

FROM COTTON AND THE CIVIL WAR TO MODERN DAY MEMPHIS

DOWNTOWN HISTORICAL WALKING TOUR

(1 1/2 - 2 HOURS - 21 BLOCKS)



(Approximately 1 1/2 - 2 hours - 21 blocks)

Begins at the Cotton Museum at 65 Union Avenue.

- A** Cotton Museum at the Memphis Cotton Exchange
- B** Cossitt Library
- C** Riverside Drive
- D** Confederate Park
- E** Court Square
- F** Calvary Episcopal Church
- G** Magevney House
- H** Shelby County Courthouse
- I** Trolley Clock Tower (Civic Center Plaza)
- J** Piggly Wiggly Historical Marker
- K** Union Avenue

**ALL TOURS BEGIN AND END AT THE COTTON MUSEUM
(UNION AVENUE AND FRONT STREET)**

UNION AVENUE

[1] From Cotton Museum front door **A**, turn left & head west to intersection. Cross over Front Street to Front Street Deli, look south down South Front at “Cotton Row”, then cross over Union & Proceed north on Front Street to Monroe Avenue and the Cossitt Library **B**.

MONROE AVENUE (1 BLOCK)

[2] Head west down Monroe over Railroad Tracks to Riverside Drive **C**.

[3] On west side of Riverside Drive - view Cobblestone Wharf, Mud Island, Memphis Riverboats docks, Mississippi River and Bridges.

RIVERSIDE DRIVE (1 BLOCK)

[4] Head north on west side of Riverside Drive to Jefferson Davis Park – view city skyline, railroad & trolley tracks, Cossitt Library and University of Memphis Law School

COURT AVENUE (2 BLOCKS)

[5] Cross over Riverside Drive & Railroad tracks to Confederate Park steps (if disability access is required, then proceed up sidewalk to Front Street access to park). View historical markers and statues in Confederate Park **D**. On east side of Confederate Park, view tall buildings.

COURT SQUARE (2 BLOCKS)

[6] Cross over Front Street, proceed to Main Street, Trolley tracks to Court Square **E**. View Hebe Fountain, then walk to north side to view Lincoln-American Tower, Burch Porter Johnson (former Tennessee Club) and Thomas Edison historical marker.

JEFFERSON AVENUE (2 BLOCKS)

[7] Head north on 2nd Street to Jefferson Avenue. Cross over Jefferson, view Calvary Episcopal Church **F**, to Adams Avenue.

2ND STREET (1 BLOCK)

[8] Turn right on Adams Avenue and walk by Calvary Church to Christopher Columbus Park.

3RD STREET & ADAMS AVENUE (1 BLOCK)

[9] Cross over 3rd Street and then over Adams Avenue to St. Peter Catholic Church and Magevney House **G**, then return back to 3rd Street.

3RD STREET (1 BLOCK)

[10] Cross over 3rd Street, view Shelby County Courthouse **H**.

2ND STREET (1 BLOCK)

[11] Cross over 2nd Street, view 100 North Main Building and Fire Museum Long Route Continued

MAIN STREET (1 BLOCK)

[12] Come to Main Street and turn right (north) and walk to Trolley Clock Tower **I** in Civic Center Plaza to view all four governmental buildings, Cannon Center and Memphis Cook Convention Center. Turn around and head south on Main to Adams, view Claridge House.

ADAMS AVENUE (2 BLOCKS)

[13] Continue south on Main to Jefferson. View Piggly Wiggly Historical marker **J** at the Courtyard By Marriott site.

JEFFERSON AVENUE (1 BLOCK)

[14] Cross over Jefferson Avenue, view Lowenstein's Building, Lincoln-American Tower and walk south past Court Square, view Kress Building.

MADISON AVENUE (2 BLOCKS)

[15] Head south on Main Street to Madison. Cross over Madison to proceed south on Main (past Mr. Peanut) to Monroe (Marriott Residence Inn).

MONROE AVENUE (1 BLOCK)

[16] Cross over Monroe and look east down Monroe towards Autozone Park. Proceed south on South Main past Gen. Washburn's Escape Alley to Union Avenue **K**.

UNION AVENUE (1 BLOCK)

[17] Cross over Union Avenue to south side walk, and then walk west to Cotton Museum **A** (1 Block).

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UNION AVENUE

[1] **Cotton Museum:** From the Cotton Museum **A** front door, turn left & head west to the intersection of Front Street and Union Avenue. Cross over Front Street to the Front Street Deli and then cross over Union Avenue to the Memphis Fire Department Headquarters (1959). Stop and look west down Union Avenue towards the Mississippi River at the set of buildings on the south side - **Howard's Row**. This set of buildings on the south side of Union Avenue was the original south limits of the first town plan in 1819 and the first "shopping center" for the town in the mid-1800s.

The 47 Union Avenue building (now the offices of the Memphis Convention & Visitors Bureau) was known as the Woolen Building, and is the oldest existing commercial building in Memphis as the basement served as a hospital for Union soldiers during the Civil War. Also, view south down Front Street to other buildings along Cotton Row.

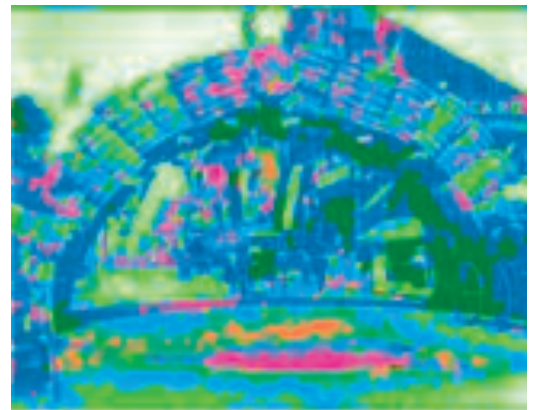
While proceeding north on Front Street to Monroe Avenue, view the **Shrine Building** (1923), former home of the Al Chymia Shrine Temple and offices, now condominiums.

MONROE (1 BLOCK)

The **Mid-South Cotton Growers Association** (southeast corner of Monroe/Front) was formed in 1931 to assist farmers during the Great Depression. The **Little Tea Shop** is a well-esteemed lunch spot in Downtown. Looking eastward down Monroe, one sees **Brinkley Plaza** (1925) on the northwest corner of Monroe/Main, former site of the original Peabody Hotel (1869-1923) in Memphis.

The east side of Front Street between Monroe Avenue and Union Avenue represent buildings of world famous "**Cotton Row**". Cotton Row, which once extended from Madison to Linden Avenue along Front Street, was the center of cotton trade in America from the 1850s to the 1970s. Front Street between Monroe and Gayoso has been designated as the Cotton Row Historic District by the Memphis landmarks Commission and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The ground floors of these (remaining) buildings were cotton classing offices, offices for factors and related businesses for the cotton industry, such as shipping, insurance and general merchandise, with the upper stories being unpartitioned and used for storage and sample rooms. The top floors were used for cotton classing and were constructed with skylights to capture the north light since it was necessary to use natural light in the classing of cotton.



This type of construction is no longer well-designed for today's large-scale operations, since the development of fluorescent lighting diminished the need for natural lighting, but the design has made the buildings ripe for re-adaptive use of residential and office development. Building exteriors show a variety of architectural styles. From 1880 to 1930, 70% of the nation's cotton crop was within 200 miles of Memphis.

Turn left on Monroe Avenue and proceed west towards Riverside Drive. On the north side of Monroe, view the **Cossitt Library** **B**, erected in 1893. The remaining red sandstone structure in the rear was built in 1929 and the modern front wing in 1959.

Cross over the **railroad tracks**, which have had a presence on the Memphis riverfront here since 1881. Currently the Canadian National (CN) tracks, Amtrak's City of New Orleans passenger train still runs daily between Chicago and New Orleans. Proceed across Riverside Drive. The west side tracks handle the Riverfront loop of the Main Street Trolley system.

Riverside Drive **C** was built in 1935 to connect the Downtown core with the two lower bridges at the time to the south of Downtown (Frisco Bridge – 1892 – and Harrahan Bridge – 1916). Beginning in 1949, a third bridge – the Memphis & Arkansas Bridge opened and now handles the I-55 interstate traffic.

[2] On west side of Riverside Drive, view the **Cobblestone Wharf**, which was erected between 1852 and 1892 in nineteen different work sessions during the advent of the Great Steamboat Era on the Lower Mississippi River. There are over one million cobbles remaining in the largest original cobblestone wharf in the nation and the wharf is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

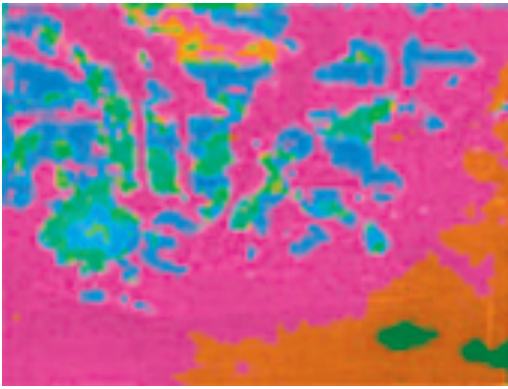
The **Memphis Riverboats** docks have moored to the cobblestone wharf since 1955 providing a variety of daily passenger excursion, dinner cruises and private charters from a fleet of three "Made In Memphis" vessels – **Memphis Queen II**, **Memphis Queen III** and **Island Queen**.

Across the Wolf River Harbor is the **Mud Island River Park**, a 50-acre theme park which celebrates the heritage and lore of the Mississippi River with the 18-gallery Mississippi River Museum, 5-block-long Mississippi River Walk scale model, Monorail, 5,000-seat Amphitheatre, 110-slip Marina, restaurants, gift shops and numerous vistas of the river and delta. The **seven flags** that fly on the southern tip of the island represent the jurisdictions over the Memphis area for the past 450+ years – Spain, France, Great Britain, United States of America, Confederate States of America, North Carolina and Tennessee.

The **Hernando Desoto Bridge**, also known as the "Big M" Bridge, just north of Mud Island was opened in 1973 and handles the I-40 interstate traffic.

RIVERSIDE DRIVE (1 BLOCK)

[3] Head north on west side of **Riverside Drive** to **Jefferson Davis Park** (1930), on the south side of Riverside Drive, north of the Cobblestone Wharf. Along the walk, view the city skyline and **Promenade** property (from Front Street to the toe of the Cobblestones, and Union Avenue to The Pyramid) laid about by the City Founders in 1819 for public use in perpetuity. The red sandstone building on the east side of Riverside Drive at Monroe Avenue is the 1929 wing of the **Cossitt**



Library, which was established in Downtown in 1893. Next to the Cossitt Library is the **University of Memphis Cecil C. Humphreys School of Law** (2010), which occupies the original United States Customs House & Courthouse opened in 1885, and remodeled in 1903 and 1929.

COURT AVENUE (2 BLOCKS)

[4] Cross over Riverside Drive & Railroad tracks to the Confederate Park steps (if disability access is required, then proceed up sidewalk to Front Street access to park). Notice the 82-foot width of Court Avenue, designed purposely wide for

mule wagons carrying heavy bales of cotton from the cobblestone wharf up the steep slope to Front Street, using a side-to-side tacking maneuver for the benefit of the mules.

View historical markers and statues in **Confederate Park** (1908) **D**. Quite a few statues and/or historical markers reside in the park including the Jefferson Davis Statue (1964), the Elizabeth Avery Merriwether and Virginia “Ginnie” Bethel Moon historical markers, and two markers dedicated to the most significant local events of the Civil War. From this bluff, the citizens of Memphis on June 6, 1862 watched the Battle of Memphis, a naval skirmish in what is now the Wolf River Harbor to the west that lasted only ninety minutes and resulted in a resounding victory for the Union fleet.

Looking north to south from the east side of Confederate Park, view tall buildings - Morgan Keegan Tower (1987) at Front/Jefferson, 100 North Main Building (1965) on Main Street (the tallest building in Memphis at 431 feet) and the **Falls Building** (1912) at Front/Court. The Falls Building was known for its Alaskan Roof Garden of big band era music, the debut in 1916 of W.C. Handy’s St. Louis Blues and the first broadcast in Memphis of a major league baseball game was transmitted from here.

[6] Cross over Front Street, proceed to Main Street past a group of three modern hotel properties (Courtyard By Marriott (2010), Sleep Inn At Court Square (1995) and the SpringHill Suites (2003).

Walk across the **Main Street Trolley** (1993) tracks to **Court Square** **E**, one of the four original squares laid out by the City founders in 1819. View eastward to the centerpiece of Court Square, the **Hebe Fountain**, developed in 1876 by the citizens of Memphis to honor the nation’s centennial. Look closer at the fountain wall to see the names of the fifty citizens that donated \$1,000 each in 1876 to have the fountain erected.



COURT SQUARE (2 BLOCKS)

Proceed to South Court Avenue. The **D.T. Porter Building** was built in 1895 as the Continental Bank building and renamed in memory D.T. Porter in the early 1900s for one of the leading citizens of Memphis in the late 19th century. The 11-story building was the tallest building south of St. Louis at the time, the first in the south with a high rise elevator and was converted to residential use in 1983. The alley known as November 6th Street

gets its name from the day in 1934 that Memphis voted to join the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) system for its power.

Heading east on South Court, the Cadence Bank is located in the oldest existing building on Court Square known as **The Tennessean** (1875). The 19-story building at the southwest corner of South Court/Second is the **Exchange Building** (1910) which formerly housed the Memphis Cotton Exchange and was converted to apartments in 1996.

Now, head north up Second Street along the eastern side of Court Square. At the southeast corner of Court/Second are the Bank Tennessee offices (2008) which occupy **The Appeal Building** (1907), one of the early homes of the local morning newspaper, *The Commercial Appeal*. Welcome Wagon, founded in Memphis in 1925, had its offices in this building for almost 75 years. WMC radio station was begun here in 1923 as a public service of *The Commercial Appeal* newspaper.

Continuing north, the next building is the Burch Porter Johnson Law Firm, which occupies the Moorish looking building built as the Tennessee Club (1890). Notice the State of Tennessee historical marker commemorating the fact that **Thomas Edison** worked in a building at this location post Civil War in the 1860s. Across from BPJ is the Court Square **Gazebo** (1954) and several renovations since. The Gazebo got its start at the end of the Civil War when the Union Band would play daily concerts in Court Square in the afternoons.

JEFFERSON AVENUE (2 BLOCKS)

[7] Head north on Second Street past the Burch Porter Johnson Law Office to Jefferson Avenue.

Cross over Jefferson, view **Calvary Episcopal** (1844) **F**, the oldest public assembly structure remaining in Memphis.

SECOND STREET (1 BLOCK)

[8] Turn right on Adams Avenue and walk by Calvary Episcopal Church to Maggie Isabel Alley, named for seamstress that has a shop in the alley for more than fifty years. **Christopher Columbus Park**, the smallest (.10 acre) park in Memphis is next and the statue was placed in the park in 1987. On the south side of the park is a State of Tennessee historic marker commemorating Nathan Bedford Forrest's early home.

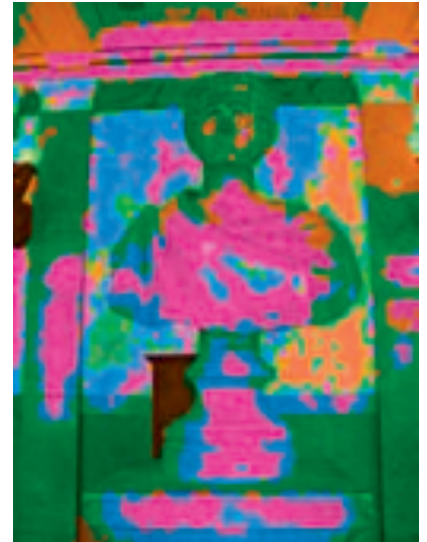
THIRD STREET & ADAMS AVENUE (1 BLOCK)

[9] Cross over Third Street and look deep into the grove of trees to notice an historical marker commemorating the location of the U.S. Post Office that on June 6, 1862, the United States flag was placed atop by Union troops after its victorious naval Battle of Memphis. Just south of the grove of trees is the **One Memphis Place** building (1985) which houses the U.S. Bankruptcy Courts for the region.

Cross over Adams Avenue to **St. Peter Catholic Church** (1854) and then walk one-half block to the **Magevney House** (1835) **G**, which is the oldest residence in Memphis, and now preserved as a museum. Walk around to the side yard to view the 1800s-style kitchen garden over the fence in the back yard. Now, return back to Adams Avenue and proceed west past St. Peter to Third Street.

3RD STREET (1 BLOCK)

[10] Cross over Third Street and view the magnificent **Shelby County Courthouse** (1909) **H**, made of blue Bedford limestone, which originally housed all offices of city and county government when it first opened. Within the Courthouse are four divisions of courts – Circuit, Probate, General Sessions and Chancery. Elaborate interiors include Cuban mahogany paneling, doors and benches as well as seven different kinds of marble from four different states. Walking by the Courthouse, notice the **Six Marble Statues** that represent Justice, Wisdom, Liberty, Authority, Prosperity and Peace. Each status is carved from a single block of Tennessee marble and is the largest of its kind in America. Above the entries, there are **Six Pediments** with carved scenes that represent Civil law, Criminal law, Common law, Statutory law, Religious law and Roman law. Above each pediment is the head of Minerva, the Roman Goddess of Wisdom.

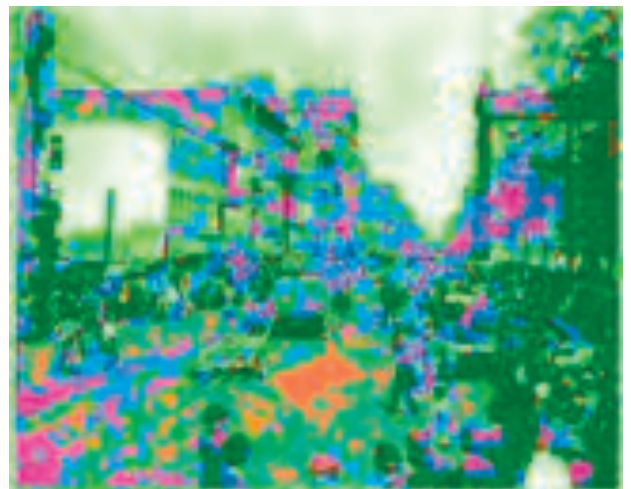


In the center of the grounds on the south side of the Courthouse, stands a lone **Tulip Poplar** tree (the official “state tree” of Tennessee. This particularly tree was planted in 1984 at the 75th

anniversary of the Courthouse and is the only piece of landscaping on the property. Looking past the tulip poplar through the middle window of the balcony, one can vaguely see into the south lobby of the Courthouse and view a **Bust of Andrew Jackson**, was of the three founders of Memphis and 7th President of the United States. This bust was sculpted in 1834 by John Frazee is the first bust sculpted of a sitting President in the United States. In the pedestal is inscribed Jackson’s famous toast: “Our Federal Union! It Must And Shall Be Preserved!” The bust was originally placed on display in Court Square in 1859, but was removed shortly thereafter due to vandalism, and was subsequently placed in the south lobby in 1921.

2ND STREET (1 BLOCK)

[11] Cross over 2nd Street, view **100 North Main Building** (1965), the tallest building in Memphis at 431 feet. The **Fire Museum of Memphis** (1998) occupies a former fire station (1910) and serves the community as the leader in fire education and fire prevention programs. The E.H. Crump Building (1901) since 1997 has been occupied by the Center City Commission, formed in 1977 to serve as the leading promoter of Downtown redevelopment, parking, security, programming and promotions.




MAIN STREET (1 BLOCK)

[12] Come to Main Street and turn right (north) and walk to Trolley Clock Tower **I** in **Civic Center Plaza** to view all four governmental buildings – City Hall (1965), Federal Building (1963), State Building (1967) and the County Administration Building (1969).

The Cannon Center for Performing Arts, Memphis Cook Convention Center, Federal Reserve Bank and Marriott Hotel all may be seen looking to the north from the Trolley Clock Tower. Turn around and head south on Main Street to Adams Avenue again and view the **Claridge House** (1924) on the southwest corner of Main/Adams.

ADAMS AVENUE (2 BLOCKS)

[13] Continue south on Main Street to Jefferson Avenue past the Renaissance Tower (1969), a residential building. View **Piggly Wiggly Historical Marker**  at the Courtyard By Marriott site, which commemorates the opening of the first self-service grocery store in America in 1916 on this site by Memphian Clarence Saunders.

JEFFERSON AVENUE (1 BLOCK)

[14] Cross over Jefferson Avenue, view the **B. Lowenstein's** Building (1885) now a newly renovated residential property and the Lincoln-American Tower (1924), which is a 30% scale of the Woolworth Building in New York City. Behind the **Lincoln-American Tower** is the Court Square Annex (2010), a modern building which is the first LEEDS certified high rise in Downtown (**Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design**). On the west side of Main Street are three hotel properties – Courtyard By Marriott (2010), Sleep Inn At Court Square (1995) and SpringHill Suites (2003).



NORTH MAIN STREET (1 BLOCK)

[15] Continuing down the Main Street Trolley Line past Court Square, look due west to the very ornate terra cotta **Kress Building** (1927). The first Kress store in America open in 1896 further down South Main Street and this building became a McCrory's in 1980, closing in 1994. In 2007, the SpringHill Suites renovated the historic building for lodging use. Head south on Main Street to Madison Avenue. Cross over Madison – looking west to the University of Memphis Law School and east towards the First Tennessee Bank (1964), Sterick Building (1930) and YMCA (1909). Proceed south on Main Street (past **The Peanut Shoppe** on the left – notice Mr. Peanut's wand tapping the window) to Monroe Avenue and the Marriott Residence Inn (2000) in the former **William Len Hotel** (1930). On the northwest corner is the Brinkley Plaza Building, which opened as a **Lowenstein's** Department Store in 1925, and converted to office space in the 1980s. This is also the site of the original Peabody Hotel from 1869-1923.

MONROE AVENUE (2 BLOCKS)

[9] Cross over Monroe and look east down Monroe towards **Autozone Park** (2000), the top-rated minor league baseball park in America in 2010 also known as “The Taj Mahal of Minor League Baseball” and home of the Memphis Redbirds, AAA franchise of the St. Louis Cardinals. On the southeast corner of Main/Monroe is **One Commerce Square** (1973) and just south on South Main is **Gen. Washburn's Escape Alley**, named appropriately for the Union general that escaped being captured by Confederate Gen. Nathan Bedford Forrest in a midnight raid of Memphis in August, 1864. Walk to Union Avenue



UNION AVENUE **K** (1 BLOCK)

[10] While crossing over Union Avenue to south side walk, look to the east and on the north side see the **WDIA** Radio Station sign. WDIA was the first all-black-formatted radio station in America in 1948, and two of its most famous disk jockeys were Rufus Thomas and B.B. King. Also notice on the south side of Union - **The Peabody Hotel**, erected in 1925. The famous March of The Peabody Ducks is held daily in the lobby from the elevator to the fountain. About this same lobby, it is said that “the Mississippi delta begins in the lobby of The Peabody Hotel and ends at Catfish Row in Vicksburg”.

Then proceed west to Cotton Museum (1 Block) west on Union Avenue to south side by Cotton Exchange Building (1924). The **Memphis Cotton Exchange**, where the region’s cotton is still bought and sold, was first organized in 1873. By the early 1950s a seat on the Exchange could cost a new member \$17,000. Memphis was the largest spot cotton market in the world from 1880 to 1930.

[10] Return to the **Cotton Museum** **A** on the historical Cotton Exchange floor as it takes each visitor through the science, history, economics and culture of the world of cotton in the Memphis and Mid-South area – from blues and sharecropping to international trade and genetically-engineered seed-giving context and more.