

About Confederate Memorial Hall

Knoxville VDC Chapter 89 is privileged to own Confederate Memorial Hall, also known as "Bleak House," an antebellum mansion built between 1854 and 1858. The beautiful house was named after the Charles Dickens novel, which was popular at the time the house was built for its newlywed owners, Robert and Louisa Franklin Armstrong. Bricks were baked on site for the construction of the Tuscan Villa style house.

Bleak House was occupied by General James Longstreet and General Lafayette McLaws as Confederate Headquarters during the siege of Knoxville in 1863. Confederate sharpshooters harassed the troops of Union General William Sanders from the tower of the house, and most historians agree that they inflicted the fatal wound that killed Sanders. At least one sharpshooter was killed and several wounded in the tower. A drawing of three Confederate soldiers, sketched by an unknown soldier artist, remains visible today on the still blood-stained tower walls.

Bleak House was purchased by Knoxville VDC Chapter 89 on May 4, 1959, as a Confederate memorial, museum, and for use by our chapter for monthly meetings. The house was lovingly restored and furnished with beautiful antiques from the Victorian era. The house also contains an extensive historical library and a museum of war era artifacts.

The members of Chapter 89 place great emphasis on the importance of honoring our Southern Heritage by preserving this historically significant house and grounds for future generations. Chapter 89 also provides factual information for tour visitors concerning the role the house played and the events that took place in Knoxville and surrounding area during the War Between the States.

Spend a Delightful Afternoon!

Knowledgeable volunteers conduct tours of the house and museum from 1:00 - 4:00 p.m. on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday afternoons, and other times by appointment. Admission charges are: adults - \$5, reduced rates for seniors and students. Children 6 and under are free. Special rates may be obtained for tours and schools.

The spectacular house and grounds are also available by reservation for weddings, receptions, parties, and other events. Please contact us at (865) 522-2371.

Confederate Memorial Hall has been listed on the National Register of Historic Places since 1984. The organization has 501(c)(3) status with the IRS and is a Tennessee tax-exempt, chartered organization.



Official Site
A Program of the Civil
War Trust

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Tours, Weddings, Receptions, Parties

Visit beautiful

Confederate Memorial Hall

Historic
"Bleak
House"



It was the perfect wedding gift in 1858.
Now it's the perfect place to spend a
lovely afternoon ... or begin a new life
with someone you love!

3148 Kingston Pike, Knoxville, Tennessee

Telephone (865) 522-2371 www.knoxvillecmh.org



Welcome to Confederate Memorial Hall!

INCLUDED ON THE TOUR: In addition to historical details of the structure and gardens, knowledgeable hostesses provide a room-by-room tour of the house. Following is a brief description of some of the rooms and their contents. In addition, much information is provided on period customs, clothes, furnishings, and etiquette. For those interested, there will be detailed discussion of the local battles and skirmishes during the War Between the States.

The Rose Parlor is now often used for formal bridal portraits. The walls once bore hand-painted flowers, and the entire room, including the ceilings, were elaborately decorated. The parlor is being restored to its original splendor. The room contains two early 19th century square grand pianos; the chandelier is hand cut Waterford, and the fireplace is Italian hand carved marble. General Lee's portrait hangs on the wall above the Armstrong's punch bowl and opposite the wall where a 20 pound Parrot shell hit the wall.

The Blue Room features include a one-piece (sandstone) hand carved fireplace, chandelier and sconces of hand blown Venetian glass from Italy, an 1885 Weber Grand Piano, and a lovely oil painting by the talented Adelia Armstrong.

The Dining Room contains an interesting China press and another hand carved Italian marble fireplace. The table belonged to the first Attorney General of Tennessee.

The Small Dining Room, with its very simple fireplace, boasts an especially interesting early 19th century Lazy Susan table and Hunt Board - both made in the South.

The Assembly Room served as General Longstreet's headquarters. From the large windows, he could observe gunboats on the river. In addition to a beautifully restored square grand piano, paintings of important military officers are displayed.

The Uplains Front Bedroom was originally on the back of the house, because the house once faced east. The walnut bedroom suite, made in Switzerland and exhibited at the Philadelphia Exposition in 1876, belonged to Thomas O'Conner. He and two other prominent Knoxvilleans were

killed in a gun battle on Gay Street in 1862.

The Second Bedroom (Coy Room) is the second original bedroom in the house. Items and furniture in the room are 18th and 19th century (donated by the Coy family).

The Ballroom was once a center of gaiety. Today it houses one of the most important collections of 19th century first editions. The reading table in the center of the room is stacked with old editions of current interest.

The Fiddlers' Room was provided for musicians who played for dances in the Ballroom. A table top panorama of the Battle of Fort Sanders now fills the room.

The Tower, sealed by later owners for many years, was a perfect vantage point for Confederate sharpshooters. They also came under fire. At least one was killed. A soldier artist preserved the moment with a portrait of three soldiers, showing their wounds. Bloodstains and bullet holes still show on the walls.

The Museum could occupy many hours of your time. Included in the collection are weaponry, photos of Confederate veteran reunions, original documents, the framed signatures of both Robert E. Lee and Jefferson Davis, the Medal of Honor earned by James Keeland, period clothes, period newspapers. Adjacent to the main museum room is a smaller room where many photographs and children's items are displayed.

