Industrialism in Knoxville

Grade Level: 5th & 11th Grade

Standards/Unit:

5th Grade
Unit 2: Industrialism and Western Expansion (1870-1900)

Local I.D. #: 5.2.01: Identify the major inventions that emerged after the Civil War

11th Grade
Unit 1: Industrial Development of the United States

Local I.D. #1.03: Identify how the effects of 19th Century warfare promoted the growth of industrialism (i.e. railroads, iron vs. steel industry, textiles, coal, rubber, processed foods.)

Lesson Time: One class period

Objective/Purpose: Students will understand the local historic significance of Industrialism in Knoxville after the Civil War and be able to locate historic structures and places that were associated with Industrialism in Knoxville.

Materials: PowerPoint

Strategies/Procedures: Teachers will present the PowerPoint and then engage the students in a discussion using the following question(s). If time allows you may use one question or all.

1. Why do you think it took Knoxville until after the Civil War to transform into a regional merchandising center?

2. Can you list some of the important industrial products made in Knoxville?

3. What is the relationship between post-civil war industrialism and the establishment of railroad facilities in Knoxville?

4. The textile industry in Knoxville was huge during the first half of the 20th century, after World War II the textile industry declined in Knoxville due to foreign competition and...
the high cost of modernization. How do you think this relates to the current market and US companies outsourcing production to foreign companies?

**Activities:** if time permits teachers can assign in-class enrichment projects for extra credit.

1. Make a timeline of the establishment of the railroads and industrialism in Knoxville.

2. Writing prompt: If you could work in Knoxville during the height of Industrialism where would you work and why?

**Assessment/Evaluation:** The teacher will evaluate the student’s discussion and level of interest and participation.
Industrialism in Knoxville
Teacher Resource Guide

Industrialism – General Information

The Industrial Revolution was a period from the 18th to the 19th century where major changes in agriculture, manufacturing, mining, transportation, and technology had a profound effect on the socioeconomic and cultural conditions of the times. It began in the United Kingdom, and then subsequently spread throughout Europe, North America, and eventually the world.


Industrialism in Knoxville post Civil war

After the war, northern investors such as the brothers Joseph and David Richards helped Knoxville recover relatively quickly. Joseph and David Richards convinced 104 Welsh immigrant families to migrate from the Welsh Tract in Pennsylvania to work in a rolling mill then co-owned by John H. Jones. These Welsh families settled in an area now known as Mechanicsville. The Richards brothers also co-founded the Knoxville Iron Works beside the L&N Railroad, also employing Welsh workers. Later the site would be used as the grounds for the 1982 World’s Fair.

Other companies that sprang up during this period were Knoxville Woolen Mills, Dixie Cement, and Woodruff's Furniture. Between 1880 and 1887, 97 factories were established in Knoxville, most of them specializing in textiles, food products, and iron products. By the 1890s, Knoxville was home to more than 50 wholesaling houses, making it the third largest wholesaling center by volume in the South. The Candoro Marble Works, established in the community of Vestal in 1914, became the nation’s foremost producer of pink marble and one of the nation’s largest marble importers.

In 1869, Thomas Hughes, a Union-sympathizer and president of East Tennessee University, secured federal wartime restitution funding and state-designated Morrill Act funding to expand the college, which had been occupied by both armies during the war. In 1879, the school changed its name to the University of Tennessee, hoping to secure more funding from the Tennessee state legislature. Charles Dabney, who became president of the university in 1887, overhauled the faculty and established a law school in an attempt to modernize the scope of the university.

The post-war manufacturing boom brought thousands of immigrants to the city. The population of Knoxville grew from around 5,000 in 1860 to 32,637 in 1900. West Knoxville was annexed in 1897, and over 5,000 new homes were built between 1895 and 1904.

Taken from [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Knoxville,_Tennessee](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Knoxville,_Tennessee)

Growth of Government Services

U.S. Custom House and Post Office – 314 W. Clinch Avenue

The Customs House was built between 1871 and 1874 and became the city of Knoxville’s first federal building. It housed the Post office on the first floor and federal courtrooms and offices on
the upper floors until 1933 when the new art deco post office and federal building opened on Main Street. It is built of East Tennessee marble, and was created from designs by the U.S. Treasury Department Supervising Architect Alfred Bult Mullett, who is remembered primarily for his ornate French Second Empire style buildings in Washington, D.C., such as the former State, War and Navy Building.

The north wing of the structure was added in 1910.

Starting in 1934 the building was used as offices for Tennessee Valley Authority and in 1976 TVA transferred the ownership to the City of Knoxville and the building has been the home to the East Tennessee Historical Society, Knox County Archives, and the McClung Collection.

**Knox County Court House – 300 Main Street**

Built between 1884 and 1886, this Queen Anne structure is actually the fourth courthouse structure to stand at the intersection of Gay Street & Main Street. It was designed by the New York architectural firm of Palliser, Palliser & Company who provided mail order plans to builders across the country with local contracting firm Stephenson and Getaz submitting the plans and acting as the general contractors. The land where the courthouse is located was purchased in October 1883 for $26,000 with the January 1884 session of the County Court levying a tax to defray the cost of the new courthouse. The cost of the construction was approximately $82,000 with $1, 278.20 of that sum going directly to the architectural plans of the building. Over the years the Court House has had several additions and modifications to accommodate the county’s growing court system. The 1920/1921 addition; two visually compatible wings of the central room were designed by Baumann & Baumann of Knoxville.

One of the Courthouse committee was directed in 1886 to employ someone to keep the new Seth Thomas clock in order and the 4,500 pound bell was installed the same year.

John Sevier’s funerary monument stands on the east lawn of the courthouse grounds where his body was reinterred in 1889. The ceremony attracted a crowd of 20,000 onlookers to this site. Following his sudden death, Sevier had been buried in an obscure grave in a cotton field in Alabama, where he had been on a surveying expedition in 1815. The body was brought from Ft. Decatur, Alabama by a special train carrying the body and was escorted by the governors of Alabama and Tennessee. Sarah (Sadie) Hawkins, Sevier’s first wife died in early 1780 and her grave has never been found. A monument to her memory was placed beside the grave of Sevier and dedicated on June 3, 1946 which was the 200 anniversary of her birth. Sevier’s second wife Catherine (Bonny Kate) Sherrill was later reinterred here.

**Railroad Transportation in Knoxville**

During the 1850s, the arrival of the railroad— namely the East Tennessee, Virginia and Georgia Railroad and its predecessor lines— transformed Knoxville from a small river town of just over 2,000 residents to one of the southeast’s major wholesaling centers. Wholesaling firms built dozens of large warehouses along Jackson Avenue and adjacent streets, where small town merchants from across East Tennessee would purchase goods and supplies to resell at rural general stores. In 1894, the ETV&G was absorbed by the Southern Railway, which in turn became part of the Norfolk Southern Railway in 1982.

**Southern Railway Passenger Station – 318 West Depot Street**

The Southern Railway was a product of nearly 150 predecessor lines that were combined, reorganized, and recombined beginning in the 1830’s and formally becoming Southern Railway in 1894. The company would eventually own two thirds of the 4,400 miles of railroad and the rest was held through leases, operating agreements, and stock ownership.

The Southern Railway Passenger Station was designed in 1904 by the Southern Railway architect Frank P. Milburn of Columbia, South Carolina. Milburn is credited with designing 250 major structures in the south. He joined the office of architecture for Southern in 1902 and in the first fifteen years designed 19 stations for the Southern and other allied railway systems.

The passenger terminal was important because of the flow of travelers through Knoxville during the pinnacle of railroad travel. Also, as a 1903 newspaper article points out, “We have here the great shops of the Southern, which furnish employment, good wages to a large number of mechanics and workingmen, whose presence and employment has gone a long way toward swelling our population.”

Originally, the lower level of the passenger station contained the mail, express, telegraph, and dining rooms. The upper level contained two waiting rooms (one each for whites and blacks) which opened to the ticket office. These waiting rooms each contained a smoking room, a ladies’ parlor, and restrooms.

A weathervane-topped central clock tower, which was a prominent feature of the passenger station, was removed in 1945. In later years, as the automobile and airplane travel became the norm, passenger rail travel dwindled. “The Birmingham Special” was the last passenger train to depart from the station, on August 12, 1970.

The terminal has been renovated and since May 1989 has served as the headquarters of the architectural and engineering firm Bullock Smith and Partners, Inc.

**Southern Railway Freight Depot – 306 West Depot Street**

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The Freight Depot was renovated and converted to office space by the architectural firm of Bullock Smith and Partners, in the late 1980s. A major renovation was undertaken in 1989 and another in 2012.
L & N Passenger Station – 401 Henley Street

The Louisville & Nashville Railroad, generally known as the L&N was chartered by the state of Kentucky in 1850 and operated under that name for 132 years. One of the premier Southern railways, the L&N extended its reach far beyond its namesake cities, ultimately building a network of nearly 7,000 miles of track.

The Louisville & Nashville Passenger Station was built in 1905, and the Chateauesque style building was designed under L&N's Chief Engineer Richard Montfort, who also was the architect of Nashville's Union Station. The construction was reported to have cost $107,061 at the time, and the building faced Asylum Avenue (now Western Avenue.) The Knoxville station opening in May 1905 coincided with the Railway's completion of its through lines from Louisville and Cincinnati to Atlanta.

The L&N Passenger terminal was one of Knoxville's most plush spaces, prominently featuring its stained glass windows and tile flooring laid in oriental carpet patterns. The Ladies Waiting Room featured its own entrance and fireplace, and was furnished in massive oak pieces that included a library table, writing desks and rocking chairs.

Progress and development encroached upon the L&N Station repeatedly over the years. In the late 1950s, when Knoxville Mayor Jack Dance was planning the western leg of what would become the Downtown Loop, discussions were held with officials of the railway to determine the fate of the station. The railway's passenger service ended in 1968, with the last run of the Flamingo on March 7, 1968.

The 1982 World's Fair, which brought millions of visitors to the city, actually was built upon the roadbeds of the L&N passenger and freight lines, but the L&N Station, with an array of shops and restaurants, was one of the focal points of the exposition. And in the more recent past, interstate access and road construction have pulled traffic nearly to the station's front door.

L & N Freight Depot – 806 World's Fair Park Drive

The L&N Freight Depot was built in 1903-1904 and was rebuilt in 1922 after a fire.

The depot was used for freight service until 1979.

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Goods

Knoxville Iron Company/The Foundry – 747 World's Fair Park Drive

Knoxville Iron Company was originally started as Chamberlain, Richards & Co. in 1865 by the Welsh brother David and Joseph Richards, their brother-in-law Daniel Thomas and H.S. Chamberlain, former Union Army captain. The firm became well known for its manufacture of square-head nails and railroad spikes. In 1868 the Knoxville Iron Company was chartered and became the majority stockholder in Chamberlain, Richards & Co. Many of the company's
employees came from the Welsh community; in the 1880s the iron company employed 250 workers, and in 1905 it employed 850 workers.

When Knoxville Iron Company expanded and moved to a new mill on Tennessee Avenue in 1930, the foundry building was sold to the L&N Railroad.

For several decades, House-Hasson Hardware Co. leased the building as a warehouse, until a 1979 fire gutted the building. The structure subsequently underwent a $400,000 renovation prior to the 1982 World’s Fair, where it was much beloved as the Strohaus. At that time, architectural elements from city landmarks were incorporated into the building, including Southern maple strip flooring from archways from the McCallie Elementary School in the historic Fourth and Gill neighborhood, and antique windows from the Brookside Mills building. In the intervening decades, it has been used primarily as a space for special events and private functions.

**Brookside Mills – off N. Central Street**

Brookside Mills was a large textile manufacturing company that operated in Knoxville, Tennessee, in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The company’s Second Creek factory was the city’s largest employer in the early 1900s. Brookside Village, a neighborhood in North Knoxville, was originally developed to house many of the factory’s workers. The company closed in 1956.

After the Civil War, Knoxville grew to become the third largest wholesaling center in the southeastern United States. In the 1870s and 1880s, wholesale company owners began reinvesting their profits in other industries, helping to build the city’s first large-scale textile factories. Knoxville Woolen Mills, the city’s first major textile manufacturer, was founded in 1884.

Brookside Mills was organized in November 1885, with $150,000 in initial capital. The following year, the company erected its two-story factory along Second Creek, on what was then the city’s northwest limits. The factory was initially 78 feet by 210 feet, and contained 6,000 spindles and 176 looms. W. R. Tuttle, who had helped establish the Knoxville Iron Company in the late 1860s, was chosen as Brookside’s first president.

In 1895, Brookside raised its operating capital to $500,000, and overhauled its Second Creek mill. The factory was extended from 210 feet to 350 feet, and a new weaving building was built adjacent to the main factory. The number of spindles was increased to 21,000, and the number of looms was increased to 650, quadrupling the mill’s output from 3 million yards of fabric per year to 12 million. After Tuttle left in 1898, James Maynard, son of former congressman Horace Maynard, was named president.

By the early 1900s, the textile industry had become Knoxville’s largest employer. While Knoxville Woolen Mills had the larger factory, Brookside’s 1,200 employees represented the city’s largest workforce. The father of movie director Clarence Brown was general manager of the Brookside Mills in the first decade of the 20th century. Photographer Lewis Hine visited Brookside Mills in 1910 as part of his assignment as an investigative photographer documenting the working conditions of child workers for the National Child Labor Committee. Several of his photographs of Brookside's youthful workers survive.
After World War II increasing foreign competition and the high costs of modernization doomed the city's textile factories. After Cherokee Mills and Venus Hosiery closed in 1954, the city offered Brookside $350,000 in tax incentives to keep its factory open. The company cut salaries and gradually reduced its workforce before finally shutting down in 1956.


**J. Allen Smith & Company/White Lily Flour - 208 E. Depot Street**

Originally the home of J. Allen Smith & Company, the building has come to be known as the White Lily Building, after the company's most famous product, White Lily Flour. J. Allen Smith & Company was a mill that produced flour and other grain products. By 1904 other products produced by the company were a number of brands of flour, including Knoxville Leader, Majestic, Roller King, New South, Mayflower, Orange Blossom, Alpine Snow, and Standard Fancy. J. Allen Smith & Company also made several brands of various grades of flour for different purposes, Evidence was a special bakers cake flour, Jasco was flour for pastries, and Clover Leaf was flour used for cookies.

The original central section of the building is dated to 1885 with a four story northern portion dating to 1890 and a later five story portion to the south dating to 1895. For many years it was easy to spot the building – its 175 foot smokestack was one of the tallest structures in the area; the smokestack was dismantled in 1943 after the plant was electrified.

J. Allen Smith a transplant from Georgia moved to Knoxville in 1873. Smith a well respected and known industrialist in Knoxville established a grain business on Gay Street called J. Allen Smith Wholesale Grain Company and added a small mill in 1881. Smith was one of the founders of Knoxville City Mills which was reorganized under the company name, J. Allen Smith & Company.

White Lily Flour, the most popular product to come out of J. Allen Smith & Company was reported either named after Smith's wife Lillie or an early partner of Smith’s, Jasper Lily. Today, White Lily Flour is distributed almost solely in Southern states but specially stores like Williams-Sonoma and Dean & DeLuca have carried it at a premium price. White Lily bags were taller than other flour bags because the flour weighs less per cup than other brands and require larger bags to accommodate. A long claim has been made that White Lily flour is ground finer and sifted more times than any other flour on the current market.

In 2007 J.M. Smuckers Company bought the White Lily brand and in mid-2008 closed the Knoxville mill and is currently producing the flour in two mid-west plants.

**Sterchi Brothers Furniture Company – 116 S. Gay Street**

Sterchi Brothers Furniture Company at its height was the world's largest furniture store chain, with sixty-five stores across the southeastern United States and a worldwide customer base. In 1946, the company became the first Knoxville-based firm to be listed on the New York Stock Exchange.

In 1888, James Gilbert Sterchi and his two brothers, J. C. Sterchi and E. H. Sterchi, founded the Sterchi Brothers Furniture Company, with just $800 in initial capital. The company found a thriving market among Knoxville's growing middle and working classes, and began to expand.
In 1896, Sterchi Brothers bought out furniture catalogue wholesaler King, Oates and Company, giving them access to a regional market.

The Sterchi Brothers warehouse, initially located on Gay Street's 300-block, burned along with several other buildings in the so-called "Million Dollar Fire" on April 7, 1897. The company then built a new warehouse, known as "The Emporium," which still stands on Gay Street's 100-block. Author James Agee, in his Pulitzer Prize-winning novel, *A Death in the Family*, recalled the "great bright lights" of the "Sterchi's" sign while walking along Gay Street with his father in 1915. The company's ten-story headquarters at 114 Gay Street, now a loft apartment building called "Sterchi Lofts," was built in 1921.

By 1920, Sterchi Brothers had expanded to 18 stores around the southeast region. Sterchi eventually acquired his brothers' shares, and continued expanding the company. After the company incorporated, Sterchi was named chairman. In 1929, Sterchi Brothers was the largest furniture chain in the world, with 48 stores, five manufacturing plants, and forest land in Kentucky with which the company supplied lumber for its operations. The company exported to places as far away as Argentina and Brazil.

During the 1920s, Sterchi Brothers played a role in the early development of country music by sponsoring regional musicians and local radio programs in hopes of boosting phonograph sales at its furniture stores. Like fellow Knoxville businessman Cas Walker, Sterchi believed in the marketing potential of East and Middle Tennessee folk musicians. Working as an agent for Vocalion Records, Sterchi Brothers paid to send early country musicians such as Uncle Dave Macon, Sid Harkreader, and Sam McGee to New York to make their first recordings.

**Miller’s Department Store – 445 South Gay Street**

The oldest portion of the building (the left facing building) has stood at this corner since 1905. Built as the home of Miller’s Department Store it was designed by Knoxville architect R.F. Graf, the seven-story building at the time of construction was one of the tallest structures in Knoxville. In 1911 the building was added onto and doubled in size with a harmonious addition on the north (right) side of the original building in the same architectural style. Do to the overwhelming success of Miller’s a third addition was designed in the art deco style and extended the store another 78 feet north.

A fourth and final expansion happened in 1945 with a 99-year lease of the “Annex” – an adjoining building which had been leased since 1922 to extend the store through to Market Square.

The original Miller’s Brothers Department Store was founded in Chattanooga, Tennessee in the late 1890’s by brothers Gustavus H. Miller and Frank I. Miller. In 1901 the Knoxville store was established with the first store located near the corner of Wall Avenue and Gay Street. The move to the large flagship store at the corner of Gay Street and Union Avenue happened in 1905. In 1907, the Knoxville store was sold to J.H. Anderson, H.L. Dulin, Oscar Handly (grandson of Gustavus H. Miller) and J.D. Varnell – the store retained the “Miller Department Store” name.

The Miller Store makes a brief appearance in the seventh chapter of James Agee’s *Death in the Family*, set in Knoxville in 1915, when young Rufus and Aunt Hannah, on a shopping trip to buy
Rufus a cap, passed by “the profoundly matronly store” on Gay Street for the flashier Harbison’s on Market Square.

Like many department stores of the era, Miller’s incorporated a restaurant snack bar and bakery counter. Miller’s coconut cake was very popular with patrons, the recipe is still a highly sought after item. Knoxville’s first escalator was installed between the first and second floors of the building in 1947, and by the early 1950’s it reached up to the fifth floor. The area the escalators once occupied is now an atrium. About the same time, Miller’s installed the new and modern fluorescent lighting, offered Miller’s “Charga-Plates,” the first credit cards issued in Knoxville, and installed air conditioning which, with seven acres of cooled floor space, made it Knoxville’s largest air conditioned building. Miller’s was the leading retail store in Knoxville until 1973 when the company closed its Gay Street flagship store and relocated to West Town Mall.

In a strange twist of events, the developer of West Town Mall, Ralph Biernbaum, became interested in the downtown Miller’s Building, and sought to transform the historic structure into “the most modern and beautiful office building in the South.” He enclosed the historic brick stone façade in a sheet of reflective glass. Knoxville Utilities Board and the City of Knoxville saved the Miller’s Building from the wrecking ball, and shared in the costs of the building’s recent renovation and the painstaking restoration of the original exteriors. The 200,000 square foot renovated building has been highly successful. It is now home to KUB and other offices, and has been a catalyst in the ongoing redevelopment of downtown Knoxville.

**Woodruff’s – 424 S. Gay Street**

After the Civil War, Captain William W. Woodruff established W.W. Woodruff & Company, one of Knoxville’s longest continuously operating businesses. The original building was destroyed when then the entire 400 Gay Street block was destroyed in “The Million Dollar Fire” in 1897. The current structure was damaged in a dynamite explosion in 1904, and didn’t destroy the whole building but tore off the façade. In 1905 the new façade was put in place. Woodruff’s closed its Gay Street store on July 17, 1992.

The Woodruff building was built on what had been Knoxville’s “Old Base Ball Grounds” from 1865.

**Market House/Market Square**

Established in 1854 as a market place for regional farmers, the square has developed over the decades into a multipurpose venue that accommodates events ranging from concerts to political rallies, and has long provided a popular gathering place for artists, street musicians, war veterans, and activists. Along with the large Market House where farmers could rent stalls, Market Square was home to Knoxville’s City Hall from 1868 to 1925. While neither the Market House nor the City Hall building is still standing, nearly two dozen late-19th and early-20th-century storefronts facing the square have survived.

Land for the market place was given to the city by brothers-in-law and business partners William G. Swan and Joseph A. Mabry. Farmers from the surrounding area would bring their
wagons to the Market House that once stood in the center of the square, where they sold their produce and wares. During the Civil War, the Union Army used the Market House as a barracks and magazine. Knoxville’s post-Civil War population boom brought about continued expansion and development in Market Square, most notably the construction of Peter Kern’s three-story confections factory and “ice cream saloon” in 1875 and Max Arnstein’s seven-story department store in 1906.

Knoxville’s first market house, built in 1816, was located on Main Street, but was torn down in 1823. Over the next thirty years, farmers simply sold produce out of their wagons, usually parked along Prince (now Market Street) or Gay. In 1853, William G. Swan and Joseph A. Mabry, who had been speculating in land around Knoxville, purchased an 11-acre tract of pastureland from physician John Fouche that lay north of Union Avenue. Hoping to boost the land’s value, they donated a small part of this tract—the present Market Square—to the city for the construction of a market house. The deed stipulated that the land must be used for this purpose, or ownership would revert to Swan and Mabry, or their heirs.

The original Market House was designed by the architectural firm Newman & Maxwell, and opened in January 1854. As many farmers preferred to sell produce from their wagons rather than pay the three dollars per month stall rental fee, the Market House saw scant use in its early years, even after Knoxville banned curb-side selling. A few shops sprang up on the Square, however, among them Albert Hudiburg’s grocery, Patrick Tracey’s saloon, a lumberyard run by John Jones, and Peter Knott’s “bowling saloon.”

By 1861, Market Square had become significant enough to be a designated polling station for the Ordinance of Secession vote that took place on June 8 of that year. In late 1863, when the Union Army occupied Knoxville, the Market House was converted into a barracks and ammunition magazine. Much of the stall furniture was tossed outside and ruined by the elements, and the Square’s shopkeepers continuously voiced their fears about the large amounts of volatile gunpowder being stored in the Market House. In 1868, Knoxville built its first permanent City Hall—a two-story building with a bell tower at the north end of Market Square. The following year, the Market House was expanded northward by about 90 feet, leaving just a short gap between it and City Hall that acted as a weighing station. During the same period, German immigrant and Confederate veteran Peter Kern opened his “ice cream saloon” at the southwest corner of the Square. Kern completed his building at 1 Market Square in 1876, with the first floor serving as a confections retail, the second story as an elegant ice cream shop, and the third floor providing a meeting place for the Odd Fellows.

By 1876, businesses on Market Square included a millinery, a physician, a pharmacist, a dress maker, a jeweler, and a boarding house. Within a few years, Fenton’s Monumental Marble Works was operating out of a shop on the Square, carving sculptures such as those found at Old Gray Cemetery. Saloons, such as Michael Cullinan’s, the Jersey Lily, and Houser & Mournan’s, maintained a continued presence, although the Women’s Christian Temperance Union was active on the Square by the 1880s. The Knoxville Chronicle (later the Knoxville Journal) relocated its office to Market Square in the 1870s, and it was here that publisher Adolph Ochs began his career in the newspaper industry.

Sausage maker Adolph Ziegler and his partners Ignaz Fanz and Anton Metler began selling sausages out of the Ziegler Building (9 Market Square) in the 1880s, and two companies—Baum’s and H. T. Hackney—began as storefronts on Market Square during the same decade. In 1897, the city built a larger Market House that included a second-story auditorium, and was
adjoined to the City Hall building. Market Square reached its height in 1906 when Max Arnstein built his seven-story department store overlooking the Square’s southwest corner.

In 1907, a citywide ordinance banning alcohol was passed, and Market Square's saloons were forced to close. With the arrival of streetcar suburbs to the north, west, south, and east of the downtown area, residents began to move away. In 1925, Kern's business was sold to investors who reorganized the company with a focus on bread making, and the Kern Building on Market Square became Coleman’s drugstore. That same year, Knoxville moved its City Hall to the abandoned Deaf and Dumb Asylum a few blocks away. In 1927, Max Arnstein retired, and his department store closed.

In spite of these setbacks, new businesses continued moving to the Square. A local grocery store chain, the White Stores, opened a store on the Square in 1927, and regional grocer Cas Walker opened one of his cash stores on the Square in the early 1940s. Movie theaters also began appearing on the Square, most notably the Rialto in the late 1920s and the Crystal in the 1930s. During the same period, Greek immigrant John Demetrius Cavalaris opened the Golden Sun, beginning a multi-generational presence on the Square.

In the 1950s, Knoxville mayor George Dempster spearheaded an effort to tear down the Market House as part of the city's efforts to revitalize its downtown area. In spite of a campaign by preservationists to save the building, which included speeches by poet Carl Sandburg and conservationist Harvey Broome, the city voted to remove the Market House in November 1959 (the building's fate was further sealed when it partially burned a month later). The Market House was replaced by the Market Square Mall, an open-air market that consisted of a series of white "toadstool"-shaped canopies. The mall received a boost with the completion of the TVA Towers at the north end of the Square in 1976, and the construction of Krutch Park in 1981. In 1986, at the urging of historical preservationists, the white canopies were removed, and the Market Square Mall was renamed "Market Square.

History taken from: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Market_Square,_Knoxville and

Jack Neely, Market Square: A History of the Most Democratic Place on Earth (Knoxville, Tenn.: Market Square District Association, 2009).
For more information or potential field trips

Permanent Exhibit – Voices of the Land: The People of East Tennessee
Museum of East Tennessee History
601 S. Gay Street
Knoxville, TN 37902
Phone: (865) 215-8824
http://easttnhistory.org/content.aspx?article=1284&parent=1200

Gay Street/Market Square – Downtown Knoxville
Knoxville, TN 37902

Have any concerns or a suggestion on how to make better? Please contact...

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