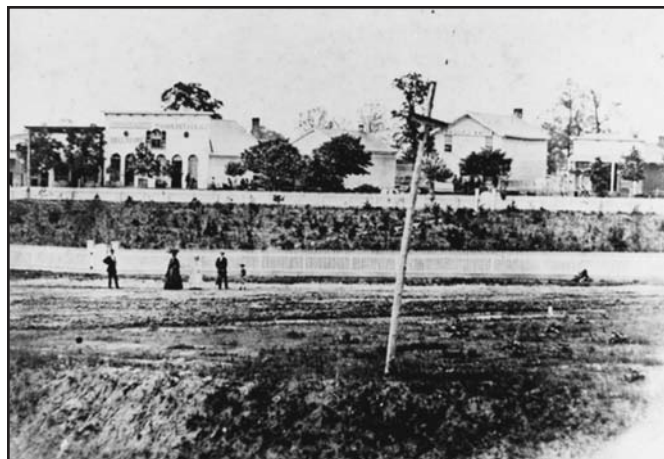


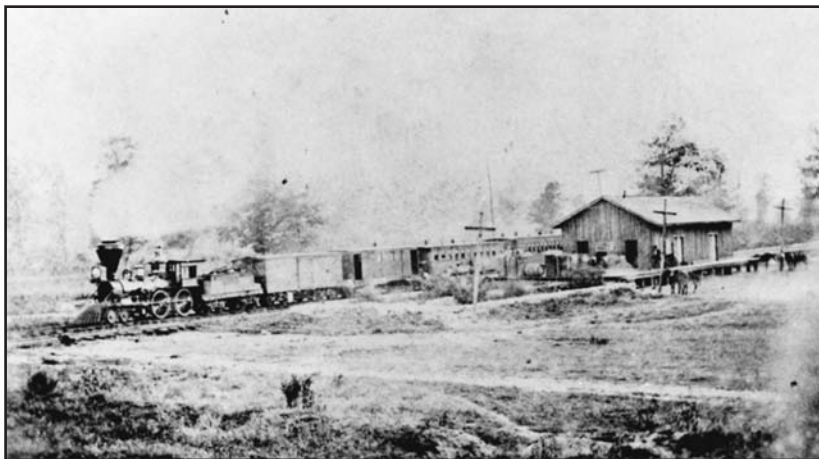
Some Scenes of Yesterday's Collierville



Collierville in the 1880's

Above: This picture was taken from the railroad tracks looking north toward the square. Notice the telegraph pole in the center of the picture. The trees in the park area were planted by Mayor H.W. Cox's grandfather. Several of these trees are standing today.

Right: This photo was shot by J.T. Harris, a distant relative of Madison Wilson around the 1880's. The woodburning locomotive is believed to be traveling eastbound as viewed from the southeast corner of the square.



Below: In the winter of 1948 approximately 15 inches of snow fell upon the city. It is very unusual for our area to have this much snow.



Above: Taken at sunset in the late 40's was the town depot when situated alongside the railroad tracks. It was still an active, working depot back then and you can see the telegraph poles and lines if you look close.



Left: In the early 1980's this excursion train with a steam locomotive pulls into Collierville. Note the Hester Hotel in the background.

Below: Collierville's schools (1-12). This aerial view was taken overlooking the schools with Poplar on the north and Walnut on the east. Notice the football field in the upper left hand corner. The photo was taken about 1948.



Above: Mulberry Street on the north side of the square in the fall during the late 40's.

Right: Looking North on Main Street in 1948. Note the Town Theatre on the left and the water tower in the background.



Above: In 1942, this young lady was awaiting the shipment of cotton to Memphis at the west end of the old depot.



Photographs: From the private collection of Madison Wilson

A Brief History of Collierville

Tennessee, The Volunteer State, was admitted into the union in 1796 as the sixteenth state. In 1818, President James Monroe directed General Andrew Jackson and General John Shelby to purchase the Chickasaw Indian Land (West Tennessee and Western Kentucky). The Chickasaw Indians were removed from the area and placed on Indian Territory. The Indians received \$20,000.00 annually for the next fifteen years.

Between 1819-1824 the area was quickly being settled. Collierville was one of the early settlements with only one structure in the area and that being a Stagecoach Stop. People began to settle nearby as this means of transportation was an attraction for growth.

Collierville is the second oldest town in Shelby County with Memphis being the oldest. The settlement (town) was laid out in the middle 1830's on William A. Tharp's (a citizen of Henry County) land grant of 640 acres. Collierville was located on Poplar Pike (then State Line Road). Our town was once part of both Tennessee and Mississippi due to a surveyor's three-mile plus error. This error was corrected in 1838.

The town took its name from Jesse R. Collier. After Collierville became part of Tennessee, Jesse Collier moved into the "real" Mississippi.

Churches in the area have played a vital role. The first church was Shiloh Baptist located just over the Fayette County line. It was built on high ground along with an adjoining cemetery. Many Colliervillians are buried there. Salem Presbyterian was built around 1844 near Byhalia Road and Holmes Road (two miles south of Collierville). The first church to be built in the village of Collierville was the Methodist Church. It was built around 1851 near Poplar and North Main street.

The Christian Church was reorganized after the Nonconnah Church near the Tennessee, Mississippi state line disbanded after the Civil War. The first church was located on the northeast corner of Main and Poplar Pike (State Line Road) until it relocated in 1871 (southeast corner of Main and Poplar). Growth has led the way for a new location on North Byhalia Road.

The Episcopal Church began, circa 1880, in the home of Mr. Mangrum and later moved to the school house of Miss Anna Holden. The cornerstone of St. Andrew's was laid April 22, 1890. The church is located on Walnut Street just north of North Rowlett.

The town of Collierville was first incorporated in 1850 (east of its present site) with Richard Ramsey being the first mayor. The population grew quickly, largely due to the chartered Memphis and Charleston Railroad (1852). The fare to Memphis was 75¢.

The tragedy of the Civil War was devastating. After the Battle of Shiloh in 1862 it is believed that 119 wounded soldiers were delivered by train to Collierville with others being dropped off at various towns along the way. One hundred nineteen were loaded onto wagons and taken to the Greenlevel Plantation (five miles north on Collierville—Arlington Road). Greenlevel was owned by Virginus and Martha Leake. He was a prominent doctor in the area. He operated on the wounded soldiers upstairs in the hall where it is said the bloodstains still remain. Soldiers were also cared for in several homes within the town.

"Sherman's March to the Sea" caused an end to Collierville's first town. On Sunday morning October 11, 1863, Union General William T. Sherman barricaded himself inside the train depot in Collierville. He and his Union soldiers defended the depot from the Confederates. A

Confederate General, James Chalmers, stole Sherman's horse and sword during the battle. The Union and Confederate soldiers fought one of the bloodiest battles in Shelby County here in Collierville. If only General Chalmers could have captured General Sherman—the war's outcome could have been different. The first town was burned to the ground with only a few buildings surviving.

Soon after the war (1867), two men, Harrison Irby and Virginus Leake bought about ninety acres at our present town's location. The acreage was divided and sold in lots. Collierville was "reborn" from her ashes. February 17, 1870, was the date of our second incorporation—James B. Abington was the mayor. The location of his burial is unknown. The historical square of Collierville was born during this era.

Tragedy hit Memphis and surrounding areas in the 1870's—Yellow Fever. Many Memphians took refuge in Collierville. In Magnolia Cemetery many yellow fever victims are buried. Yellow fever was as devastating to Collierville in the 1870's as the war was in the 1860's.

Education was a top priority in the area. The Parent Act of 1873 began public education but Collierville had already embarked upon the age of enlightenment. The Collierville Male Academy opened before 1870 with school master, Captain Pat Strickland. Another school for boys began around 1882 with Professor Perkins running a semi-military school. In 1880 Miss Anna Holden's School for Girls opened.

Bellevue College opened in 1872. It was located at the present site of Collierville Middle School. This building for young women burned in 1896. The town had no fire fighting equipment. Bellevue College was lost but no one was hurt.

In 1897 Shelby County built a coed high school on the same location where Bellevue College was located. The existing Collierville Middle School building was begun in 1934 and completed in 1937. Several additions to the building have been made since then.

In 1886, Collierville is mentioned as the second town in Shelby County with 1,200 plus people. The town consisted of nine dry goods stores, eight groceries, two drug stores, two hardware stores, two furniture stores, three livery stables and two hotels. In 1913, Reverend Burk Culpepper, a Methodist evangelist held a two week revival. He vowed to end the curse of drunkards in Collierville. The town board voted three to two to outlaw the sale of whiskey in Collierville.

The 1900's were an era of hustle and bustle in Collierville. Most of the buildings on the north side of town were built in the late 1800's and early 1900's as were the grand homes along the railroad tracks.

Cotton was the major crop for over a century. Collierville was the trade center for west Fayette County, Tennessee, as well as northern Marshall and DeSoto Counties in Mississippi. This is one of the reasons Collierville continued to grow. It was a town of an agricultural nature until the mid 1950's when industry slowly began to develop.

Collierville's Historic Town Square gives you the feeling of American Nostalgia. We are the only town in Shelby County that has a square. Our town square was built after the Civil War destroyed our first town. We welcome you to our historical town that is on the National Register of Historic Districts. Thanks for sharing your time with our city.

Interesting Facts

- As early as 1904 electric lights came to Collierville (usage was limited to a few hours at night and in the early morning).
- A horseracing track was built around 1898 near the intersection of Highway 72 and Highway 57. (Imagine a southern belle dressed in a satin frock with a parasol watching the event.)
- W.C. Handy (Father of the Blues) performed in the park. He delighted the people with soulful melodies.
- Peter Adams gave two acres of land for the first railroad depot in 1852.
- T.J. Morris had the first phone in Collierville connecting his business to his home on Mill Street.
- Dr. E.K. Leake took advantage of the phone system—he ran lines from his office to his patient's homes using the wire on fences.
- In 1907 the Collierville Telephone Company was established and located on the second floor of Kelsey Brothers Mercantile store. This building is currently occupied by the Collierville Antique Mall.
- In 1874 the Collierville Athletics baseball team was organized by a group of young men from this area. The local men toured the South to play various teams.
- Bicycling and tennis were popular sports in the late 1800's. The town now has a two million dollar community center/theatre which is the hub of recreation.
- Wonder Horse - a child's prized toy was brought to Collierville around 1943. Mr. Andrew G. Manning manufactured the first one from wood. After World War II the company went to plastic. Mr. Ed Kohler became a partner in this successful business. The idea and patent came from Mr. Bolze from Pochohantas, Arkansas.

Acknowledgements

Text Sources: Collierville citizens and property owners of the Town square.

This brochure was produced as an Eagle Scout Project. Main Street Collierville was responsible for the funding and support of the project.

Greg Baumgartner, a member of Boy Scouts of America Troop 56, Collierville Christian Church, began this walking tour project in the Summer of 1992. Using fellow Scouts to complete the research and compilation of the brochure, Greg accumulated more than 100 hours of project time. This walking tour brochure is the result of his dedication to the project. We congratulate Greg on his achieving the Eagle Scout award.

Main Street Collierville
125 N. Rowlett • Collierville, Tennessee 38017 • 901.853.1666
Laura Todd, Executive Director

www.collierville.com/mainstreet
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A Walking Tour of Historic Collierville, Tennessee

