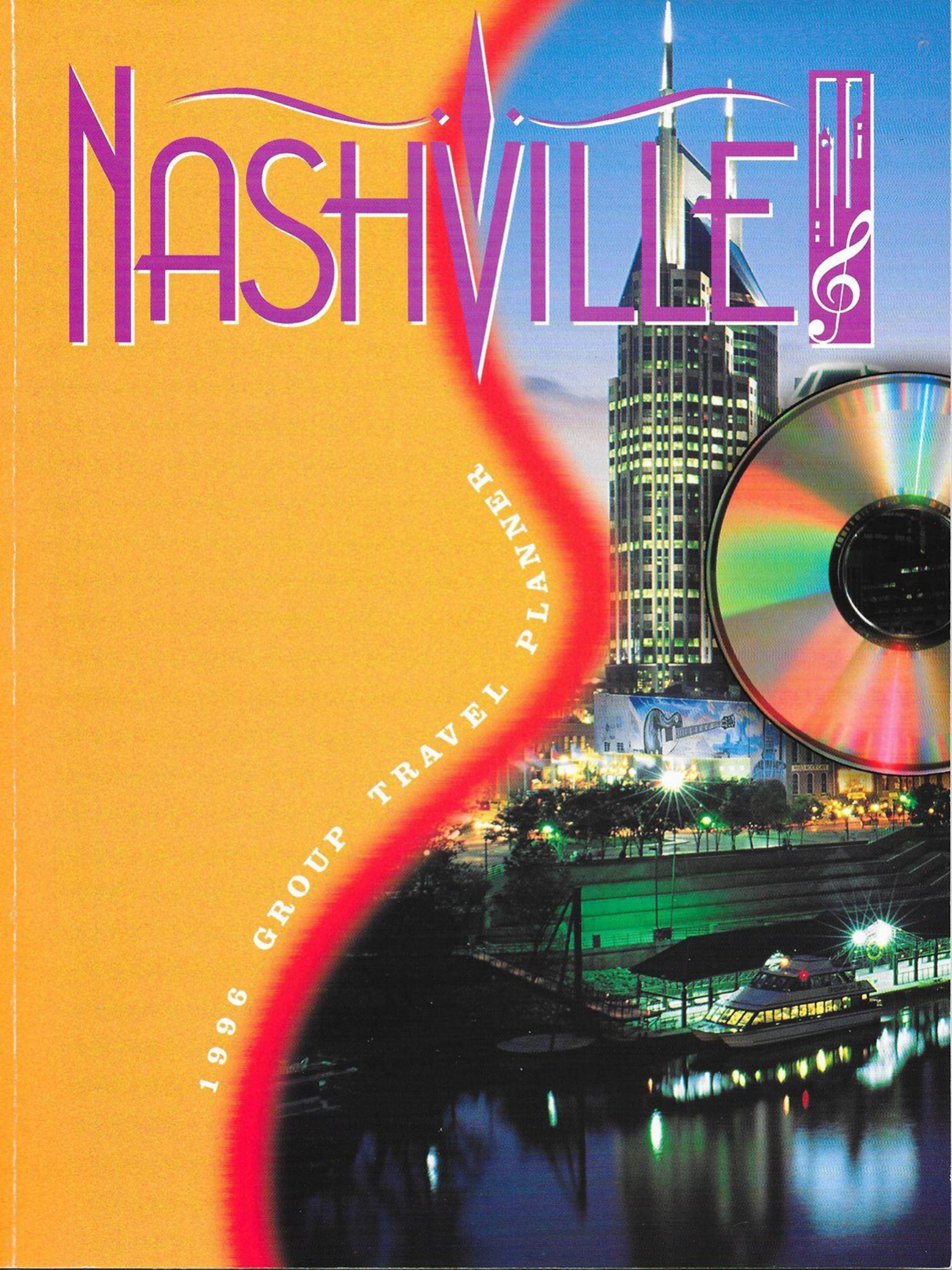
NASHVILLE



1996 GROUP TRAVEL PLANNER



THE ANTEBELLUM TRAIL

Sitting in a rocking chair on a columned veranda in the late afternoon sun, sipping ice tea, it is easy to be transported to another place and another time — far from the hectic pace of today. The past comes alive this way for thousands of visitors every year in Nashville and the surrounding counties of historic Middle Tennessee. They say that every home has a story to tell and the tales that emerge from the antebellum homes and Civil War sites of this area are rich with detail and full of unforgettable Southerners.

The tales are about heroes and scoundrels, great prosperity and overwhelming despair, blood shed and heartbreak, but most of all the familiar and oft repeated stories tell of the perseverance and character of the people who made Middle Tennessee what it is today. William Faulkner once said, "The past is never dead. It's not even past." Stand very still in these shrines and you can feel what he meant. Listen to the whisperings of the walls, the murmuring of the graves and hear the tales of the ghosts that followed the antebellum trail.

The plantation era and subsequent wealth it brought was responsible for the creation of some of the grandest homes of the South. Mansion after splendid mansion sprung up on the vast tracts of land as people tried to best each other with bigger and better architectural feats. Just as the homes were larger than life, so were the people who inhabited them.

A walk through the 15 restored rooms of the opulent **Belmont Mansion** features a path lined with gilded mirrors and marble statues. Its mistress, the beautiful and charming Adelicia Acklen, the original "Steel Magnolia," managed her three husbands and her $3 million dollar estate with a cool head and iron fist.

And the women of **Belle Meade Plantation** weren't exactly wallflowers either. During the Civil War, Selene Harding stepped out of her home into a hail of bullets waving her handkerchief and told the men that she would not budge until they went behind the barn to air their dirty laundry. They obliged. This colonnaded plantation was also famous for its thoroughbred horse farm. Visitors can see the stable where Iroquois, the first American horse to win the English derby, was raised and trained. Never to be

forgotten, Iroquois lives on inside the house, for his hooves were sent to Tiffany's in New York and made into a sterling silver inkwell.

Another magnificent monument to the wealth and luxury of the time when "cotton was king" is the **Rattle & Snap Plantation.** The name comes from a game of chance similar to craps. Luck was indeed with Colonel William Polk when he won the tract of land for his family. The home that his son George built on his portion of the land reflects his desire to outdo his neighbors. An art historian has said, "Most people of the time had four columns, Andrew Jackson managed six, but George Polk had ten." George also had his father's luck; his mansion escaped the Yankee torch and is open to visitors.

The plantation era was not to last, for the rumors of war grew into a conflict that would plunge Middle Tennessee and the rest of the fledgling country into bloody turmoil. The Civil War transformed the landscape, from the bloodstained rooms of the plantation homes turned hospitals to the graveyards that began to spring up to give the Confederate dead a final resting place.

A stop at **Carter House** brings home the atrocities each side visited on the other during the Civil War. The bullet holes and cannon scars on the buildings bear witness to the fighting that raged on the farm. The Battle of Franklin claimed thousands of casualties on both sides, including young Captain Tod Carter, who escaped a Union prison to rejoin his regiment and fight in his own backyard. After he had fallen his family sought him out by dawn's light among all the other dead and wounded and took him home to die.

Another home, **Carnton Plantation**, also served double duty as a hospital and make-shift morgue for the Confederate Army. The bloodstains on the hardwood floor from hasty surgical operations stubbornly refuse to fade away more than a century later. They recall a time when four dead Confederate generals were laid out on the back porch. The McGavocks, who opened their home to the cause, were so moved by what they had experienced that they marked the two acres adjacent to their family cemetery as a final resting place for 1,500 of the "boys in Gray."

Middle Tennessee produced many remarkable men and women who were passionate about their nation and the place they called home. Among this number stand our seventh and eleventh presidents, Andrew Jackson and James K. Polk. **The Hermitage**, with its Greek Revival style and formal garden, was the dream house of Andrew Jackson and his bride, Rachel. **President Polk's Home**, in nearby Columbia, also offers an intimate look at the beginnings of a president as well as displaying White House artifacts, documents and personal belongings.

There are many other historic sites worthy of attention, like **Travellers Rest**, **The Athenaeum**, and **Rippavilla Plantation**, where the Confederate generals who died in the Battle of Franklin ate their breakfast, oblivious to their fate. So sit back in that rocking chair, sip your ice tea and listen to the echoes of the past.

ITINERARY

Day One

MORNING

Start your trip into the past at **The Hermitage: Home of President Andrew Jackson** followed by the **Civil War Driving Tour** which takes you back to the cold December of 1864 where Union and Confederate forces clashed at the Battle of Nashville.

LUNCH

Belle Meade Brasserie

AFTERNOON

Enjoy the gracious hospitality of **Belle Meade Plantation,** where guides in period clothing recreate a bygone era. Next, **Belmont Mansion** invites you to experience the luxury and elegance of the antebellum era.

EVENING

Dinner at **Sunset Grill**

Day Two

MORNING

Begin your morning in Franklin, at **Carter House,** where the battle of Franklin raged. Also, visit plantation home turned hospital, **Carnton Plantation.**

LUNCH

Choices in historic downtown Franklin.

AFTERNOON

Spend the afternoon in an antique lovers paradise. With such shops as Walton's Antique & Estate Jewelry and **Antiques on Main,** you will probably be tempted to take a little piece of history home.

EVENING

Come back to Nashville for a leisurely dinner and entertainment cruise down the Cumberland River on one of the ***Belle Carol Riverboats.*** Another option is to enjoy one of their daytime cruises with historical commentary.

Day Three

MORNING

Travel to Columbia and begin your morning with a tour of **President Polk's Home.** The adjacent Sisters' house is a museum to the 11th President. Also, just down the street is the **Athenaeum,** the rectory of a prestigious school where Southern belles learned the classics and perfected their charms.

LUNCH

Harlan House in quaint downtown Columbia.

AFTERNOON

Stop at **Rippavilla,** a 1,500-acre plantation and museum of the Civil War Armies of Tennessee. Wind your way down the road to **Rattle & Snap Plantation** which will have an operational smoke house and ice house in the Spring of '96.

EVENING

Watch the sun set on the rolling hills of Tennessee from the veranda of **Rattle & Snap** and enjoy an old-fashioned plantation supper (must have group of 20 or more).