Basic Sources for Information about Nashville History: A Selected Bibliography
Compiled by Carole Bucy

1. Pre-arrival of Europeans:
Crutchfield, James A. *Early Times in the Cumberland Valley, From its Beginnings to 1800.* Nashville: Williams Press, 1977. (TN Dept. of Archaeology Reports are excellent sources about specific pre-historic sites in Davidson County. In a few cases, we have some earlier reports from the Smithsonian and UT Archaeologists.)


1. 1763-1860:


2. Civil War: (Certainly there are numerous other books, but these provide an overview.)


Hurst, Jack. *Men of Fire, Grant, Forrest & the Campaign that Decided the War.*

Ash, Stephen V. *Middle Tennessee Society Transformed, 1860-1870.*

3. 1865-1900:


4. 1900-1945:


5. 1945-1980:


Wills, Ridley II. *Lest We Forget: Nashville’s Lost Businesses and Their Stories*. Franklin: Plumbline Media, 2013.

General Histories:


Vol. 2 – Hillsboro Pike  
Vol. 3 – Harding Pike  
Vol. 4 – Charlotte, Clifton, & Hydes Ferry Pikes  
Vol. 5 – Buena Vista, Whites Creek, Brick Church, & Dickerson Pikes
There are also several older histories that you may want to consider including:

**Clayton, W. W.** *History of Davidson County, Tennessee with Illustrations and Biographical Sketches....* Philadelphia, 1880 and then reproduced by Charles Elder - Bookseller in 1971. This book covers the history of the county from 1780 to 1880. It was not originally indexed, but in 1973 Sarah McMahon Whitfield and June Cox Williams compiled a comprehensive index which is very useful. This book has over 10,000 names, but many of them are in the form of lists.

**Crew, H. W.** *The History of Nashville Tenn., With Full Outline....* Nashville: Publishing House of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, 1890. (Some refer to this history as the "Woolridge History" since J. Woolridge was the editor.) This book has several topical chapters in addition to a chronological narrative. It begins with the Mound Builders and ends more or less with the Civil War. It does have a group of biographical sketches at the end which include a variety of 19th and early 20th-century men. It has an excellent Table of Contents but no index.

**Goodspeed Publishing Company of Nashville and Chicago.** *A History of Tennessee from the Earliest Times to the Present, Together with an Historical and a Biographical Sketch of [county names go here],* The Goodspeed Publishing Co., Nashville TN, 1886-1887. Includes the histories of 82 counties, but the histories of Davidson County and twelve rural counties were never published. Can be accessed online through the TNGenWeb Project at [http://www.tngenweb.org/records/goodspeed.html](http://www.tngenweb.org/records/goodspeed.html).

Note: There are numerous institutional histories of churches, colleges, and businesses.

The History Press/Arcadia Publishing has also published numerous photographic books about specific Nashville topics.

**Other Sources:**

- Vertical files, Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, city directories and digitized *Nashville Banner archives* (Nashville Room, Main Branch of Nashville Public Library)

- **Metro Archives**, 3rd floor of the Main Branch of Nashville Public Library

- **TN State Library & Archives (TSLA) Vertical Files**

- **TSLA Pro-Quest service**: Indexed Nashville newspaper articles up to 1920. A member of the TSLA staff will show you how to use this program. This is an excellent way to find obituaries for people who died before 1920.

- **Tennessee Historical Quarterly**: numerous Nashville articles

- **Louise Davis, Hugh Walker, and George Zepp** writings about various aspects of Nashville history. These 3 long-time reporters for *The Tennessean* did excellent research. They are delightful to read.

- **Equal Justice Initiative “Legacy of Lynching”**: [https://eji.org/racial-justice/legacy-lynching](https://eji.org/racial-justice/legacy-lynching)

- **We Remember Nashville**: [https://www.weremembernashville.org/](https://www.weremembernashville.org/)

- **Civil Rights Room, Nashville Public Library**: [https://library.nashville.org/research/collection/civil-rights-room](https://library.nashville.org/research/collection/civil-rights-room)