, a major marble tycoon. Its 1888 design came from the studio of Baumann Brothers.



The 1888 house at 1403 is particularly distinguished for the sunburst pattern on its front gable, painted in contrasting colors. It was the longtime home of locomotive engineer L.L. Robbins, who was profiled as a hero in April, 1897, after he piloted a trainload of Chattanooga firemen and fire engines to help with the catastrophic Gay Street fire of 1897, making the 110-mile trip in only one hour and 51 minutes, reportedly a speed record for that rail line. According to the Journal and Tribune, "Mr. Robbins and his splendid crew, at the peril of their lives, came flying as upon the wind to the relief of Knoxville in the time of her extreme danger and peril." The enormous blaze, still the most destructive in Knoxville history, could have spread and consumed much of downtown, but extra equipment and personnel helped contain the fire to one block.



At 1409 Highland is a house designed in 1894 by Baumann Brothers. This "shingled vernacular" version of the Queen Anne style dates to 1893. It was the longtime home of the Southern family, notably W.H.H. Southern (1877-1946) and his son, Martin Southern (1905-1976), both well-known attorneys and politicians. Martin Southern's 1967 lawsuit helped nudge Tennessee to rescind its notorious Scopes-era ban on teaching evolution. Among the neighborhood's last multi-generation family households, the Southern family remained here into the 1970s.

Now known as Christ Chapel, the sizeable church at 1538 Highland began in 1889 as the Ramsey Memorial Church. It later became a Methodist church, eventually renamed Epworth Methodist. It was rebuilt in a French Gothic design by architect Clem Meyer in 1929. It has since become a non-denominational church; in the 1970s and '80s, it was known as the Jubilee Center, and hosted some jazz and reggae shows, as well as film screenings.

***Return to the corner of Highland and James Agee Street and turn left.
Go north one block and turn right onto Forest Avenue.***



1411 Forest. The house at 1411 Forest was described in 1977 by Ron Childress as a "little gothic jewel," although its style appears to have been much simplified since then, when its porch woodwork was described as "particularly elegant."

Forest Avenue's Anti-Strip. A little commercial cluster emerged to serve West End residents who preferred not to walk all the way to Cumberland Avenue to shop. It never hosted more than a few businesses, but some of them became legendary.

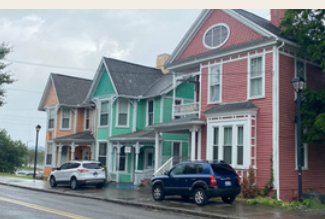
The Yardarm, located at 1015 Forest by 1969, was a storied counterculture hangout. There are credible stories of author Norman Mailer winning and losing a series of arm-wrestling bouts there.

In an old house just around the corner on 12th Street was the Parsley Tree, one of Knoxville's two or three gourmet restaurants of the early 1970s. Soon Fuad Bahou, an immigrant originally from Jerusalem, opened the Bahou in early 1971 at 1106 Forest, probably Knoxville's first middle eastern restaurant. Those restaurants attracted an affluent suburban crowd. But the cluster also featured Kagley's amazingly inexpensive beer store at 1111 Forest and an unusual rustic Mexican restaurant Los Charros, at 1013 Forest. By 1980s or so, the semi-urban cluster developed a punkish reputation as "the Anti-Strip." The Polish Pub at 1108 Forest often hosted live music and offbeat poetry, as did its successor, Vatican Pizza.



Over the years it was forgotten, as many of those buildings vanished, and the easternmost of those addresses have been developed away altogether, so thoroughly you can't even tell where the addresses were. But The Hill Bar & Grill, thriving here for more than a decade now, may carry on some of its legacy.

***Follow Forest Avenue all the way east to World's Fair Drive and a slight right onto 11th Street.
Go south on 11th street back towards to starting point of the tour.***



World's Fair Drive approximates old 10th Street, which still existed by that name in the 1970s. Another street once known as 9th Street was already mostly gone.

Eleventh Street Victorian Houses. The three small-scale Victorians facing 11th were empty, covered with vines, and slated to be demolished around 1979, when they were saved by a surprising World's Fair project. Perhaps the most preservation-minded international exposition in history, the 1982 World's Fair saved these, as well as four other more conventional houses of the same era facing what was then a block of Laurel Avenue, to serve various modest purposes during the fair. The house at the southeast corner of Laurel and 11th was perhaps the most popular; it was the Budweiser pavilion, featuring a long porch "beer garden" in the rear. It was just uphill from the Clydesdale horse stables, which were along 11th near Clinch.



For the Fair's six months, a tall chain-link fence stood along the eastern side of 11th Street; no one was allowed in without a ticket or a staff pass. An employee entrance was at Clinch Avenue, which was closed to vehicles between 11th and Henley.



World's Fair Drive approximates old 10th Street, which still existed by that name in the 1970s. Another street once known as 9th Street was already mostly gone.

For years after the Fair, the "Victorian Houses," as they were known, hosted art galleries, some with residences above, as well as a cafe. The houses are now residences.

While this is mostly a work of original research, we're grateful to the late preservationist architect Ron Childress (1948-1982), who put together an architectural walking tour of Fort Sanders for Knoxville Heritage in 1977; and his successor in architectural research in that renamed organization, Hollie Cook of Knox Heritage; as well as the wonderful Calvin M. McClung Historical Collection. And thanks to all who have invested their own resources in saving the best of Fort Sanders for us to be able to enjoy from the sidewalk.



Of course, there are many other worthwhile houses and other details that make this interesting place different from any other, and there are many other stories to tell about the machinists, lawyers, clerks, teachers and students who lived and worked here. Consider this an introduction to a fascinating neighborhood about which there's still much more to learn.

Tour Ends.

THANK YOU

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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.

For more walking and driving tours, stories, podcasts, and publications, or to make a donation to support KHP's work, please join us online at knoxvillehistoryproject.org or call 865-337-7723