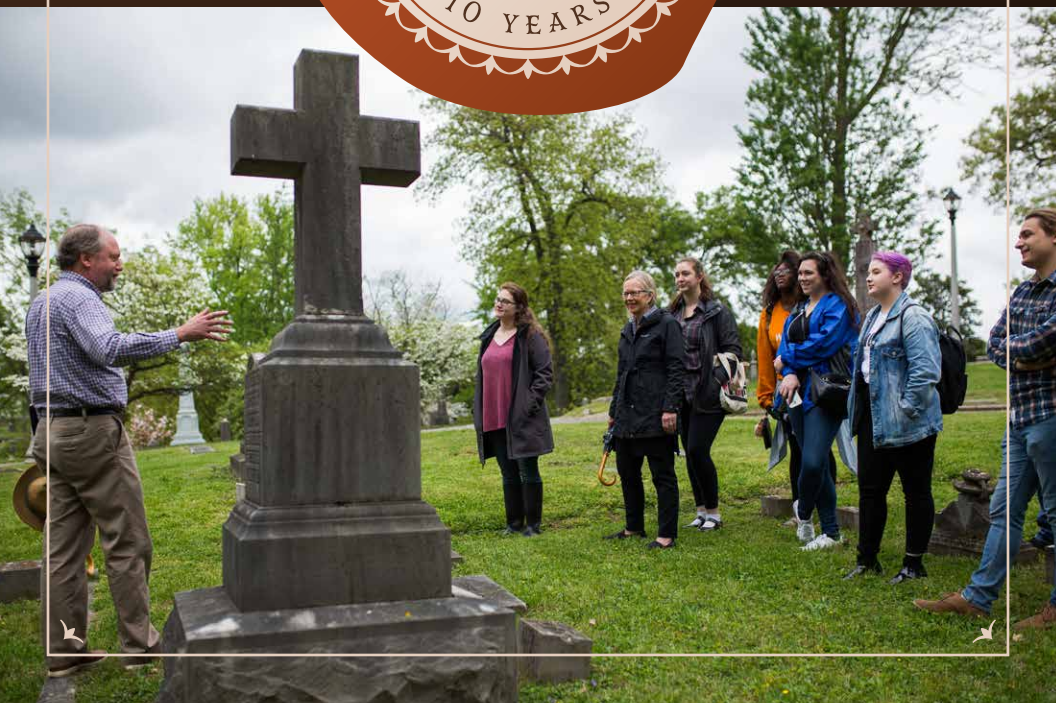
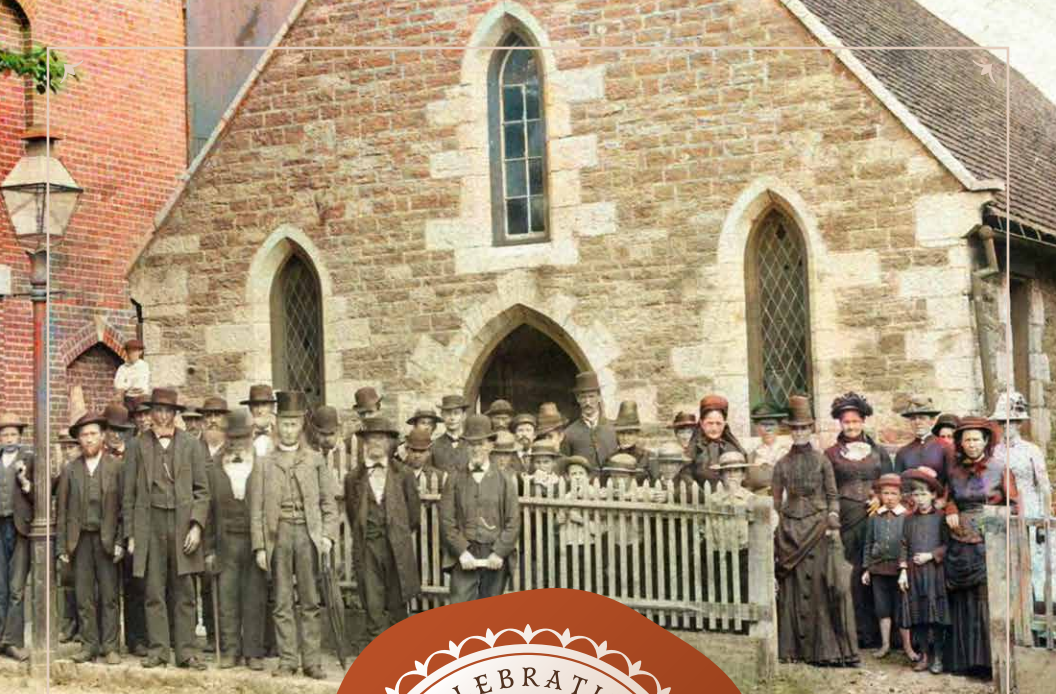




10TH ANNIVERSARY ACHIEVEMENTS

The Knoxville History Project

began a decade ago, partly as a method to help salvage independent journalism in Knoxville. Although our weekly, the multiple award-winning *Knoxville Mercury*, didn't last in the turbulent media market, we created something that did. Approved in 2015 as a 501(c)(3) educational nonprofit, KHP has grown in directions nobody expected. Inspired by Knoxville's complex, unique, and universally relevant stories, we've published many small books and a few big ones, as well as hundreds of online articles. We've created several online resources, from podcasts to photo galleries to driving tours, most of them free to the curious. We've accomplished several practical research projects for a variety of organizations. We've changed the city's landscape with our "art wraps," high-quality prints that place the work of historic local artists in public places. We've planned or participated in several hundred public programs—talks, tours, slideshows, Zooms—with dozens of guest speakers. We weren't the only factor, but my impression is that Knoxville is much more interested in and aware of its history, and itself, than it used to be.



In retrospect, it seems an achievement beyond my own dreams, and in fact I couldn't have accomplished even half of this by myself; I lean heavily on our staff, publishing director Paul James and administrative coordinator Nicole Stahl, our several creative freelance partners, and our champion board of directors.

Most of our support comes from our contract work and our hundreds of donors, to whom we're grateful for helping create our unusual careers, and, we think, an important asset that promotes, challenges, and sometimes tries to explain our shared city.

Jack Neely

founding executive director

Front cover: Top: Immaculate Conception Catholics Church, 1886. (McClung Historical Collection). Bottom: Jack Neely at Old Gray Cemetery with Prof. Pat Rutenberg's Public History students. (Kelli Guinn-Olsson.) **Back Cover:** Holston Treaty statue. (Shawn Poynter.)

TALKS & TOURS

Since 2015 KHP has reached tens of thousands residents and visitors through engaging educational programs, both in person and online. Our programs illuminate the city's past, incorporating new research and previously untold stories covering a broad range of subjects, presented by KHP staff and guest presenters. KHP also partners with Laura Still and Knoxville Walking Tours to promote regular themed tours in the downtown area.

Wide-ranging talks have been given to members of the public and special groups, include AmeriCorps, CAC, East Tennessee Historical Society, Farragut Town Hall, Friends of the Smokies, Introduction Knoxville, Knox County Public Library, Knox County Schools Social Studies Teachers, Knox Heritage, Leadership Knoxville, Leadership Tennessee, Knoxville Museum of Art, Old Gray Cemetery, and University of Tennessee, plus historic house museums, churches, civic clubs, business associations, and more.

Thank you to all of our special guest presenters who enhanced our educational programs over the years:

Linda Behrend • Robert Booker • Paul Brown • Nissa Dahlin-Brown • Jack Brubaker • Christine Cloninger • Hollie Cook • Steve Cotham • Jim Cortese • Eric Dawson • Dr. Warren Dockter • Dr. Charles & Terry Faulkner • Prof. Ernie Freeberg • Becky Hancock • Prof. Bill Hardwig • Mark Heinz • Patrick Hollis • Prof. Bob Hutton • William Isom • Michael Jordan • Rev. René Kesler • Dr. Susan Knowles • Prof. Beauvais Lyons • Prof. Chris Magra • Jennifer Montgomery • Todd Morgan • Prof. Wes Morgan • John Morton • Prof. Ted Olson • Daniel Pierce • Steve Prince • Jim Richards • Theotis Robinson • James “Sparky” Rucker • Norman Shaw • Alan Sims • Stephanie Slater • Prof. Nancy Locklin-Sofer • Laura Still • Georgiana Vines • James Wedekind • Stephen Wicks • Janine Winfrey • Ken Wise • Koichi Yamamoto

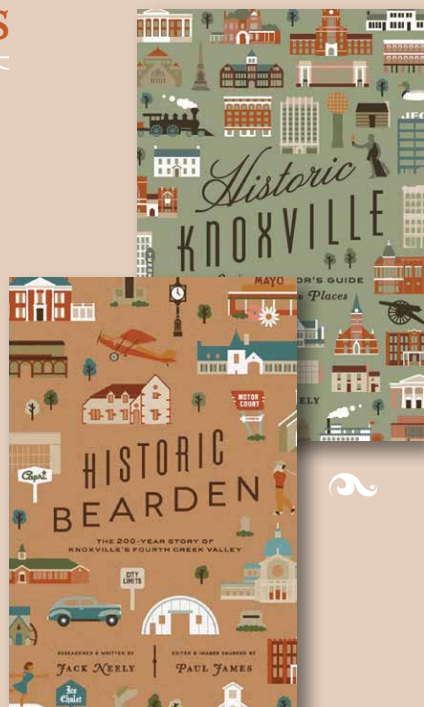


SIGNATURE BOOKS

To date, KHP has published 32 books and booklets. Using a conservative industry estimate of two readers for every book distributed, KHP has reached an estimated 39,000 readers to date. Our signature publications, designed by the award-winning team of Robin Easter Design, and featuring 200 full-color pages, include:

Historic Knoxville: The Curious Visitor's Guide to its Stories and Places (2018) by *Jack Neely* • A local bestseller, this comprehensive and engaging guide for both visitors and residents offers a wide-ranging guided tour to scores of places and institutions relevant to the city's little-known but endlessly fascinating history. The award-winning guide is provided to participants in Leadership Knoxville's annual flagship program and its companion series, Introduction Knoxville.

Historic Bearden: The 200-Year Story of Knoxville's Fourth Creek Valley (2022) by *Jack Neely* • A familiar place to live and shop, Bearden has deep and complicated stories that might seem unrelated except that they all played a part in this patch of perhaps five square miles of suburban Tennessee.



COMING SOON

Historic South Knoxville by *Jack Neely and Paul James* • Following several years of research into the district's pioneers, industries, communities, and fascinating individuals, a new book will be published in 2026 telling the stories of the city's largest and perhaps least understood sector.

Historic Greater Knoxville • Work will begin next year on a new book encompassing the histories of satellite towns and hamlets known to most travelers mainly just by name and a few facts, encompassing a circle within a 30- to 90-minute drive from the city.

THEMED PUBLICATIONS

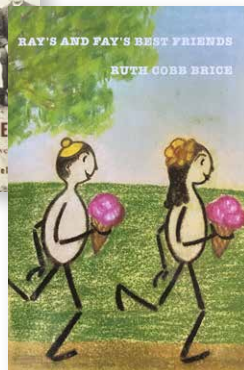
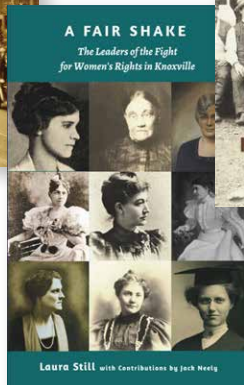
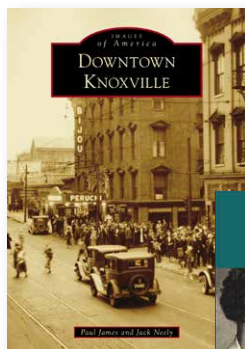
These standalone titles are the first of many books reflecting the diverse nature of the city's history.

Downtown Knoxville (2022) • Part of the popular “Images of America” national series, this visual history, a collaboration between Jack Neely and Paul James, chronicles the story of the city's downtown core through a compelling collection of vintage photos and illustrations, many previously unpublished.

A Fair Shake: The Leaders of the Fight for Women's Rights in Knoxville (2021) by Laura Still with contributions by Jack Neely • A delve into the history of the women's suffrage movement in Knoxville, its leaders including Lizzie Crozier French, and other fearless female progressives who achieved lasting change.

Knoxville Beer: A Short History of the City's First Breweries (2024) by Jack Neely • The story of Knoxville's native breweries that bloomed after the Civil War. A cultural phenomenon led by German and Irish immigrants who produced a substantial industry impossible to ignore in the saloons and breweries of the Gilded Age—only to suffer an unnatural death in the early 20th century.

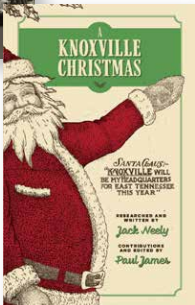
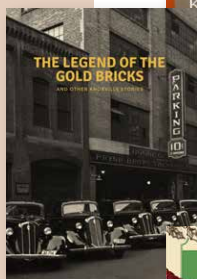
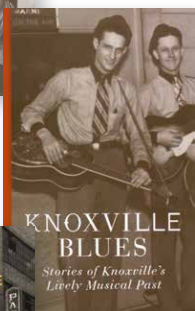
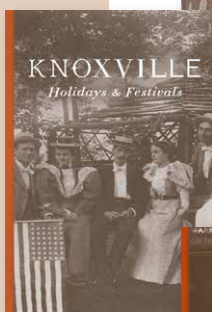
Ray and Fay's Best Friends (2020) by Ruth Cobb Brice • In collaboration with Beck Cultural Exchange Center, this previously unpublished children's short story (from the Beck archives) was written and illustrated by Ruth Cobb Brice, a life-long teacher and notable Knoxville artist.



STORY COMPILATIONS



Knoxville History Project Sampler



In 2017, KHP created its publishing division with the **KHP Sampler**, a compilation of 12 stories written by Jack Neely selected from his columns written exclusively for the *Knoxville Mercury*. This first publication sampler spawned a new series of themed story collections that KHP continues to produce today through the series “Knoxville Lives.”

Knoxville History: Vol. 1 (2017) • A collection of short stories forming a sampler of Jack Neely’s weekly columns from the *Knoxville Mercury*’s 28-month run.

Knoxville Holidays & Festivals (2017) • Stories that mark Knoxville’s growth and self-awareness as a permanent community— and, at times, a pretty festive one.

Knoxville Blues: Stories of Knoxville’s Lively Musical Past (2018) • Stories covering the legendary music festivals, recording sessions, radio stations and venues that helped launch talented performers onto the national stage.

The Legend of the Gold Bricks and other Knoxville Stories (2018) • Including Pryor Brown’s livery stable and ground-breaking garage; the 1867 flood disaster; Cal Johnson’s first speedway; and a walk around Burlington’s quirky mini-downtown.

A Knoxville Christmas: Expanded Second Edition (2023) • The city has been celebrating the Christmas season since the 1800s with German-inspired traditions, municipal Christmas trees, and the annual Santa Claus parade along Gay Street.

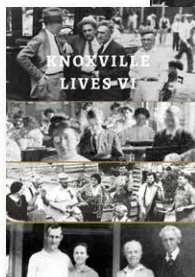
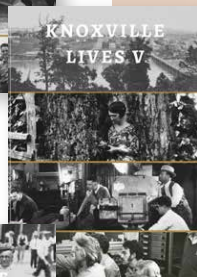
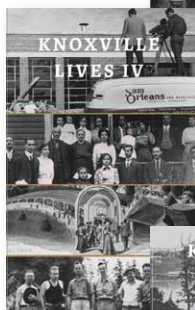
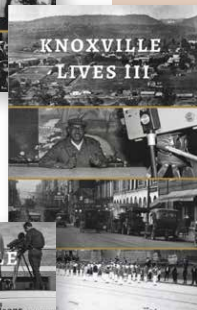
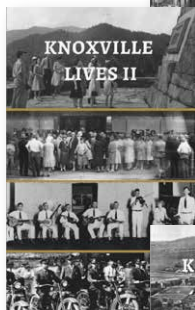
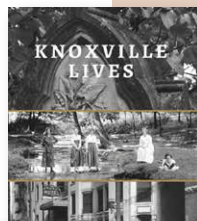
KNOXVILLE LIVES

Knoxville Lives, Volumes I-VI (2020-2025) •

These annual story collections feature long-form essays by KHP historians and guest writers (Paul Brown, Eric Dawson, Laura Still, Janine Winfrey) highlighting fascinating Knoxvilleians, some well-known, others more obscure, who all made a mark on their home city. Funded in part by our generous supporters, copies are mailed each year to our Friends of KHP who donate \$100 or more per year.

KNOXVILLIANS COVERED IN THESE STORIES

Brown Ayres
Frances Hodgson Burnett
Carlos Campbell
Don Carlos
Col. David Chapman
Charles Coburn
Lottie Cummings
Beauford Delaney
Mildred Keister Dennis
Isaac Gammon
Joseph Ijams
Joy King
Maggie Lattimore
Will Lenoir
Hugh Hadley Moore
Sam Orleans
Florence Payne
Jim Thompson
Laura Thornburgh
Gilbert & Richard Trythall
Hugh Tyler
Eleanor Wiley
Alice Williams
Tennessee Williams
Albert “Acey Boy” Wilson
Newman Wise



CULTURAL HISTORY PARTNERS

On request, KHP has researched and written numerous historical narratives for the City of Knoxville, businesses, local property owners, and developers.

A History of Knoxville Public Works

(2018) • Originally a fortified settlement on the frontier and the state's first capital, Knoxville has witnessed many practical changes. The city's history is a story of public works—involving tragedy, resilience, heroism, and great progress through epidemics, floods, fires, as well as civil progress including roads, electric lights, gas and water plants, sewage systems, street cars, bridges and viaducts.

A History of the Cal Johnson Building

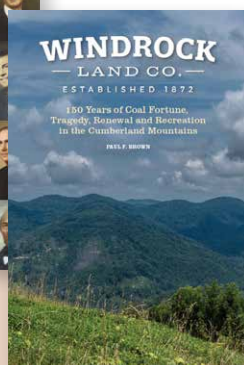
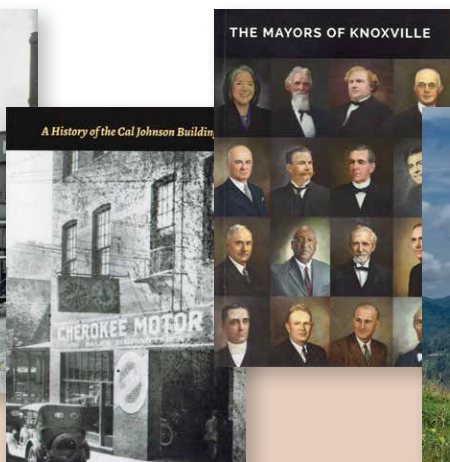
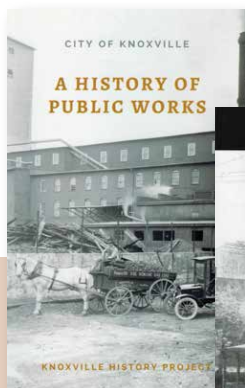
(2018) • A short book that aided in the preservation and restoration of this important, often overlooked, historic building on State Street, built by African American Cal Johnson (1844-1925), who was born into slavery and who became a well-respected horse trainer, saloonkeeper, and businessman.

The Mayors of Knoxville

(2019) • Since Knoxville first formed a city government well over 200 years ago, 67 men and two women have served as mayors of Knoxville. Some mayors were influential, some were more ceremonial, and one was recalled from office by a referendum. One thing the overwhelming majority have in common is their names and stories are unfamiliar to the citizens of the city they once led.

Windrock Land Company: 150 Years of Coal, Fortune, Tragedy, Renewal and Recreation in the Cumberland Mountains

(2022) by Paul F. Brown • The story of one of Knoxville's oldest and most durable businesses, including the men, women, communities, and events that shaped it, and of the 150-year legacy that positions Windrock at the center of a rich regional history.



100 Years of Hope: United Way Greater Knoxville (2022) • Celebrating the centennial of the local community services organization, which began as Community Chest in 1922, this is a story of controversy, heartbreak, fiscal and moral challenges, and ultimate triumph.

Knoxville's Oak Hill: From Scott Residence to St. Mary's Hospital to Public Safety Building (2025) • This short booklet tells the story of a North Knoxville prominence, the site of a picturesque mansion, and how it transitioned into the site of a major hospital with the help of an Irish-Catholic saloonkeeper, his beloved daughter, and a cadre of intrepid nuns dedicated to improving the lives of the thousands who sought help there.

The Second Balcony: The African American Experience at Knoxville's Bijou Theatre (2025) • Opened in 1909 in the back of the venerable Lamar House hotel, the Bijou Theatre is Tennessee's oldest secular theater. For more than 50 years, it was racially segregated, with Black people usually, but not always, confined to the Second Balcony. Since its revival in the 1970s, the Bijou has hosted many of the most influential Black performers of our era.

Helping People, Changing Lives: 60 Years of Knoxville-Knox County Community Action Committee (2025) • CAC plays a vital part in the lives of thousands of local people every month, yet many Knoxvilleians have no idea that it exists. Resulting from a massive national program, CAC landed in a city with urgent and very specific needs, and over the decades, the agency has constantly evolved, always responding to the diverse needs of its community.



FREE GUIDES & BOOKLETS

To serve both broad, as well more narrowly defined audiences, KHP has produced several grant-funded booklets, which have all been distributed for free.

“Why Knoxville Matters: 25 ways the city has made a difference in its 225 years,”

(2016) • This special insert for the *Knoxville Mercury* celebrated the city’s quasiquibicentennial anniversary, highlighting Tennessee’s first newspaper, the early days of Blount College, the state’s first constitutional convention, electing African Americans to office, and more.

Knoxville’s National Cemetery: A Short History* (2018) • Founded as an urgency during the Civil War in 1863, this is the final resting place of several thousand men and women, Black and white, who in a wide variety of circumstances, signed up to serve their country in uniform. This short-run book was produced in partnership with the University of Tennessee’s Center for War and Society and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

The 1982 World’s Fair in Hindsight: Was History Made in Tennessee?* (2022) •

In partnership with the University of Tennessee History Department, this brief introduction to a big subject explores the enduring legacy of the Knoxville International Energy Exposition, one of America’s last big world’s fairs.

Knoxville: A Walking Literary Guide*

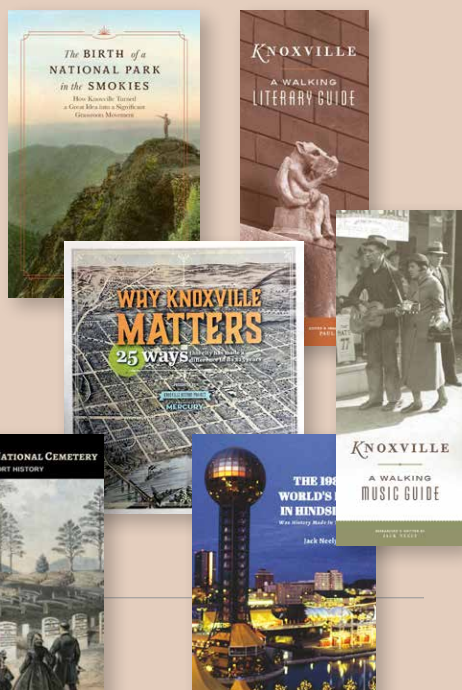
(2023) • This handy booklet highlights the city’s role in national literature by emphasizing sites downtown associated with well-known writers, and local places that have informed their work.

The Birth of a National Park in the Smokies: How Knoxville Turned a Great Idea into a Significant Grassroots

Movement (2024) • Supporting a three-day symposium, this illustrated booklet highlights stories of the Knoxville civic leaders, conservationists, and trailblazers who led pioneering efforts, against all odds, to make the new national park a reality.

Knoxville: A Walking Music Guide*

(2025) • With a narrative connecting significant musicians to tangible downtown sites, this pocket guide outlines Knoxville’s influence on musical history.



**available to read online at
KnoxvilleHistoryProject.org*

NEW SCRUFFY CITIZEN

In 2015, Jack Neely began a new monthly column exploring the broad and compelling aspects of the ever-unpredictable story of our beloved city. These stories are emailed to our supporters first before they are posted online for the general public. To date, Jack has written almost 80 columns featuring his reflections on lost jazz venues, idiosyncratic local characters, African American baseball, 1930s communists, conjure men, the beginnings of Halloween, strange tales from the Western Frontier, the birth of the state of Tennessee, and much more.



GHOST WALKING KNOXVILLE

There are ghost walks and then there is “Ghost Walking,” Paul James’ own take on life on the city’s streets in bygone times; how buildings have changed through the years, and how through old pictures and stories we can glimpse the echoes of people’s past lives and particular events. Ghost Walking columns, featuring Market Square, gas-lit streets, hotels, movie theaters, and statues, are written especially for InsideofKnoxville.com, and also featured on KHP’s podcast, *Knoxville Chronicles*.

In addition, Jack and Paul write monthly history blogs for [Visit Knoxville](http://VisitKnoxville.com) and a regular column for *West Knoxville Lifestyle* magazine.



DOWNTOWN ART WRAPS

In 2017, KHP launched a new program designed to inspire an appreciation of the city’s rich artistic heritage. Highlighting renowned works of art from local museums and collections by placing them on blank traffic signal boxes has created a “street collection” of artworks by well-known artists such as Lloyd Branson, Catherine Wiley, Charles Krutch, and Beauford Delaney. Other artists, whose talents are only now being appreciated by the broader public, include Ruth Cobb Brice, Ted Burnett, and Earl O. Henry. All the art wraps feature a biography of the artist.

Over the years, the collection has grown to include 44 installations around the downtown area and is enjoyed by thousands of pedestrians and drivers every day.

Special thanks to the City of Knoxville and Visit Knoxville, and local art institutions and collections, including: Knoxville Museum of Art, East Tennessee Historical Society, Knox County Public Library, McClung Historical Collection, Beck Cultural Exchange Center, UT Ewing Gallery, McClung Museum of Natural History & Culture, and private collections.



KHP ONLINE

KnoxvilleHistoryProject.org offers a comprehensive online resource, including stories, historic sites, image galleries, short documentaries, videos, podcasts, walking and driving tours, and our online store. KHP also maintains the online *Knoxville Mercury* archive (KHP contributed more than 110 weekly “Scruffy Citizen” stories for the newspaper, all of which are available online).



DOWNLOADABLE TOURS

In 2020, KHP began a series of driving tours designed to introduce local residents to the distinctive urban geography and interesting architecture throughout the city’s sectors. Initially, the tours were intended to provide activities that individuals or couples could do in the safety of their own vehicles or from the comfort of an armchair during the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition to sector-specific driving tours, the series expanded to also include related walking tours.

DRIVING TOURS North Knoxville • East Knoxville • South Knoxville • Near West Knoxville • Fountain City • Mechanicsville & Lonsdale

WALKING TOURS Fort Sanders • University of Tennessee campus • Knoxville Women and sites of the Suffrage Era

SCRUFFY THE HISTORY HOUND



Scruffy the History Hound series includes a growing number of activities designed to help young children explore the history of Knoxville in a fun and engaging way.

To date, themes include The Beginning of Knoxville, Gay Street, and World’s Fair Park.

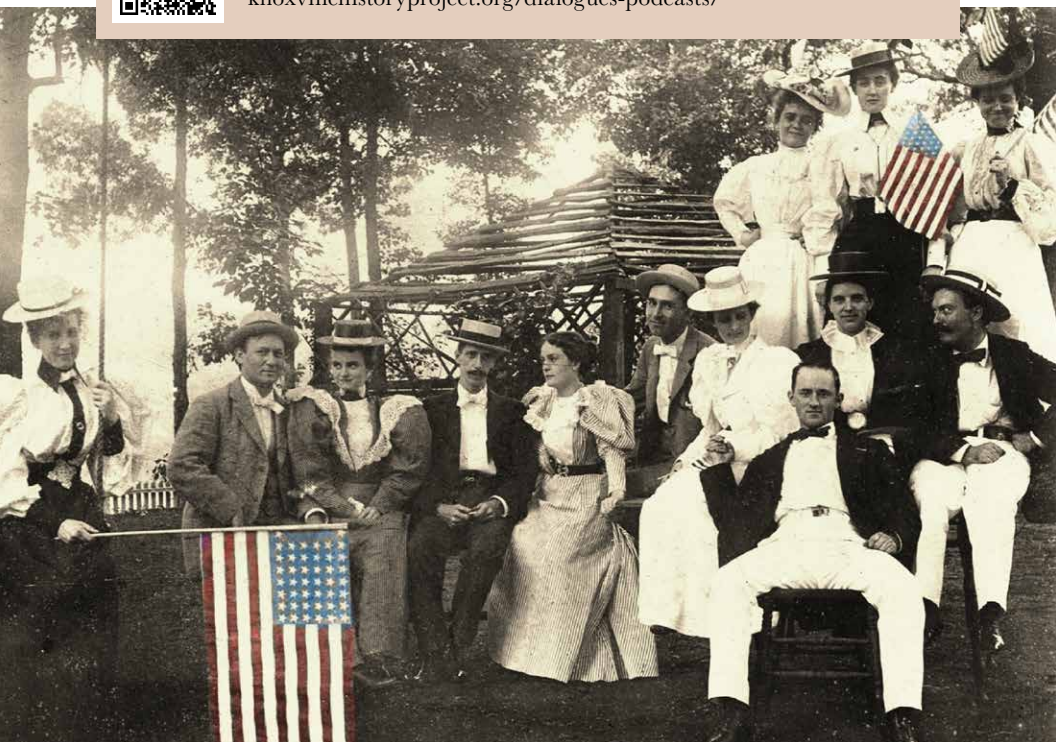
KNOXVILLE CHRONICLES PODCAST

Knoxville Chronicles is a podcast series highlighting some of the most interesting of the city's old stories that still have relevance today. Since its launch in March 2023, more than 6,000 listeners have tuned in to hear stories written by Jack Neely and Paul James. Guest readers include Todd Etheridge, Alex Haralson, Chrissy Keuper, Richard Lee, Rebecca Longmire, Dationa Carter Mitchell, and Don Thress.

Episodes: Through the Keyhole: Knoxville's The Extraordinary Marble World • The Legend of Marshal Carlos • The October Carnival • Creature of the Cumberlands • Love in the Time of Upheaval: The Cansler Elopement • The Hottest Day and the Immortal Kiosk • Matilda X • Matron of Depot Street • The Night the FBI Collared a Nazi Spy • Prof Ijams and the Asylum • Saturnalia of 1893 • A Dickens of a Knoxville Christmas • Knoxville's Thanksgiving Traditions • In Walked Mr. Ghost • The Printer's Devil • Ghost Walking Market Square • Ghost Walking Walnut Street



To access all our episodes, search for “Knoxville Chronicles” on your preferred podcast app on your phone or visit knoxvillehistoryproject.org/dialogues-podcasts/





KNOXVILLE SHOEBOX

KHP encourages community members to share photographs, brochures, and illustrations to be permanently archived for historical use. In addition to many fascinating digital photographs, postcards, brochures, and maps, highlights include incredibly rare photographs of Louis Armstrong and his band playing at Chilhowee Park's Jacob Building in 1957, shared by Martin Lang; photographs of the Bottom neighborhood during the 1930s, now the site of the new baseball stadium, shared by Cindy and Mark Proteau; early photos of the Old City during the early 1970s taken by Ros Mol; an extensive collection of reference photos taken for the Post Sign Company, shared by Jodi Davis; and promotional gig flyers for bands such as R.E.M. and the Stray Cats on the Cumberland Avenue Strip in the early 1980s, shared by WUOT radio host Paul Parris.

And through the generosity of passionate collector Alec Riedl, KHP now has a collection of 2,000 Knoxville postcards, all digitized for use in programs and publications. Selected images are periodically highlighted in monthly articles in *West Knoxville Lifestyle* magazine.

An illustrated booklet highlighting a selection of shared images was published in 2019.

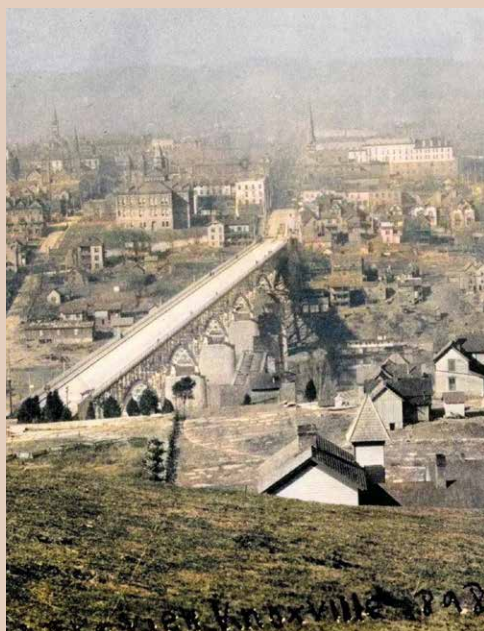
FUTURE PROJECTS

As KHP moves into its second decade, priorities include finally publishing our **Historic South Knoxville** book in 2026, highlighting the district's pioneers, industries, communities, and notable individuals.

As soon as that book is completed, we will begin work on multi-year book project to tell the fascinating stories of **Greater Historic Knoxville**, including the satellite towns and hamlets known mainly just by name and a few facts, encompassing a circle within a 30- to 90-minute drive from the city. We shall outline the cultural, political and economic histories of towns in the area—most them of them distinctively different from all others—and describe how they connect with Knoxville's own history.

In the spring, we will launch a new cultural history series at the newly renovated **Eugenia Williams House** on Lyons View Pike. The Aslan Foundation has done a stunning job resurrecting the house and the grounds, which will be a memorable backdrop for KHP historians and guest speakers to tell some new stories.

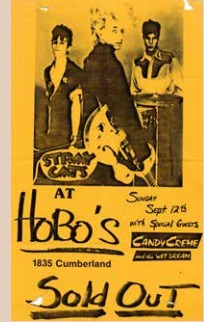
To coincide with the 235th anniversary of the founding of Knoxville in 1791, KHP plans to host a new symposium and other related programs and field trips. **"The Road to Knoxville: How Revolutionary War veterans and pioneers claimed a new land, founded a new city, and forged a new state on the western frontier"** will also tie-in with the nation's America250 commemoration in 2026.



We are also in the early stages of research and conducting interviews with local historians, musicians, promoters, and journalists to create a new **Knoxville Music Archive and Oral History Project**.

The goal is to document notable shows at the city's major and minor venues, many that are long gone but favorably remembered. In addition to collecting new stories, we are also seeking to expand KHP's Knoxville Shoebox initiative through digitally shared photographs, show posters, flyers, and related ephemera.

KHP also has plans to begin research on at least three new community history projects for cultural partners that we will announce as plans solidify in the new year.



ANNUAL LUNCHEON

KHP's annual fundraising event, which raises critical donations to support its mission and operations, also recognizes individuals who have made significant contributions to what we know about the city's history through research, publications, programs, archive management, and teaching.

Since 2024, the honor has been named the **William Rule Award for Lifetime Achievement in Knoxville History**. Rule was a Civil War veteran, a longtime newspaper publisher, a two time Knoxville mayor, and the author of the city's first substantial history of the city: *The Standard History of Knoxville*, published in 1900.



William Rule
(1839-1928)

To date, KHP has recognized the following worthy historians:



2017
Bradley Reeves
& Louisa Trott



2018
Robert Booker



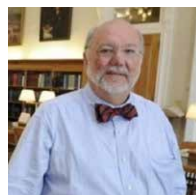
2019
Dr. Bruce Wheeler



2020
Dr. Jim Tumblin



2021
Dr. Charles Faulkner
& Terry Faulkner



2022
Steve Cotham



2023
Prof. Fred Moffatt



2024
W.R. "Sandy" McNabb



2025
Dr. Susan Knowles



STAFF



LEFT

Nicole Stahl
administrative
coordinator

CENTER

Jack Neely
executive director

RIGHT

Paul James
director of
publishing &
development



GOVERNANCE



The KHP staff wish to recognize our board of directors for wise governorship and inspiring leadership.

2025 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Erin Slocum (President), Scott Fugate (Vice President), Ed Shouse (Treasurer); Prof. Pat Rutenberg (Secretary), Dan Brown, Eric Dawson, Dr. Warren Dockter, Charles Fels, Mark Heinz, Dr. Dasha Lundy, Rosa Mar, Dationa Carter Mitchell, Nicki Russler, Finbarr Saunders, Georgiana Vines

Honorary: Linda Billman, Duane Grieve

PAST BOARD MEMBERS

Jacki Arthur • Rick Blackburn • Robert Booker • Anne Bridges • Steve Cotham • Casey Fox • Ernie Freeberg • Nelda Hill • Kim Lauth • Ellen Kern • Tore Olsson • Bill Ruckeyser • Mary Linda Schwarzbart • Cat Shteynberg • Marshall Stair • Joe Sullivan



The mission of the Knoxville History Project is to research, preserve, and promote the history and culture of Knoxville, Tennessee. Our vision is to ensure Knoxville's history is widely known; connecting the past, present, and future.

THANK YOU

Major ongoing support for the Knoxville History Project has been provided by:

Friends
of the
Knoxville
History
Project



KNOXVILLE
HISTORY
PROJECT

123 S. Gay Street, Suite C, Knoxville, TN 37902
KnoxvilleHistoryProject.org