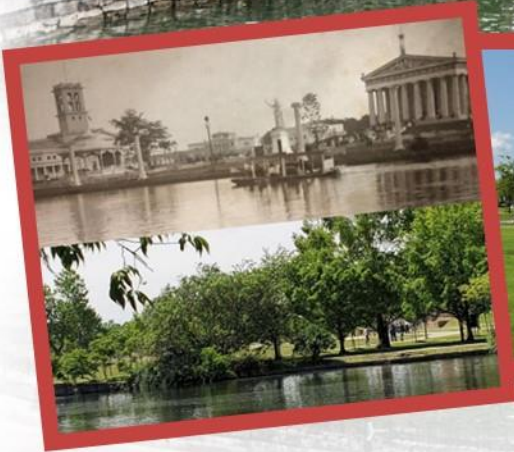




THE  
PARTHENON

# NASHVILLE PARTHENON EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES



## Centennial Park History Tour: 1897 Exposition

## **Centennial Park History Tour: 1897 Exposition**

**Mission:** To educate the public concerning the Parthenon in Nashville, Tennessee and the civilization that built and maintained it from 1897 to the present. To exhibit, collect, and care for objects and information related to the Tennessee Centennial Exposition and the building of the Nashville Parthenon. To exhibit, collect, and care for visual art and artifacts from the Exposition and to educate the public concerning its various forms.

**Program Title:** Centennial Park History Tour: 1897 Exposition

**Target Audience:** All ages

**Exhibit/Gallery:** Centennial Park

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**Activity Time:** Approximately 15 minutes

**Implementation Date:** Spring 2022

**Staff/Docents Needed:** 1

**Overview:** During this program, visitors will take on an outdoor tour of Centennial Park while viewing transparencies and images of Exposition artifacts to create a visually stimulating immersive experience of the Centennial Exposition. Offering hands-on experiences with photos and scenes from the Exposition will enable visitors to understand what it was like to attend in 1897 by viewing how the Exposition looked from that exact point.

**Big Idea:** Although time has left the Centennial Exposition behind, visual clues and artifacts remain as evidence enabling us to discover exactly what Centennial Park looked like during the Exposition.

### **Goals:**

- Visitors will acquire information about the Centennial Exposition and the Nashville Parthenon.
- Visitors will gain an awareness of Centennial Park.

### **Objectives:**

- Visitors will view Centennial Park in its 19<sup>th</sup> century context.
- Visitors will see what the spaces surrounding the Parthenon looked like.
- Visitors will experience being present at the 1897 Exposition through a sensory experience with artifacts and photos.

### **Family Learning Behaviors:**

L. Family member facilitates problem-solving to mastery

*Example: Family members work together to find the correct angle of the transparency*

P. Family members contribute information or ask a question during the program.

*Example: "Where did all of the buildings go? "Why wasn't the Parthenon taken down too?"*

T. Member announces achievement to another member.

*Example: I did it! It matches up!*

### **Education Standards:**

Grades 9-12 SOCIAL STUDIES PRACTICE (Tennessee)

Tennessee in the New South (1880-1890s): Students will identify the changes in Tennessee post-Reconstruction.

- TN. 43 Describe Tennessee's Centennial Exposition, and explain its significance.

### **Background information:**

#### The Centennial Exposition

- What is the Centennial Exposition?
  - The Centennial Exposition was a celebration of 100 years of Tennessee statehood. The Exposition was comprised of over one hundred buildings which recognized and honored the successes of the state of Tennessee. The Parthenon was in the center of the Exposition, serving as a cultural emblem for Nashville, known then as the "Athens of the South".
  - When the temporary buildings of the Exposition were demolished and moved to other festivals, such as the Trans-Mississippi and International Exposition, the Parthenon stood standing as a favorite from the Exposition, decomposing until it was rebuilt in 1931 with permanent materials.
  - The admission price for children was .25 cents, equivalent to about eight dollars today while the admission price for adults was .50 cents, equal to about sixteen dollars today. Each ride and attraction at the Vanity fair cost .10 cents, or about three dollars today. 1.8 million people attended the Exposition
- The Buildings
  - The buildings of the Exposition were built with temporary materials, such as plaster, wood, and brick. Some of the buildings were sold for parts after the Exposition, while others were used in other fairs and festivals.
  - On October 8<sup>th</sup>, 1895, the first cornerstone of the Nashville Parthenon was laid, and the Exposition lasted from May 1, 1897 until October 31, 1897.
  - There were over one hundred buildings used in the Exposition, and they offered entertainment and learning opportunities for visitors who came to the Exposition. The Agriculture Building exhibited products of the field, including a magnificent electrical display showing full power of electrical decoration. The large Auditorium was the gathering place for festivals, congresses, and meetings. The Centennial Clubhouse offered a cool respite for hungry and important guests, while the Children's Building provided entertainment to young children at the Exposition. The Commerce Building was the biggest, and it housed exhibits relating to the Liberal Arts and duty free goods from other countries. The Education and Hygiene Building was shared with the Department of Hygiene and the Department of Education, and was referred to as "one of the most unique, attractive, and instructive exhibits ever placed before the American public
  - Located in the western corner of the park, Vanity Fair was an area dedicated to amusement. The elaborate list of attractions is said to have exceeded all other

fairs and expositions, and included a Giant Seesaw, a Chinese Village and Beauty Show, a Japanese Village, Edison's Mirage, the Palace of Illusions, Mystic Maze. Streets of Cairo, Ostrich Farm, Moorish Palace, and countless other entertaining and beautiful attractions.

### **How does this program tie to your gallery content and museum?**

This program allows visitors to view and comprehend the Exposition through the lens of original photographs, and gain an understanding of the Parthenon's role in the Exposition as a whole. This program introduces viewers to the Parthenon as it related to the other buildings that were made for the Centennial exposition. Interacting with the history of the Exposition through effective visual aids brings to life what it was actually like.

**Ideas for Initiating Interaction:** This program will take place around the park, but the program will meet in the lobby of the museum to start. Times will be made available through announcements around the museum and social media pages.

### **Props:**

- At least one copy of each of the four transparencies, labeled and numbered
- Eight laminated copies of the map/tickets
- A map of the park that designates the location of each transparency (Facilitator use only)
- Program bag
- Microphone

### **Advance Preparation:**

- Gather all available transparencies for the group.
- Gather laminated copies of the map/tickets.
- Bring program script and map which designates the locations of the transparencies.
- Collect group inside the lobby of the museum and bring them outside.

**Gathering:** "Hello, everyone! My name is \_\_\_ and I have some really cool images to show you exactly what this park looked like during the Centennial Exhibition of 1897."

### **Program Script:**

Hello! My name is \_\_\_\_\_. Today, right here in Centennial Park, we will discover the 1897 Tennessee Centennial Exposition. Has anyone been to a state or county fair before? (**Model raising hand.**) Back in 1897, the state of Tennessee organized a state fair on an international scale- similar to the World's Fair in Chicago and other cities. Imagine if people came from all over the world to visit our state fair today—that's a big deal! While we are here looking back 125 years after the Exposition, this tour will help us gain a sense of what the park looked like during the Exposition by looking through transparent photos to see how it originally stood. We'll also study real artifacts that people used and purchased here at the Exposition.

To start, let's talk a little bit about the Centennial Exposition. Tennessee wanted to celebrate its 100<sup>th</sup> year as a state while establishing itself as a leader in the economic and educational revival of the South following Reconstruction and the economic depression of the 1890s. The Exposition was geared to preserve the history of Tennessee and the "Old South" but also to establish itself as a thriving, modern hub for ingenuity and progress. You all came here today to see the

Parthenon, which is only one of the 100-something rides, structures, and buildings that made up the Exposition. This park was thirty acres—or roughly 30 football fields-- larger than it is now. It was called Centennial City. The Parthenon was built as Nashville's emblem in the center of Centennial City, and the city of Memphis designed and built a life-sized pyramid which was right there. **(Motion towards Northeast)**. We will talk more about that later!

**(Pass out a copy of the laminated tickets/map to each of the guests. If there are not enough copies for each individual guest to have their own, make sure each individual group has their own.)**

Here is a map of the Centennial Exposition. Continue to reference this map throughout the experience!

During this tour, remember that music was a highly important aspect of the Exposition, and it was said to be wafting through the air in all areas of the park throughout the day and night. The planners wanted music to be a highlight as one of the most attractive features of the Exposition. It states in a document from 1897 "The most talented organizations in the country have been engaged...[from] organ recitals...[to] a series of concerts...[The] morning, afternoon, and evening air will be filled with melody" (Tennessee Centennial booklet, page 9). Throughout this tour, try to imagine yourself surrounded by different melodies from all around in a truly fantastical setting.

There were four lakes in Centennial City. Lake Watauga, which is still here **(motion towards East)**, which was built using water sourced from Cockrill Spring, the drinking water supply.

Lake Sevier, which is further east, past Lake Watauga **(motion towards East)**, and Lake Katherine **(motion towards South)**, which would be seen immediately before entering the park. A bridge spanning across the lake was said by spectators to be so beautiful and breathtaking that it must have been created rather than man made. Lily Lake **(motion towards North)** was located in the sunken garden in front of the Transportation building.

Please turn over your map now to view the tickets and season passes on the other side.

**(Hold up a laminated copy of the tickets.)**

Upon Entering the Exposition **(motion towards the entrance of the Exposition)**, one would provide proof of ticket and identification. These are real examples of season passes, one male and one female, which would be verified upon entry. The male's season pass shows a permit to sleep on the grounds of the Vanity Fair. Hold onto these passes for the duration of the tour, and try to imagine you are the ticket holder attending this Exposition. While we walk through the park, hold onto your map and tickets! I will collect them at the end!

**(Walk guests to the location of Transparency One.)**

Using transparencies, we are going to see Centennial Park and the Centennial Exposition as it looked in 1897. The first thing we are going to see is the original Athena statue that stood outside the Parthenon.

By looking through this transparency, we can match up the current surroundings with the photo, and see exactly what this space looked like with the original Parthenon and Athena statue.

**(Demonstrate by holding up Transparency #1 looking through it. Ask guests to pass around the transparency and take turns looking through it. While guests look through the transparency, continue to narrate about the Pallas Athena.)**

In this transparency we can see the Parthenon and an Athena statue in front of it. The Board of Directors in charge of the Exposition chose West End Park to be the location and Eugene Caster Lewis, the event director proposed that the centerpiece be an exact replica of the Parthenon in Greece. The Parthenon would be used to exhibit the Fine Arts from the best artists and schools in the country, with 1,175 works of art on display to be arranged salon-style and covering the walls of the once vacant interior. The Parthenon, like the rest of the buildings in the Exposition, was built to be temporary, and was made of plaster, wood, and brick. It sat deteriorating until 1921, when the plaster exterior was replaced with concrete aggregate and the inside became a replica of the Parthenon interior.

During the Exposition, there was an Athena that went along with the Parthenon, but it was not the same Athena that is here today. A large white Athena statue stood at the east end of the Parthenon building, and it was based on the Pallas Athena statue in front of the Louvre, a 1<sup>st</sup> Century Roman copy of a previous Greek statue of Athena from the 5<sup>th</sup> century BCE. It stood in the middle of this large grassy patch.

The statue was sculpted by Enid Yandell, and it was the largest statue ever made by a woman at the time. It was 40 feet in height, so it was about two feet shorter than the Athena statue that is currently in the Parthenon.

The building you can see behind the Parthenon, the Foreign Annex of Commerce, was about five times the size. It exhibited products of the Liberal Arts and exhibits of Nashville local businesses. Congress allowed duty-free goods from foreign countries and invited foreign governments to participate through the Department of State, so the foreign section of the exhibit showed products from countries all over the world. This allowed them to be viewed and learned about by a wide population of Tennesseans. A second story gallery overlooked interior aisles and a nave where things were displayed.

**(Collect Transparency #1. Lead guests to the location of Transparency #2, demonstrate Transparency #2 and pass out Transparency #2.)**

In this transparency, we can see the Auditorium and Gourd Entrance, with a view of many spectators who were here enjoying the Exposition. The Auditorium was used for all festivals, congresses, and meetings. There was a 6,000 person seating capacity. It was built in the Colonial design, with an ionic order. There was a square tower with a view of the countryside and exposition. There were four airy porticos on the North, South, East and West of the auditorium, and chimes in the tower.

The walkway you see leading out from the entrance of the auditorium was the Gourd Arbor, which created a long avenue from the Auditorium's central entrance to the west walkways of

Centennial city. The arbor was comprised of an airy framework with vines, southern gourds, and colorful flowers. A romantic, sweet place for the "knightly gallant" and "queen of coquetry". The Gourd Arbor offered ample shade and peaceful and poetic surroundings in the center of the crowded Exposition. The building to the left is the Minerals and Forestry building.

**(Collect Transparency #2. Lead guests to the location of Transparency #3, demonstrate Transparency #3 and hand out Transparency #3.)**

In this transparency we can see a view of the Parthenon taken from the perspective of the bridge that spanned across Lake Watauga. Behind the Parthenon is the Building of Commerce, which showed exhibits from businesses in Tennessee, greater America, and other countries. The building second from the right of the Parthenon is the Education and Hygiene Building. This building was shared by the Department of Hygiene and the Department of Education and was referred to as "one of the most unique, attractive, and instructive exhibits ever placed before the American public". In the Education space, almost every Tennessee educational institute was exhibited, and the Hygiene department taught the public about health and various advances in the medical field.

In the middle of the Commerce and Education & Hygiene buildings you can see a large crane like shape, and that was the Giant See-saw. The Giant See-saw was the location of the Vanity Fair, located in the western corner of the park, beyond the Commerce and Transportation buildings. The central street or road in the Vanity Fair was a three hundred foot wide, 1/4 mile long avenue around the base of a hill. There was a great Casino on top of the hill- which is now a dog park.

The list of elaborate extractions is said to have surpassed that of any other contemporary exhibition or fair. There was a Giant See-Saw, a Moorish palace, a Palace of Illusions, a Shoot the Chute (large slide), a Mystic Maze, animal shows, and dozens more attractions.

Looking at your tickets, you can see stubs for various attractions at the Vanity Fair used by Exposition attendees.

Attending the Fair would bring many first-time experiences to Tennesseans, who were exposed to villages representing various cultures, and new perspectives and heights brought on by the high elevations of the rides. Most of the rides and attractions cost visitors an additional 10 cents. The Gettysburg Cyclorama was a massive cylindrical painting representing the Battle of Gettysburg with a 360 degree view that allowed viewers to stand in the middle of the painting and view all sides of it. This was one of four editions of the Cyclorama painting and one of these is still on view at the Battle of Gettysburg National Military Park in Pennsylvania. This was a very interesting attraction to people who visited the Exposition, especially Civil War veterans.

There were many new technologies at the Vanity Fair, including "Edison's Mirage", which was a type of movie theatre/cinema that paid homage to Edison for introducing Nashville to motion pictures. There was a reproduction of the Alhambra, and other eastern sites, which exposed Nashville to representations of cultures they had never observed before.

To the right of the Education and Hygiene Building is a scaled down model of the Pyramid of Kheops (**KEY-ops**), and served as the contribution and exhibition of Memphis during the

Exposition. This pyramid looked real, and it was much taller than the Parthenon as it stood then and now.

**(Collect Transparency #3. Lead Guests to the Location of Transparency 4.)**

In this image we can see the Band Stand, an airy structure that held musicians and composers throughout the days and nights. Music would have been wafting through the area we are standing in now to all of the surrounding buildings. The flagpole in this image anchored the Exposition with a strong sense of Nationality and Nashville's appreciation to be a thriving entity of the newly United States.

The building behind the flagpole with a lower and upper balcony is the Clubhouse, a building that provided an excellent viewing points for the grounds of the Exposition as well as indoor and shaded outdoor areas for attendees to relax and eat at the clubhouse café. Many famous attendees were hosted in the clubhouse, including President McKinley- our 25<sup>th</sup> President- and his cabinet. The white building to the right of the flagpole is the Building of Commerce, the largest building in the Exposition, which we have discussed. To the right of that we can see the Parthenon and Pallas Athena statue as they originally stood.

**(Collect Transparency 4. Lead Guests to the entrance of the Museum. Collect tickets/maps from Guests.)**

I'll collect all the laminated pages of tickets and maps back from you, and lead you back to the museum where we started. Let me know if you have any questions about the Exposition, Centennial Park, or the Parthenon along the way!

**Conclusion:**

- Thanks for joining me today! I hope you enjoyed seeing images of the Centennial Exposition and it helped you better picture what this park looked like in 1897. I'll be here for about 10 minutes if you have more questions while you explore around the Parthenon and the park.
- Thanks for coming on a tour of the Centennial Exhibition! I hope you enjoyed exploring the stories and history of the Centennial Exhibition. After seeing these kinds of images, I was never able to view the space the same way! Enjoy your visit!

**Adaptation suggestions for different audiences:**

One Family/Small program size

- Help each individual guest find the precise locations for the transparencies if they cannot do so on their own.

For younger/preschool audiences

- Show young visitors exactly where to stand and hold the transparency so they can understand the images.
- Choose only two or three transparencies to show.

Larger groups (who may wish to participate but have limited time or space)

- Ask visitors to share tickets amongst themselves if there aren't enough for every sub-group to have their own. Facilitate sharing between groups.
- Choose to show only two or three of the transparencies.

Adults only

- Allow adults to find the correct location and angle for the transparencies on their own.



**Following Up:**

- Self-assessment: What went well? What is one thing that didn't go well? What is one thing you will try next time? What did people enjoy most?
- Collect and count the map and tickets and transparencies while checking for damage.
- Record number of visitors on the program clipboard. Return all materials and transparencies to the cart; report any items that need repair or replacement.

**Resources:**

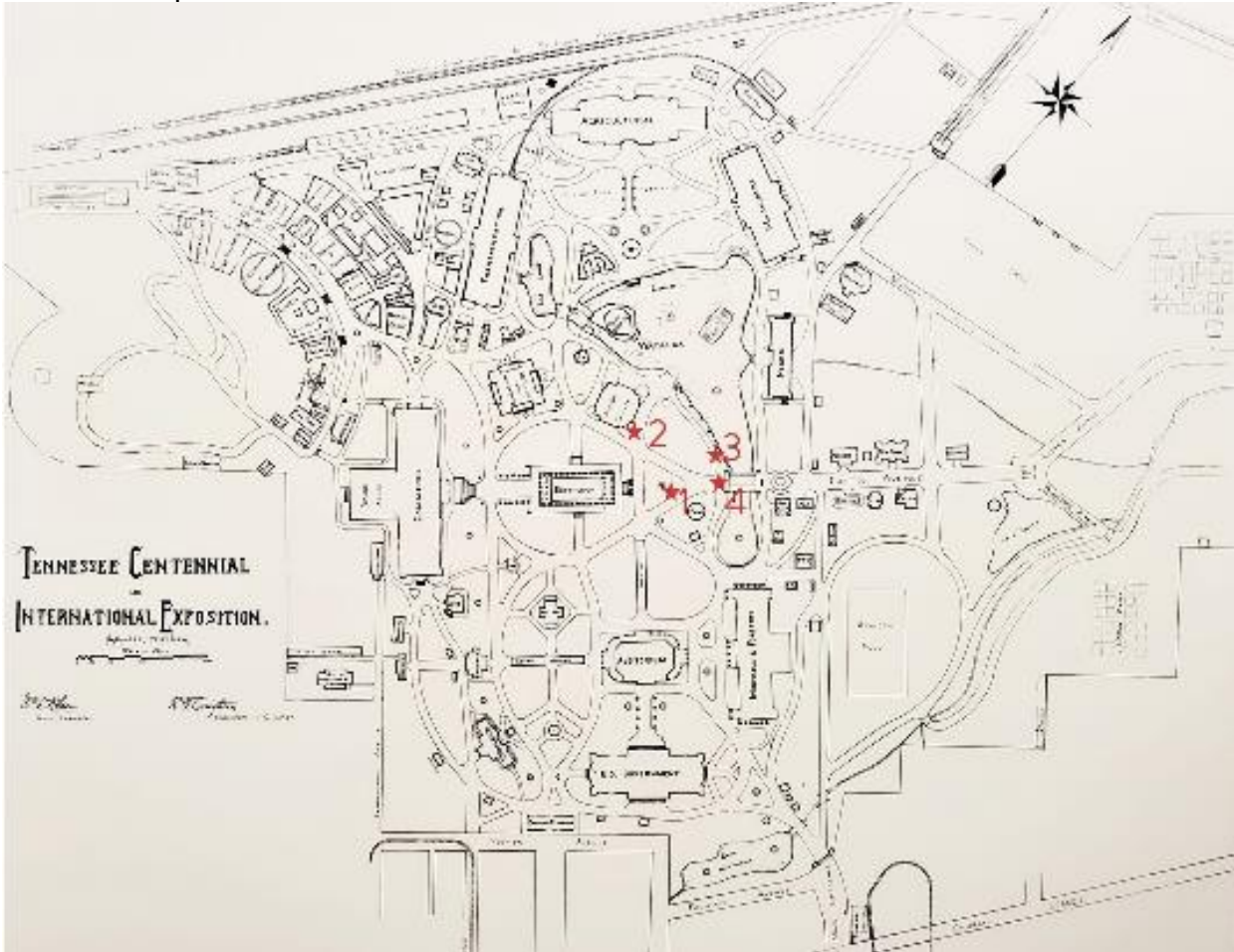
- "Tennessee Social Studies Standards." Tennessee Department of Education. Summer 2018. P. 185.
- Rob Simbeck. "How They Celebrated Tennessee's First 100 Years". The Tennessee Conservationist. October/November 1996.
- Nashville Parthenon. "The Docent Guide and Training Manual". Fall 2021.
- "Tennessee Centennial Exposition." Tennessee Virtual Archive. 2021.  
<https://teva.contentdm.oclc.org/customizations/global/pages/collections/centennial/centennial.html>
- <https://archive.org/details/tennesseecentenn00nash/page/n4/mode/1up?view=theater>

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## Appendix A: Images

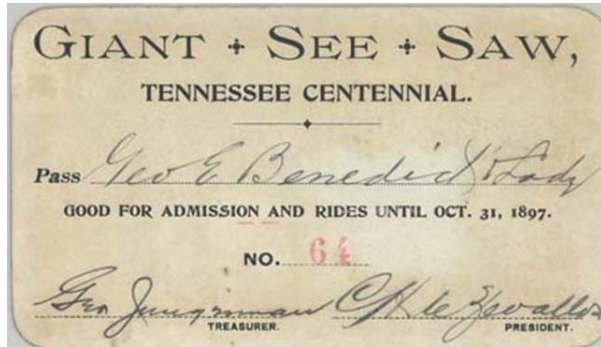
Facilitator Map



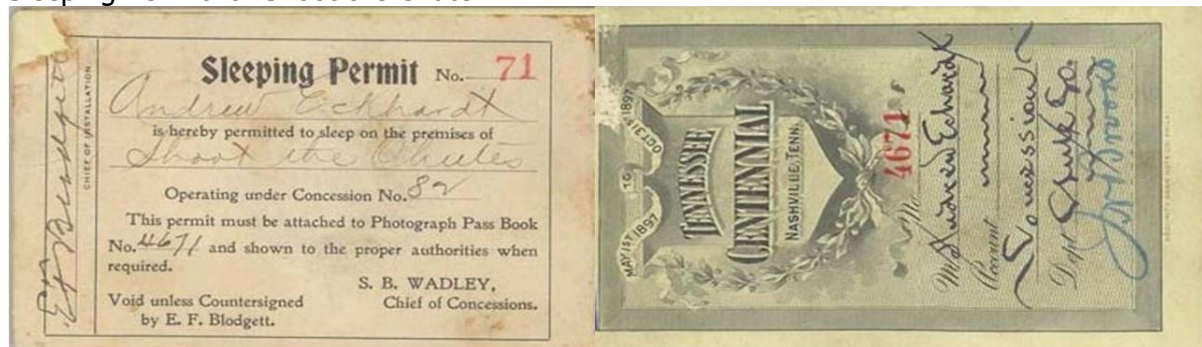
Exposition Map



Giant See Saw Ride Ticket



Sleeping Permit for Shoot the Chute



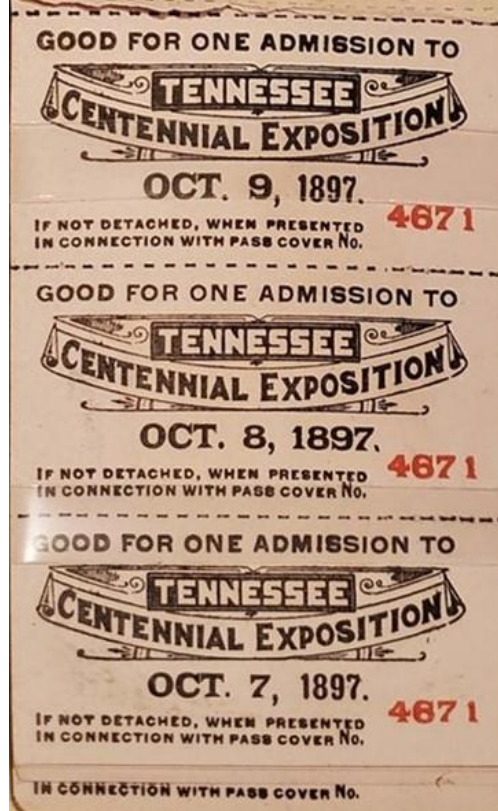
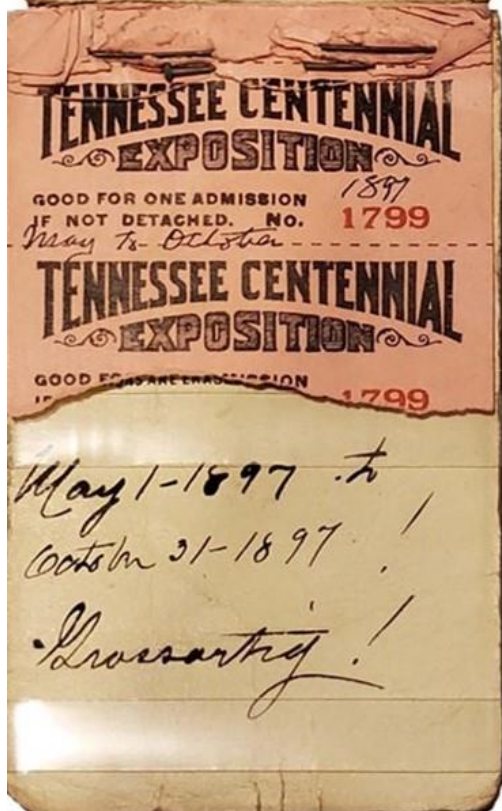
Admission Pass



Complimentary Ride Ticket



Admission Tickets 1799 & 4671



Stop 1



Commerce Building, Parthenon, See-Saw, and Pallas Athena

Stop 2



Pallas Athena, Mineral & Forestry Building, Auditorium with Arbor, and Parthenon

Stop 3



Parthenon, Commerce Building, See-Saw, Education & Hygiene Building, and Pyramid of Cheops

Stop 4



Woman's Building, Band Stand, Centennial Clubhouse, Flagpole, Commerce Building, Parthenon, and Pallas Athena