DINKY USED AT COKE OVENS TO FILL OVENS FULL OF COAL. LAWRENCE WAYNE ENGINEER.

c.1920 image of the “Dinky train” used to transport coal to coke ovens on smaller gauge tracks. Courtesy of Tennessee State Library and Archives, Nashville, Tennessee.

This guide was prepared by the Center for Historic Preservation at Middle Tennessee State University in partnership with the Sequatchie County - Dunlap Chamber of Commerce. All photographs, unless otherwise noted, are courtesy of the Center for Historic Preservation and the Chamber of Commerce.

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Welcome to Dunlap!

This historic town, established on the eve of the Civil War, became one of southern Appalachia's industrial centers in the early 20th century. Today, many buildings and places associated with the town's mining past, as well as properties that reflect the community's growth and transition in the decades since, stand along Rankin Avenue and Cherry, Main, and Church streets.

Come and explore more than 170 years of history, from the roots of Sequatchie County at the Rankin House to the three jewels of the Sequatchie County Courthouse, the Sequatchie County Public Library, and the Dunlap Coke Ovens Park—all are listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Enjoy this vibrant, friendly community, visit the shops and restaurants, and learn more about Tennessee's Appalachian roots.

1. Dunlap Mercantile
15664 Rankin Avenue
Dunlap Mercantile, built in 1894, is the oldest brick commercial building in Dunlap. After a devastating fire, four prominent businessmen—Carl Everett Burrow, William Vernon Freiley, Jeremiah Tillman Walker, and Homer Perwin Payne—purchased it from bankruptcy court in 1906. Payne was later elected school superintendent, and his family operated the Dunlap Mercantile Company for some 80 years. The building also served as the Democratic Headquarters for Sequatchie County and housed a photography studio upstairs. Abandoned in 1988, Lewie and Becky Card bought and restored the building in 2020. It now houses a retail store and event venue.

2. Local Depot
15652 Rankin Avenue
This two-story brick building once served as a movie theater in Dunlap, starting with the introduction of “talkies” in the late 1920s. More recently, owner Jenna Johnson LaFevor acquired the building and, through adaptive reuse, converted the theater into retail space for local crafts and arts.

On the cover: Undated map of Grundy, Sequatchie, and Bledsoe counties; c.1920 image of miners near the entrance to Number 2 coal mine in Dunlap. Both images courtesy of Tennessee State Library and Archives, Nashville, Tennessee.
3. CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND TOURISM CENTER
15643 RANKIN AVE
This building has always been a center for commerce, whether legal or illegal, in Dunlap. While it now houses the Chamber of Commerce, the building began in the 1930s as an Esso service station. Former owner George Bryant was arrested in 1939 for using the building to house ten cases of illegal whiskey and three slot machines. The station was a stop for travelers along Dunlap’s main street, which became part of U. S. Highway 127 as the route was extended to connect Grayling, Michigan, to Chattanooga.

4. SEQUATCHIE COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY
227 CHERRY STREET
Listed in the National Register of Historic Places, this beautiful stone building was constructed as a community center between 1938 and 1942 with support from the National Youth Administration, an organization which provided job opportunities to people aged 16 to 25 during the Depression. Ninety-six young men from around Dunlap participated in the construction. The building also housed government offices, a dentist, and the Home Demonstration Club. In 1959, the community center was converted to its current use as the Sequatchie County Public Library, although it still bears the words “Community Building” and “Built by N. Y. A. 1938-1940” above its entrances.

5. SEQUATCHIE COUNTY BANK
CHERRY STREET AT RANKIN AVENUE
Established in 1905 with capital of $10,000 dollars, the Sequatchie County Bank originally operated at the Moore House Hotel. In 1909, the bank moved into this fashionable Classical Revival-style building. By 1923, bank officers expanded the business with an addition that included a drug store. The bank survived the 1929 Great Depression as one of the few solvent banks in Sequatchie County. The bank remained here until moving to a new Rankin Avenue location in 1969.
6. **GAME SHACK CAFÉ** (FORMERLY SMITH DRUGS) 185 CHERRY STREET
Pharmacist P.B. Smith and his wife, Ida Hixson Smith, operated Dunlap’s drugstore from this building from 1925 into the 1950s. Ida Hixson Smith was also a music teacher and county clerk. In 1956, Ida and P.B.’s son, Briggs Smith, took over the business. Like many pharmacies from the same era, P.B. Smith Drugs was also a soda fountain that served Coca-Cola, ice cream, snacks, and sandwiches to residents and tourists.

7. **GREER LAW OFFICE** 188 CHERRY BUILDING
This early 20th-century two-story brick building was once Quay’s Grocery, a downtown commercial landmark in the mid-1900s. Quay Johnson came from a local family of grocers and operated the business from 1951 to c. 1976. Later owners converted the retail space into offices.

8. **STANDIFER BUILDING AND BOUFFANT BEAUTY SALON** 183-187 WALNUT STREET
Constructed in 1940, this building has several deceiving features, including a facade constructed of false-brick concrete. Several Art Deco features are also on display, including two diamond-shaped, glass-block windows on the façade. Over the years, the building has had many different owners, among them local physician R.E. Standifer, and has served many purposes, notably as an apartment building, barber shop, and pool hall. Next door at 187 Walnut Street is the Bouffant Beauty Salon, Dunlap’s oldest-running private business, where Anna Faye Heard has styled hair for decades.

9. **THE DUNLAP YARD** 169 CHERRY STREET
An innovative adaptive-reuse project, Dunlap Yard uses the remaining walls of a historic movie theater to create an outdoor music and event venue. The walls contain a mural of the no-longer-standing Dunlap railroad depot and a map showing the original route of U.S. Highway 27 that brought travelers through the town.

10. **DOLCE IN DUNLAP** 140 CHERRY STREET
This two-story, concrete-block building was constructed between 1946 and 1950. Melvin Foust operated a pool hall here during the 1950s. The Dunlap Seventh Day Adventist Church acquired it after 1981 and used it as a community center until 2020 when the current owners converted the building into a boutique store. The brick facade on the building was a common embellishment used in 1950s-era constructions.
11. DUNLAP MASONIC LODGE AND P.B. SMITH DRUGS
137 CHERRY STREET
Built in 1945, the Dunlap Masonic Lodge #693 has occupied the top floor of this building since 1954. It is also home to the Order of the Eastern Star, which historically has welcomed women into its ranks while the Free Masons have not. The Masons have existed in Dunlap since the early 1900s, but the lodge was not always alone. Several other fraternal lodges were active in Dunlap during the 20th century, including the International Order of Odd Fellows and the Knights of Pythias.

12. BLEDSOE TELEPHONE COOPERATIVE
122 CHERRY STREET
This red-and-yellow brick example of “mid-century modern” style is exceptional for a rural Tennessee town, and reflects the commercial vitality of Cherry Street when the building was constructed c. 1970.

13. JOHN W. MANSFIELD HOUSE
CHERRY AND SPRING STREETS
John W. Mansfield (1869-1956) had this interesting Folk Victorian-style house built between 1910 and 1920, most likely close to the time of the adjacent county courthouse in 1911. Mansfield operated a mill at the corner of Cherry and Main streets and helped to build the original sanctuary for the Chapel Hill Methodist Church in Dunlap. He or his contractor may have constructed the home using elements from the architectural pattern books popular in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.
14. SEQUATCHIE COUNTY COURTHOUSE
22 CHERRY STREET
Built in 1911, this two-story brick Classical Revival-style building was Sequatchie County’s first brick courthouse and replaced a former frame Greek Revival-style courthouse from the 19th century. A Chattanooga company, W.K. Brown and Brothers, designed and built the courthouse for $12,000. In 1959, a building to house the Sequatchie County Board of Education was added to the property and faces Spring Street. The courthouse was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1980.

In front of the courthouse is the Sequatchie County Courthouse Veterans Memorial, established by Sequatchie County residents and dedicated in 1950 in honor of the veterans who had served and died in World Wars I and II. Memorials to the Sequatchie County soldiers who perished in the Korean and Vietnam wars were added on either side of the original monument in later years. In 2011, the Veterans Memorial Park opened to the public and lies one mile south of downtown. The park pays tribute to all Sequatchie County veterans from the Revolutionary War to the Iraq War.

15. BOBBY’S PIT STOP AND PURE OIL GAS STATION
CHERRY STREET AT MAIN STREET
Beginning with an Esso station in the 1950s, a gas station has been located at this corner, where the town’s major commercial street intersected with the original York Highway (U.S. Highway 27). The town’s first traffic light hung at the intersection of Cherry and Main streets. After World War II, the United States had an explosion of car ownership, and increased traffic led to more places being built to service these new cars in accessible locations. Modern architectural style gave most gas stations a distinctive look that stood out from the built landscape in a way that symbolized the future.

16. RANKIN HOUSE
1363 MAIN STREET
Built in 1852, the William Rankin House is the oldest dwelling in Dunlap, which was known as Coops Creek when Rankin (1804-1886) built here. The name changed to Dunlap after the state legislature established Sequatchie County in 1857. The house is a classic example of a Greek Revival-style, two-story, central-hall house. County commissioners bought 40 acres from Rankin to establish the county seat. The first sheriff of Sequatchie County, Rankin is buried at the nearby Rankin Cemetery, located on land he donated to the community. The house received a total renovation c. 2010.
17. **CITY OF DUNLAP JUSTICE CENTER 119 CHurch STREET**
The Justice Center houses the Dunlap City Police Station and the Volunteer Fire Department. Built in the mid-1970s, the modern-style brick building is located near the site of the old Sequatchie County Jail. During national Prohibition, the Sequatchie County Sheriff’s Office and County Jail routinely made the news for persons jailed or fined for violating Prohibition laws and occasionally for the confiscation of moonshine-stills in the surrounding mountains.

18. **HARRIS PARK CHURCH STREET AT CEDAR STREET**
Created at the end of the 20th century, Harris Park is a center for outdoor recreation and events in downtown Dunlap. It stands on the site of a former county jail that was built in 1903 and remained in operation for most of the 20th century. Early inmates at the jail included cattle thieves and moonshiners such as Alex Cheek and George Bryant. The old jail proved inadequate by the 1930s and eventually a new jail was constructed. Between 1981 and 1997, the old building was demolished to create Harris Park.

19. **SPARTAN INDUSTRIES BUILDING 123 STATE STREET**
This factory was the first major industry to operate here after the closure of the coal mines in 1927 and once served as the center of manufacturing in Dunlap. From 1952 to 1969, the building was home to the Spartan Industries shirt factory, which at its height of production employed about 1,200 Dunlap men and women in the production of blouses. When Spartan Industries closed down the Dunlap factory in the late 1960s, Paintset Fashions, Inc., and Miller Bros. Industries, Inc., briefly owned it. In the mid-1970s, the factory became home to Dunlap Industries, Inc., and the company used the factory to manufacture zippers until it moved to a new building in 2013.
20. CAROUSEL GIFTS & ANTIQUES
15802 RANKIN AVENUE
This well-preserved house has been a Rankin Avenue landmark for decades. The Classical Revival-style porch dominates the front, but a peak at the side gable shows Victorian tracery and a bay window that helps to date the building to the early 20th century. Once turned into a business, the house was the first location of the Ewton Funeral Home. For the past four decades, it has served as an antique, gift, and home-decorating business.

21. BARKER CHEVROLET BUILDING
NOW BLACK CAT TIRE
15704 RANKIN AVENUE
This one-story brick building was home to the local Chevrolet dealership for 57 years. It features an excellent example of a small-town, automobile dealership storefront and continues to be part of the automotive industry as a tire store.

A SHORT DRIVE FROM DOWNTOWN

22. DUNLAP COKE OVENS
350 MOUNTAIN VIEW ROAD
Listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1985, the Historic Dunlap Coke Ovens Park is located at the foot of Fredonia Mountain along Coops Creek. Abandoned for almost 100 years, the well-preserved “beehive” ovens burned the abundant stands of timber nearby to manufacture coke out of coal for iron and steel foundries in Chattanooga. The interior of each oven was built with firebrick atop a clay foundation with a segmented arch opening, creating the beehive shape. There were 268 intact ovens in 1927 when mining operations ceased in the area. Today, these ovens exist in varying states of deterioration.

The property is also associated with the Cherokee Trail of Tears. Both the Richard Taylor and James Brown detachments traveled through the area in 1838 following the route of the Old Hill Road, originally constructed in the 1820s to connect McMinnville to the Sequatchie Valley. The Reverend Daniel S. Butrick traveled with the Taylor detachment and documented the westward journey in a journal, noting the group camped in the area in early November. He also referred to the Sequatchie Valley as “the Vale of Sodom.” The two groups reached Indian Territory (now Oklahoma) in March 1839.