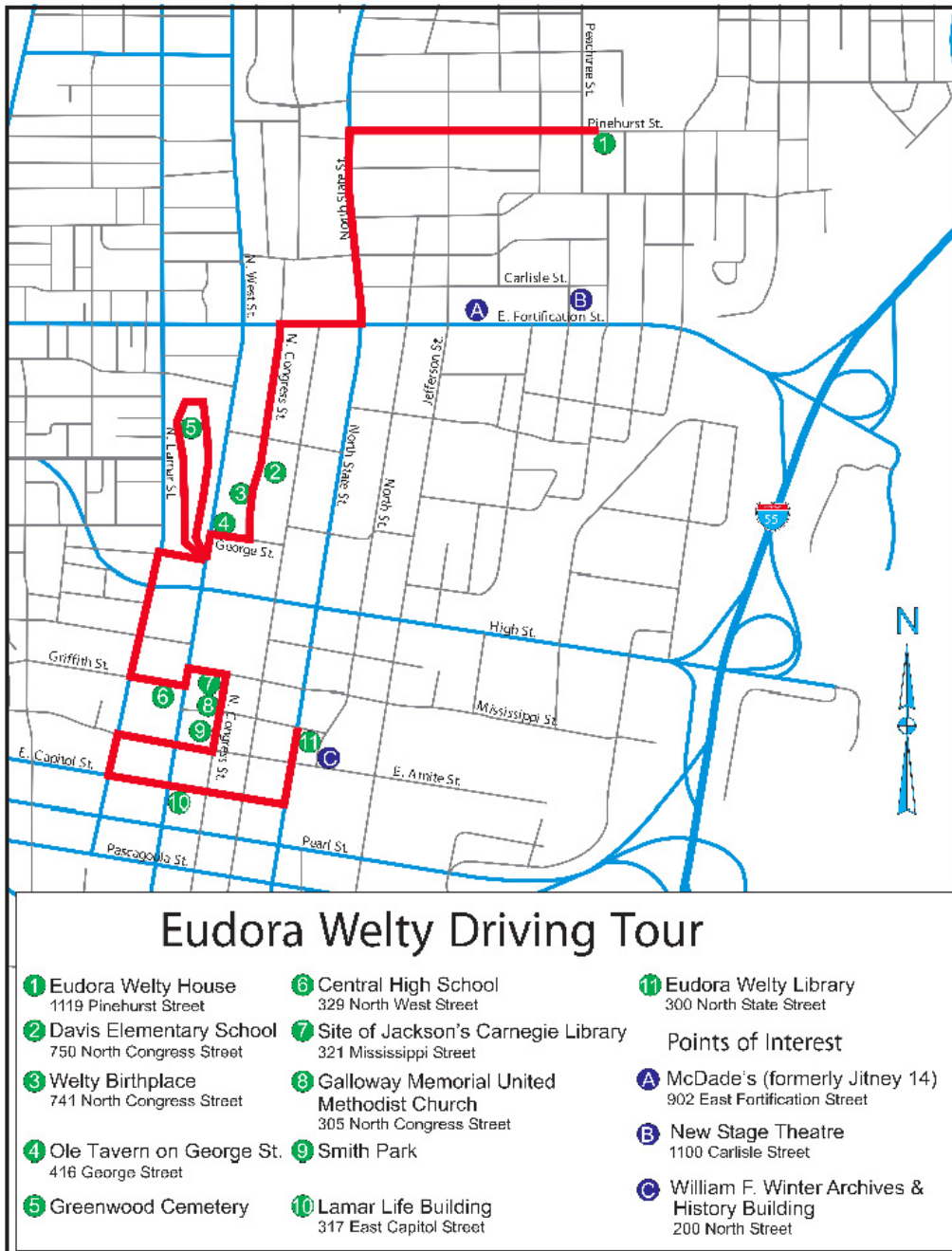


Eudora Welty Driving Tour of Jackson, Mississippi



The entire tour will take approximately 30 minutes to drive and is 3.3 miles long. You may choose to park your car and walk to some of the sites, especially if taking pictures. For example, it is a short walk between Sites 3, 4, and 5.

Leave the **Eudora Welty House (1)** and travel west on Pinehurst Street. At the traffic light at the fourth intersection, turn left onto North State Street. Travel 0.7 mile and turn right at the second traffic light onto Fortification Street.

On the right corner of Fortification and North Congress Streets is the Manship House Museum, home of Jackson's Civil War mayor and one of the few antebellum houses remaining in Jackson. (It is currently closed for renovations.)

At the intersection of Fortification and North Congress Streets, turn left. In the second block, just past Barksdale Street, look to the left for **Davis Elementary School (2)**, where Welty was once a student.

"When I was five years old, I knew the alphabet, I'd been vaccinated (for smallpox), and I could read. So my mother walked across the street to Jefferson Davis Grammar School and asked the principal if she would allow me to enter the first grade after Christmas. 'Oh, all right,' said Miss Duling. 'Probably the best thing you could do with her.'" – One Writer's Beginnings

Across from the school is **Welty's childhood home (3)**—the yellow, two story house at 741 North Congress Street.

"In our house on North Congress Street in Jackson, Mississippi, where I was born, the oldest of three children, in 1909, we grew up to the striking of clocks. There was a mission-style oak grandfather clock standing in the hall, which sent its gong-like strokes through the livingroom, diningroom, kitchen, and pantry, and up the sounding board of the stairwell. Through the night, it could find its way into our ears; sometimes, even on the sleeping porch, midnight could wake us up." – One Writer's Beginnings

As a child, Pulitzer Prize-winning author Richard Ford lived on the left, at 736 North Congress Street.

Continue south on Congress Street. The dome of the State Capitol Building (1903) is visible from here. As a child, Welty would roller skate from her home through the basement of the Capitol's rotunda on her way to the library. At the end of North Congress Street, turn right onto George Street. On the right, at number 436 is **George Street Grocery (4)** where the young Welty was sent on errands. (It is now a restaurant.) The cemetery is straight ahead.

Continue traveling west on George Street. At the stop sign, turn left onto North West Street. Get into the right hand lane. When the street curves to the right, take the immediate right into Greenwood Cemetery (land grant 1823).

Drive 0.2 mile up the gravel drive, stop at the turnaround, and walk north. On the left is a black wrought iron fence enclosing the Spengler family plot, marked by a large monument. Past the Spengler plot, turn left between the two wrought iron

fences. On the right stands a magnolia tree and straight ahead, under the shade of a cedar tree, is the marker for **Welty's grave (5)**. Although Welty's parents, Christian and Chestina, are not buried here, an older brother, Christian, Jr. is. He died before Eudora was born.

A similar cemetery appears in Welty's novel The Optimist's Daughter:

"There was a ringing for each car as it struck its wheels on the cattleguard and rode up into the cemetery. The procession passed between ironwork gates whose kneeling angels and looping vines shone black as licorice. The top of the hill ahead was crowded with winged angels and life-sized effigies of bygone citizens in old-fashioned dress, standing as if by count among the columns and shafts and conifers like a familiar set of passengers collected on deck of a ship, on which they all knew each other—bona-fide members of a small local excursion, embarked on a voyage that is always returning in dreams."

Retrace your steps to exit the cemetery through the main gate. Turn right. The road curves to the left and becomes Lamar Street, which is one-way.

On the right, at the intersection of Lamar and High Street, look for the back of the Smith Robertson Museum and Cultural Center. This was Jackson's first African American public school, where Richard Wright graduated from the ninth grade, first in his class.

Continue south on Lamar Street and move into the far left lane. At the third traffic light, turn left onto Griffith Street. On the right is the Mississippi Department of Education, formerly **Central High School (6)**, from which Welty graduated at age 16. Proceed east on Griffith Street. At the light, turn left onto North West Street. Take an immediate right onto Mississippi Street. Look to the right. The **Carnegie Library (7)** formerly stood at the corner of Mississippi and Congress Streets. This was the library Welty skated to via the State Capitol rotunda. On the left is the State Capitol Building.

Take an immediate right onto Congress Street. Welty's church, **Galloway Memorial United Methodist (8)**, stands on the right.

Continue south after the intersection of Congress and Yazoo Streets to **Smith Park (9)**, on the right. It is the only surviving public square from Peter Van Dorn's city plan of 1822. The re-landscaping of Smith Park has made it a different place from the one Welty knew as a child. In her short story "The Winds," she describes the visit of two young girls to the park as it was then:

"They ran through the park and drank from the fountain. Moving slowly as sunlight over the grass were the broad and dusty backs of pigeons. They stopped and made a clover-chain and hung it on a statue. They groveled in the dirt under the bandstand hunting for lost money, but when they found a dead

bird with its feathers cool as rain, they ran out in the sun. . . .They floated magnolia leaves in the horse trough, themselves taking the part of the wind and waves, and suddenly remembering who they were. They closed in upon the hot-tamale man, fixing their frightened eyes on his lantern and on his scars."

Take the next right onto Amite Street. Move into the left hand lane. Pass St. Peter's Cathedral on your right and turn left onto Lamar Street. Take the next left onto Capitol Street. As you make this turn, look east up Capitol Street. The large Gothic building with a purple clock face is the **Lamar Life Building (10)**, Jackson's first skyscraper. Welty's father, Christian, oversaw its construction.

A skyscraper in what was then the small town of Jackson proved fascinating to teen-aged Welty:

"At every stage of the building, Daddy took his family to see as much as we could climb over, usually on Sunday mornings. At last we could climb by the fire escape to reach the top. We stood on the roof, with the not-yet-working clock tower at our backs, and viewed all Jackson below, spread to its seeable limits, its green rim, where the still river-like Pearl River and the still-unpaved-over Town Creek meandered and joined together in their unmolested swamp, with 'the country' beyond. We were located where we stood there—part of our own map." – One Writer's Beginnings

St. Andrew's Episcopal Cathedral stands at the right corner of North West and Capitol Streets. Mr. Welty wanted the Lamar Life Building to compliment the Gothic style of St. Andrew's. If time permits, stop to get out of the car and look at the detail on the Lamar Life Building. You will need to stand at some distance to be able to see the top—gargoyles and all.

Across the street from St. Andrew's is the Governor's Mansion, the second-oldest continuously occupied governor's residence in the United States.

Continue east on Capitol Street. At the intersection of Capitol and North State Streets is the Old Capitol Museum. William Nichols, who designed the Governor's Mansion, was the architect for the Old Capitol as well.

Turn left on North State Street and travel 0.1 mile. **The Eudora Welty Library (11)** is on your right, between Yazoo and Mississippi Streets.