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**FOR MORE INFORMATION  
ON THE PROGRAMS OF  
THE TENNESSEE HISTORICAL  
COMMISSION, PLEASE  
SEE OUR WEB SITE AT**  
[www.tdec.net/hist](http://www.tdec.net/hist)

# TENNESSEE HISTORICAL COMMISSION

*An overview of the programs  
and services offered by the  
Tennessee State Historic  
Preservation Office*



THE MISSION OF THE TENNESSEE HISTORICAL COMMISSION IS TO ENCOURAGE THE INCLUSIVE DIVERSE STUDY OF TENNESSEE'S HISTORY FOR THE BENEFIT OF FUTURE GENERATIONS; TO PROTECT, PRESERVE, INTERPRET, OPERATE, MAINTAIN, AND ADMINISTER HISTORIC SITES; TO MARK IMPORTANT LOCATIONS, PERSONS, AND EVENTS IN TENNESSEE HISTORY; TO ASSIST IN WORTHY PUBLICATION PROJECTS; TO REVIEW, COMMENT ON AND IDENTIFY PROJECTS THAT WILL POTENTIALLY IMPACT STATE-OWNED AND NON-STATE-OWNED HISTORIC PROPERTIES; TO LOCATE, IDENTIFY, RECORD AND NOMINATE TO THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES ALL PROPERTIES WHICH MEET NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERIA, AND TO IMPLEMENT OTHER PROGRAMS OF THE NATIONAL HISTORIC PRESERVATION ACT OF 1966 AS AMENDED.

## FEDERAL PROGRAMS

### PLANNING

As the state agency primarily responsible for the stewardship of historic resources in the State of Tennessee, the Tennessee Historical Commission (THC) has taken the lead in efforts to develop a comprehensive plan for historic preservation in the state. The goal is for the plan to be used not only by the historic preservation profession but for it to be integrated with other growth management and planning efforts in the state. To view a copy of the preservation plan, visit our website.

### SURVEY

The foundation of most historic preservation efforts is the Survey and Inventory program. THC is responsible for maintaining a statewide survey of historic properties. Current efforts focus on transferring survey data to a new web-based Geographic Information System. Forty counties have been entered into the system. The goal of this work is to make the office survey and National Register data more accessible to the public.

### NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

The National Register of Historic Places is the nation's official list of historic properties. Listing a property on the register does not ensure its preservation. Neither does it restrict the rights of private property owners. As of June 2007, there were nearly 2,000 listings in the National Register from Tennessee. Nominations are generated by property owners, neighborhood associations, local historical societies or preservation groups, local governments, and THC staff.

### PRESERVATION TAX INCENTIVES

The preservation tax incentive for historic buildings is a federally financed tax incentive for the rehabilitation of historic buildings. This 20% credit is available to income-producing properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places and can often be the impetus for historic preservation that might not otherwise occur. Since the program's start, Tennesseans have received nearly \$718,000,000 tax credits.

## FEDERAL PROGRAMS

### CERTIFIED LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROGRAM

In 1980, an amendment was added to the National Historic Preservation Act to foster local government participation in preservation efforts. There are now twenty-eight certified local governments. The THC laid the foundation for these local governments by processing applications for their certification to the National Park Service, and continues to aid their development by offering grants, technical assistance, advice, and workshops.

### PROTECTION AND DEVELOPMENT

Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act calls for the review of any project using federal funding, licensing, or permitting. The objective of the review is to compel federal agencies to take historic properties into account as they plan and execute their programs. Over the last four years, the THC has conducted over 9,800 Section 106 reviews.

In 1988, the Tennessee State Legislature enacted a law that requires THC to undertake a review of the demolition or alteration of any state property that may be of historical significance before the demolition or alteration occurs.

### FEDERAL PRESERVATION GRANTS

Federally funded matching grants are available through THC. Grant priorities are for surveys of historic resources and historic preservation planners for the state's development districts. In addition to historic surveys, grants are awarded for preservation planning studies, preparation of nominations to the National Register of Historic Places, planning or pre-development work necessary to undertake restoration of an historic property, and restoration of historic properties. Grant applicants must provide 40% of the project total.

Applications are accepted each year with a September 1 deadline. Application material is available at our web site.

## STATE PROGRAMS

### STATE OWNED HISTORIC SITES

Numerous sites have been acquired by the State for the purpose of preservation and interpretation for the public. At present, there are fifteen sites that are owned, supported, or overseen by the THC. Many people, including Tennesseans and out-of-state visitors, gain their first exposure to history and to the importance of preserving historic structures by visiting a historic site or museum.

### HISTORICAL MARKERS

One of the most visible programs of the THC is the Historical Markers Program. This program began in 1950 and has resulted in the placement of approximately 1600 signs commemorating and marking the locations of sites, persons, and events significant in Tennessee history. The three methods of funding the placement of historical markers include: full funding by the sponsor; full funding by the THC; or 50% funding by the sponsor and 50% funding by the THC.

### TENNESSEE WARS COMMISSION

In 1994, the State Legislature enacted a law creating the Tennessee Wars Commission (TWC), which is administratively attached to the THC. The TWC is authorized to promote and preserve resources associated with the French and Indian War, Revolutionary War, US-Mexican War, and the American Civil War. TWC developed a statewide preservation plan and has preserved over 1,000 acres of endangered battlefield property.

### PUBLICATIONS

This program provides assistance through grants to other agencies, e.g., historical societies, universities, for various publications relating to Tennessee History. In addition to this grant program, the Commission has itself published historical reference works. The THC also publishes *The Courier* newsletter three times a year.

The Tennessee Civil War Sourcebook is an online, searchable publication about the Civil War in Tennessee. It can be accessed at our web site.