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This investigation assesses the evolution of Nashville, Tennessee's Lower Broadway in the last quarter of the 20th century. As an American streetscape, the area evolved from a heavily blighted street with the loss of the Grand Ole Opry in the mid 1970s to a family-friendly tourist attraction by the mid 1990s. In order to investigate the many changes that occurred over a 20-year period, the research consists of preservation theory, urban economics, and how tourism and entertainment have shaped and continue to shape Lower Broadway. The research reveals the various ways in which preservationists, city staff and private investors achieved substantial revitalization and demonstrates the ways in which historic preservation and entertainment commingle to bring about lasting renewal for the urban environment.

NASHVILLE'S LOWER BROADWAY:  
PRESERVATION AND PLAYSCAPES  
IN THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT

by

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## INTRODUCTION

The success of Nashville's Lower Broadway National Register District, as a revitalized streetscape, depended on linking tourism marketing, history and country music, through the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s. The revitalization of the three blocks that comprise the area, now a showplace for the city, resulted from efforts by Nashville public agencies, private preservationists, and business and property owners embracement of Lower Broadway as an historic urban playscape. The redevelopment of Lower Broadway is addressed in the following chapters as a vibrant city affected by its eccentricities and intricacies that make it a leading regional metropolis and as a model for revitalization through preservation and playscapes for other mid-size cities.

Originally home to turn of the 20th century commercial warehouses, Lower Broadway housed a collection of honky tonks and retail establishments in the 1960s that catered to musicians and fans of the Grand Ole Opry, located at the Ryman Auditorium, just across an alley. The honky tonks provided a place for the performers to mingle, drink and play with their fans and fellow musicians. When the Opry left the Ryman in 1974 for Opryland 12 miles outside of Nashville's center city, Lower Broadway experienced subsequent blight and dilapidation with neglected storefronts, adult movie theatres, pawnshops and dodgy bars. The area retained its seedy reputation until preservation initiatives embraced Lower Broadway's architectural historicity and cultural identity as a late 20th American urban playscape focused on country music.

While the Opry's departure from the Ryman promulgated Lower Broadway's decline, the area's renewal and change in reputation resulted from its individual significance to Nashville and American culture. As a place that offered more than leisure, music, and drinking, Lower Broadway evolved to become a major tourist attraction where one experienced all types music. Honky tonks joined with music to create a version of country music more in line with the genre's traditional roots than the commercialized, smooth sounds that dominated the genre in the last quarter of the 20th century. It was Lower Broadway's direct correlation to country music that enabled its renaissance to be more than a collection of bars in historic buildings (see Figure 1).



Figure 1. Tourists and Nashvillians amble along a revitalized Lower Broadway, enjoying the honky tonks and bars that dispel music from the morning to late at night. (Photo by author, 2004).

The research demonstrated the importance of entertainment and history to the Nashville's identity. Often referred to as Music City U.S.A, Nashville's leading industry is actually tourism. As the economic leader for the city, tourism is largely based on the city's historic and musical identity. The honky tonks and businesses on Lower Broadway illustrated this by successfully linking music and history to renew a blighted streetscape. By focusing on the evolutionary changes of Lower Broadway, chronological perspective allowed for a comprehensive understanding of the many people, agencies and initiatives that shaped the area's renewal. The research connected Nashville's historical and musical identities through the identification of the area's endeavors to shape Lower Broadway into an historic playscape.

## CHAPTER I

### THE GRAND OLE OPRY, LOWER BROADWAY, AND NASHVILLE IDENTITY

Country music, as manifested in the Grand Ole Opry and its Ryman Auditorium (see Figure 2), has shaped and defined Lower Broadway by playing to the changing rhythms of popular interests, musical and business forecasts, and profit earnings. When Chet Atkins was asked to describe the Nashville sound of country music to a German reporter, he took the change out of his pocket, jingled it around and said, “That is the Nashville Sound” (Jensen, 1998, p. 88). Intimating that country music in Nashville is more business than music, Atkins effectively described that the business of country music, made concrete at the Ryman, had come to define not just country music, but the city as well. As the barometer for the country music scene and Nashville business,



Figure 2. The Ryman Auditorium after a multi-million dollar restoration in the late 1990s. The Ryman is located just across an alley from a conglomeration of honky tonks on Lower Broadway. (Photo by author, 2004).

the changes to the Grand Ole Opry and the Ryman, their presence and subsequent absence, have witnessed and shaped the area's significance, downfall, and rebirth.

Nashville's strategic location on the Cumberland River and centralized location to the majority of the United States contributed to its development as a center for insurance and entertainment. Don Doyle (1985) and Bill Carey (2000) suggest that the need to expand business into rural areas beyond middle Tennessee led the National Life and Accident insurance company to create the Grand Ole Opry through the WSM radio station. The musical program became so successful that it outgrew the insurance company in popularity and its notoriety spread far and wide across the country. The Grand Ole Opry's success revealed itself, not only in the lives of its fans and in the lives of its performers, but in the built environment it inhabited.

The changes in the Opry and the Ryman reflected and shaped the changes in the country music business. The performers of the Opry poignantly note the symbiotic relationship among performers, fans, industry and place. Personal histories of Opry performers like Roy Acuff (1983), Chet Atkins (Hagan, 1989) and Bill Malone (2002) attest to these changes in country music. Honky tonks near the Ryman were an integral element in the urban environment for its newly relocated rural residents and they helped to define Lower Broadway through the 1960s. Joli Jensen argues that the creation of the Nashville Sound cannot be understood without the honky tonks that fed country music. Jensen critically analyzes the Opry's influence on the changing soundscape of country music as well as how soundscapes influenced the Opry in the 1950s and 1960s, an evolution of sound evident in uses of structures on Nashville's Lower Broadway

As country music became more commercialized in the 1960s and 1970s, so did its environment. Music moved from a “natural” sound created onstage at the Opry or in the honky tonks to an “artificial” sound created in the recording studios of Music Row and at Opryland, USA. When country music moved to sounding more like “pop” music in the mid- 20th century, both the music and the industry grew increasingly commercialized. Critics of this shift contend that the music lost its authenticity and a sense of the music’s history. Leaving its musical roots in the honky tonk, the Opry left the physical honky tonk as well. The places that gave rise to the genre were left behind as much as the twang and steel guitar.

*“Tennessee River”:*

#### *Nashville as Regional Capital and Transportation Hub*

As capital of Tennessee, Nashville was home to business and cultural institutions and its situation on the river provided a means for growth and wealth for trade and transportation (see Figure 3). When Nashville was founded on Christmas in 1779 as a trading post called Fort Nashborough, few would have imagined their burgeoning town as one day being synonymous with steel guitars and “hillbilly” music. It was more than half of a century before Nashville moved from western frontier town to metropolis.

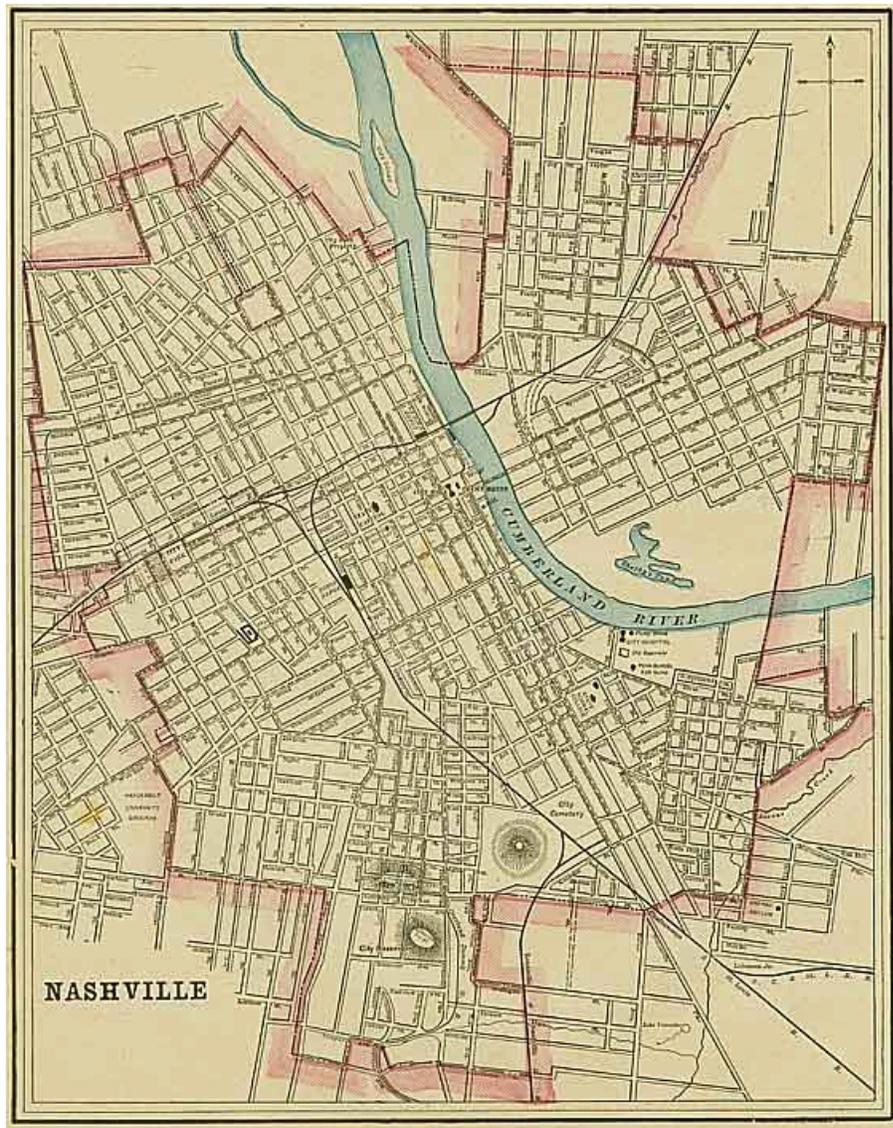


Figure 3. Street map of Nashville in 1892 by George Cram. When National Life moved to Nashville, the city was still tightly concentrated around the Cumberland River in a relatively dense center city. (PastPresent Gallery, 2005).

By the turn of the 20th century, Nashville boasted a growing role in national commerce as a leader in religious publishing, and a railroad hub that was home to a thriving wholesale grocery business, and second as the location for a collection of colleges and universities (Carey, 2000, p. 4-6). It was Fisk University, an African American college, that first gave rise to the moniker, “Music City,” with the internationally renowned Jubilee singers. Their fame, notoriety and immense talent led newspapers and European audiences to conclude that the singers must be from “Music City” (Carey, 2000, p.75). The term wasn’t widely accepted though, until nearly a century later when Nashvillians recognized the financial importance and benefits of being so closely related to the music industry.

Country music’s significance in Nashville began as a marketing tool employed by the National Sick and Accident Insurance Company. At the turn of the 20th century in the South, personal insurance policies were rarely held except by the wealthy few as policies were purchased from major companies in northern metropolitan areas. With insurance among African Americans and poor rural whites nearly nonexistent, the companies had few or no plans to attract the rural farm laborers of the South.

One exception was the National Sick and Accident Insurance Company, which catered to the Southern African American audience and specialized in burial and industrial insurance. When its owner died and the company was offered at auction, five Nashville businessmen saw an opportunity and bought the company for \$17, 250 (Carey, p. 68). Reorganizing in 1902 as the National Life and Accident Insurance Company, the

corporation took inspiration from insurance tradition and picked a shield as an emblem with the mission “to shield humanity in its fight with sickness, accidents and death” (Carey, p. 74), a mission that would soon be heard in clear channel across the country.

*“Strange Currencies”:*

*Insurance, Radio and Hillbilly Music*

As National Life’s traveling salesmen crossed the country to drum up business and new policyholders, this sales force needed something more to publicize the company name outside of middle Tennessee. Edwin Craig, son of the president of National Life and a radio enthusiast, convinced the company’s board to invest in its own radio station to sell insurance policies and promote the company. Suggesting that the station’s call letters should reflect the mission of National Life, Craig influenced the selection of call letters as WSM, “we shield millions” (Hagan, 1989, p. 5).

With radio stations being popular tools for companies to promote themselves and their goods at the time, National Life broke no new ground nor acted as visionary businessmen. The format of the station, like many company owned stations at the time, included broadcast lectures, sermons, sports and music (Carey, p. 78). What WSM soon discovered was the need for professional talent and organization in order to ensure the success of their investment. The station recruited and hired George Hay from Chicago’s WLS station where he was known across the country as the host of WLS’s popular weekly show, the National Barn Dance, a show that featured hillbilly music.

After being lured to WSM, Hay (see Figure 4) created Nashville's own barn dance and on November 28, 1925, welcomed Uncle Jimmy Thompson to the live portion of the show, stating: "For the past hour we have been listening to music largely taken from grand opera, but from now on we will present grand ole opry" (Jensen, p. 69). Thompson, well into his eighties, fiddled for over an hour as telegrams immediately streamed in praising the hillbilly music (Hagan, p. 8). In just a week, the Nashville *Tennessean* reported that WSM would regularly feature "old-time tunes" (Hagan, p. 9).



Figure 4. George Hay at the WSM microphone. Hay, as emcee for the WSM Barn Dance radio show, created the name *The Grand Ole Opry*, and helped to define the Opry's image in the early 20th century. (Photograph courtesy of [www.opry.com](http://www.opry.com), 2005).

The Grand Ole Opry took a prominent role in American popular culture after its inaugural performance. In just months, Hay expanded the barn dance to feature dozens of different musicians and forms of hillbilly music. By 1927, WSM increased the station's power from 1,000 watts to 5,000 and became affiliated with NBC's radio network (Hagan, p. 23). The Opry, poised to move from a regional phenomenon to a nationally influential radio program, became so important to American culture that Roy

Acuff even attributed the Grand Ole Opry with getting many Southerners through the Depression. The national program helped to unite economically-depressed Americans from far-flung corners of the country with entertainment and leisure as a common thread. Acuff states that radio was one of the only things people could afford to do at the time and that “there’s no question, it helped to popularize ‘hillbilly’ music far beyond the hills and into the living rooms of people everywhere, and turned it into ‘country music’” (Acuff, 1983, p. 40-43).

The increase in radio wattage and NBC affiliation may not have been as dramatic if not for the droves of Southern laborers who moved into Northern and Southern cities alike, looking for work in the late 1920s and through the Depression. To the city, farmers and workers brought their accented drawls and cultural identities closely associated with regional musical forms that were absent in northern cities. When the Opry reached most of the country in clear channel, displaced Southerners found delight in hearing the sounds associated with their landscapes of home, including Mr. V.E. Fraker of Noti, Oregon, who wrote to praise the show:

Ain’t radio wonderful? Last night an old Tennessee hillbilly out in Western Oregon was giving the dial a final twist about 10:15 Pacific Time when he hit banjos like they never have. The wife dropped her knitting and moved over closer to the old set, and out popped something about life insurance (Carey, p. 77).

In bringing hillbilly music to the airwaves WSM, Hay and The Grand Ole Opry discovered these people left their place behind, but they did not lose their sense of place.

*“Song of the South”:*

*World War II Disseminates the Sound*

World War II was one of the major turning points in country music’s dissemination and consequently, the Grand Ole Opry’s popularity. “To hell with Roosevelt! To hell with Babe Ruth! To hell with Roy Acuff!” was a battle cry shouted by Japanese troops in World War II (Kingsbury, 1995, p. 65). The early 1940s brought about the idea of country music being *American* music, closely ingrained with American culture and ideology. Prior to the World War II, Nashville was home to the Grand Ole Opry, WSM, and National Life, but most Nashvillians were embarrassed by their association with hillbilly music (Carey, p.78).

Millions of Northern Americans moved to munitions factories in the South and Southerners moved to army bases all over the country (see Figure 5), exposing Northerners and Westerners to the music of the South while Southerners brought their music across the country. Carrying their musical tastes, servicemen and women played their records away from home and on the jukeboxes that began to be fixtures in bars, honky tonks, restaurants and clubs.



Figure 5. Workers checking out at the Vultee Aircraft Company, 1942. The Vultee Company manufactured aircraft during World War II in Nashville. As a large employer, many people came from all over the region to gain employment. (Photo courtesy of the Library of Congress, 2005).

With so many people introduced to country music at the time and to “satisfy the musical hunger of soldiers and sailors,” R. J. Reynolds sponsored a tour of Grand Ole Opry performers called the Camel Caravan, which helped solidify the Grand Ole Opry’s prominence in respect to the many barn dances broadcast all over the country. Touring military camps, bases, hospitals and air fields, the Caravan’s popularity was measured by its sheer number of performances: 175 shows in 68 different locales in just over one year. By the middle of the war, the Opry was the most important barn dance program (Malone, 2002, p. 183).

The Opry and the Camel Caravan did not promote country music to its popular status alone. With the help of jukebox expansion, movie exposure and increased radio coverage, country music became so integral to the music industry that in 1942 *Billboard* magazine created a “Western and Race” column that would be changed one month later to “American Folk Records” (Malone, p.181).

The Opry’s intense popularity abroad, and at home in Nashville, promoted WSM’s decision to move performances from War Memorial Auditorium to a larger venue in downtown Nashville. In 1943, the Opry moved to a larger space that housed thousands of fans and a growing roster of Opry cast members. The move to the Ryman Auditorium caused country music to dominate the landscape of part of Nashville’s downtown for more than 50 years. The Ryman also became the symbolic home of the Opry and consequently of country music.

*“Mother’s Song”:*

*Nashville’s Mother Church: the Ryman Auditorium*

The Opry’s and the Ryman’s significance rests in their relationship to each other. Both have muddled histories that must first be assessed in order to understand each’s importance in a contemporary context. Their histories straddle the notions of what is earthy and honest, even if both are somewhat on the fringe. Both appeal to a great many people for a great many reasons. In the end it could be considered that the Opry’s placement at the Ryman was fitting in history and in imagery. The Ryman Auditorium was constructed as the Union Gospel Tabernacle, a gift to Nashville’s religiously devoted

from Captain Tom Ryman, a successful owner of several Cumberland riverboats. In 1885, Ryman attended a Nashville revival to poke fun at the enthusiastic participants and left as a convert to Christianity. He subsequently banned liquor consumption and gambling on his boats and donated the Tabernacle in 1890. The tabernacle's goals were "strictly religious, non-sectarian, and non-denominational and for the purpose of promoting religion, morality and the elevation of humanity to a higher plane and more usefulness" (Eiland, 1992, p.13).

The Ryman's location on the edge of downtown welcomed people to the heart of the city. It was adjacent to merchant and governmental buildings and situated directly between Nashville's major transportation hubs; the Cumberland River and Union Station, where it captured the attention of visitors and residents alike as did its contrasting red brickwork, white trim and gothic ornamentation.

After Ryman's death, the Tabernacle's care was entrusted to local businessmen. In order to keep the massive building in operation, the men decided to open the building for secular performances and its stage served as a venue for music and dramatic performances, lectures, and revivals (Eiland, p.25-34). None of these performances though, were as prominent and lasting as the Grand Ole Opry.

*"High Cotton":*

*The Opry Dominates Nashville's Center City*

When the Opry moved to the Ryman Auditorium in 1943, country music was about to undergo drastic changes that manifested themselves in the genre's sound,

marketing, business, and in Nashville's physical landscape. As millions of people relocated after World War II, they carried with them a wealth of new experiences and cultures to sort out and the American city was once again a battleground between rural and metropolitan values and cultures.

Prior to World War II and during the War years, country music was commonly referred to as "hillbilly" music. The name conjured up the rural environment and tavern where this music originated and first flourished. In the American West, taverns were often social hallmarks of their communities and when associated with live country music, they were called a honky tonks. Entangled with the West Texas oil boom during the Great Depression, honky tonks were regularly located on the periphery of towns in order to attract both town and rural dwellers (Malone, 2002, p.153) (see Figure 6). These spaces were noisy and crowded as people met, drank and danced, which provoked performers to dispel a louder, harsher sounds, often highlighted by the distinctive twang of steel guitars. Musicians also catered their lyrics to the honky tonk audience singing about the conflicts of rural people in urban settings and common life struggles like the troubles of marriage, cheating lovers, poor jobs, loss of money and gun influenced felonies.

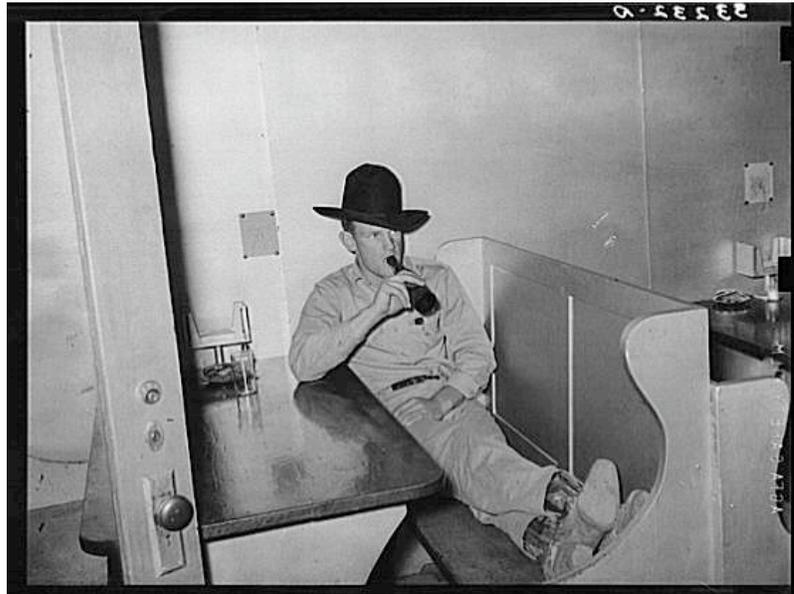


Figure 6. Cowboy drinking a beer in a bar in West Texas bar, 1939. The sound that greatly influenced the Grand Ole Opry largely derived from the honky tonks of West Texas where rural and town dwellers mingled to dance, drink and listen to music. (Photo courtesy of the Library of Congress, 2005).

Honky tonks were not a West Texas idiosyncrasy but, as Jensen contends, rather located in nearly every metropolitan environment with a sound that originated in Texas and disseminated across the country. Many of the Opry's performers from across the country had musical backgrounds in honky tonks and their prevalence on radio and on touring promotions for the Grand Ole Opry helped to broadcast the sound.

Critics often debate how one defines country music as a genre and debate even further the definition of country's sub-genres like bluegrass, country-politan, and honky-tonk. Many critics contend that what makes honky tonk music authentic is the derivation of music from a specific place. Music in the honky tonks speaks of place and the trials and tribulations that come from it, a musical sound often referred to as the "real" and

“authentic” makers in country music. The story and sound of honky tonk music, best understood in respect to its setting, “tells the story of trying to be down home in an urban world” (Jensen, p.33). It traces the migration of the Southern working class through the city and the conflicts encountered there. The Opry reflected the honky tonk sound and was heard by some of its most popular members like Lefty Frizzell, Ernest Tubb and Hank Snow, all of whom drew their musical performances and sound, in part, from the honky tonk.

The growing popularity of honky tonk music manifested itself in the area around the Ryman Auditorium, and as the Opry grew, so did its adjacent business district, once “furniture row” (Lynch & Dick, 1990, p. 27), Lower Broadway became a collection of honky-tonks and bars that reflected the sound of the Opry and catered to its stars and patrons across an alley.

*“I’m Barely Hangin’ On to Me”:*

*The Nashville Sound Represents Itself in Nashville’s Landscape*

Country music transformed in the post-War years through the creation of the Nashville Sound and with country music growing in popularity. As with other musical genres, country musicians were unprepared for what would change American musical culture: the rise of Rock ‘n’ Roll. Scholars attribute the major changes in country music in the 1950s and 1960s as a response to Rock ‘n’ Roll’s popularity (Malone, 2002; Jensen, 1998). It is unquestioned that country music transformed in everyway by the middle of the 20th century as its sound, image, performers, publishing industry,

marketing and overall concept became less regionalized, more homogenized and smooth. Jensen recounts interviews with Nashville figures about the changes in country music in the 1950s, all of which lead to the same response: “rock nearly killed country” (Jensen, 1998, p. 38). Whether or not country music “sold out” during the mid-century is largely contested, but regardless, the music changed, as did almost everything associated with it.

Chet Atkins, a major Opry star in the 1950s and 1960s, credited with being the driving force behind the Nashville Sound, aimed to make country palpable to mainstream musical audiences. Removing the regional sounds and twang brought a middle-of-the-road style of music that was a “compromise” between being commercially appealing and “preserving the feel and ambiance of country” (Malone, 2002, p. 257). This new sound was intended to retain fans of “hillbilly music” while capturing the growing rock ‘n’ roll and teenage audiences. Jensen (1998) maintains that this sound was just a temporary survival tactic in which country music “disguised itself as pop music” in order to have a chance to recover from the transformation at a later time (p. 39).

The Nashville Sound found its way into the Grand Ole Opry and its cast members, as the change in sound came from the recording studios and offices located only a few blocks from the Ryman on Music Row. With the popularity of country music in the post War years, record companies located in New York and major northern cities established offices in Nashville to profit from the wealth of musicians in the city. In a collection of bungalow houses bordered by downtown and Vanderbilt University, smooth, slickly-produced, studio created albums replaced live performance albums that originally gave rise to the Opry and country music. The change in country music’s sound

moved to an overall repackaging of the genre. Recordings, which were once taped from performances and jam sessions moved to the soundproof walls of Music Row recording studios. The sound, less regional and spontaneous and more professional, polished and packaged (see Figure 7) moved away from honky-tonk country sounds and to more polished and professional sounds.



Figure 7. Women waiting back stage at the Grand Ole Opry, 1972. The stylish dress of these women suggest the broad appeal of the Nashville Sound throughout America. Fans and performers were no longer mountain hillbillies, but rather a diverse group who appreciated the smooth sounds of country music that began in the 1960s. (Photograph by Henry Horenstein, 2003).

Country music may or may not have lost authenticity with the rise of the Nashville Sound, but it was the Nashville Sound that enabled Nashville to develop as Music City U.S.A. (Jensen, 1998, p. 63). The conglomeration of record companies, musicians, and immense profits allowed Nashville to shift its economic focus to tourism. As country music grew more attractive to a wider audience Nashville sought to capitalize on country music's identity, a focus that heightened the muddled understanding of the genre as it fit somewhere between commercial, popular, authentic, real, and imagined. Country music's Nashville Sound was recognizable both as these separate elements and a conglomeration of all of them together.

Country music and the Grand Ole Opry moved from near extinction, prior to the evolution of the Nashville Sound, to unprecedented popularity by the late 1960s and early 1970s. The sound of the music was so transformed by the late 1960s that much of country music's physical landscape did not fit with the new identity of the music. What became universally appealing, slick, packaged, tourist focused and "family-oriented" did not agree with the earthiness associated with honky tonks and the aged Ryman Auditorium.

As Nashvillians moved to the suburbs in the 1960s, much of downtown's commerce moved with it and blight and dilapidation were commonplace in the center city, caused the metropolitan government and private investors to look towards growth outside of downtown. With little funding and interest in downtown, the Ryman slowly decayed due to lack of regular care and years of hard use and the Grand Ole Opry looked for new locations to better fit country music's emerging new image.

National Life and WSM created Opryland to make the most of Nashville's growing music related tourism economy. As a theme park located 12 miles outside of Nashville complete with nightly shows, roller coaster rides and all sorts of family-oriented entertainment, the Grand Ole Opry created a Disneyfied vision of country music. Opryland wasn't just a theme park, but also the new home to the Grand Ole Opry. The Saturday night show moved from downtown for the first time in over 50 years. Nashville, the country music industry, its performers and the Grand Ole Opry directed the development of a new style of country music. This style allowed country music to survive rock 'n' roll and flourish in popularity while changing its landscape and definition of authenticity.

*"Ain't That a Pity":*

*The Opry Changes Nashville's Lower Broadway*

The Grand Ole Opry and the Ryman Auditorium chronicled the changes and developments in country music for over 75 years. The Opry retained its significance because of its deep connection with the identity of country music. As the symbolic home and heart of country music and the Ryman Auditorium has been the determining physical icon for country music.

The Opry witnessed and played an influential part in the changes in country music as well in the physical landscape and identity of Nashville. Although the Opry gave rise to the development of the recording industry on Music Row, the Opry and Music Row represented different ideologies in country music and each retained its own definition of

success. Jensen (1998) pointed out that the difference between the two denoted the duality of the music as manifested in performance style: the Opry was rooted in live performance, directly related to regional identity and the recording studio was rooted in artificial environments that can be found almost anywhere (pp. 68, 84). Although both were created to make money, the Opry, with its symbolic home at the Ryman, represents the roots and authenticity of country music.

The honky tonks that developed next to the Ryman provided a tangible link between the music, its roots, its authenticity and its constantly evolving nature. Their informality, proximity to the Ryman and unique nature fueled much the musical creativity in Nashville and on stage at the Opry. If honky tonks are the battleground between rural and urban, then their location in downtown Nashville represented this tradition. With Lower Broadway at the edge of downtown, pushed to the back, the honky tonks formed a bridge between the Opry and its rural roots and the commercial environment of Music Row.

The development of the Nashville Sound, as a response to Rock 'n' Roll's popular explosion, changed country music significantly. The sound moved from a regionalized, "earthy" form to a homogenized sound palpable to broader audiences. Nashville's physical landscape and the Grand Ole Opry attended these changes by moving away from downtown and the Ryman Auditorium to Opryland. This move, already prominent in country music's sound, at last revealed itself in Nashville's urban environment.

## CHAPTER II

### LOWER BROADWAY: A SEARCH FOR AUTHENTICITY

Nashville's location first helped to develop its music and its placement in the midst of rural Tennessee as well as its proximity to the Appalachian Mountains created a place welcoming to the traditional music of the South. By the mid 20th century, though, Nashville used its music to define its sense of place. While Nashville may be the home of country music and appropriately associated with that particular genre, Nashville's greatest attribute is through its more encompassing moniker: Music City USA. Nashville used not only its musical identity to shape its sense of place, but also its historic identity.

Lower Broadway forms an "epitome district" within Nashville. Clay (1980) uses this term to describe "special places in cities [that] carry huge layers of symbols that have the capacity to pack up emotions, energy, or history into a small space" (p. 38). Lower Broad's architecture, culture and history "pack up" a three-block streetscape in Nashville's center city.

The changes that occurred on Lower Broadway illustrate how entertainment and historic significance shaped the area. The Ryman Auditorium, the hallmark structure of Lower Broadway, mirrors the evolution of Nashville's modern economy that straddles several industries, but indisputably known for its association with country music. Lower Broadway's landscape is a diverse one that can be understood with a multi-faceted

approach. Through a focused understanding of scholarly works concerning authenticity in architecture, the urban entertainment economy, entertainment as social and public space, the urban environment, and evolving historic preservation theory, Nashville's redevelopment of Lower Broadway can be addressed in its complex and diverse terms and understood as a vibrant city affected by and addressing its intricacies and eccentricities that make it a leading regional metropolis.

*"Where I'm From":*

#### *Authenticity and Sense of Place in Architecture*

Norberg-Schulz (1979) articulates the connection between architecture, authenticity and sense of place:

“if the primary structural properties are respected [in architecture], the general atmosphere or *Stimmung* will not get lost. It is this *Stimmung* which first of all ties man to “his” place and strikes the visitor as a particular local quality. The idea of preservation, however, also has another purpose. It implies that architectural history is understood as a collection of cultural experiences, which should not get lost but remain present as *possibilities* for human use” (p. 180).

Authenticating a place, realized beyond the visual environment, utilizes all of the senses.

Through taste, smell, touch, sound and sight the *pukka* of a place can most fully be understood. Nashville's Lower Broadway, a commercial historic district, can be assessed through music and architecture as both authenticate this three block long streetscape.

Defining authenticity, Tschudi- Madsen (1985) provides five points to assess a place, correlating Norberg-Schulz's ideas of recognizing architectural authenticity and history with his work on wooden structures. The five points, material, structure, surface, architectural form and function, when aptly applied to all historic buildings in a constant state of change, demonstrate that "authenticity is essential and must be respected in all works of restoration, conservation and preservation." Tschudi-Madsen argues that these points do not need to remain stagnant because through their layering a building becomes a "historic document, not an object for architects and antiquarians to play with" (p. 18). He goes on to suggest that although layers may obstruct decorative details, "keeping the effect of the many layers is just part of the age value, the proof of authenticity. If you remove those many layers, you also remove a part of the building's history (p. 18)."

Heath (2001) correlates to Tschudi-Madsen's theory of retaining these architectural layers of history as well as Norberg-Schulz's tenants of respecting and recognizing architectural authenticity, history and the future possibilities of an historic building's use. Heath argues for understanding the built environment in terms of "cultural weathering." This term refers to the changes in the built environment that result from the actions of the inhabitants of the structure. Studying the New England mill town of New Bedford, Massachusetts, Heath analyzes the triple-decker house and the changes made, over time, by the residents. These changes, a patinization of the built environment, result from "the embodiment of a complex social process" (p. 183) rather than individual architects or designers. Thus, Heath argues that architecture should be understood "like

the landscape of which it is a part, . . . dynamic and ever changing” (p. 184). Further, Heath calls for designers to acknowledge and pay homage to architecture’s constantly changing face: “Failing to acknowledge a wide spectrum of dynamics that shape such a work [architecture] limits our understanding of its diverse and often complex nature and, therefore, does a disservice to the work itself” (p. 186).

The layers of architecture do not just testify to changes in history or momentous events, but in the everyday changes that lend a building its sense of place. The unique layers added to a building construct a patina unique to its place and constantly evolving character over time. But authenticity and sense of place can be found beyond architecture, especially on Lower Broadway.

*“Rebuilding the Ruins”:*

*Applying Preservation Theory to the Modern Built Environment*

Like many Western cities, Nashville uses, in part, its historic identity to define place. Preserving the built environment on Lower Broadway echoes the theories of preservation scholars from Ruskin (1849) to Warner (1983) and by understanding these ethics and practices, preservation theory provides insight as to how adaptive reuse and rehabilitation are advantageous to a city’s economy, identity and sense of place.

Much preservation theory and literature stems from the treatises of Viollet le Duc (1860) and Ruskin (1849), who posited the two camps prominent in preservation: the scrapists and anti-scrapists. Each conceives their preservation principles in the works. Ruskin (1849) calls for preservationists to embrace the work of past generations, seeing

each contribution as equally important as its predecessors. Rallying for the anti-scrapists, Ruskin discusses the role of preservation in architecture via the Lamp of Memory. He states that “we cannot remember without her [architecture]” and believed that a building’s “glory is in its age.” Ruskin views the built environment as the product of its creators and all those who inhabit them in or will do so in the future. He states that “we have no right to touch them [historic buildings]. They are not ours. They belong partly to those who built them, and partly to all the generations of mankind who are to follow us.” As one of the first champions of the preservation movement, Ruskin’s theories serve a primary role in understanding contemporary culture through the past. By showing the glory of age and patina on historic buildings, Ruskin provides modern preservationists with a school of thought to be applied to redevelopment, conservation, restoration and preservation.

Viollet le Duc (1860), following the influence of Ruskin’s writings, pioneered the opposing scrapist ideology. As another one of the first advocates for preservation, Viollet le Duc also called for the end of the destruction of our historic built environment. Vociferous about his cause, he reminds his audience of the significant works of past cultures and times, like the Romans and builders of the 16th century, and then brings to light the French building trends of his time. He calls the public to build structures in a way indicative to their own time and preserve structures indicative the structures’ time and no other. While his practice often proved contrary to his writings, his opposing view provides an alternate theory for interpreting and preserving the historic built environment. Viollet le Duc even offers that it is the duty of artists to enlighten the public taste when it

goes astray. In short if present observers view a building as somehow incorrect it is the present viewers' responsibility to rectify the wrongs of the previous generations and rebuild in the "correct" manner. Viollet le Duc saw preservation as an obligation to those practicing it to "scrape" off the incorrect and replace it with the correct.

Continuing with preservation theory nearly a century later, Lowenthal (1985) moves the discussion further questioning how people experience and know the past through memory, history and relics. When Lowenthal first discusses the role of relics he associates them with Steinbeck's *Grapes of Wrath*. Recounting the journey of the Okies as they move west, the family must limit the belongings they carry with them and thus leave behind many of the things that they are attached to. They ask "How will we know it's us without our past?" Thus, as Lowenthal believes, people associate themselves with relics so much that they define themselves by them as their tangible links to the past. Relics are the physical evidence of what was here before and what people leave behind.

As relics are the physical remains experienced, they take on different roles depending on their interpretation. Many current relics survive because the value placed on them in their own age. They first are valued for their artistic impact on a culture, but they are important now because of their age and impact on culture today. Relics retain a certain limbo of time, existing "simultaneously in the past and the present." As Lowenthal explains, relics are what "leads us to identify things as antiquated or ancient" and "varies with the environment and history, with individual and culture, with historical awareness and inclination" (p. 241).

Relics are viewed as artistic or historic or a combination of the two but, it is through their interpretation that we begin to understand and value these separate roles. Lowenthal focuses much of his discussion on how people view relics and the ways in which they can be altered. The duality of relics displays how they can be viewed as both objects of beauty while implying inherent historical qualities as well. Ruskin is of similar thought, viewing buildings as the physical embodiment of artistic accomplishment as well as the constant reminder of history and those cultures that have preceded us. The innate duality of relics poses the questions: What to preserve and why? Do we preserve buildings because of their ability to represent the pinnacle a culture has reached? Or do we preserve to remind the public of the cultures that have preceded us? In short, do we preserve for history or beauty?

Current theory and practice in the rehabilitation of historic structures supports the study of the built environment as a relic developed over time. Historic relics have become an economic viability associated with heritage tourism, marketing, and development. While seminal works on adaptive reuse theory still wait to be written, many modern preservationists discuss the process in terms of economic viability and quantitative measures. Warner (1983) uses statistical findings, historic analysis, and case studies to investigate adaptive reuse projects. While counting the benefits of adaptive reuse in terms of economics, company public relations, and aesthetics, Warner also illustrates problems associated with preservation including, capital availability, uncertainties in construction, and community, employee, and management apprehension. Warner illustrates that the adaptability of a building cannot be addressed alone, but must

be assessed in these in quantitative terms. It becomes imperative to apply Tschudi-Madsen's theories on integrity to rehabilitate an historic building that is both economically viable and contributing to the collective culture and history of a place in order for an historic structure to exist, as Lowenthal suggests, in the past, present and future.

As Smith (1983) proposes, utilizing the forgotten buildings of deteriorating city areas can bring desolate areas back to life through increased property taxes, support for commercial businesses, reduction of energy, and the increased use of neglected utility systems, but cities can also benefit through the re-creation of community feelings and feelings of identity and pride of ownership. Thus the application of historic preservation theories can be applied to contemporary cities to provide economic benefits as well as community pride and a sense of place.

*"Song of a City":*

*The Urban Entertainment Economy*

A building's use, specifically as an urban entertainment space, adds another layer to a structure's authenticity. Lower Broadway's multi-layered authenticity derives from its diversity of entertainment associations that span the latter half of the 20th century. Like Nashville, many Western cities, addressing their shift from production centers to consumption centers, have redefined their identities. Manchester, England, once a national symbol of production, now embraces its identity as one of fun and play. Like Manchester, some cities have used entertainment as a means to clean up and revive their

depressed urban cores, while others have used the entertainment economy as a destination point. As tourist attractions, these cities draw from local, national and global economic bases. Faced with fleeting, former identities, they now address their potential roles as locations for “footloose global capital” (Lovat, 1994, p.144). As shown in Manchester, the entertainment economy can have staggering effects on a city. Some cities like Austin and Nashville have based a majority of their development on entertainment, while other cities are redeveloping their decaying downtowns with concentrated areas of entertainment, or nightscapes.

The entertainment industry, a major component of the American economy, has not been studied much outside of the world of family-oriented leisure. In the United States, research focuses on how people spend their free time, largely excluding what Chatterton and Hollands (2003) term as nightscapes. These are the places that house varied nighttime activities in “licensed premises such as bars, nightclubs, and music venues, as well as the streets and spaces in-between” (p. 4). Richard Kraus (2000), documents the changes in leisure in the 21st century and warns against nightscapes, describing them as “shady” and a form of “morally marginal play” (p. 306). What researchers cannot ignore is that, in the 21st century, entertainment, leisure and play are valued and sought out for their vast, income producing capabilities.

In the city, consumption has come to largely define urban entertainment districts. These places have been, and continue to be developed by city planners and private developers in their entirety, rather than as individually owned and realized properties. This mode of comprehensive area development, glaringly evident in American suburbia

and shopping centers, is also at the center of much European urban development. Chatterton and Hollands (2003) theorize about the effects of corporate capital, branding, standardization and ‘theming’ of urban nightlife. Britain has long been dominated by corporate sponsorship of nightlife. Nearly every local pub is owned, in large part, by national breweries and then leased or franchised to local entrepreneurs (pp. 32-33). Pubs, still controlled by corporate breweries, run the danger of becoming standardized and mainstream playscapes, catering to the urban middle-class or the bourgeois bohemians, BOBOS, as David Brooks (2000) calls them. This consolidation of ownership differs drastically from the American model of ownership, but several parallels can be drawn. Corporate ownership may dominate Britain’s downtown nightscapes, but developers’ visions dominate American downtown nightscapes. This approach though, may ignore a community’s particular culture and identity.

The heavy influence of consumption in the city notes an overall change in its economy. Many European urban and social researchers discuss Fordist and post-Fordist economic practices, noting that cities have made a significant shift in the last half of the 20th century from being producers to being consumers. This shift can be seen in decline of manufacturing employment, a proliferation of low-wage and part-time employment, and significant rises in employment within the service industry. Mole (1996) theorizes that the influx of planned upper middle-class urban housing, and entertainment developments planned for neglected downtowns indicates “the strength of property and finance capital and the relative weakness of industrial capital” (p. 44). Milestone (1996) carries the argument further by studying Manchester and its relatively new-found fame

within a hedonistic context. Milestone argues that Manchester has become a postmodern city based on the consumption of culture. It is through the city's welcoming of pop culture that it is now one of Britain's top destinations as a "cool" place to be. Rediscovering itself as a post-Fordist city in the 1980s, Manchester forged a new identity centered around pop culture (p. 93).

Embracing the "cool" factor can be a significant tool for the economic redevelopment of depressed urban areas. Catering to the young, creative, upper-middle class BOBOS living and working downtown, "cool" entertainment districts provide a place for them play, socialize and spend their disposable incomes. British research on the entertainment economy unapologetically focuses on the young urban middle class. This group, with disposable incomes and few responsibilities in comparison to their child-rearing contemporaries, usually experience a "post-adolescent" phase by going out to bars, pubs, nightclubs, and music events as a significant component of their lifestyle (Chatterton and Hollands, 2003). Lovatt, Ryan and Fitzpatrick (1996) comment on the role of young gay culture as well as youth culture and their significant effects on the urban entertainment economy. A vast majority of the British research on the topic acknowledges the integral role of the 'post-adolescents' in the city. Manchester, seeking to attract this group has redefined itself as "Madchester," a Fun City where it's cool to be (Lovat, 1996). Disregarding its Fordist, production-driven past, Manchester has successfully "re-imagined the city as a place of spectacular, hedonistic consumption and an exciting cosmopolitan location for footloose global capital" (Lovat, 1996, p. 144).

*“Tourist Point of View”:*

*Tourism as a Shaper and Reflector of American Culture*

Nashville has embraced its reputation as a city composed of “footloose capital” to become an American tourist destination. The tourist landscape of Nashville and the tourist landscapes in most American cities, help to form identities for tourists and residents alike. The advertisements promoting tourism, often integral to a city’s success in the area, beg to be examined as they shape tourism identity as much as the place itself. Much scholarship addresses the historic identity of tourism and tourist promotions in America. Compiled as guides and advertisements, they provide a framework for understanding how tourism identities shaped the American landscape.

Shaffer (2001) proposes that tourism shaped and defined the American landscape, as well as Americans themselves in the 20th century, the result of the tourist being both consumer and producer. As tourists were “consuming the nation, [they] also participated in and shaped this search for national identity” (p. 5). This dichotomy of production and consumption, resulted from an evolving national transportation system, coast to coast communication, the rise of a national market and corporate capitalism promoted a middle class with leisure time and wealth to spend (p. 3).

Guidebooks shaped the ways in which Americans viewed travel, especially in the American West where each guide served a specific purpose to inform the reader/ tourist on appropriate ways to experience and understand the landscape. Shaffer explains the various texts with the Appleton guides, first produced in the latter half of the 19th century. Focused largely on the eastern states, categoric descriptions of regional

geography, tourist routes and points of interest, the guides eventually grew to include pictorial evaluations of a region's scenery that gave impetus to the *Picturesque America* guides. These pictorial guidebooks placed the American landscape in picturesque, sublime terms, equating the American landscape to art, or more appropriately, European art. Shaffer states that the albums "defined a tourist gaze that allowed tourists to understand the landscape in visual terms, reducing the nation to a series of framed views, an assemblage of objectified landscapes" (p. 178).

By the second decade of the 19th century, the Page Company published the *See America First* series. The series described a range of states, with a focus on the eastern seaboard and western states and promised to bring the tourist "into the very heart of the country." The collection, as Shaffer states, "was the first to attempt a comprehensive overview of the tourist opportunities throughout North America" (p. 181). *See America First* added to the Appleton formula by covering the history of an area as well. The guides, while being the first to recognize states as part of a nation, also highlighted the ways in which each state contributed to the country as a whole. *See America First* set forth a model for further tourist guides to follow that were published throughout the teens and twenties.

As the tourism industry evolved dramatically over the 20th century and helped to shape American identity, Zukin (1995) addresses how two very different tourist enterprises shaped two very different cities at the close of the century: Disney World and the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art (MASS MoCA) in North Adams, Massachusetts. Highlighting both high brow and mainstream, Zukin explores the

success of each entity. Disney World teaches a great deal about the American perception of the city, but as Zukin points out, its great contribution is that it is a new social space, as an alternative to the city (1995, p. 76). Purposefully attracting and providing an image, however realistic or unrealistic, of mainstream America, Disney World is a destination not only for Americans, but for foreign travelers as well. MASS MoCA though, a division of the Guggenheim, attracts a smaller portion of the tourism industry. Although still a tourist destination, MASS MoCA does not receive near the attention Disney World enjoys. Zukin subliminally questions: Why does one work and not the other? Chatterton and Hollands (2003) would argue that it is Disney World's focus on the theming, branding and commercialization of the mainstream, which provides for its success. Addressing the success of a "branded, stylized nightlife" throughout Britain, Chatterton and Hollands remark briefly on the phenomenon in the United States, noting the major national producers of entertainment: Hard Rock Café, Planet Hollywood, Dave and Busters and Disney. Apparently, the mainstream, whether real or imagined, is desirable to tourists and residents alike.

*"Where Everybody Knows Your Name":*

*Entertainment as Social Space, Public Space*

Entertainment has been ingrained into American life for centuries. Likewise, entertainment has defined Lower Broadway for most of the second half of the 20th century. In early America the tavern was often a central meeting place for people in urban and rural areas alike. As taverns were often the first buildings constructed at early

settlements, they became part of the public sphere for the entire community. The tavern and the meetinghouse both served as places where people could come together, but the tavern provided a place where people could congregate irrespective of social rank. Everyone from wealthy merchants to servants shared the tavern and drank alongside one other.

Thompson (1989) examines this early mixing of society by analyzing the tavern as “the most enduring, most easily identifiable, and most contested body of public space in 18th century America” (p. 16). Studying Philadelphia, Thompson looks at the multitude of taverns in the city, from twelve taverns to nearly two hundred by the Revolution. Suggesting that the tavern served as a means for a wide variety of people to voice concerns, take up debate, and participate in public life. With its tightly packed rooms, members of all levels of society rubbed elbows, sat face to face and drank together. Thompson posits that early Philadelphians intermingled because they “believed they could garner from speech and behavior observed in mixed, competitive, and often drunken tavern encounters insights and information about themselves and the world around them of a quality unattainable in any other sight” (1999, p. 203). The men and women of this era, Thompson argues, felt that speech and verbal interaction among peers provided the best means to ascertain a man’s character. It was in these public places where one’s opinions and beliefs could be judged against or with his fellow man.

Sallinger (2002) questions Thompson’s argument of the tavern as egalitarian space, instead postulating that taverns have, in fact, been separated into social divisions since their inception. Examining newspapers, journals, diaries, and personal letters, she

discusses how taverns catered to distinct social groups early on. Noting that the earliest taverns mixed classes, Sallinger argues that it did not take long for patrons and tavernkeepers to differentiate themselves. In the seventeenth century, New Amsterdam had taverns catering to specific people, like those that established themselves for farmers. Even specific areas of the city quickly came to be known as places for a certain clientele. Taverns did not just self-segregate though. Using documents from public meetings, Sallinger discusses how the people of Philadelphia used public meetings to speak out against the mixing of races and genders (2002, p. 227).

*“20th Century Fox”:*

#### *20th Century Entertainment*

The late 19th and early 20th centuries witnessed the rise of the middle class as well as the concepts of leisure and entertainment for all Americans. Nashville’s Lower Broadway, mirrored this evolution with its honky tonks that catered to Opry performers and fans alike in the late 20th century. With more leisure time available Americans sought to spend their time not separated from each other, but together, in public spaces. Nasaw (1978) discusses America’s love affair with all things social by recounting our country’s variety of prolific public amusements, especially at the turn of the 20th century. Suggesting that Americans “lost not simply buildings and parks but also the sense of civic sociability they nourished and sustained” (p. 1). He further explores the omnipresent link between public amusements and urban society, defining “the city as a place of glamour and glitter, of fun and sociability” (p. 1). Where nightlife was once the

domain of a wealthy few, patronized playhouses, operas and private clubs, and in a few decades nightlife was opened up once again to vast and varied cross-sections of citizens. Americans soon frequented restaurants, baseball parks, vaudeville theatres, dance halls, picture shows, taverns and local pubs. By examining the many ways Americans participated in leisure, Nasaw demonstrates that ‘going out’ became not just a release from one’s work, but a way that people could socialize within their community. “The city was becoming as much a place of play as a place of work and recreation and play were necessities for cities” (p. 9).

Almost as quickly as urban social life re-emerged though, it fled to the suburbs. In the decades following World War II American suburbanites looked within their own homes and newly developed neighborhoods for socialability. With private lawns, who needed to go to the city park? With local shopping centers, who needed to go downtown to look for new school clothes? With movies, television and radio in one’s living room, who needed to go downtown to the theatre? As Americans fell in love with suburbia, urban centers lost the vitality and commerce that had once defined them.

Although many Americans sought entertainment indoors within their suburban environments, some cities looked for ways to regain the vibrancy once common to downtowns. Chatterton and Hollands (2002) discuss the importance of entertainment and play to urban centers like Newcastle, Manchester, and Dublin. Calling entertainments centers within a city “urban playscapes,” they investigate the role that youth culture attributes to an area and how nightspots cater to those that enjoy and frequent these places, benefiting the local economy and invigorating areas once decayed or forgotten.

These playscapes cater to young adults who are educated, open-minded, diverse, independent and value the place where they call home.

Florida (2002) refers to a similar group in our own country calling them the “creative class,” young professionals who engage in work whose function is to “create new forms.” They have values that may differ and define themselves from previous generations, valuing individuality, meritocracy, diversity and openness. The creative class seeks an “experiential” life in which they do not merely work and reside in an area, but actively participate in it (p. 68). They look for a “street level culture” that is fluid and on going, a community constantly mingling with itself and others (p. 182). Interviewing members of the creative class across the country, Florida discovers what’s significant to an area is its ‘quality of place’: what’s there, who’s there, and what’s going on. Many members of the creative class value entertainment in deciding where to live and in assessing the places where they live now. Audio identity (having a music scene) and nightlife played a significant role in this assessment for a great majority of the creative class. It wasn’t just merely entertainment, but diverse playscapes that they valued. Like urbanites in the 18th century, members of the creative class look for sociability and community through their entertainment. Within a modern urban center a varied grouping of social opportunities and the opportunity to chose among them defined their quality of place. Florida refers to these places in the words of Ray Oldenburg: *third places*.

Oldenburg (1989) analyzes the components and users of *third places* as he describes these places as neither home, nor work, but rather the place that we consciously choose to go. Places that “people can gather, and hang out simply for the pleasures of

good company and lively conversation” (p.27). In addition to studying modern third places: coffee shops, bookstores, hair salons, bars and cafes, Oldenburg cites the European and early American roots of these places: German beer gardens, English pubs, French cafes, and the American tavern. These social arenas, all part of the urban playscape, act as levelers, “reducing men to equality,” as inclusive places which, when clustered together, take form as entertainment districts or urban playscapes; what Oldenburg describes as social vitality (p. 226).

Cities like Austin, Texas and Dublin, Ireland link their sense of place largely to their playscapes. Florida examines both and takes Dublin’s revitalization efforts into special consideration. Dublin revitalized a dilapidated area known as Temple Bar into a thriving community now known for its abundance and diversity of entertainment and creative class residents. A ramshackle neighborhood just a couple decades ago Temple Bar set out to invigorate itself by restoring the same pubs where James Joyce, Bram Stocker and Samuel Beckett drank pints. Originally slated to become a transportation depot, the area is now a cultural district defined by its restaurants, pubs and cafes (Florida, 2002, p. 301). Florida notes that Temple Bar, like other playscapes, prides itself on its tolerance, open-mindedness and diversity- all characteristics of cities that “get it.”

*“Urban Paradise”:*

*The Urban Environment*

Cities are often divided into different entities by urban academics so that they may be analyzed in terms that are less abstract and broad. This method, while

understandable by being on a human scale, may ignore the contributions of the city in total. In contrast much of the research of city as a whole is limited to historic terms. Studying it as an active, complete organism, many urban historians attempt to qualify current cities in comparison to the events and emerging conditions of cities in history. Each method, while providing a framework to understand the vastness and diversity of cities, may leave holes in the fabric of the understanding of the city when studied alone. Thus, it becomes advantageous to analyze the city by both methods.

Jacobs (1961) analyzes New York and other major American cities in terms of a few individual, physical spaces: sidewalks, parks, aged buildings, blocks, slums, housing projects, and the automobile. While Nashville may call for other categories in which to understand it, Jacobs provides a framework to divide the city in more concrete terms that can be both individually and comprehensively investigated. Jacobs views the city as an “immense laboratory of trial and error, failure and success, in building and city design” (p. 6). Writing as an “attack” on the principles and theories that shaped the American city in the late 19th century and first half of the 20th century, Jacobs’ not only assesses the current state of American cities, but also provides suggestions for the improvement of these metropolitan spaces.

Working from the omnipresent influence of urban theorists, Ebenezer Howard and Le Corbusier, Jacobs’ posits that their ideal spaces of the Garden City and the Radiant City, respectively, were “irrelevant to the workings of cities” (p. 25) and thus unsuccessful. Jacobs’ offers one of the first analyses of the workings of the city. Beginning by understanding the social behavior of people in cities, Jacobs’ uses this

analysis, acquired through observations and interviews, to understand the economics of the city, what she deems as the most important facet of her work (p. 14). Through her study of the most ordinary events and people, Jacobs' finds that diversity, on a variety of levels, provides mutual support among the inhabitants of the city as well as in the city itself. Jacobs argues that this mutual support of diverse people, events and places must become ingrained in the "science of city planning and the art of city design" (p. 14).

Regarding the city in its entirety, Kunstler (2001) offers opportunities to "redirect what has amounted in recent times to a petty incoherent national discussion on how we live." Kunstler traces the growth, development and decline of cities through history. Highlighting Paris, Berlin, Rome and London at their cultural and political highs and Mexico City, Atlanta and Las Vegas as massive sprawling metropolises, Kunstler theorizes why some cities are viewed as successful while others are not.

Kunstler's successful cities benefited from strong visionary leaders and the implementation of strong architectural codes. In Paris, Haussmann and Napoleon III redesigned the city; in Berlin, Hitler and Speer envisioned the Third Reich in masculine Art Deco; in Rome, Augustus championed classicism; and in London, strong architects and planners like John Nash articulated classicism in the 19th century. Kunstler suggests cities in the 20th century "mark not so much the death of the classical idea in building, but the throwing away of all its hard-won principles, standards and technical considerations" (p. 190).

The American city, by its very nature, is comprised of different and sometimes competing entities, thus it becomes helpful to understanding them in parts. By dividing

the city into small entities, like Jacobs, we gain a comprehensive view, becoming more conscious of the many facets that comprise the city. When divided and analyzed in small sections like Lower Broadway, Nashville contains multiple layers in respect to urban theory, economics, authenticity and entertainment. Regarded for its cultural capital, the city thrives on an economy based on that culture. As a culture rooted in the traditions of the past, with an eye on the future, Nashville has grown into a regional metropolitan leader. Utilizing its history, historic resources and progressive economy it is a place recognized for the diversity and vibrancy intrinsic to cities.

*“Time and Time Again”:*

*A Historic Framework for Study*

While preservation theory, the study of urban entertainment economies, and the roles of tourism and entertainment in America allow for an analysis of urban playscapes in their contemporary environments, there exists a gap in understanding how urban playscapes evolve over time. Nashville’s Lower Broadway, as an urban playscape, must be addressed in an historic framework in order to understand its progress as a revitalized streetscape. Work of urban scholars point to methods in which urban landscapes are analyzed in order to comprehend their shifts over a specific time periods.

Evaluating small towns in middle Tennessee, Tolbert (1999) discusses how townscapes became “influential components of antebellum southern culture” (p. 10). Utilizing photographs, diaries, personal letters, maps and newspapers of the time Tolbert addresses the role small towns played as “forces of cultural change in the region” (p. 7).

Through these various primary sources, Tolbert defines an evolving urban landscape and cultural identity over time.

Heath (2001) employs primary sources similar to Tolbert's in his evaluation of the transformation of New Bedford, Massachusetts. His study addresses New Bedford's development from a river port village to a city on the "brink of a phase of large-scale industrialization" (p. xx) in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Drawing upon period maps, photographs, city directories, local newspaper accounts, and New Bedford city documents Heath demonstrates that New Bedford's rapid industrialization helped transform the city's economy and identity.

Documenting the transformation of Charlotte, North Carolina as an icon of the New South, Hanchett (1998) evaluates the local government's role in urban development and the impact of federal programs on the city from the 1930s through the 1960s. Hanchett uses newspaper articles to corroborate his analysis of government programs as promulgators of urban separation physically and culturally. Government programs, as Hanchett establishes, often play an important role in the reconfiguration and evolution of American cities. Grogan and Proscio (2000) illustrate how economics and politics can drastically alter urban neighborhoods. Highlighting the work of public-private partnerships and specific government incentives like the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit, Grogan and Proscio demonstrate how blighted neighborhoods experience revitalization through concerted public and private investment. Through the utilization of specific government programs and incentives, Hanchett, Grogan and Proscio decipher urban transformations over time.

In order to understand the changes in Lower Broadway's aesthetics, reputation and economy it becomes imperative to address the area's changes within an historic framework as well as in the context of preservation theory, the urban environment, urban entertainment and economics, and the ways in which tourism shapes urban identity. By understanding Lower Broadway's transformation in the late 20th century in these terms, the area can be addressed as an evolving urban landscape.

## CHAPTER III

### UNDERSTANDING CHANGE ON LOWER BROADWAY

The thesis, based upon knowledge of the significant changes in aesthetics, reputation and economy of Nashville's Lower Broadway in the late 20th century, involves both quantitative research and qualitative analysis. The buildings of Lower Broadway were first identified, then significant alterations in their use documented, as were local legislation and incentives for improvement. Lastly, the buildings were analyzed to evaluate how shifts over time influenced transformations in the built environment. The Ryman Auditorium, as the hallmark of the area's decline and revitalization, provided focus for documentation, identification and cultural analysis of the evolution of Lower Broadway.

*"Close Encounters":*

*Identification- Lower Broadway as an Epitome District*

Differing from other areas of Nashville, Lower Broadway forms an epitome district within the city as a separate urban entity with its own livelihood and personality, bounded by Fifth Avenue to the south, First Avenue and the Cumberland River to the north (see Figure 8). The study of Lower Broadway was restricted to the blocks between Fifth and Third Avenues, because it converges with another downtown epitome district,

Second Avenue. Culturally, architecturally, and symbolically, Second Avenue and the businesses that exist there carry different significances than the northern area of Lower Broadway. Moreover, the blocks between Fifth and Third Avenues are also the most influenced by the Ryman Auditorium's metamorphosis.

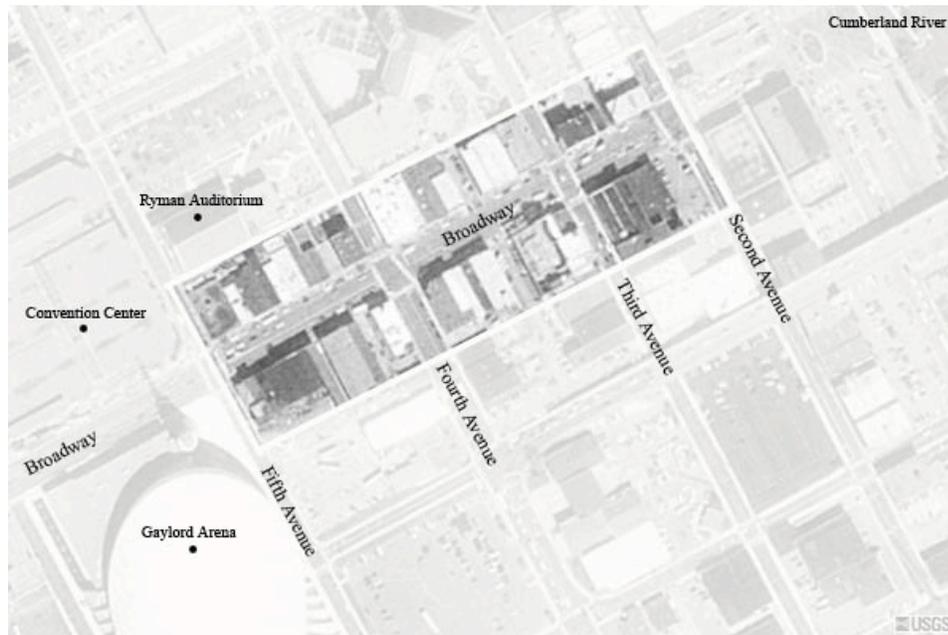


Figure 8. Map of Lower Broadway (highlighted). The 400 block is located just across an alley from the Ryman Auditorium and in the heart of Nashville's downtown. (Map courtesy of Terra server, 2005)

The research commenced with an identification of the changes in building use and in property values on Lower Broadway. The shifts were mapped chronologically from 1974 through 1995. As the beginning point in the approach, 1974 marks the year the Grand Ole Opry moved from its downtown location at the Ryman to Opryland. 1995 serves as the terminus to the methodology as the year that the Ryman Auditorium

reopened for live performances after extensive restoration. The Ryman's closing and reopening bookend the significant shifts Lower Broadway experienced during its periods of dilapidation and revitalization. Major adaptations in country music also occurred during this time and the city reflected these adjustments by shifting its economic focus towards country music and its subsidiary enterprises.

Nashville city directories were employed to identify variations in building use over time. Directories, examined in five-year increments from 1975 through 1995, allowed for a focused inspection of the transfiguration on Lower Broadway during the late 20th century. The information culled from this stage was listed in graphic form highlighting significant periods on Lower Broadway. Compared with country music's shifts in subgenre popularity over the same 45-year period, this evaluation allowed for an understanding how the built environment embodied the changes of a community in physical form.

Property appraisal values supplemented the information garnered from city directories. Acquired from Nashville's Office of the Property Assessor, property values were examined for 1975, 1984, 1993 and 1997. These dates reflect the years that Nashville assessed citywide property values, thus every building on Lower Broadway. A systematic sample of properties outside of Lower Broadway, but still located within Nashville's center city, provided comparison data assessing the consistency with which property values increased. One property was chosen at random for each of Nashville's five redevelopment districts within the I-265 highway loop as well as five properties

inside of the I-265 loop, but not part of a redevelopment district. Significant value increases and decreases were presented in graph form to recognize patterns.

Photographic evidence was also employed to document changes during this time period. Photographs were obtained from the Nashville Room of the Davidson County Library. They were examined to find any significant façade alterations between 1974 and the late 1990s. Specific focus of photographic evaluation was placed on signage, fenestration, and lighting, as well as overall maintenance of the buildings to exemplify shifts in care and reputation for Lower Broadway.

*“Come On Over”:*

#### *Identification- Legislation and Incentives for Lower Broadway*

The next stage of the research focused on legislation and incentives encouraging the preservation and revitalization of Lower Broadway. Public and private agencies worked together to bring about significant improvements in the area. Through this partnership, funding and local laws were implemented that encouraged façade renovations, changes in businesses and building ownership, new investments and streetscape improvements.

The research followed a chronological path, focusing on local and statewide legislation promoting Lower Broadway’s revitalization. Any amendments to legislation were obtained from Nashville Metropolitan government’s records and the archives of Metropolitan’s Historical Commission. These laws were identified and catalogued for the time period after the aforementioned planning proposal and continued through 1995

with specific focus on Lower Broadway's inclusion into the Capital Mall Redevelopment District. Cataloging reforms in chronological order allowed the researcher to assess local government's increasing or decreasing role in Lower Broadway's evolution.

As these laws did not affect just Lower Broadway in a vacuum, but the Nashville community in its entirety, newspaper articles were examined to address community support and opposition. The *Nashville Banner* and *Tennessean* provided well-documented accounts of public opinions regarding this reshaping. While newspapers often have biases, the use of both Nashville's liberal and conservative newspapers allowed for a more thorough understanding of public opinion during this time of change. *Tennessean* and *Banner* articles dating from 1974 through 1995 were obtained from the Nashville Room's vertical file on Lower Broadway and compared against each other for consistencies in public and editorial opinion.

The legislative incentives that affected Lower Broadway were compared against the "Broadway Market and Design Study" (1982) to evaluate revitalization progress. Examined chronologically, these local legislation incentives enabled the researcher to evaluate the partnerships that developed among Metro government, the building and business owners and the Broadway Revitalization Committee. With the major changes in the Lower Broadway streetscape identified, those changes were analyzed to understand Lower Broadway's evolution, and the change in reputation that facilitated its revitalization.

*“Good Boy with a Bad Reputation”:*

*Analysis- Reputation and Tourism*

The measurable changes on Lower Broadway- property values, laws, variations in business use- indicated the overall revitalization of the area. While this transformation required a significant amount of interpretation to understand differences in values and reputation, these factors are often the most eminent signifiers of true and lasting transition to an environment. As building values rose and businesses shifted from adult movie houses to honky tonks and bars, then to tourist-friendly attractions, Lower Broadway experienced a breakthrough in reputation. The area shifted from a cultural black hole to a tourist calling card that defined Nashville.

Analysis began with the identification of Lower Broadway’s nomination for the National Register of Historic Places. Although biases are often recognizable in documents such as these, the nomination holds valuable information regarding Lower Broadway’s historical and cultural significance in the early 1980s.

Documentation of preservation and community planning initiatives continued with a Market and Design Study for the Broadway National Register Historic District. This document also included prospective design guidelines for the district’s future. Undertaken in 1983 by an outside planning firm and implemented by Metropolitan government, the plan assessed Lower Broadway’s condition at the time and contained a revitalization plan that included façade and streetscape improvements and tourism proposals. The researcher used this document to assess Lower Broadway’s initial revitalization goals and evaluate achievement in revitalization over a 25-year period. The

plan's goals and proposals were organized in list form and then compared against initiatives undertaken and those that were not. The impact and/ or success of the undertaken plans was evaluated using scholars' assessment of successful urban spaces (Jacobs, 1961; Oldenburg, 1989).

Examination of tourism advertisements and marketing provide a framework for the evolution of Lower Broadway as a tourist destination for Nashville. Using the work of Shaffer (2001) as a guide to discern changes in public perception, visual tourism material of Lower Broadway was then examined: tourist brochures, posters published by the city; and tourism information published by the Broadway Revitalization Committee. This approach provided a window for the documentation and understanding of conversions in the area's reputation. As Shaffer illustrates, published advertisements often act as both shapers and reflectors of particular cultures and values. They exhibit both the goals of those promulgating change, here the business owners and metropolitan government, as well as the tailored response to consumers' wants and needs.

In addition to visual material, tourism guides published between 1974 and 1995 were examined in this phase of the research. The guides used included several serial editions (Frommer's, 1994 and 1995) and a number of independent guides published as single editions from the early 1970s through the middle 1990s, and the guides published by the city's Historical Commission. Providing insight into how Lower Broadway transformed into a major tourist destination for Nashville and country music, the guides were analyzed for their descriptions of the Ryman and Lower Broadway to assess each entities' presence as tourist destinations. Specific time periods when Lower Broadway

was noted as an exceptional “to do” were then compared against previously culled information.

By comparing and contrasting information gathered from the different stages of research, Lower Broadway’s revitalization was brought into focus. Property tax information compared with façade grants, zoning changes, local legislation and tourists’ guides, provide the means to discern patterns in the revitalization process. The research identified specific periods of involvement among Metro government, private business owners, and preservation advocates. The information was examined not only to find patterns and overlapping events, but to develop an understanding of keystone projects in the area that promulgated its decline and/ or revival.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE EVOLVING REPUTATION OF LOWER BROADWAY

The cultural and economic shifts that define Lower Broadway's revitalization form a chronological story contingent upon public/ private partnerships. The people involved in these partnerships understood that Lower Broadway's success was dependent on its architectural and cultural identity. Layers of history that helped define the area, these identities also tied Lower Broadway to larger changes in Nashville and country music during the 20th century. While Lower Broadway transformed significantly from the 1970s through the mid 1990s- from Furniture Row, to honky tonk row, to porno and wino row, to tourist row- its unique layers celebrate the area's rich cultural and architectural patina that defines this distinctive area of Nashville's downtown (see Figure 9).



Figure 9. The Ryman Auditorium and Lower Broadway. The Ryman is located just behind the honky tonks on Lower Broadway's 400 block. This proximity helped to create Lower Broadway's country music and cultural identity. (Photograph by author, 2004).

*“He’s Gone. And Nothin’s Gonna Bring Him Back”:*

*The Opry Leaves Lower Broadway*

When the Grand Ole Opry made the decision to move its Saturday night country music performance out of its 50-year home at the Ryman Auditorium in the early 1970s, Lower Broadway was, by most accounts, already in a state of dilapidation. Lower Broadway began its transformation in the 1960s and early 1970s from Furniture Row, dominated by furniture stores with a cluster of honky tonks located on the street’s 400 block, to a spotty conglomeration of adult movie houses and gift stores that mixed with the hordes of music fans coming weekly to watch and listen to their favorite music stars of the Opry. Pugh (1974) described the area at the time of the Opry’s relocation as blighted and punctuated by prostitutes and panhandlers, but with surprisingly little crime. Despite the lack of crime, Lower Broadway was sometimes just too much for many Opry fans who did not live in or have much association with urban environments: “the Opry people just don’t know how to handle them [prostitutes and panhandlers]” (Pugh, 1974). With many fans uneasy about the environment of Lower Broadway and the Ryman needing costly repairs and maintenance, the Opry fled Lower Broadway for Opryland, a new music-oriented theme park 12 miles outside of Nashville. As the Chamber of Commerce and Nashville’s city government encouraged development in suburban enclaves, downtown became the domain of prostitutes and panhandlers, down on their luck musicians, and the establishments that catered to them. Local Nashvillians recalled the Opry’s departure from downtown as the nail in the coffin for the once thriving area (Hilman, 1980).

When Opryland opened in 1972, much of Nashville's tourism veered away from the city and toward county music's only theme park, which included a convention complex with hotel and multiple stages for live musical performances. With these accoutrements, Opryland offered a vision of Nashville and country music that was family friendly and upbeat. Like Zukin's (1995) assessment of Disneyland, Opryland was able to draw tourists away from Nashville's downtown and the Ryman because of its focus on theming and a commercialization of mainstream interests. Opryland's prominence in Nashville's tourism industry at the time, at least in tourism guides of the late 1970s and early 1980s, included passages that read as promotional tools for the theme park rather than independent publications. The guidebooks defined Opryland, especially after its sale to Gaylord Entertainment in the early 1980s, as the embodiment of Music City, U.S.A. (Glasgow, 1978, pp. 41-44; Schemmel, 1982, p.140; Scheer, 1982, p.138). Opryland though, with its interest in family-oriented leisure activities, eschewed much of the authentic history, background and place that defined the ballads of country music; and the Ryman Auditorium was blandly footnoted in the guides as a relic of country music's past.

*"Honky Tonkin' Lifestyle":*

*Honky Tonks, Pawnshops and Preservation on Lower Broadway*

Crime and dilapidation set in at a steady rate on Lower Broadway after the Opry's departure and was virtually ignored by city agencies until historic preservationists took the first steps toward revitalization. Broadway's 1980 National Register of Historic

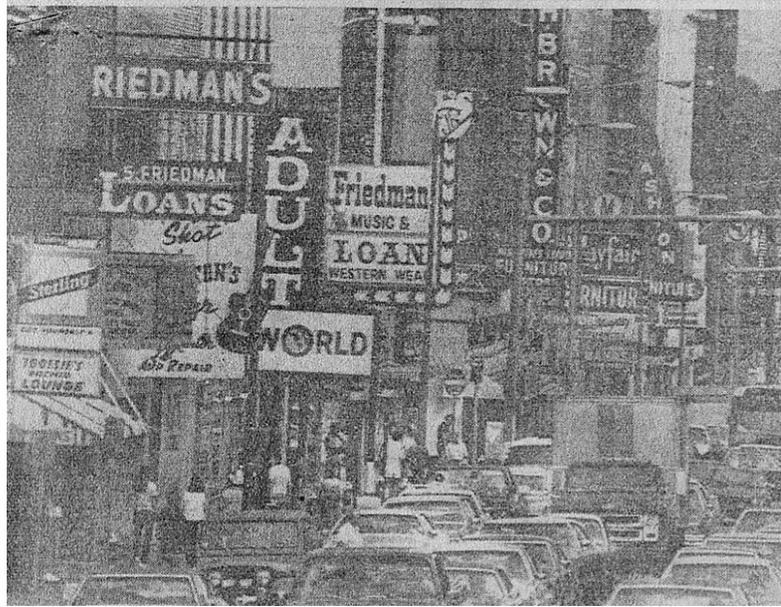


Figure 10. Signage on Lower Broadway, 1979. The various signs highlight the many businesses on the street that mixed with adult venues like “Adult World” and pawnshops like “Friedman’s.” (Photograph from *Nashville Banner*, 1979).

Places nomination initiated renewal as the first private preservation effort for the area.

Businesses on the street shifted from furniture stores to adult gift stores, pawnshops, frequently changing bars and regularly vacant storefronts; and preservationists took proactive steps to ward against Broadway’s further deterioration and encourage its redevelopment.

Lower Broadway’s listing on the National Register made the area eligible for federal tax credits, promoted rehabilitation of qualified structures, and provided local and national notoriety as a member of the Register. The nomination documented the area’s major architectural and cultural features and listed each building as noncontributing, contributing, or significant to Lower Broadway’s historical importance. While such

nominations are often written with heavy biases toward the nominated place, the nomination's statement of significance lent insight to Broadway's cultural and architectural impact at the time. Lower Broadway's layering of historical significance, both architecturally and culturally, exhibited the ways in which Heath (2001) and Ruskin (1849) celebrated the spirit of buildings' ever-changing and multi-layered histories. The buildings' multi-faceted and century-long impact on Nashville provided inspiration for future preservation and development.

Though the nomination was submitted for architectural significance, and a catalogue of the area's architectural features, most of the statement focused on the 400 block's association with the Ryman Auditorium and country music. While the document noted that this association was relatively recent, and consequently too early for nomination on that merit alone, it stated Lower Broadway was "of extraordinary importance to Nashville as country music continues its phenomenal expansion in world popularity" (Paine, 1979). The closing statement addressed the area's potential for improvement and suggested, "if country music can be said to have a focus, that focus is on the Broadway district" (Paine, 1979). The author's celebration of entertainment as a valuable part of America's culturally identity supports Nasaw's (1978) assessment that places like Lower Broadway defined cities as places of fun, glamour and sociability (p.1). Even in the early 1980s, Broadway was recognized for its valuable cultural link among music, place and identity.

The honky tonks along Lower Broadway formed what Oldenburg (1989) recognizes as unique *third places* (p.16). Although once the domain of the Southern

working rural class, these honky tonks became places where creative types, like those that Florida (2003) described, went to experience different forms of music and culture intrinsic to Nashville. This area allowed new residents, tourists, and people of diverse backgrounds to be physically and ideologically connected to Nashville's past and collective culture. Like Thompson's (1989) taverns of early America, the honky tonks provided a middling, quasi-public space that welcomed all levels of society.

The nomination described Broadway's cultural milieu with a depiction of diverse businesses and a heady mix of bars, pawnshops, furniture stores, wholesalers, and gift shops. These business typologies were in constant flux from the Opry's departure through the early 1990s. The Nashville city directories of 1975, 1980, 1985, 1990 and 1995 illustrated a steady shift from a majority of furniture stores, pawnshops, bars and adult venues, but, by 1995, a large amount of vacant storefronts dominated the streetscape. The great number of vacancies revealed a streetscape undergoing significant change and transition. With recently restored facades, the buildings' vacancies allowed for new entertainment venues and professional storefronts more in line with the city agencies' and preservationists' visions for a revitalized Lower Broadway (see Figure 11).

### Changes in business use by block

	200 Block	300 Block	400 Block	Totals
1975*				
professional	1	2	1	4
furniture store		7	1	8
pawn shop	1		4	5
adult venue	1		6	7
bar/ honky tonk			4	4
general retail		2	6	8
vacant	1	4		5
1980*				
professional		1	1	2
furniture store		6	1	7
pawn shop	2		4	6
adult venue	1		4	5
bar/ honky tonk			4	4
general retail		4	4	8
vacant	1	4	5	10
1985*				
professional		2		2
furniture store		2		2
pawn shop	2		3	5
adult venue	1		3	4
bar/ honky tonk		1	9	10
general retail		2	5	7
vacant	2	7	1	10
1990*				
professional				
furniture store		2		2
pawn shop	1		2	3
adult venue			3	3
bar/ honky tonk			10	10
general retail		4	3	7
vacant	4	6	3	13
1995*				
professional		2		2
furniture store		2	1	3
pawn shop			1	1
adult venue				
bar/ honky tonk			6	6
general retail	3	1	3	7
vacant	2	8	9	19

\* data missing from city directories in these years for some properties

Figure 11. Changes in business use on Lower Broadway, 1975 through 1995. The changes in business uses on Lower Broadway illustrate the loss of adult venues by the mid-1990s and many storefronts poised for new uses after their renovations as exhibited by the vacancies that were filled shortly thereafter.

The 400 block illustrated another story for Lower Broadway. As the only block with music businesses in continual operation from 1975 to 1995, such as Tootsie's

Orchid Lounge, Lawrence Brother’s Record Shop, and Ernest Tubb Record Shop, the block’s honky tonk and musical identity remained constant while the other two blocks were in transition. (Only one storefront in the 300 block, Harley Holt Furniture, retained a presence on Broadway from 1975 through 1995, see Figure 12). Most of the businesses of the 400 block catered to musicians in spite of the Opry’s absence from the area, but the block was not free from the adult venues that blighted the streetscape.



Figure 12. Business in continual operation, 1975 through 1995. Tootsie’s Purple Orchid Lounge, a world-famous honky tonk, and two record shops, Ernest Tubb and Lawrence Brothers were the only businesses on the 400 block that did not move or close between 1975 and 1995. Harley Holt Furniture store was also in continual operation during this time, but closed in the late 1990s. (map courtesy of Nashville MDHA GIS, 2005)

Furniture sellers, musicians, prostitutes, business owners, and souvenir salespeople peppered this diverse block that featured honky tonks, retail establishments, and pawnshops.

Jacobs (1961) praised diversity as a signifier of a successful urban environment, but it must be understood that all forms of diversity in Nashville were not considered desirable. The mix of businesses on Lower Broadway in the 1970s and 1980s actually threatened the area's livelihood and future success. The vacancies and types of business, especially in the four 400 block, were promulgators to the Opry's departure according to Nashville *Banner* and *Tennessean* newspaper articles of the late 1970s and early 1980s (Hillman, 1980; Bailey, 1983). Lower Broadway, being ignored by the city and public support for improvements, provided the opportunity for some building owners to practice demolition by neglect (Carey, 1996). The assortment of storefronts, especially in the 400 block, caused some long-time business owners to close their downtown outlets because of patrons discomfort with the mix of characters on the street (Pugh, 1974). Ironically, the diversity that helped to further Lower Broadway's shabbiness and decrepitude is what Nashville's Metropolitan Historical Commission (MHC) rallied to protect during the active years of the streets' renewal.

*"City Love":*

*The City of Nashville Gets Involved with Lower Broadway*

Private preservationists instigated Lower Broadway's inclusion to National Register, but city involvement in the area promoted lasting, tangible results. Examples

included façade improvements, changes in business use, increased public safety and promotion of Lower Broadway as a tourist destination. Begun with a market and design study by an Ann Arbor, Michigan planning firm, Lower Broadway took shape conceptually, with design guidelines and suggestions for overall improvement of the street. This planning document, known as the “Market and Design Study for the Lower Broadway National Register District,” led to Lower Broadway’s official recognition as a certified redevelopment district, a destination that provided fiscal incentives for owner improvement of their properties as well as provided legislative power to Nashville’s Metropolitan Government.

Implemented by the MHC and the Metropolitan Development and Housing Agency (MDHA), and the Broadway Revitalization Committee (BRC), the “Market and Design Study” set in motion Broadway’s two-decade-long endeavor with redevelopment. At the time of the study in 1982, Nashville’s downtown experienced the first steps of revitalization. The city encouraged new businesses to locate in the Central Business District and Second Avenue, which was in its initial phases of redevelopment after its National Register nomination. The city planned a convention center and riverfront improvements were underway, but Lower Broadway was noticeably absent from the renewed interest in the area. Lower Broadway’s only recognition by the city was MHC’s office located on Broadway at the corner of Second Avenue.

The study signified the active role city officials, private business, and property owners instigated for Lower Broadway’s all-encompassing revitalization plan. The study suggested (a) the physical clean-up and repair of the area, (b) the development of a

positive public image for Broadway, (c) an expanded and upgraded commercial mix, (d) the development of office and residential use, and (e) creation of the necessary support and infrastructure (“Market and Design Study,” 1982). Beyond marketing, the study also provided design guidelines for Lower Broadway’s buildings’ facades, overall architectural guidelines and urban design guidelines (see Figure 13). The scope of the study did not merely contain broad suggestions and casual guidelines, but incorporated specific implementations for the street, design improvements for every building, and specific comments on individual windows, cornices and awnings.

The design suggestions considered the historic framework of the streetscape as a cohesive unit of Italianate-style and Tapestry Brick-style buildings dotted with contemporary structures built in the mid-20th century (Paine, 1979). As the National Register nomination suggested, the streetscape, though it contained some buildings of individual architectural merit, was most significant as a culturally and architecturally cohesive district. The study also pointed to the economic feasibility of storefront restorations. As Smith (1983) and Warner (1983) discussed, the restoration of such facades often help to revitalize areas through increased property values, feelings of community identity and pride of ownership. If such restorations shunned their authenticity in favor of current styles or thematic approaches and thus disregarded Tschudi-Madsen’s (1985) theories of authenticity, the structures risked the loss of the very integrity and historic value that promoted their initial preservation. Although many of Lower Broadway’s storefronts were considerably altered over time, the city still

valued their historic contribution to the area's significance and took steps to retain them, pointing to the increased value placed on the street's historic integrity.

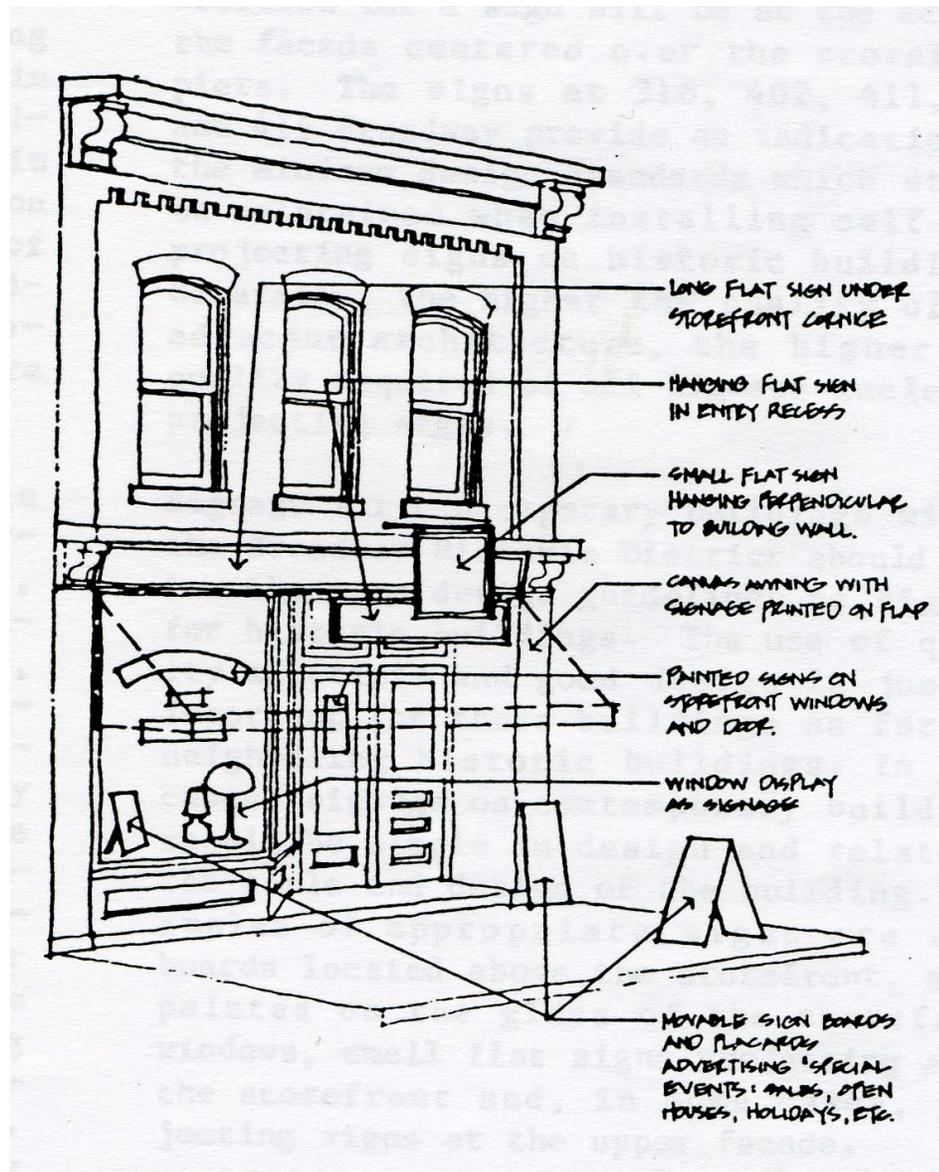


Figure 13. Design suggestions for façade renovations on Lower Broadway. The study describes such alteration as “typical” of historic buildings. While aesthetically pleasing, the renovations could be seen anywhere in the country and promote the erasure of the defining patina that often accompanies many historic structures. (“Market and Design Study,” 1982).

The MDHA, Historic Nashville Incorporated (HNI), and MHC came together under Nashville's metropolitan government to bring about incentives and legislative implementation that had a lasting effect on Lower Broadway. As Kunstler (2001) posited, it is often cities with strong municipal involvement that are eventually redefined by their architectural and cultural significance. The Napoleon III and Haussmann plan in Paris, and the Speer plan in Berlin, were implemented to transform old, blighted cities. These dominating administrations, which envisioned their cities as monuments, employed drastic measures to revitalize their cities. Kunstler provides fodder for evaluating the important role administrations play in urban redevelopment. Though not to the scale of Paris's rebuilding in the 19th century, or Berlin's in the early 20th century, Nashville's strong civic involvement brought about significant changes for Broadway.

*"Stop the Presses":*

*Public Opinion Motivates Lower Broadway*

Press coverage of Lower Broadway by the Nashville *Tennessean* and *Banner* in the mid-1980s provided insight to public opinion regarding the area. Although newspapers often display their biases as matters of pride, the *Tennessean* and *Banner* neutrally provided documentation of Lower Broadway's development where city archive records were incomplete. Both papers interviewed property owners, business owners, and Metropolitan officials regularly from 1982 through the early 1990s. With remarkably comprehensive coverage, the range of articles by both the *Tennessean* and *Banner* suggested an interest in Lower Broadway by the Nashville community at large.

Consequent to Lower Broadway's inclusion in the National Register and the Market and Design Study, the BRC solidified its commitment to the area with a focused effort on the street's revitalization. The *Banner* reported the creation of a director post in 1982, filled by a preservationist (Burke, 1983), an effort that gestured to a valuation in historic preservation as an economic and marketing tool by business and property owners. BRC's director, Mary Anne Eanes, provided a concentrated voice for the association and infused newspaper coverage with professional opinions that reflected BRC's goals of increased economic vitality, aesthetic improvements and an increased public safety in the area.

At the same time, both the *Tennessean* and *Banner* informed Nashvillians about an MDHA program for façade improvements on Lower Broadway. The program was funded by Community Development Grants and supplied building owners with up to \$10,000 in loans for storefront restorations. Mayor Richard Fulton was "very pleased with the success" of the program (Fletcher, 1983). In only a few months, so many loans were awarded that the MDHA sought additional funding. The agency furthered its commitment to Lower Broadway with its application for a grant from the Economic Development Agency (EDA) for the improvement of sidewalks, landscaping and pedestrian areas. The *Banner* quoted Mary Anne Eanes in 1983, that the EDA grant was "crucial in the implementation of the plans to improve the Broadway Historic District" (Hudgins, 1983).

Photographs of the building facades illustrated comprehensive changes to the streetscape and displayed the degree to which the façade loans helped shape Lower

Broadway. Photographs taken in 1980 for the National Register nomination showed a street comprised of turn-of-the-century structures masked by aluminum slipcovers and unsympathetic signage. The alterations appeared cheap, woefully unattractive, and concealed any architectural significance the buildings possessed. When the area was photographed again in 1994, dramatic physical changes characterized the appearance of the street, with property owners having removed aluminum slipcovers thus restoring the buildings' brickwork and details (see Figure 14). Also notable were the amount of boarded-up windows that had been uncovered and restored by 1994. Storefronts were conscientiously restored, which lent a pedestrian and visitor friendly appearance to Broadway. Although not all of the buildings received such attention, the improvements were comprehensive enough to change Lower Broadway's physical image and its reputation.

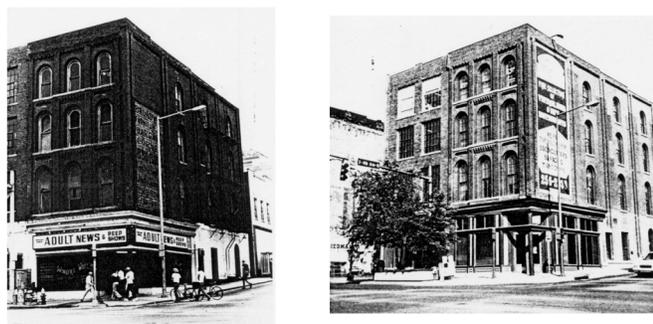


Figure 14. Photographic comparison of façade improvements to 400 Broadway. 1980 (left) and 1994 (right). The photos illustrate the aesthetic transition on Lower Broadway. The closing of “Adult World” allowed for sensitive façade and storefront rehabilitation, brickwork restoration, new, sensitive windows, and restoration of the painted advertisement on the side of the structure. (Courtesy of Ephemera Collection, Historic Nashville, Inc. Downtown Survey, 1979-1994).

These changes were so significant that both the *Tennessean* and *Banner* covered the façade improvements and Lower Broadway's public safety issues in the early and middle 1980s. As the city tried to encourage tourists and Nashville residents to invest and spend time on Lower Broadway, it was faced with solving the problem of adult entertainment outlets on the streets. Prostitutes and the homeless moved among adult movie houses, adult bookstores, gift shops and massage parlors in the same vicinity as those tourists catching a quick glimpse of the Ryman before they were whisked to Opryland on air-conditioned bus tours. City officials and the BRC knew that the removal of the adult-oriented storefronts was imperative to Broadway's success. Regular newspaper coverage of a crackdown on fire, health and safety codes in the buildings where these businesses operated, and some tenants were motivated to leave the area (Bostick, 1988). The Merchants Hotel, longtime known for its association with prostitutes, closed in 1985 after violating fire codes (Gordon, 1985). That year, half of the adult stores on Lower Broadway had closed, however the city and BRC continued to place pressure on the store and property owners. The *Tennessean* even publicly named property owners who the paper asserted were prohibitive to Broadway's revitalization by continuing to rent to such businesses as the Ellwest Theatre, Adult World and Swinger's World (Hilman, 1986).

Further stress was placed on adult entertainment centers as Nashville announced plans for a convention center that backed up to Broadway and included an upscale hotel. The convention center complex signaled a multi-million dollar investment in the area. Subsequent to the finalization of the convention center's plan, the Ryman Group,

comprised of Central Parking Systems, Opryland and the Matthew Company (a construction firm) proposed a \$320 million development including restoration of the Ryman and the creation of a downtown park, which was to be a historic version of Opryland. The project was contingent on Broadway's inclusion to the Capital Mall Redevelopment Plan though, which provided fiscal incentives to included properties. The Ryman Group's investment was viewed as so powerful in the late 1970s that a related *Banner* article was titled: "Ryman development seen as cleansing Lower Broadway" (Fortune, 1987). The newspapers shifted their focus from support of public programs for Lower Broadway to cheerleading large private investments in the area. Unfortunately, the Ryman Group's plan included purchasing property along Broadway to either tear down or redevelop according to the Group's guidelines, which shunned the area's historic fabric ("The missing puzzle piece," 1987). Proposals for the project included demolishing Lower Broadway buildings' except for their storefronts and enclosing much of the area in a glass "bubble" (Gordon, 1987).

The re-interpretation of Lower Broadway as a historic version of Opryland by the Ryman Group calls to Lowenthal's (1985) discussion of historic structures' different roles depending on their interpretation. Although the area was unquestionably valued for its historic significance in respect to Nashville and country music's culture, its interpretation by the Ryman Group called for the area to be re-imagined as something more akin to a thematic interpretation of country music' past, like Opryland.

The *Banner* and *Tennessean*, while publicly targeting the adult entertainment venues on Broadway, made scarcely a mention of the bars on the street. The exclusion of

bars from the lists of problems to the area's renewal signified that the bars, especially those on the 400 block, were a valuable part of the area's cultural cache. The National Register nomination identified Broadway's bars as culturally significant, not just to Nashville, but also to country music and consequently to American culture. The press complemented this assessment in the years that followed by identifying such bars and musical institutions as Tootsie's, Gruhn Guitars, Lawrence Records and Ernest Tubb as permanent, desirable businesses on Broadway.

Despite the press's shift in focus in the late 1980s, the partnership between the city, the MDHA and the BRC indicated the extent of the 20-year revitalization project as needful of both public and private investment and support. The partnership and efforts involved in the project, as documented in the public eye by both of Nashville's newspapers, suggested a comprehensive interest in Lower Broadway throughout the city.

*"That's When the Party Started":*

#### *Inclusion into Redevelopment Districts*

The public-private partnership to rejuvenate Lower Broadway reached a highpoint by the late 1980s with full-scale efforts by the BRC, MDHA, MHC, HNI, the Ryman Group, and the Nashville Convention Center. All groups realized Lower Broadway's potential as an economic "gold mine" (Fletcher, 1982) consequent to MDHA's and MHC's preservation and development efforts. By 1987, Lower Broadway was included in the Capital Mall Redevelopment Plan and preservation efforts took an economic focus that had a lasting impact on the area's identity and tourism.

Redevelopment districts are, by Tennessee law, legally-binding programs that provide property owners and local governments certain privileges (Capital Mall Redevelopment Plan, 1982). By the close of the decade, Lower Broadway, was sandwiched between two redevelopment districts, Capital Mall and Rutledge Hill. Pressure from the Ryman Group promoted the inclusion of Lower Broadway's north side into the Capital Mall District, making it eligible for the boons afforded such districts. By its inclusion into the Capital Mall Redevelopment District, Lower Broadway's redevelopment benefited from tax increment financing, land assembly by eminent domain, relocation assistance, land use control, and design review. Additional benefits included waiting periods and public notification for building alterations and demolitions, changes consistent with the *Secretary of Interior Standards for Rehabilitation*, and the rezoning of properties for residential use on Lower Broadway. Broadway's inclusion in the Capital Mall District, followed by the street's south side addition to the Rutledge Hill District; both predated the eventual inclusion of both sides of the street in the Capital Hill District in 1997. With both sides of Broadway legally protected by the late 1980s and development assistance for rehabilitation projects encouraged by the plan, the city solidified its commitment to the revitalization of Broadway. As a nationally-recognized preservation district, developers and property owners were courted for investment, a steep change from the laissez-faire attitude of the 1970s.

*“Main Street Shuffle”:*

*Lower Broadway Fills out “The District” to Become a Main Street Community*

As the city took its first steps towards Broadway’s revitalization in the mid 1980s, MCH and HNI implemented Broadway’s development as a Main Street community. Sponsored by the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the Main Street program provided organizational assistance and funding for areas redeveloping as traditional American main streets. At the time, the National Trust was partially funded by the federal government, thus, their involvement with Broadway’s redevelopment implied not just an understanding of the street’s significance to America’s cultural and architectural history by Broadway’s proponents, but by America’s preservation community as well. The area’s inclusion into the Main Street program soon encompassed Nashville’s Printer’s Alley and Second Avenue Historic District and formed *The District*.

The District program, although not officially a part of Nashville redevelopment network until the early 1990s, provided a context for tourism and reputation redevelopment in the area. Most significant in the Main Street approach was Lower Broadway’s pairing with nearby historic streetscapes to form The District, rather than an individual Main Street. This grouping not only provided for increased funding and support by the National Trust, but also enabled the city government to package several areas of downtown as a cohesive unit. Visitors and investors no longer participated in a single street’s activities, but an entire package in which one street provided support as well as competition for the other. Tourists could spend an entire day or longer in The

District. Although the area was full of souvenir retail establishments and bars, the city, BRC, and Second Avenue and Printer's Alley supporters proposed to change The District's image to one dominated by entertainment and the arts (The District, 1990).

Prior to the grouping of the three streetscapes, Second Avenue and Printer's Alley reshaped themselves as tourist-friendly historic districts. Second Avenue had courted large-scale developments to the street in its 19th century warehouses, and thematically-inclined Hard Rock Café and Wildhorse Saloon. Both venues occupied several buildings and left little of their architecturally-significant interiors intact. Moreover, the buildings' exteriors appeared to have been carefully rehabilitated, but lacked the patina that could authenticate the street. Stovel (1985) cautioned against theming of streetscapes, in which buildings lose their intrinsic identity in favor of the widely accepted and aesthetic pleasing "Main Street Model," commercialized spaces that eschew Lower Broadway's authenticity. Second Avenue, although a National Register District, lost much of its defining patina in favor of a Main Street aesthetic, so much so that design work on Main Streets, like Second Avenue, have "resulted in the substitution of generalized and bogus architectural expression for significant historic/ architectural expression" (Stovel, 1984, p. 51) (see Figure15).



Figure 15. Comparison photographs of Lower Broadway and Second Broadway. Lower Broadway (left) illustrates a cultural and architectural patina with a variety of storefronts and signage that help to authenticate this distinct area. Second Avenue (right) illustrates the removal of patina and diversity in favor of a Main Street aesthetic that could be anywhere in the United States. (Photos by author, 2004).

By the late 1980s and early 1990s, Broadway piggy-backed commercially and thematically revitalized streets, like Second Avenue and Printers Alley, and subsequently, ran perilously close to losing its defining character and patina. The decision to join Second Avenue's and Printers' Alley's revitalization efforts echoes Chatterton and Hollands (2002) assessment of the trend toward branded nightlife in the early 1990s. Like many British cities, Nashville's historic streetscapes focused on thematic approaches to revitalization through "branded, stylized nightlife."

MDHA, MHC, and HNI did not view Lower Broadway as an epitome district, but rather, as part of a district that supported and paid homage to other epitome districts in downtown. By trying to remake Lower Broadway in a typical Main Street image, one that favored streetscapes recalling late 19th century American small towns, HNI, MHC and the MDHA partially erased Lower Broad's cultural personality. In 1987, a *Banner*

article reported on Broadway's redevelopment with a prominent architecture critic noting that he "wouldn't know, walking around here, that this is a city famous for a few things. . . Tearing down the bars on Lower Broadway would destroy the only real country music culture left in Nashville, which has been replaced with the artificiality of Opryland" (Boume, 1987).

*"Movin' On Up":*

*Analyzing the Investment*

The efforts of Nashville's civic agencies and the efforts of local preservationists resulted in significant economic development for the area. The influx of money certainly helped improve not only the physical image of Broadway's buildings, but also its public image. Investments by property owners, the city, and private developers hint at widespread care and involvement in the redevelopment of Lower Broadway.

The property values of Lower Broadway certainly increased between 1975 and 1997, but what is notable is the rate of increase at different time periods. While average values were not drastically different from Lower Broadway to the rest of Nashville's center city, the rate at which the two groups increased marks a drastic change in the public value of the area (see Figure 16). Between 1975 and 1984, property values increased at a rate much slower than that of the rest of Nashville's center city, located within the I-265 loop. From the mid-1970s to the mid-1980s, center city properties increased by 279 percent while Lower Broadway properties increased by 94 percent. This period also marked Lower Broadway's most serious blight with a many adult venues

and several pawnshops. As preservation and revitalization efforts were more pronounced, the area was more visual appealing and considered safer, and property values increased at a rate more in line with Nashville's center city. Between 1984 and 1993, Lower Broadway property values increased 79 percent and center city values increased at only 41 percent. By 1997, property values on Lower Broadway surpassed center city values and increased at a substantially higher rate. From 1993 to 1997, Lower Broadway properties increased 195 percent, whereas center city properties only increased by 36 percent. During these four years Lower Broadway emerged as a major tourist destination for the city as the place where "arts and entertainment intersect" ("The District," 1990). The change in property values reflected this new identity and renewed value placed on the area by the city, preservationists, business and property owners, Nashvillians and those who came to visit the city.

Lower Broadway's revitalization efforts support Smith (1983) and Warner (1983) contentions that the utilization of deteriorating or forgotten structures can bring life back to blighted and depressed areas. The quantitative data of skyrocketing property values between 1993 and 1997 testifies to the success of a three-block streetscape revitalization, changing public opinion and reputation for the area. The roles city government and private citizens both contributed to Lower Broadway's revitalization and brought about substantial physical and economic alterations to the streetscape.

## Average property values, 1975-1997



Figure 16. Graph of rising property values for Lower Broadway and Nashville's center city from 1975 through 1995. The graph illustrates the dramatic rise of Lower Broadway property values between 1993 and 1997 as compared to properties in Nashville's center city. This increase coincided with Broadway's transition to a tourist destination and preservation programs that had come to their highpoint in the early and middle 1990s.

*“Tourist in Paradise”:*

*Changing Reputations and the Tourist Economy*

As Lower Broadway shifted from a streetscape dominated by adult venues to a tourist destination from the 1970s through the 1990s, contemporary guidebooks pointed out Nashville’s notable attractions and Lower Broadway’s inclusion or exclusion therein provided insight to the area’s significance for both Nashville and America. Lower Broadway’s role as a main component of Nashville’s tourism economy was largely ignored until the early 1990s, as tourist guide writers of the 1970s and 1980s only mentioned the derelict Ryman Auditorium (see Figure 17) in context of The District. The Ryman, described more as a relic of country music’s past, provided an example of what the Opry and country once were, unconnected to their modern images. The guides of late 1970s and early 1980s all pointed to Opryland as the pre-eminent Nashville attraction (Schemmel, 1982, p. 140; Glasgow, 1978, pp. 41-49; Scheer, 1982, pp. 138-141). Most described the park not only as the definer of Nashville’s tourism industry, but as the new face of country music: thematic, glitzy, and with widespread appeal rarely indicative of place, different from the genre’s honky tonk roots on Broadway.



Figure 17. Interior of the vacant Ryman Auditorium, 1979. The stage sets and Grand Ole Opry signs gesture to the Ryman's once-thriving role in country music and Lower Broadway. (Photo courtesy of the Library of Congress, Historic American Buildings Survey, 1979).

The only exception to this pattern is the American Folklore Society (AFS) guide for their 1983 conference, which focused specifically on Lower Broadway. Providing commentary on individual business and adding little known facts and legends, the guide colorfully extolled Lower Broadway's vices and virtues. Discussing significant honky tonks like Tootsie's and the Ernest Tubb Midnight Jamboree, the guide pointed out that the area was largely ignored by the city and by country music. The guide's author referred to the area as "the red-haired bastard of the family reunion" (Fulcher, 1983, 3). Describing the area as such, Fulcher pointed out the lackadaisical attitude proffered by city agencies and the country music industry for Lower Broadway. Despite the street's

architectural and cultural significance, it was widely acknowledged as a blighted area, poorly attended by Nashville and the music industry, both having benefited from its notoriety. AFS's highlighting of Lower Broadway suggested the area's cultural significance in respect to its contributions to country music and country music's developing identity. Much like the National Register nomination indicated, Lower Broadway, despite its pornography shops, prostitutes and panhandlers, was viewed as an icon where entertainment, historic buildings, and live country music mingled together to form an individual urban identity unmatched by other American streetscapes.

Broadway's inclusion into Nashville's guidebooks occurred abruptly in the early 1990s. Although ignored in the two previous decades, by 1993, The District was identified as a major destination point for tourists in most guidebooks. Interestingly, Broadway, as an individual destination, hardly makes an appearance. Any mention of defining places (Tootsie's, Ernest Tubb, Hatch Show Print and Lawrence Records) was wrapped in an overview of The District (Buckstaff, 1995, p.120; Samson, 1994, p.88) easily attributed to BRC, MHC, and HNI's marketing efforts of the area as a cohesive unit. Although Printer's Alley, Second Avenue and Lower Broadway were loosely related to each other as historic streetscapes in a compact downtown, each street looked dramatically different and contained cultural and architectural significance for distinct reasons. Printer's Alley, Second Avenue and Lower Broadway were extolled as contributors to The District, which increased their popularity among guidebooks and tourists. By downplaying each street's individuality, the guidebooks negated the streets' unique contributions to Nashville history and identity.

This packaging, posters, flyers and advertisements sponsored through BRC, MHC, and HNI, shaped Broadway's identity as an historic district with an entertainment vibe. The city promoted The District as "the place where arts and entertainment intersect" (The District,1990) and guidebook writers adopted this persona, listing The District as *the* place for nighttime entertainment (see Figure 18). Although The District



Figure 18: Family on Lower Broadway on New Year's Eve. Largely due to the packaging of Lower Broadway as The District, the area was viewed as family-friendly by the mid 1990s. (Photograph by Bill Rouda).

and Broadway's entertainment offerings are extolled for their variety and historical significance, the area's restored buildings are mentioned nearly as afterthoughts, not as the impetus for change and revitalization that they were. The retention of the area as a playscape, especially the 400 block adjacent to the Ryman, illustrates Tschudi-Madsen's

(1985) concept of authenticity in respect to function. Many of the block's buildings retained their traditional functions as bars and honky tonks instead of rehabilitating the structures' other uses. The preservation of the bars and honky and honky tonks on the streets provided the identity for an entire district and became the calling card for all of Nashville's downtown in the early 1990s.

The marketing sponsored by the city, which was then repackaged to tourists in the form of guidebooks, depended more on the successful revitalization of Second Avenue and Printer's Alley than on Broadway's unique character. Consumers who came to Nashville as tourists for The District found not one downtown neighborhood, but actually three distinct ones: Lower Broadway, Second Avenue and Printer's Alley, each with different identities. This packaging and repackaging for consumption illustrated the ways in which, as Shaffer (2001) proposed, advertising and marketing can shape a place's identity. The city shaped Broadway's and The District's identity as an entertainment district and that identity was proffered to the tourism and consumed by tourists who, in turn, shaped the area as it catered to their wants and needs. The District's buildings, as Lowenthal (1985) describes, became functioning relics, and defined Nashville's past and a collective identity and memory of the city. Architecturally and musically, tourists physically experienced the collective roots of Nashville and of country music.

*“Brand New Face”:*

*Assessing Broadway’s Renewal*

Broadway’s identity changed dramatically in the early 1990s, but at what cost? In order to be included in tourism guides and promotional material distributed by the city and preservation groups, Broadway erased some of its intrinsic distinctiveness. With aesthetically appealing renovated buildings, new businesses, streetscape improvements, increased public safety, and the removal of the adult entertainment industry, Broadway experienced renewal; while the area improved in such a manner, it also lost part of its individuality. As major tenants like NASCAR Café (see Figures 19 & 20) and Planet Hollywood represented considerable private investment, they also destroyed historic buildings with their renovations and created spaces that were out of scale with the traditional venues on the street. Such commercial spaces drew in tourists that may not have been as interested in country music’s honky tonk roots and identity, and further created the type of Main Street that Herb Stovel warned against.



Figure 19. 305-311 Broadway. The former Service Merchandise building was completely gutted in 1995 for its conversion to become a NASCAR Café. This alteration erased the building's historic interior in favor a thematic, generic interior similar to many NASCAR Café's throughout the country. (Photos by author, 2004)

Invariably with large-scale revitalizations efforts, property values often rise to the degree that small investments are no longer feasible. Districts become such hip places to be that many times only large-scale investors are able to be part of newly revitalized areas. The businesses that help bring about change often get pushed out in favor of higher rents and investments; along Lower Broadway this was the case for only a few short years. Despite the loss of some of its traditional, colorful appeal, Broadway emerged as a place where Nashvillians and tourists of all ages experienced a large piece of country music's history that continues to develop and redefine the city and its musical identity.



Figure 20: Planet Hollywood on Lower Broadway. Planet Hollywood's exterior alterations dominated the streetscape in the early 1990s. (Photograph by Bill Rouda).

## CHAPTER V

### LOWER BROADWAY: A 20TH CENTURY AMERICAN LANDSCAPE

Nashville's Lower Broadway exhibits an intricately woven story about a definitive American landscape. The street's architectural identity, cultural milieu and history present a dynamic environment that transformed significantly in the last quarter of the 20th century. As American culture moved to being more in line with consumption and commercialization, Lower Broadway mirrored this transformation. The street does not exist and change in a vacuum though. Broadway's distinctiveness was and is largely dependent on its association with country music, and much like country music's evolution in the Nashville Sound in the 1960s, Lower Broadway had to alter its identity in the 1980s and 1990s in order to survive as a commercially successful American landscape. The changes on Lower Broadway are reflected in the area's music and tourism and help to create an urban playscape.

Urban playscapes, as Chatterton and Hollands (2002) contend, are the places that house various nighttime activities like bars, music venues and nightclubs as well as the places and streets between. Nashville's Lower Broadway, full of honky tonks, nightclubs, and musically oriented retail shops, comprise a playscape that set it apart from the rest of the city. Largely due to its proximity to the Ryman Auditorium, the iconic home of the Grand Ole Opry, Lower Broadway has come to be known as the place

people can hear and experience the sounds of authentic country music. The street's 400 block, located just across an alley from the Ryman's stage door, largely served the musical and leisure needs of Opry musicians and their fans. The diversity of the street, the mixing of furniture stores, honky tonk bars, pawnshops and the Ryman Auditorium, created a streetscape that celebrated both American business and a distinctive form of American music.

The Opry's departure from the Ryman had a profound impact on the street's identity, vitality, safety and reputation. When the Opry moved to Opryland in 1974, Lower Broadway lost its anchor and consequently blight and dilapidation took hold over the area. Without the Opry, Nashville's Lower Broadway no longer "defined the city as a place of glamour and glitter, of fun and sociability" (Nasaw, 1978, p.1). The Opry's live Saturday night performances were opportunities, as Nasaw suggests, for people to experience not just a release from work, but a way they could socialize within their community. The Opry and many of the honky tonks on Lower Broadway were what Oldenburg (1989) described as *third places*. They were the locations that tied people to their place and helped to construct personal identities. Through tourism and historic preservation initiatives that dominated the area in the 1980s, Lower Broadway transformed from a blighted streetscape to a family-friendly tourist attraction that defines much of Nashville's downtown. What was once referred to as the "bastard of the country music family reunion" (Fulcher, 1983) is now the place "where arts and entertainment intersect" (The District, 1990).

The research revealed not so much that Lower Broadway *did* change and evolve, but rather *the ways* in which it evolved. The businesses that were pushed out of the area and the businesses that were ushered in relay information as to what the Nashville and local preservationists thought the public wanted. As growth moved beyond the center city to suburban developments, Lower Broadway and much of Nashville's downtown experienced neglect, blight and dilapidation. This lack of interest though, provided opportunities for preservationists who implemented federal and local incentives for the area's revitalization.

As Lower Broadway experienced a transitional time, the area, despite its contributions to and associations with country music, was largely ignored by the tourist industry. Lower Broadway did emerge as a tourist hotspot in the early 1990s as preservationists redefined the area once again as Main Street community. Lower Broadway was included with the nearby Second Avenue and Printers Alley historic districts to form "The District." This grouping though, although providing an accessible tourism package, largely shunned Lower Broadway's unique identity. As Lower Broadway became more and more popular as part of The District, commercialized entertainment venues like Planet Hollywood and NASCAR Café dominated the streetscape. What was once a street dotted with lively idiosyncratic retail establishments and honky tonks, quickly became defined by commercial venues that could be found anywhere throughout the United States.

The preservation of Lower Broadway brought renewed interest and investment to the area and abolished blight, but also forsook some of its architectural and cultural

authenticity. This effort at commercialization was common to many revitalized streets in the country. The heavy financial investment by nationally-recognized chain establishments suggested an appreciation of an area by outside parties, and these nationally-recognized chains provided familiarity to tourists in unfamiliar places. By embracing these commercialized spaces Nashville risked losing the very cultural significance that drew investment and interest into the area in the first place.

Broadway's move toward commercialization mirrors the evolution of country music. The times in which commercialized entertainment thrived, cross-over country with mass appeal flourished, but when fans of the genre longed to get back to the roots of country, Broadway followed suit with the inclusion of new honky tonks like Robert's Western Wear and the Bluegrass Inn in the middle and late 1990s. The public-private partnerships that brought about Broadway's revitalization sought to embrace much of what made the area so unique. The powerful relationships among private business and property owners and Nashville city agencies brought about significant, lasting change for the area to become the "heart of the Nashville entertainment scene" (Samson, 1994, p. 111).

Lower Broadway's revitalization illustrates many of the successes and missteps common throughout the country in urban revitalization efforts. Valued for their unique cultural and architectural character, older areas and neighborhoods gain the attention of preservationists who seek to revive the vitality that made the area successful and iconic in the past. The area, through its "clean-up," often loses the very patina and richness that set it apart from other areas of a city. Lower Broadway has been "cleaned up," property

values have increased and facades are aesthetically appealing, but it is rare to find people as fond of its current state, as they were of the 1960s and 1970s version of Lower Broadway. The area is noted in tourist guides as the place to see where modern country music originated, but rarely is it referred as the place to see where new country music is emerging now. Preservation efforts saved much of Lower Broadway from demolition, but also turned it into a symbol of the past: what country music once was and a nostalgia for something that is now absent in country music and in Nashville. Lowenthal (1989) describes such nostalgia as a means by which people celebrate their past by preserving relics. Preservation did not forsake the area's musical and cultural identity, but chose to celebrate it as a living, historic relic.

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APPENDIX  
PROPERTY VALUES

200-206 Broadway



1980



1994



2004

Property values

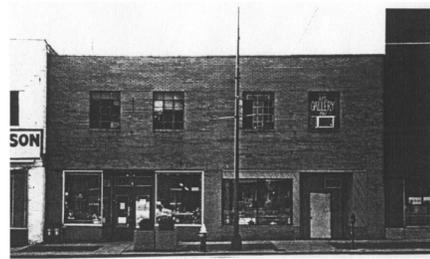
1975	\$32,170
1984	\$49,300
1993	\$161,900
1997	\$243,000

Business use

1975	not listed
1980	Photo Guild, photography/ Swin Shop, the swim wear
1985	vacant
1990	vacant
1995	vacant

207-209 Broadway

no photo



1980

1994



2004

Property values

	207	209
1975	\$21,360	\$44,540
1984	\$40,900	\$48,700
1993	\$62,400	\$172,300
1997	\$300,500	\$361,300

Business use

	207	209
1975	TG Tillman, meat market	Nashville Barber College
1980	same	TriCircle Restaurant Supply
1985	same	same
1990	same	vacant
1995	vacant	vacant

208 Broadway



1980



1994



2004

Property values

1975	\$13,410
1984	\$73,100
1993	no data
1997	no data

Business use

1975	L & L Loan, pawn shop
1980	same
1985	same
1990	same
1995	Window to the Southwest, retail

212 Broadway



1980



1994



2004

Property values

1975	\$32,280
1984	\$217,800
1993	\$387,000
1997	\$661,200

Business use

1975	Homeway Furniture Co.
1980	vacant
1985	same
1990	same
1995	same

217-223 Broadway



1980



1994

Property values



2004

1975	\$97,790
1984	\$213,300
1993	\$355,900
1997	\$960,200

Business use

1975	Beasley Furniture Co.
1980	vacant
1985	vacant
1990	vacant
1995	A Sofa Shop

300-302 Broadway



1980



1994



2004

Property values

1975	\$236,140
1984	\$243,200
1993	\$243,200
1997	\$1,286,400

Business use

1975	Commerce Union Bank
1980	same
1985	same
1990	Sovran Bank Central South
1995	vacant

301 Broadway



1980



1994



2004

Property values

1975	\$51,540
1984	\$67,700
1993	\$303,900
1997	\$380,100

Business use

1975	First American National Bank
1980	vacant
1985	Architectural Alliance Inc.
1990	vacant
1995	Cochran Fuerguson Smith

304-308 Broadway



1980



1994

Property values

304 306 308



2004

	304	306	308
1975	\$29,300	\$29,300	\$29,300
1984	\$15,390	\$15,390	\$20,290
1993	\$95,500	\$95,500	\$106,000
1997	\$242,300	\$242,300	\$399,900

Business use			
	304	306	308
1975	Fashion Furniture Mart	n/a	n/a
1980	vacant	n/a	n/a
1985	vacant	n/a	n/a
1990	vacant	n/a	n/a
1995	vacant	n/a	Agmark Intermodal Sytems, Inc.

305-307 Broadway



1980



1994



2004

Property values

1975	\$22,980
1984	\$72,800
1993	\$55,900
1997	\$212,000

Business use

1975	Service Merchandise, wholesale and retail
1980	same
1985	same
1990	same
1995	vacant

309-311 Broadway



1980



1994



2004

Property values

1975	\$42,580
1984	\$100,000
1993	\$98,000
1997	\$320,400

Business use

1975	Service Merchandise, wholesale and retail
1980	same
1985	same
1990	same
1995	vacant

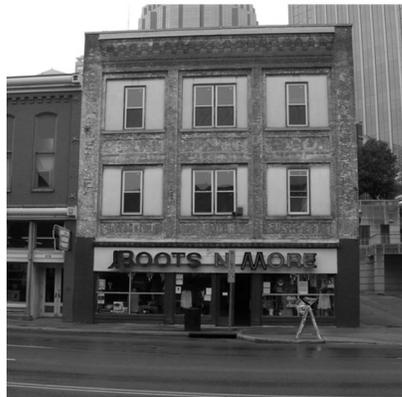
312 Broadway



1980



1994



2004

Property values

1975	\$27,330
1984	\$71,400
1993	\$107,000
1997	\$163,100

Business use

1975	Manas Furniture Co.
1980	same
1985	same
1990	same
1995	same

316 Broadway



1980



1994



2004

Property values

1975	\$38,700
1984	\$110,400
1993	\$277,900
1997	\$316,900

Business use

1975	Mayfair Furniture Co.
1980	same
1985	same
1990	vacant
1995	Hatch Show Print

317 Broadway



1980



1994

Property values



2004

1975	\$40,610
1984	\$74,600
1993	\$87,800
1997	\$533,800

Business use

1975	Harley Holt Furniture Co.
1980	same
1985	same
1990	same
1995	same

318 Broadway



1980

no photo

1994



2004

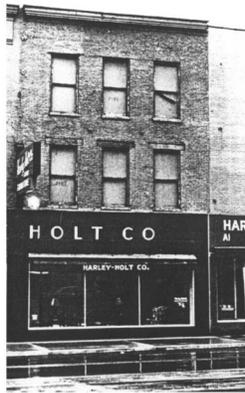
Property values

1975	\$28,260
1984	\$61,800
1993	\$108,500
1997	\$364,500

Business use

1975	no data
1980	same
1985	same
1990	same
1995	same

319 Broadway



1980

no photo

1994

Property values



2004

1975	\$28,170
1984	\$59,300
1993	\$72,600
1997	\$233,900

Business use

1975	Harley Holt Furniture Co.
1980	same
1985	same
1990	same
1995	same

320 Broadway



1980



1994



2004

Property values  
(assessed with 322 & 324 Broadway)

1975	\$50,900
1984	\$122,700
1993	\$147,600
1997	\$2937,00

Business use

1975	Hermitage and Kantor Furniture Co.
1980	same
1985	vacant
1990	Alamo of Nashville, western wear
1995	vacant

323 Broadway



1980



1994



2004

Property values

1975	\$21,040
1984	\$18,330
1993	\$42,900
1997	\$154,800

Business use

1975	vacant
1980	Alamo of Nashville, western wear
1985	same
1990	same
1995	same

324 Broadway



1980



1994

Property values



2004

1975	\$50,900
1984	\$122,700
1993	\$147,600
1997	\$2937,00

Business use

1975	Hermitage and Kantor Furniture Co.
1980	same
1985	vacant
1990	Alamo of Nashville, western wear
1995	vacant

325 Broadway



1980



1994



2004

Property values

1975	\$20,250
1984	\$42,200
1993	\$43,700
1997	\$152,100

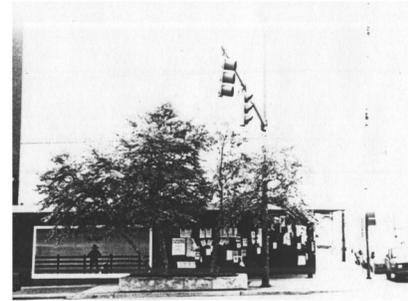
Business use

1975	vacant
1980	Alamo of Nashville, western wear
1985	n/a
1990	n/a
1995	vacant

327 Broadway



1980



1994



2004

Property values

1975	\$45,640
1984	\$252,100
1993	\$180,400
1997	\$708,400

Business use

1975	Morris Furniture Stores
1980	same
1985	Heavy's Restaurant and Arcadae
1990	vacant
1995	vacant

400-402 Broadway



1980



1994



2004

Property values

1975	\$40,150
1984	\$88,500
1993	\$177,800
1997	\$704,500

Business use

1975	Swinger's World, adult bookstore
1980	same
1985	same
1990	same
1995	Gruhn Guitars, retail

401-405 Broadway



1980



1994



2004

Property values

1975	\$30,510
1984	\$102,500
1993	\$702,500
1997	\$1,614,000

Business use

1975	Deemen's Den, tavern
1980	same
1985	Mercaht's General Store, restaurant
1990	same
1995	same

408 Broadway



1980



1994



2004

Property values

1975	\$39,500
1984	\$91,700\
1993	\$111,900
1997	\$382,600

Business use

1975	Friedman's Music and Loan, pawnshop
1980	same
1985	same
1990	vacant
1995	vacant

409 Broadway

no photo



1980

1994



2004

Property values

1975	\$34,930
1984	\$93,200
1993	\$111,300
1997	\$294,600

Business use

1975	Lawrence Brothers, western wear and souvenirs
1980	same
1985	same
1990	same
1995	Lawrence Record Shop

410 Broadway



1980



1994



2004

Property values

1975	\$190,260
1984	\$250,000
1993	\$358,800
1997	\$589,600

Business use

1975	Strech Brothers Inc., furniture store
1980	same
1985	same
1990	Helig Meyers, furniture
1995	same

412 Broadway



1980



1994



2004

Property values

1975	\$56,480
1984	\$111,700
1993	\$205,000
1997	\$286,600

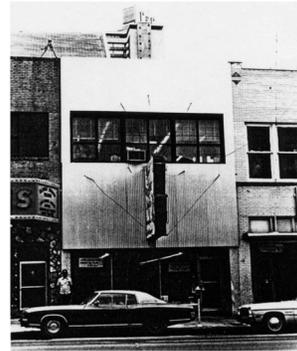
Business use

1975	Amusement Arcade of Nashville, vending machines
1980	Adult World, adult bookstore
1985	same
1990	same
1995	vacant

416-A Broadway



1980



1994



2004

Property values

1975	\$24,760
1984	\$181,600
1993	\$128,900
1997	\$407,700

Business use

1975	Music City Poster Corp.
1980	TJ's Loung, tavern
1985	vacant
1990	n/a
1995	Jack's BBQ, restaurant

417-423 Broadway



1980

no photo

1994

Property values



2004

1975	\$115,670 (total for all four buildings)
1984	\$270,000
1993	\$352,100
1997	\$725,000

	Business use 417	419	421	423
1975	Ernest Tubb Record Shop	Rose Loan, pawnshop	The Wheel, tavern	Playhouse, adult cinema
1980	same	same	421 Books	vacant
1985	same	same	Thw Whell, bookstore	Say When II, tavern
1990	same	same	same	same
1995	same	same	n/a	vacant

418 Broadway



1980



1994



2004

Property values

1975	\$23,980
1984	\$63,200
1993	\$112,200
1997	\$133,900

Business use

1975	Ell-west Theater, adult cinema
1980	same
1985	same
1990	same
1995	vacant

420 Broadway



1980

no photo

1994



2004

Property values

1975	\$29,190
1984	\$62,400
1993	\$110,000
1997	\$165,600

Business use

1975	Friedman's Loan Office, pawnshop
1980	same
1985	same
1990	same
1995	same

422 Broadway



1980



1994



2004

Property values

1975	\$25,000
1984	\$69,100
1993	\$114,100
1997	\$175,600

Business use

1975	Tootsie's Orchid ounge, tavern
1984	same
1993	same
1997	same

425 Broadway



1980

no photo

1994



2004

Property values

1975	\$28,370
1984	\$31,360
1993	\$112,200
1997	\$174,500

Business use

1975	Bob's Bicycle Shop, retail
1980	Tiger's Country Saloon, tavern
1985	Polee's Rhinestone Cowboy
1990	same
1995	not verified

427 Broadway



1980



1994

Property values

	1975	\$23,070
	1984	\$33,900
burned. fire in late 1990a	1993	\$33,800
	1997	\$98,700

2004

Business use

1975	Roy Wiggins Music City, tavern
1980	vacant
1985	Music City Lounge, tavern
1990	First Draw, tavern
1995	Music City Lounge, tavern

429 Broadway



1980



1994



2004

Property values

1975	\$15,690
1984	\$27,500
1993	\$19,900
1997	\$47,800

Business use

1975	Music City Lounge, tavern
1980	same
1985	The Turf, restaurant and bar
1990	same
1995	same

431 Broadway



1980



1994



2004

Property values

1975	\$14,500
1984	\$25,100
1993	\$19,600
1997	\$45,000

Business use

1975	Rebel Trading Post, souvenirs
1980	same
1985	same
1990	Buddy's Sandwich Shop, restaurant
1995	vacant

