



LEEDS  
TRAILS  
& TOURS

# Leeds in the 1950s

*Leeds Trails & Tours 1950s Downtown Walking Tour  
April 12, 2025, 10am to 1:30pm (Raindate April 26)*



# Leeds, Alabama, in the 1950s

## Population Growth

The 1950s saw continued population growth in Leeds. According to census data, the population of the city limits of Leeds in 1950 was 3,306, however adding the surrounding population in unincorporated Jefferson, Shelby and St. Clair counties the population was over 7,000.

Looking at the census data, the 1950s was a precursor to a large population increase in the 1960s of 38% due to the substantial growth in manufacturing and transportation industries.

## Community Life

The 1950s in Leeds was a period of active community engagement, centered around local businesses, schools, and churches.

Downtown Leeds served as a social hub, with residents gathering at establishments like the local drug store's soda fountain, and various shops that lined the main street.

Schools played a vital role, with events like football games, school plays, and community gatherings strengthening local bonds.

Churches were central to community life, providing spiritual guidance and organizing social events.

The railroad was still very important to the town, and many residents worked for, or had family that worked for the railroad.

The community was close knit, with strong family ties, and a shared sense of local pride.

## Activities

### Elvis Tribute Artist Aiden Joiner performing live

Aiden Joiner will perform three sessions on the 8th Street Stage—10am, 11:15am and 12:45pm.

### Leeds Greenwave Jazz Ensemble

performing at the Gazebo, 10:45am and Noon.

### Gilda's School of Dance

Young dancers recreating the Gilda School of Dance in front of the old Roxy Theater on the 8th Street Stage, 11am and 1:45pm.

**Southern Railway Depot railroad agents** welcoming visitors at the Depot, guides from the Mid-South Chapter of the Railway and Locomotive Historical Society.

**Seven food trucks** offering a delicious variety of local eats on 7th Street between Parkway Drive and Railroad Avenue.



### Market on Main

(hosted by Leeds Main Street)

Over 35 vendors celebrating the entrepreneurial spirit and craftsmanship of 1950s Leeds.

### Yellowhammer Antiques' Southern Market

A 1950s-themed event with vintage finds, live music, and fun activities for all ages

## Gift Card Alert!

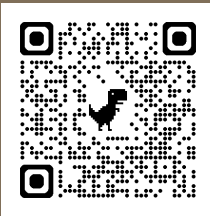
**Register for free raffle for the 3 \$100 Rediscover Downtown Leeds Shopping Gift Cards!**

Registration cards and drop-off boxes located throughout the walk!



# Leeds 1950s East

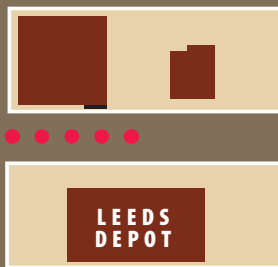
Gabriel Asman, proprietor of Asman's Department Store.....	ERIC ASMAN
Bill Dorrough, Mayor of Leeds, 1948-1962.....	BRIAN ATTAWAY
Gilda Campbell, dance instructor.....	KRISTY BIDDLE
Dr. John Campbell, chiropractor.....	JOHN BERRYBIDDLE
Jane Hooton, math teacher, Leeds High School.....	DEBBIE CHILDERS
Danly H "Fessor" Jones, history teacher, Leeds High School.....	TIM CHILDERS
Mary Etta Marbury, mother of Carl Marbury.....	WHITNEY HALL EVANS
Carl Marbury, 1957 graduate, Alabama A&M.....	BRYSON THOMAS
Winnie Carlisle, Leeds Public Librarian.....	NELDA FAULKNER
Ralph Powers, proprietor of Powers Cafe.....	TRAVIS GANN
Jo Anne Powers, daughter of Ralph and Marie Powers.....	KATHRYN RICE
Elvis Presley, visitor in Leeds, 1956.....	JEFF THOMAS
Elvis Presley Fan Club president.....	JOCELYN MEYER
Sam Gagliano Sr., band director, Leeds High School.....	SAM GAGLIANO JR.
Ruby Skinner, owner and cook, The Green Spot Cafe.....	BOBBIE HOGLAND
Annie May Skinner, daughter of Ruby Skinner.....	TALLULAH McDONALD
James F. "Coon" Byers, manager, Leeds Hardware.....	REX HOGLAND
Mary Bess Spruiell, wife of Lynn Blake Spruiell.....	MEAGAN HOLMES
Jesse Ryan, counselor, Leeds High School.....	MARGARET LITTLE
Bill Harrington, owner of Bill's Barber Shop.....	JARED HUDSON
Euel Musgrove, newcomer to Leeds 1957.....	JARED MUSGROVE
Billie Musgrove, wife of Euel Musgrove.....	HANNAH HUDSON
John "Bull" Pledger, Chief of Police.....	PAUL IRWIN
Nelda Mize, employee at Miller Drug Company.....	PAISLEY MABERY
Vivian "Bell" Lawrence, nurse, Davis Clinic.....	AUBREY MABERY
Dr. James Edmund Davis, owner of Davis Clinic.....	DR. MATT MABERY
Doris Marie Holley, secretary, Citizens Bank.....	MARY VIRGINA MABERY
W. R. McKinnon, vocational coordinator, Leeds High School.....	KYLE MCKINNON
Bill Lewis, Coca Cola territory manager.....	EDDIE MOORE
Nora Becker, owner of Becker's Beauty Shop.....	MICHELLE OWEN
Joseph Wyeth "Skip" Griffin, Leeds Insurance Agency.....	RANDY RAY
Minnie Harding, long-time resident of Leeds.....	DELL HARDING SMITH
Lynn Blake Spruiell, owner and pharmacist, Miller Drug Company.....	MATT SPRUIELL
Ruby Whitmire, secretary, Leeds High School.....	SUSAN MUSGROVE NELMS
Bernice Goodson, director of music, Leeds Presbyterian Church.....	ANNA GOODSON
Mary Lou Goodson, wife of Ed Goodson.....	JULIE WATTERS
Gertrude Forehand Hathcox, owner of Gertrude's Beauty Shop.....	SHELLY McDONALD
Lucy Leeds, gossip columnist, <i>The Leeds News</i> .....	MELINDA ADKINS
Walter Layton, Volunteer Fire Chief.....	CHUCK PARSONS



Scan QR Code for the Leeds Trails & Tours  
Web site for the 1950 Walking Trail:  
[www.Leedstrailsandtours.com/Leeds-1950](http://www.Leedstrailsandtours.com/Leeds-1950).  
Web site for the Leeds Historical Society:  
<https://www.leedshistoricalsociety.org/>

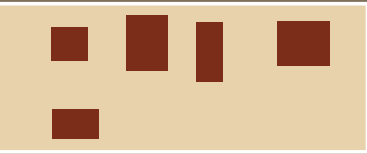


THORNTON AVENUE

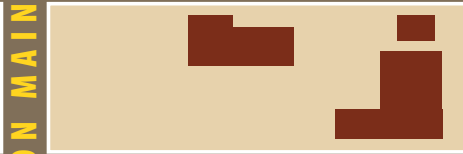


LEEDS  
DEPOT

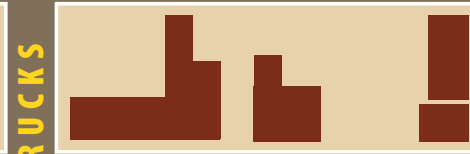
RAILROAD AVENUE NE



PARKWAY ALLEY

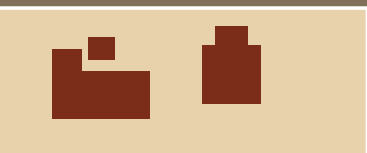
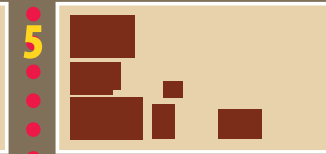


MARKET ON MAIN



FOOD TRUCKS

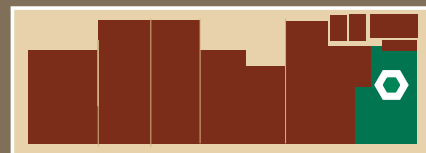
PARKWAY ALLEY



PARKWAY



STAGE & SOCKHOP



DRIVE



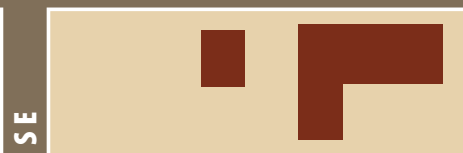
1ST ALLEY



1ST AVENUE SE



1ST ALLEY



1ST AVENUE SE



7TH STREET SE

8TH ST SE

9TH STREET SE

### Guide Numbers

on the map correspond to the legend below:

### 1950's Leeds Guides

1. Ralph Powers—the corner of Parkway and 8th Street
2. Winnie Carlisle—Parkway Drive in front of the Library or Mosaic Chapel
3. Dr. James Davis—Parkway Drive in front of Koplou Dental
4. Bill Dorough—9th Street between Parkway Drive and Railroad Avenue

5. James "Coon" Byers—9th Street at Railroad Avenue
6. Vivian "Bell" Lawrence—Parkway Drive near Koplou Dental
7. Bill Lewis—corner of Parkway Drive and 7th Street
8. John "Bull" Pledger—9th Street in front of City Hall
9. Jessie Ryan—Parkway Drive at 7th St (Little House)
10. Danly "Fessor" Jones—Parkway Drive in front of the Arts Council
11. Walter Layton—corner of Parkway Drive and 9th Street

### Floating Guides

Joseph "Skip" Griffin and Ruby Whitmire will be roaming guides, covering the entire event area at will.

### Food Trucks

(8th Street between Parkway and 1st Ave NE):  
Uncle G's pizza  
Stephen's Hot Dogs  
Gumbo To Geaux  
Hollywood Grill  
Chinitos  
Battle Axes  
Kona Ice

### Community Events

**Market on Main**  
7th Street between 1st Ave SE and Railroad Ave NE  
**Yellowhammer Antiques Spring Market** 8430 1st Ave SE  
**Community Organizations Representatives** at Mosaic Chapel, 8110 Parkway Drive

### Restrooms

The Depot, Leeds Arts Council, Leeds Jane Culbreth Library, Mosaic Chapel, portable toilets at 8th Street and Railroad Ave NE