

## 2006 Ten in Tennessee List



### **1. Hawkins County Courthouse, Rogersville**

**THREAT:** Deferred Maintenance, Inappropriate Remodeling

Dating to 1836, the Hawkins County Courthouse is a revered landmark in one of the state's most historic and picturesque towns. It is also one of just a handful of antebellum courthouses in Tennessee still used for its original purposes. Built by John Dameron in Greek Revival style, its original cupola was replaced in 1929. In constant use for 160 years, deferred maintenance issues plague some areas of the building, while some of the repair work that has been done has not been respectful of the historic character of the courthouse. It is hoped that the listing will help focus attention on the courthouse's condition--and inspire local leaders to focus on generating a long-term restoration plan with the help of professional preservationists.



### **2. Zippin Pippin Roller Coaster and the Carousel at Libertyland Memphis, Shelby County**

**THREAT:** Demolition, Sale

Even if it were not popularly known as the favorite ride of the late Elvis Presley, the c. 1923 roller coaster would be important as one of only five remaining examples of wooden roller coasters from the era of classic American amusement parks. The carousel, built in 1909 by William Dentzel, has been a Memphis fixture since the 1920s. Both are found at Libertyland, an amusement park that closed last fall. The Mid-South Fair and the City of Memphis both claim ownership of the roller coaster and carousel. Meanwhile, the Fair has scheduled an auction of the Libertyland assets for June 21<sup>st</sup>. A grass-roots organization, "Save Libertyland" has been working to try and keep the park and its treasures from disappearing forever.

**UPDATE:**

***The City of Memphis and the Mid-South State Fair announced a compromise in the dispute over ownership of the Ten in Tennessee-listed c. 1909 carousel and the c. 1923 Zippin Pippin roller coaster at the former Libertyland Amusement Park in Memphis on June 20th. In exchange for keeping the carousel, the city decided to allow the fair to maintain its claim of ownership of the roller coaster. A last-minute attempt to file an injunction to block the sale by Save Libertyland advocates was unsuccessful, and the auction was held as scheduled. The roller coaster went for only \$2500-- to two individuals only interested in obtaining the car used by Elvis.***



**3. Hiram Jenkins House, Murfreesboro, Rutherford County**

**THREAT:** Commercial Development

Since 1853, this handsome two story Greek Revival house has stood firm-- surviving a war that came to its front door and passing through successive decades of more peaceful changes. But recently, the march of "progress" has brought a new interstate interchange very near to the house. With that development, the prospect of commercial development for the property looms very large. The house and its surrounding acreage are currently for sale and the property has been rezoned. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places since 1989, the fact that the Jenkins House is also one of the last remaining buildings associated with the Battle of Stones River in 1864 amplifies its significance among preservationists. A group of concerned citizens, the "Save the Jenkins House Campaign," has formed to try and find a way to protect the house and at least a portion of the property around it. They have gained several hundred signatures on petitions, and are looking to find a potential buyer for the property.



After standing in Rutherford County for 153 years, this is the former site of the Jenkins House as it looked by late June, 2006.  
Photo by Dan Deal.

**UPDATE: DEMOLISHED** ***The owners, former Atlanta Rhythm Section drummer Roy Yeager and Char Fontane had the Jenkins House bulldozed on Saturday, June 10th. After the destruction of this irreplaceable landmark, TPT learned that unbeknownst to them or the local grass-roots group, the demo permit had actually been issued in April. It is a sad end and a completely avoidable loss. TPT first attempted to work with the property owners in 2003.***



#### **4. East Side of Brownsville Court Square, Brownsville, Haywood County**

**THREAT:** Demolition; Neglect; Lack of Official Protection

Courthouse squares are a wonderful and vibrant part of the unique appeal of Tennessee's county seats. Brownsville's square is no exception, and a serious threat to its unique character has landed the east side of the square on this year's list. The problems began when the corner building, located on what was the original "Lot #1" in Brownsville, was torn down in the fall of 2005 after the façade collapsed. That demolition weakened the building next door and has forced the owners to vacate. The fear is that there will be a continued "domino effect" resulting in the eventual loss of the remaining buildings, which date to 1868. More troubling is that the Brownsville Historic Zoning Commission has recently been abolished-- leaving the town without the critical protections afforded by historic zoning. It is hoped that local leaders and citizens will work to protect the east side of the square before a key component of the city's character is lost.



#### **5. Harrison-Goyer-Lee House, Memphis, Shelby County**

**THREAT:** Neglect

This exuberant Victorian mansion-- the longtime home of riverboat tycoon James Lee and also the first home of the Memphis Academy of Art-- began as a small dwelling in 1848. It was expanded again by 1865 and in the early 1870s. The last remodeling, by architect Edward Jones, was done in the Victorian Eclectic style. With its Mansard tower, rounded arch Italianate windows, and grand cornice brackets, the house is among the most important examples of its type in Tennessee. It has been unoccupied since 1959, with only isolated repairs made. It is located next to another grand home, the Woodruff-Fontaine House, a museum located in an area known as "Victorian Village." The Association for the Preservation of Tennessee Antiquities has long-term leases for both properties with the City of Memphis, but the leases expire in 2011.

There is concern among local preservationists that the City would reclaim the house upon the expiration of the lease, and its future would be very uncertain.



#### **6. Commonwealth House, Ruskin, Dickson County**

**THREAT:** Neglect

In 1894, a utopian socialist from Indiana, John Wayland, established a colony called the “Ruskin Cooperative Association” in honor of British idealist and critic John Ruskin. From the beginning, the colony was not as utopian as Wayland had hoped—being fraught with infighting over its management and social practices. By 1895 Wayland himself had left. The colony relocated several miles away from its first location to a new site during the winter of 1895-96. At the new location they constructed the imposing three-story Commonwealth Hall, completed by 1897. This large building included a print shop, library, dining room, bookstore, nursery, guest lodging facilities and an auditorium. During early 1897 the colony had over 250 inhabitants, but it had dissolved by 1899. Today Commonwealth Hall is the only remaining building from the colony. It suffers from advanced neglect. The site is currently used by Dickson’s Renaissance Center as a day camp for children and teens. While two new structures were recently being constructed at the site, there are no known plans to restore or reuse this unique building associated with one of the state’s more intriguing stories.



### **7. Walker-Sherrill House, Knoxville, Knox County**

**THREAT:** Neglect

This handsome circa 1830 Federal-style brick house is one of less than a dozen of its type remaining in Knox County. It is located in a rapidly developing area and is entangled in an estate. It is eligible for the National Register, and local preservationists are hopeful that the listing will help efforts to establish a dialogue for the development of a long-term preservation plan for the property.

### **8. Jacob Brown Historic Site, Washington County**

**THREAT:** Structural Deterioration; Development

Colonel Jacob Brown established the Nolichucky Settlement on this site in 1771. The site contains a historic cemetery and standing structures including the May Day Post Office, the Byrd Brown Grist Mill, and the Byrd Brown House. The site also undoubtedly contains archaeological information about the early settlement period. Today it is tied up in an estate, and development is encroaching on the area.



### **9. The Colored Hotel, Union City, Obion County**

**THREAT:** Demolition

During the period of segregation, there were very few lodging opportunities for African-Americans between Chicago and Memphis. Built around 1950, this two-story concrete block building afforded travelers a welcome stop as they made their way through West Tennessee.

Well-known entertainers including Tina Turner performed there in an age when the building served as a social hub for Union City's black community. Today it lies vacant, deteriorating, and facing demolition. The city council has given the owner six months to formulate a plan to save the structure, and now less than two months remain. The property owner would like to pursue a mixed-use project that would combine a local African-American history museum with a bed and breakfast.



**10. Sen. Estes Kefauver Boyhood Home, Madisonville, Monroe County**

**THREAT:** Fire Damage, Funding

Built around 1846 by New York-born craftsman Thomas Blanchard, this house is a wonderful example of the transitional Federal-Greek Revival style. It features handsome architectural pattern book details and a graceful pediment-sided portico. Around 1912, the family of future U.S. Senator Estes Kefauver moved into the home and he was raised there. Kefauver was a colorful figure who served in the Senate from 1948 until 1963. He served as the Democratic nominee for vice president in 1956 under Adlai Stevenson. A devastating fire last fall damaged the house, but the owners are working to restore the property. It is hoped that this listing will help garner support for their efforts.