

The East Tennessee History Center

Calvin M. McClung Historical Collection – Knox County Archives

East Tennessee Historical Society and the Museum of East Tennessee History

by Paula Gammell

The East Tennessee History Center in downtown Knoxville houses the Calvin M. McClung Historical Collection, the Knox County Archives, and is headquarters for the East Tennessee Historical Society and their Museum of East Tennessee History.

Calvin M. McClung Historical Collection

The McClung Historical Collection is a branch of the Knox County Public Library System. This is the first stop for anyone. Check their card catalog of books, microfilm, and microfiche in advance, but remember not everything is online, such as rows and rows of vertical file cabinets full of manuscripts and newspaper clippings. Another resource not online is their “First Families of Tennessee” files; be sure to check this. Expect to spend a lot longer here than you thought!

You won’t be able to take any large bags in with you, or any food or drink (they have lockers you can use). Expect it to be chilly, so dress warmly. Don’t worry about bringing exact change for copiers; to get copies you fill out a form and pay a staff member, so small bills are ok.

Knox County Archives

For Knox County court records go to the Archives. Check hours and note that it is closed on weekends.

Does this building in this old postcard look familiar to you? Well, if you’ve ever been to the McClung Historical Collection, you’ve been here!

It was built as the Customs House back in the 1870s. Recently an addition has been added on its east side (the left rear in the picture) and the entire complex is now known as the East Tennessee History Center.

Besides the McClung Collection, the Knox County Archives and the East Tennessee Historical Society’s headquarters and museum are housed here.

Museum of East Tennessee History

The East Tennessee Historical Society is headquartered here, and their Museum of East Tennessee History is a must-see (small admission fee charged). Some exhibits are permanent; others change. Also be sure to browse thru their gift shop.

When you visit: Expensive parking is nearby; walk a few blocks and park at half the cost. Hungry? Quick restaurants are within three or four blocks. I recommend you avoid the lunch crowd, but do remember that some close by early afternoon. Need a break? There’s shady Krutch Park for relaxing or eating a snack and Market Square shops to browse thru.

Blount Mansion and the Craighead-Jackson House are within walking distance, as is the Knox County Courthouse. Just a little further you can reach the Knoxville Museum of Art or the Women’s Basketball Hall of Fame.

These tips are just for starters. A friendly receptionist awaits just inside the door and is happy to provide directions and answer questions. Enjoy your visit!

www.knoxlib.org

www.easttnhistorycenter.org

www.east-tennessee-history.org

