



METROPOLITAN GOVERNMENT OF NASHVILLE AND DAVIDSON COUNTY

Metropolitan Historical Commission
Metropolitan Historic Zoning Commission
Sunnyside in Sevier Park
3000 Granny White Pike
Nashville, Tennessee 37204
Telephone: (615) 862-7970

To: Metropolitan Council
From: Metropolitan Historical Commission, Staff
Date: July 28, 2023
Re: BL2023-2114

An ordinance to amend the Geographic Information Systems Street and Alley Centerline Layer for the Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County, by renaming Forrest Avenue, between Main Street and North 17th Street, and between North 17th Street to terminus, to “Forest Avenue”. (Proposal Number 2023M-002SR-001).

Forrest Avenue, from Main Street to North 17th Street, was platted in four sections from 1887 to 1892 (Fig. 1). According to the first plats, the original name of the road was “Forest.” A fifth section, from North 17th Street to its terminus east of North 18th Street, was renamed “Forrest” in 1907. The historical record, as far as Historical Commission staff has been able to determine, does not explicitly state why the spelling of the street name originally platted as “Forest” was changed to “Forrest.” Additionally, the historical record contains both spellings seemingly interchangeably and sometimes within the same source. For this report, text is written exactly as it appears, with the name emphasized in **Bold text**; current street names are in parentheses.

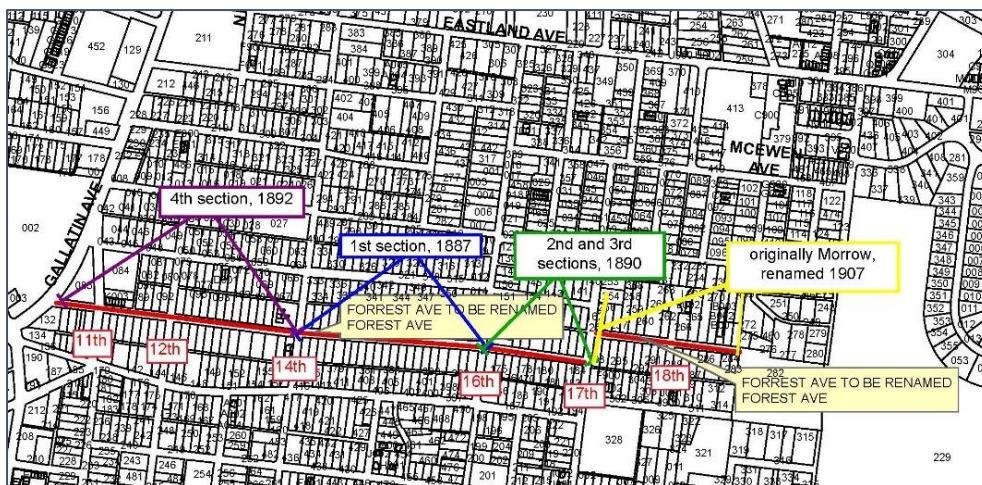


Figure 1: Parcel map with notations indicating phases of road development.

Forest Avenue – the first plats:

Forest Avenue, running west-to-east from Ordway Avenue (North 14th Street) to Hickman Street (North 16th Street), parallel between Gartland Avenue along the north and Chadwell Avenue (Woodland Street) along the south, was one of six streets platted by the Subdivision of the A.V.S. Lindsley 29 Acre Tract, recorded on February 25, **1887** (Fig. 2).¹ This appears to be the first platted segment of Forest Avenue in east Nashville.² At the time of recording, the property was located outside of Nashville city limits.

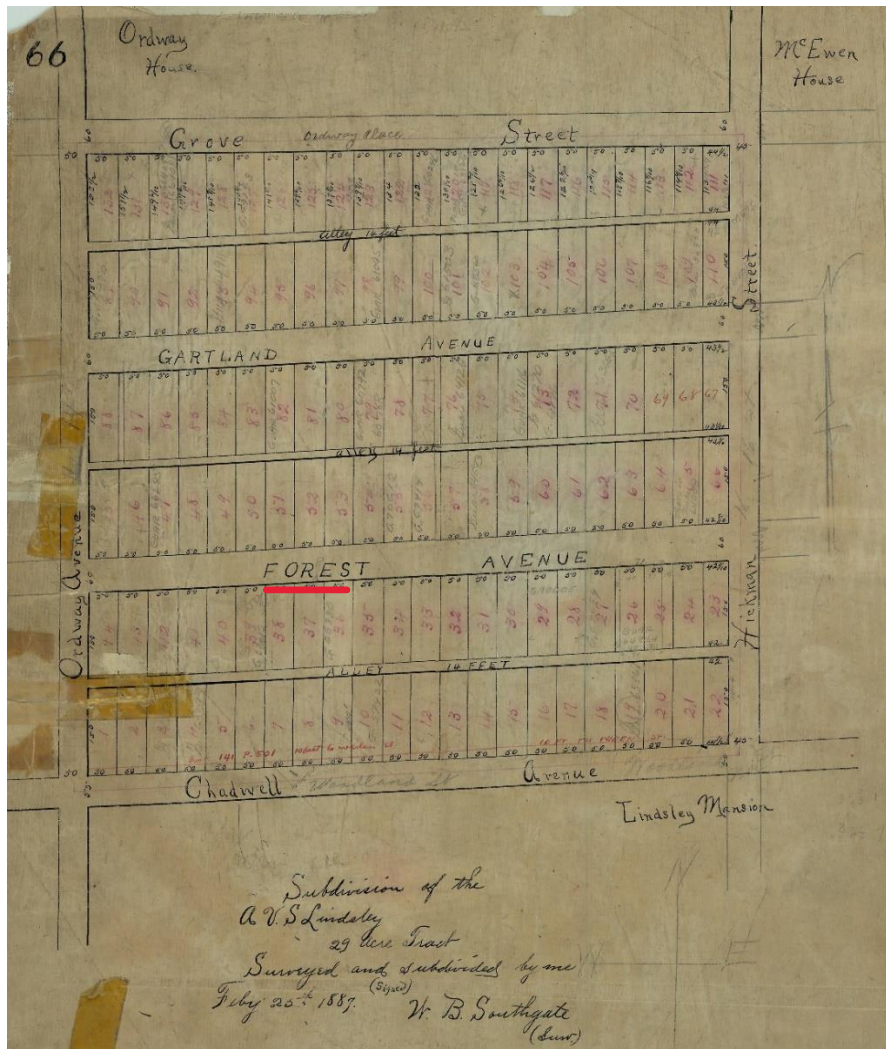


Figure 2: Subdivision of the A.V.S. Lindsley 29 Acre Tract, 1887. Source: Metropolitan Planning Department

¹ Davidson County, Tennessee, Plat Book 57, p. 66.

² Streets named Forrest/Forest existed in north Nashville and south Nashville as early as 1880, including today's 10th Avenue North in Buena Vista (short-lived as Forrest) and Elliott Avenue in Waverly Place (Forrest along with Germania, Crescent, and Kirkman renamed for continuity); the City of Nashville renamed these streets by 1908 (after it had annexed the first section of Forest/Forrest in east Nashville in 1901). "Chadwell" is likely an error or was short-lived; the street is called E. Lindsley in other early sources.

Undated notations, faintly written in pencil on the plat, have **added a second “R” to change Forest to “Forrest”** and have noted the name changes of other streets, names which remain in use to this day.³

The new A.V.S. Lindsley subdivision does not appear on the *Sanborn Fire Insurance Map* of 1888 or the *Atlas of Nashville* produced by G.M. Hopkins & Co. in 1889. In both cases, the area is located outside of the corporation limits and is not included in the mapped areas of property found just beyond the boundaries of the city. However, plate 19 of the *Atlas of Nashville* shows the nearby, and earlier, plat for East Edgefield Addition, Jan 1874, located southwest of the A.V.S. Lindsley subdivision.⁴ Streets on the East Edgefield Addition plat include Elm (Holly), Pine (12th Street), Linn (Russell), Walnut (then Hickory, now Lillian), and Magnolia (Boscobel), reflecting the popularity of tree-inspired street names and possibly inspired by the “fine view of the surrounding country” from the property’s sylvan setting near the street railroad terminus.⁵ While Ordway, Hickman, and Chadwell/E. Lindsley streets reflect the surnames of adjacent property owners, A.V.S. Lindsley’s Grove, Gartland, and Forest streets were clearly inspired by nature, possibly following the nomenclature set by the East Edgefield Addition.

Nashville city directories misspelled the name from its creation and may be the source of the original error. **Forrest** Avenue (in east Nashville) first appears in the “Street Directory” section of the Nashville City Directory beginning in **1888**. The first listing identifies the street as “Forrest, from Ordway av. east, next north of E. Lindsley av., district 18.”⁶

Forest Avenue expanded first to the east before closing the western gap between Main Street/Gallatin Pike and North 14th Street. The road’s second segment appears as **Forest** on the Map of W.R. Cornelius Jr. Subdivision, recorded on March 14, **1890** (Fig.3).⁷ Again, **undated hand-written notations in pencil have added the second “R” for Forrest**. Here, Forest runs between Hickman Street (North 16th Street) and the boundary of “‘Lockeland’ or Chadwell Home Place,” south of Gartland Avenue and north of E. Lindsley Avenue (Woodland Street). A

³ Notations indicating new street names, lot subdivisions, subsequent plats, etc., are common. Chadwell, Ordway, Grove, and Hickman streets renamed between 1891 and 1908.

⁴ Davidson County, Tennessee, Plat Book 21, p. 147. Recorded December 11, 1875, but drawn 1874 per surveyor’s note. *Atlas of Nashville* (1889), on file at Tennessee State Library and Archives: <https://teva.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p15138coll23/id/10302/rec/18>.

⁵ “Real Estate, East Edgefield Put Upon Market,” *Republican Banner*, 2 May 1874, p. 2. The City of Nashville annexed this area in 1889 and renamed most of the streets in 1891, likely to avoid duplication with pre-existing streets in the city.

⁶ With one exception, city directories consistently use the Forrest spelling for its street listing in the “Street Directory” section. However, the 1888 entry for Garland (spelled Gartland on the plat) states, “from Ordway av. east, next north of **Forest**, district 18.” The Garland entry appears the same in 1889, but by 1890, the entry consistently uses Forrest. *Nashville City Directory*, 1880-1909. Accessed through ancestry.com. Most volumes on file at Tennessee State Library and Archives.

⁷ Davidson County, Tennessee, Plat Book 57, p. 124. See also, Chancery Court, Minute Book 24, pp. 118-119, recorded May 22, 1890.

note on the plat states, "Owing to a mistake in having the wrong survey registered Hickman St. appears 50 ft wide while on the original survey it is only 45 which is correct. W.H. Lyle, sur. Corrected Dec. 21, 1891."

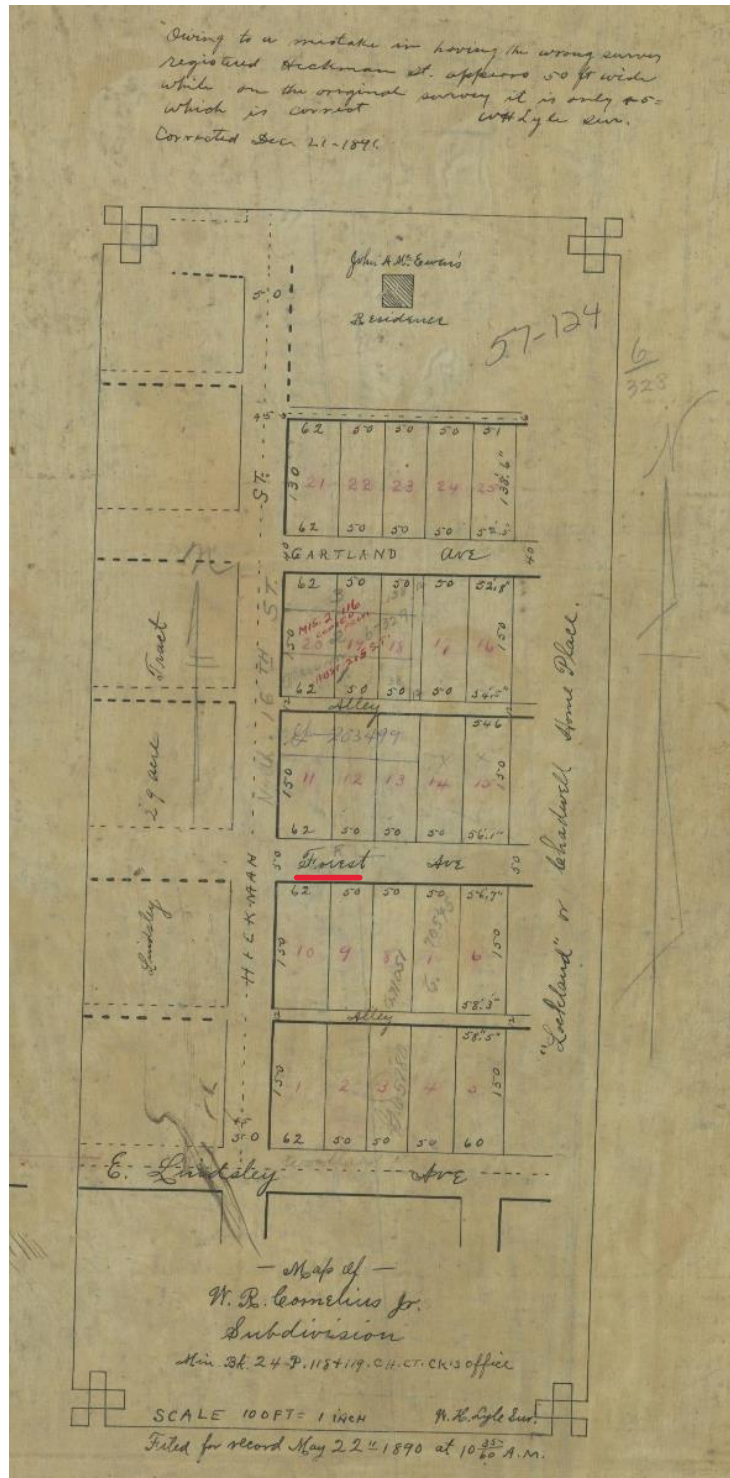


Figure 3: Map of W.R. Cornelius, Jr. Subdivision, 1890. Source: Metropolitan Planning Department.

Once again, the street's path continued eastward with the Plan of Chadwell Home Place, recorded on May 20, **1890** (Fig. 4).⁸ Faint pencil notations call this plat “Plan of ‘Lockeland’ a subdivision of the Chadwell Home Place.” On this plat, a street labeled “Woodard” aligns with the Forest Avenue drawn on the plat for the Cornelius subdivision (the plats meet about mid-block – the dividing line is located between today’s 1608 and 1610 Forrest Avenue) and **undated notations in pencil have changed the name Woodard to Forrest**. “Morrow Street” is located about a half-block north of Woodard. Light pencil notations **also changed the name of Morrow Street to Forrest Avenue**.⁹ Surveyor’s notes state, “The above is a correct Plan of Chadwell Home Place as the same has been subdivided into Building and Residence Lots, March 31st 1890.” At the time of recording, the Cornelius and Chadwell plats were located outside of the corporation limits. Nearby streets include Evander, Jones (North 17th Street), Allen (North 18th Street), Plum (Woodland Street), and Chadwell (Holly Street)

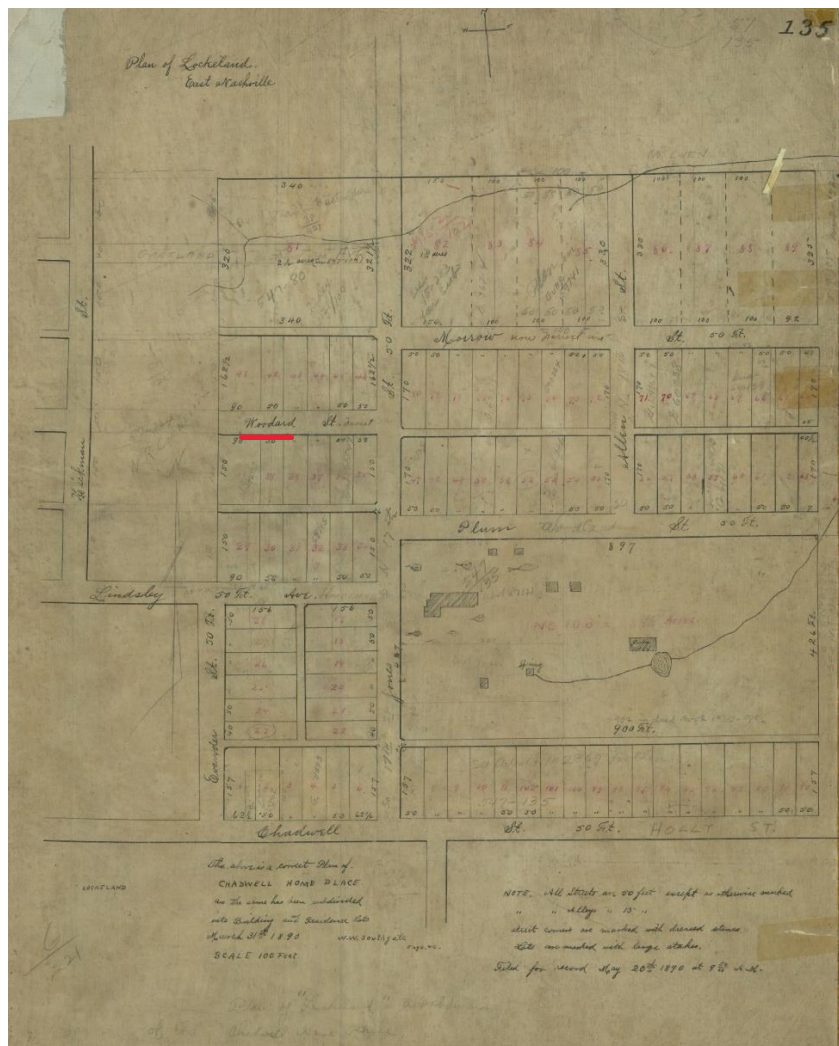


Figure 4: Plan of Chadwell Home Place, 1890. Source: Metropolitan Planning Department.

⁸ Davidson County, Tennessee, Plat Book 57, p. 135

⁹ Woodard Street renamed by 1901. Morrow Street renamed in 1907.

The entry for Forrest Avenue in the 1891 City Directory reflects the expansion of the road through the new plats, the first change since the original 1888 entry: “Forrest, from Ordway av. east to Chadwell place, next north of Locksland [sic] av., district 18.”

Forrest Avenue – the later plats:

The western segment of **Forrest** Avenue, from Gallatin Pike crossing Allison Avenue (North 12th Street) to Ordway Avenue (North 14th Street), between Gartland Avenue and “Lindsley Pike or Lockeland Avenue,” appears on the Partial Plan of the Property of the East Addition Real Estate Company, recorded April 1, **1892** (Fig. 5).¹⁰ This appears to be the first use of the “Forrest” spelling for this road on a recorded plat.

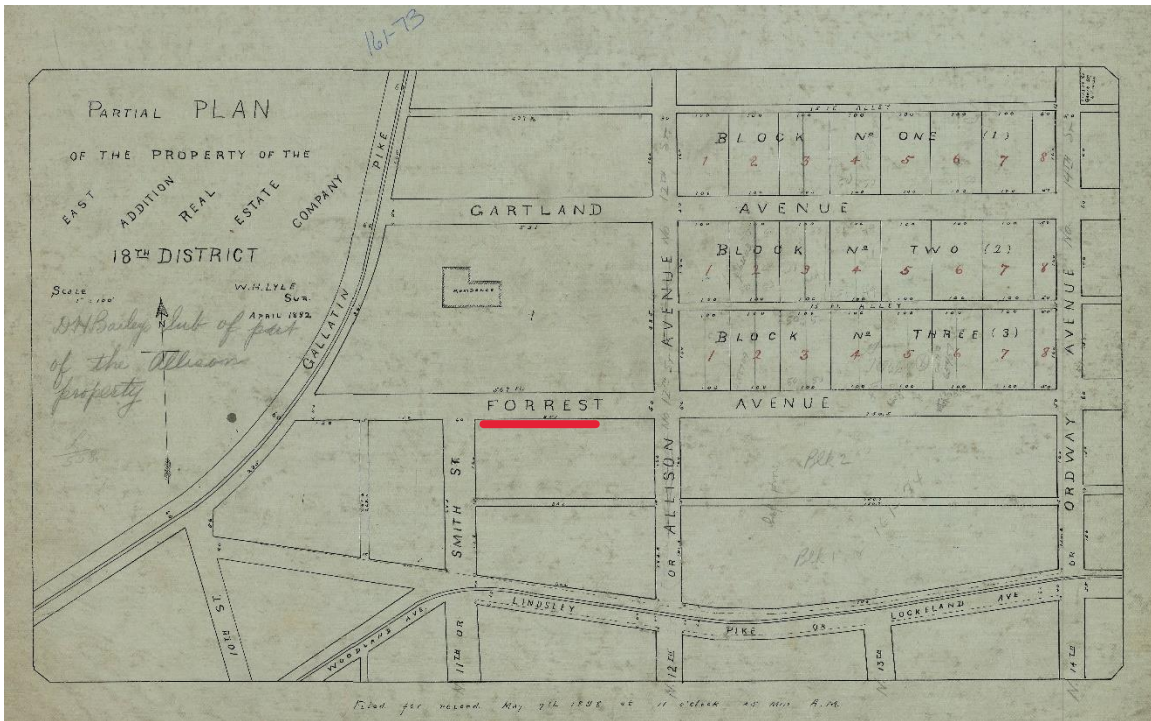


Figure 5: Partial Plan of the Property of the East Addition Real Estate Company, 1892. Source: Metropolitan Planning Department.

The Andrew Allison Addition, recorded January 7, 1899, subdivided property south of Forrest Avenue between “12th or Allison Street” and Ordway Avenue (North 14th Street) (Fig. 6).¹¹ Again, the property was located outside of the corporation limits. From this point on, plats subdividing property between Gallatin Pike and North 12th Street use the Forrest spelling.

¹⁰ Davidson County, Tennessee, Plat Book 161, p. 73. Recorded April 1, 1892, per the online portal of the Register’s Office. Notes on the plat state, “Filed for record May 7th 1898.”

¹¹ These two plats show the evolution of names for today’s Woodland Street. Davidson County, Tennessee, Plat Book 161, p. 74.

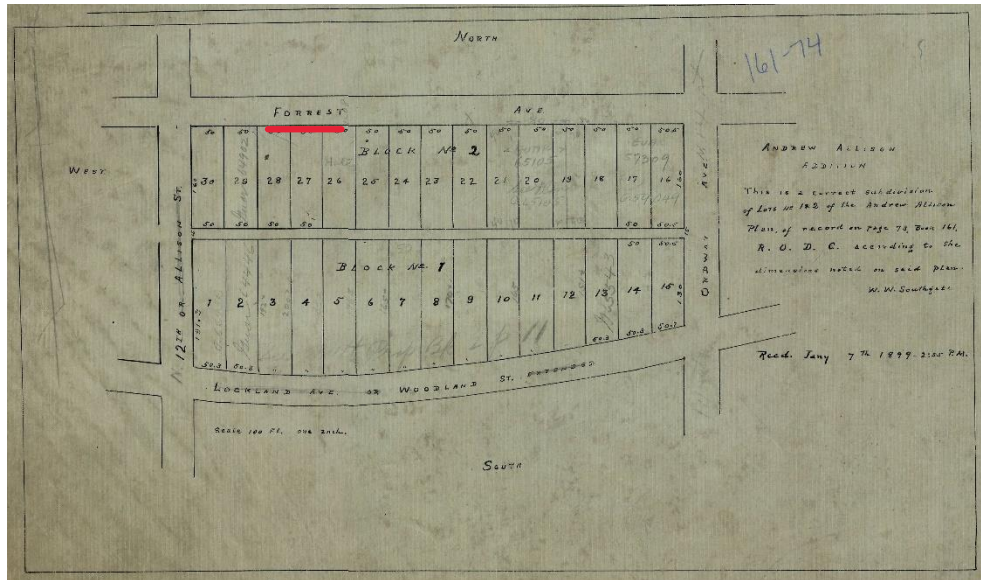


Figure 6: Andrew Allison Addition, 1899. Source: Metropolitan Planning Department.

City directory entries for Forrest Avenue remained unchanged from 1891 until 1896, which is when the entry reflects the addition of the western segment: “Forrest, from Gallatin Pike east to Jones, next north of Lockeland av., district 18.”¹² At some point during this time, the short segment of Woodard platted by the Chadwell Home Place was renamed, officially or unofficially, to Forest or Forrest.¹³

In 1901, the City of Nashville annexed a small area that included Forrest (or Forest) Avenue, from Gallatin Turnpike to North 14th Street. A map from 1903, which shows annexations up to this point, labeled the road “Forest” (Fig. 7).¹⁴ However, when the *Nashville Banner* published a copy of House Bill No.745, “An Act extending the corporate limits of the city of Nashville,” the legislation uses the spelling “Forrest” when describing the boundaries of the annexed area (Fig. 8).¹⁵

¹² The one exception to the consistent use of Forrest in the Nashville City Directory’s Street Directory occurs in 1895. Here the entry is spelled Forest. However, it is noteworthy that the 1894 Directory’s listings of individuals with the last name Forrest are also spelled Forest in 1895 directory.

¹³ City directories contain entries for Woodard in the Street Directory from 1891 to 1900, after which it no longer appears. From 1891-1895, its location is noted simply as “Chadwell Place Plan, district 18.” In 1896, the entry changes to “from Jones east next south of Morrow, district 18,” which appears to be the location of Plum Street (renamed Woodland Street in 1907).

¹⁴ *Map of Nashville, Tennessee, 1903*. Compiled by R.B.C. Howell, Office of Real Estate Agt., N.C. & St L. Ry.

¹⁵ “House Bill No. 745,” *Nashville Banner*, April 22, 1901. Newspapers.com, accessed June 19, 2020. Legislation approved by Governor Benton McMullin on April 2, 1901. The remaining area was annexed in 1906 (1905 legislation took effect September 1, 1906).



Figure 7: Map of Nashville, Tennessee, 1903. Source: Metropolitan Planning Department.

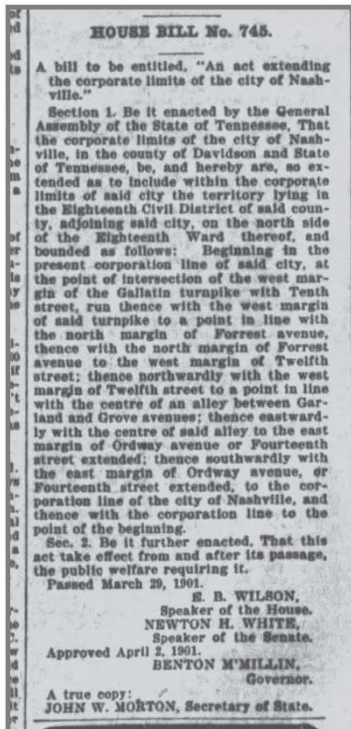


Figure 8: "House Bill No. 745," Nashville Banner, 1901.

The 1908 *Digest of Ordinances* includes a listing of the "Names of Streets" based on a digest of Section 610 of Price & McConnico's *Digest of the Laws of Nashville* (1901) as amended by ordinances approved from December 23, 1901 to February 14, 1907. Here, **Forest** runs "From

Main Street east to Seventeenth Street, next south of Gartland Avenue, wards 18 and 23.”¹⁶ The digest also includes an ordinance from January 25, 1907, to widen Forest Avenue from 14th Street to 16th Street so that it will conform to the 50ft width of Forest Avenue from Gallatin Pike to 14th Street.¹⁷ Both spellings are found in the *Digest*. Laws pertaining to the actual street tend to use the spelling Forest, while Forrest is used when the street is noted as a boundary (annexation, livestock run boundaries).

Forrest Avenue – Naming Ordinances:

On May 24, 1907, Mayor T.O. Morris approved the renaming of Morrow Street to **Forrest** Avenue as passed by Ordinance No. 0323 on May 23, 1907.¹⁸ In reporting on the activities of the Council, the *Nashville Banner* and the *Nashville American* each use Forrest and Forest in different articles published on different dates from April 12 (after the bill’s introduction) to May 24, 1907. Once again, Forrest Avenue expanded when Morrow Street was renamed **Forrest** from 17th Street to the “st limit” (corporation line) by Ordinance No. 063 on May 14, 1908.¹⁹ Mayor James S. Brown approved the bill on May 16, 1908.

The 1908 Map of the City of Nashville, Davidson County, Tennessee, Published by the G.M. Hopkins, Co. of Philadelphia, identifies the street as **Forest** on the Index Map and shows the full length of the street, prior to the Morrow renaming, on Plate 17 (Fig. 9).



Figure 9: Map of the City of Nashville, Davidson County, Tennessee, 1908. Source: MHC.

¹⁶ *Digest of the Ordinances of the City of Nashville (1908)*, Compiled by Hill McAlister and Edward J. Smith, Brandon Printing Company, Nashville, 1908. Accessed June 25, 2020. https://books.google.com/books?id=mIZCAQAAMAAJ&pg=PA1&lpg=PA1&dq=1908+digests+of+ordinances+nashville&source=bl&ots=VNGbApTJVD&sig=ACfU3U1PlzhshDSOIbZmvAftWHwlgJr_1w&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwj6sajhqXqAhWGVN8KHQKUBdUQ6AEwAnoECagQAQ#v=onepage&q=forrest&f=false. See pages 326 and 343. This author also reviewed Annual Reports of Departments of the City of Nashville from 1900 to 1909 and found both spellings used seemingly interchangeably.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ Minute Book 12, p. 116.

¹⁹ Minute Book 12, p. 244. The rationale for this second renaming ordinance is unknown.

This 1908 map could be Forest’s last appearance. From this point on, most maps appear to consistently spell the street name as **Forrest**. The full length of Forrest Avenue appears on the 1913 *New Map of Nashville* and other maps that follow (Fig. 10).²⁰



Figure 10: *New Map of Nashville, 1913*. Source: Metropolitan Planning Department.

Summary:

According to the first plats, recorded in 1887 and 1890, the original spelling for the street was Forest. Over the next few years, the spelling changed to Forrest. The historical record does not clearly state the rationale for this change; therefore, Historical Commission staff cannot determine whether it was an error that was adopted over time or whether it was intentional and for what reason. While the renaming of Morrow Street to Forrest Avenue in 1907 was likely approved to provide one name for one continuous road, even this intention is not readily clear.

²⁰ *New Map of Nashville, Tennessee, 1913*, Published by Marshall & Bruce, Co. Metropolitan Planning Department.