

Stories from the Past to the Present at the Tennessee State Museum
Syllabus
Winter 2024

Session 1: Ashley Howell, Executive Director of the Tennessee State Museum, will provide an introduction to the State Museum, its rich history since 1818 (including the THS connection), the art of collecting, and the challenge of interpreting history and heritage.

Session 2: Debbie Shaw, Curator of Archaeology will present “Tennessee’s Land and First Peoples,” a glimpse into the prehistoric world and the rich cultures of the first people to inhabit the land of what is today Tennessee.

Session 3: Jeff Sellers, Director of Education and Community Engagement, “Forging a Nation and Building a State,” a period from European settlement in the 1700s to the eve of the Civil War, with such colorful and forceful personalities as Sequoyah, Andrew Jackson, and James K. Polk,

Session 4: Richard White, Chief Curator, will address “Civil War and Reconstruction,” a time when Tennessee became a major battlefield, with in-state families and counties divided, and then the difficult challenge of reunion and reconciliation.

Session 5: Miranda Fraley-Rhodes, Assistant Chief Curator, will provide insights into the late 1800s and early 1900s, a period of “Change and Challenge.” It was a time of when women got the vote, automobiles and roads transformed life, public education developed, two world wars brought immense change, electricity became widespread, and a divided society confronted Jim Crow,

Session 6: Trena Chatman, Curator of Social History, and Curator Matthew Gailani will present “Tennessee Transforms,” which embraces the mid-1900s and into the 2000s, when the civil rights movement brought vast changes and Tennessee became a centerpiece of American music. Television brought entertainment into the home and sports, from schools to professional leagues, became a dominant part of life.