UNITED STATES

CIVIL RIGHTS TRAIL



2026 TRAVEL GUIDE





WHAT HAPPENED HERE CHANGED THE WORLD



NEGRO LEAGUES BASEBALL MUSEUM

SHOW THEM THE MOMENTS THAT MATTERED.



OLD COURTHOUSE

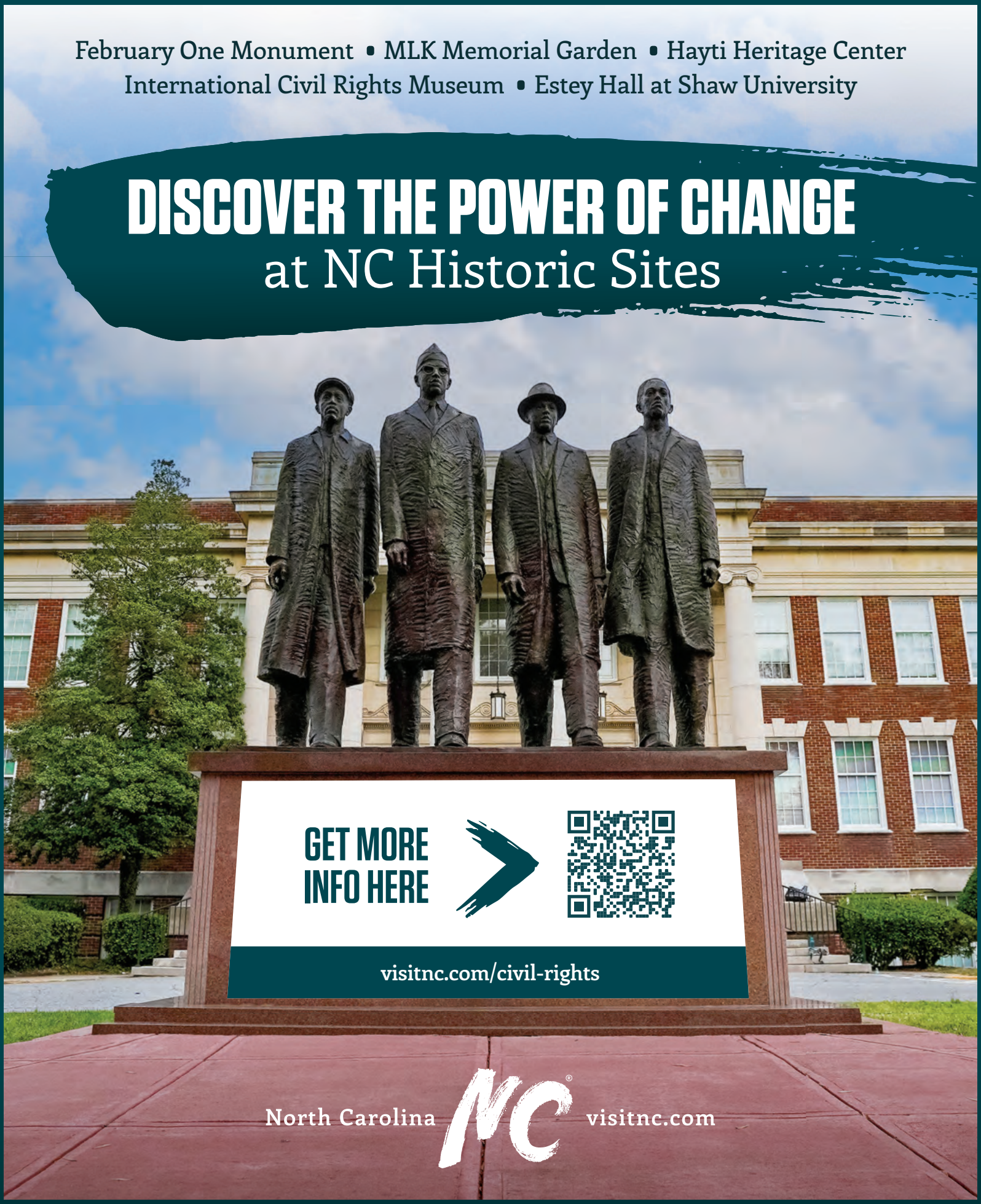


HARRY S. TRUMAN PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY AND MUSEUM

MISSOURI

VisitMo.com

From landmark court cases to the rich history of African American baseball to Harry S. Truman's presidential powers—explore Missouri's significant role in advancing the Civil Rights Movement. Ready to plan your historic group tour? Contact Megan Sheets at Megan.Sheets@ded.mo.gov today.


February One Monument • MLK Memorial Garden • Hayti Heritage Center
International Civil Rights Museum • Estey Hall at Shaw University
DISCOVER THE POWER OF CHANGE
at NC Historic Sites
GET MORE INFO HERE
visitnc.com/civil-rights
North Carolina NC visitnc.com

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THESE HOUSES OF WORSHIP WERE INSTRUMENTAL IN THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT.

ON THE COVER:

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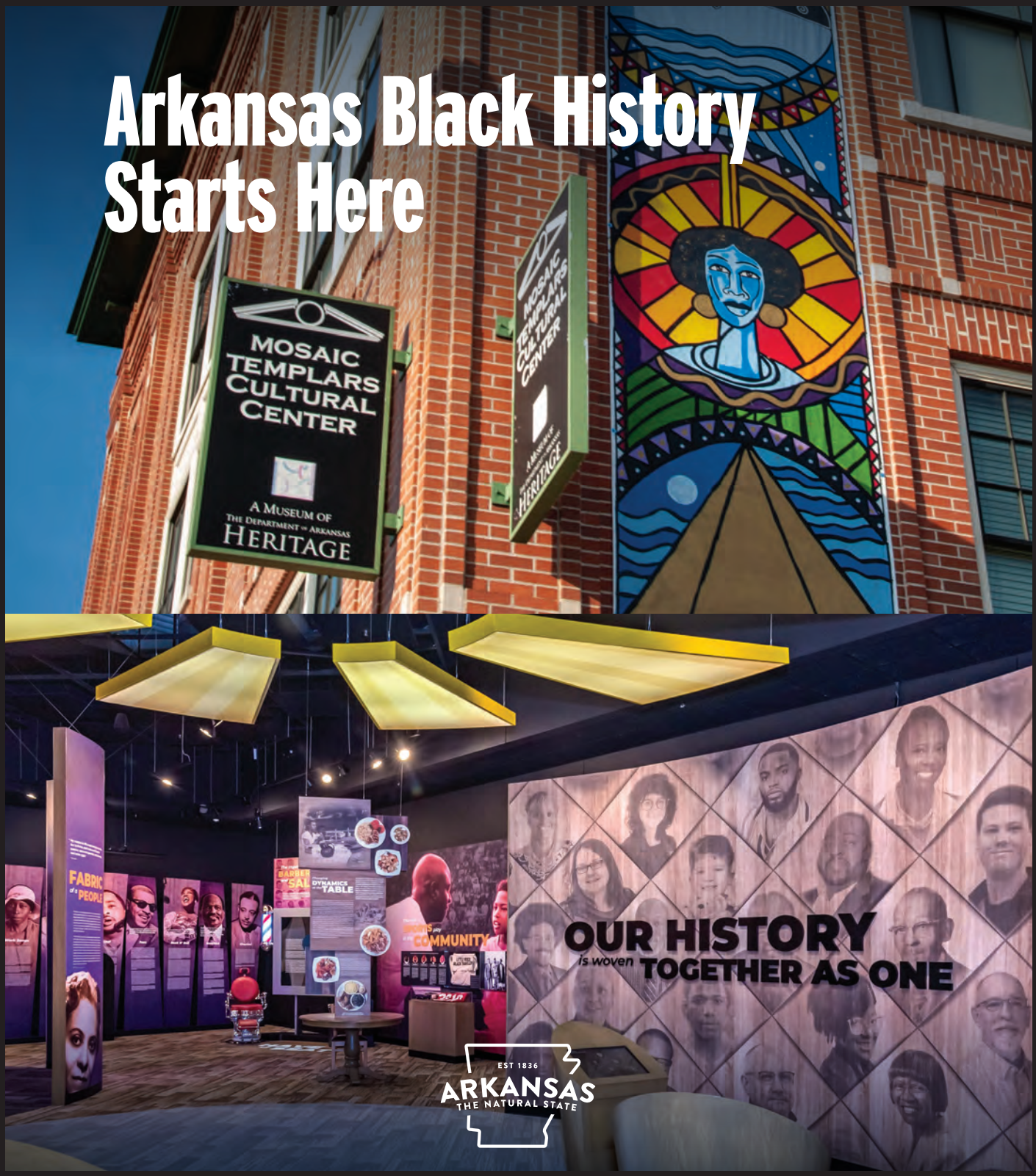
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THE MOSAIC TEMPLARS CULTURAL CENTER is a nationally accredited, award-winning museum dedicated to African American history and culture in Arkansas. From the musical legacy of Sister Rosetta Tharpe to the founding of the Mosaic Templars of America, this newly-renovated center has the power to deepen and expand your understanding of civil rights in America. Plan your visit at Arkansas.com/groups!

CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT TIMELINE



MANY THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE CONTRIBUTED TO THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT IN WAYS LARGE AND SMALL, BUT NUMEROUS HIGH-PROFILE EVENTS FROM 1951 TO 1968 GALVANIZED THE NATION. HERE'S A TIMELINE OF THE MAJOR MILESTONES DURING THAT PERIOD.

1951

WALKOUT AT ROBERT RUSSA MOTON HIGH SCHOOL
FARMVILLE, VIRGINIA

1954

BROWN V. BOARD OF EDUCATION
SUPREME COURT DECISION ILLEGALIZES SCHOOL SEGREGATION

1955

EMMETT TILL MURDERED
MONEY, MISSISSIPPI

ROSA PARKS ARRESTED
MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA

1956

BUSES DESEGREGATED
MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA

1957

MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. LEADS SOUTHERN CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE
MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA

CIVIL RIGHTS ACT OF 1957 SIGNED INTO LAW BY PRESIDENT DWIGHT EISENHOWER

INTEGRATION AT CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL
LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS

1960

LUNCH COUNTER SIT-INS
GREENSBORO, NORTH CAROLINA

1961

FREEDOM RIDES
MOBS ATTACK FREEDOM RIDERS IN VARIOUS SOUTHERN CITIES

1962

UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI DESEGREGATED
OXFORD, MISSISSIPPI

1963

THE BIRMINGHAM CAMPAIGN
BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA

MEDGAR EVERS MURDERED
JACKSON, MISSISSIPPI

MARCH ON WASHINGTON
WASHINGTON, D.C.

BOMBING OF 16TH STREET BAPTIST CHURCH
BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA

1964

CIVIL RIGHTS ACT OF 1964 SIGNED INTO LAW BY PRESIDENT LYNDON B. JOHNSON

1965

"BLOODY SUNDAY" ON THE EDMUND PETTUS BRIDGE
SELMA, ALABAMA

VOTING RIGHTS ACT SIGNED INTO LAW BY PRESIDENT LYNDON B. JOHNSON

1968

MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. ASSASSINATED
MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE

CIVIL RIGHTS ACT OF 1968 SIGNED INTO LAW BY PRESIDENT LYNDON B. JOHNSON

UNITED STATES CIVIL RIGHTS TRAIL



COME FOR THE STORIES.
STAY FOR THE LEGENDS.

Kansas is home to two sites on the Civil Rights Trail: **Brown v. Board of Education National Historic Park** and **Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library, Museum & Boyhood Home**. When the legal challenge of "separate but equal" made its way from Topeka, Kansas to the Supreme Court, school segregation was declared unconstitutional. Enforcing that law fell to President Eisenhower of Abilene. The rest, as they say, is history.

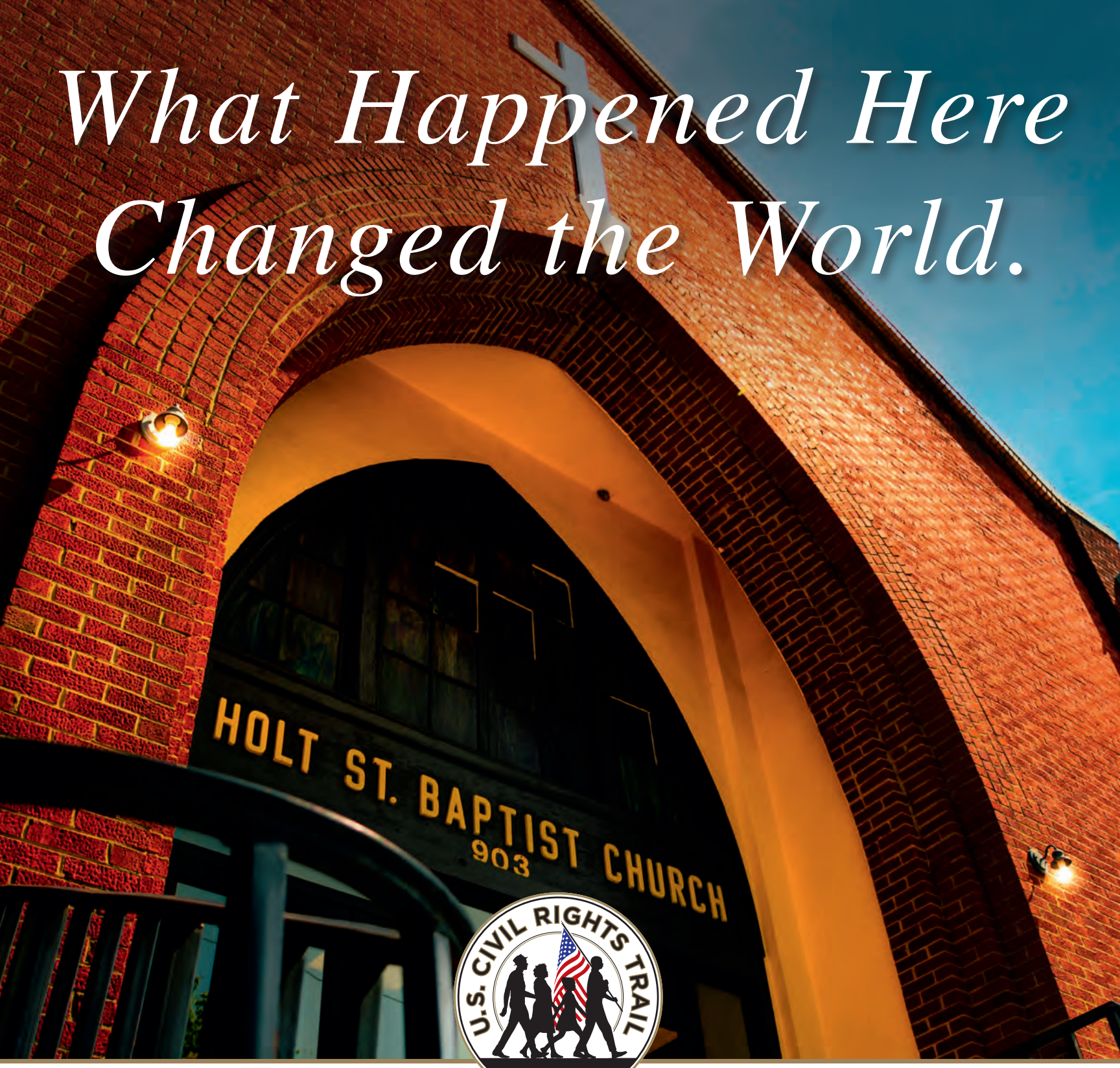
Discover more stories at these historical sites:

- ★ GORDON PARKS MUSEUM
- ★ BAXTER SPRINGS HERITAGE CENTER & MUSEUM
- ★ BUFFALO SOLDIER MONUMENT
- ★ RICHARD ALLEN CULTURAL CENTER & MUSEUM
- ★ JOHN BROWN MUSEUM STATE HISTORIC SITE
- ★ GEORGE WASHINGTON CARVER MUSEUM EXHIBIT
- ★ NICODEMUS NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE
- ★ BLACK HISTORY TRAIL OF GEARY COUNTY

KANSAS
— TOURISM —
to the stars

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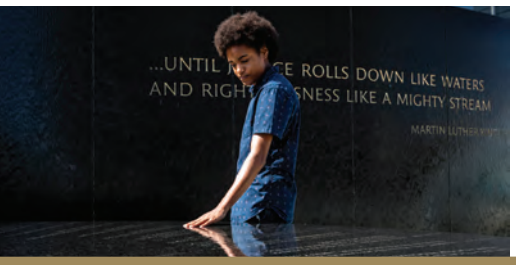
What Happened Here Changed the World.

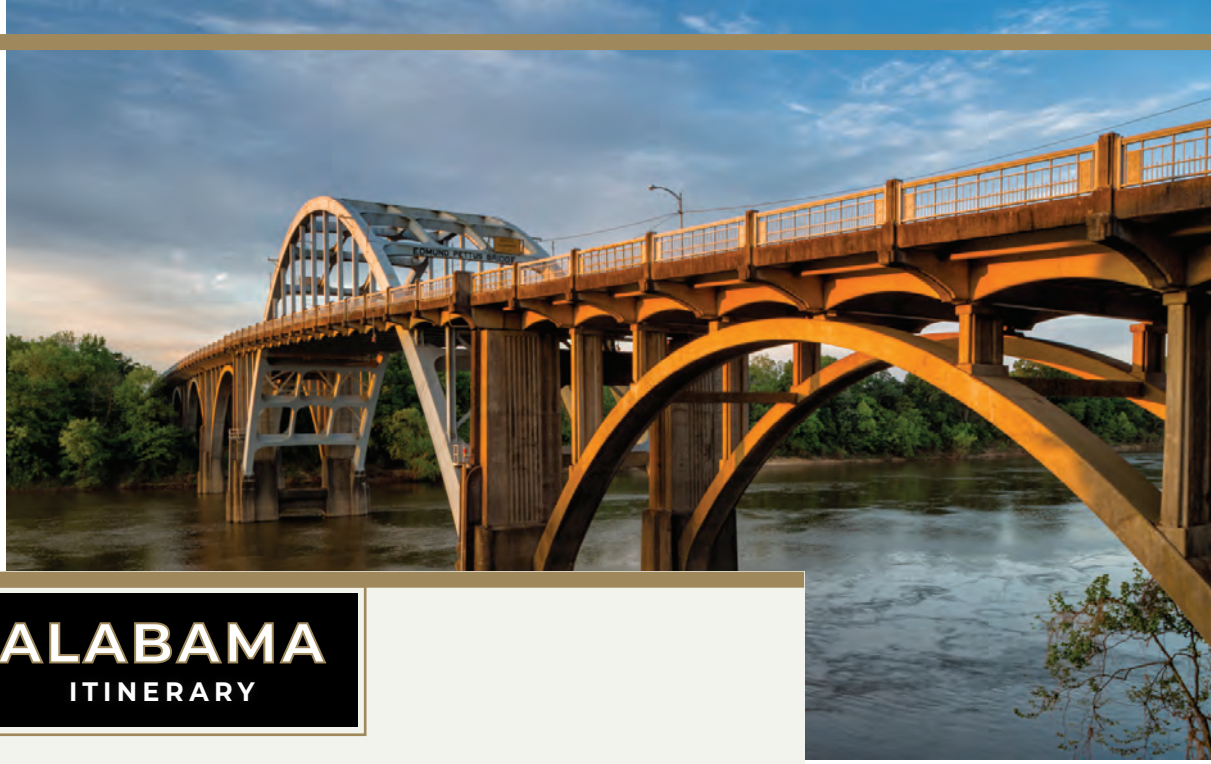


After Rosa Parks's arrest on December 1, 1955 for refusing to give up her seat on a Montgomery, Alabama bus to a white passenger, more than 5,000 people gathered at Holt Street Baptist Church on December 5, 1955 to listen to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. deliver a compelling speech promoting nonviolent protest strategies. This event marked the beginning of the Montgomery Bus Boycott, one of the most successful boycotts in history. It was also at this location and on this day that Rev. King was named president of the newly formed Montgomery Improvement Association (MIA).

For information contact: Shawna.Faniel@tourism.alabama.gov or call 334.353.1907







ALABAMA
ITINERARY

DAY ONE
BIRMINGHAM

Start your journey in Birmingham at the **Birmingham Civil Rights Institute**, showcasing the struggles of the Civil Rights Movement. Visit the **16th Street Baptist Church**, tragically bombed in 1963. Stroll through Kelly Ingram Park, where sculptures depict the brutality faced by demonstrators. Tour **Bethel Baptist Church**, headquarters for the Alabama Christian Movement for Human Rights, led by Rev. Fred Shuttlesworth. Experience the powerful history at these sites.

DAY TWO
SELMA

Journey to Selma's **Brown Chapel AME Church**, where Dr. King launched the voting rights march. Meet Foot Soldiers who survived Bloody Sunday on the iconic **Edmund Pettus Bridge**. Follow the 54-mile **Selma to Montgomery National Historic Trail**, passing Viola Liuzzo's historic marker. Stop at the **NPS Lowndes Interpretive Center.** In Montgomery, drive past the City of St. Jude before reaching the march's final destination, the **Alabama State Capitol**, where history was made in the fight for voting rights.

DAY THREE
MONTGOMERY

Continue your journey starting at **Holt Street Baptist Church**, where the 1955 Montgomery Bus Boycott was organized and the **Rosa Parks Museum**, honoring her courageous stand against segregation. Next, the **Freedom Rides Museum**, **First Baptist Brick-A-Day Church** and the **Harris House**; places of attack and refuge for the 1961 Freedom Riders as they challenged interstate bus segregation. Finally, visit Dexter Parsonage, Dr. King's former home and **Dexter Avenue King Memorial Baptist Church** reflecting on his legacy.

DAY FOUR
MONTGOMERY

Finally, honor the martyrs of the Civil Rights Movement at the **Civil Rights Memorial Center.** Continue to **The National Memorial for Peace and Justice**, which highlights racial terrorism, then visit **The Legacy Museum** to explore America's history from slavery to mass incarceration. Conclude at the 17-acre **Freedom Monument Sculpture Park**, reflecting and honoring the lives and memories of the 10 million Black people who were enslaved in America and celebrate their astounding courage and resilience.



Sweet Home Alabama

ALABAMA TOURISM

SHAWNA FANIEL
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UNITED STATES CIVIL RIGHTS TRAIL

UNITED STATES

CIVIL RIGHTS TRAIL

NEW SITES SIGNATURE MUSEUMS



THE GLOUCESTER MUSEUM OF HISTORY CONTAINS EXHIBITS ABOUT THE AREA'S CIVIL RIGHTS HEROES, LIKE IRENE MORGAN.

The Journey Continues

New Civil Rights Trail sites advance the mission

BY RACHEL CRICK

The newest additions to the U.S. Civil Rights Trail already carry storied histories within.

Each year, new museums, churches, local history trails and historic buildings are added to the long list of sites on the Civil Rights Trail. These include both the historic places where the Civil Rights Movement unfolded and the modern institutions dedicated to an in-depth retelling of that story. As each site receives recognition for the significant role it played in the movement's marches, demonstrations and speeches — and in the lives of its most compelling figures — it joins dozens of other significant attractions across the U.S. Here are the six new additions to the U.S. Civil Rights Trail in 2026, with information on how travelers can experience them to the fullest.

Courtesy Gloucester County, Virginia

Jacksonville Civil Rights Trail

JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA

While Northeast Florida might not first come to mind when one thinks of the Civil Rights Movement, Jacksonville has an extensive civil rights history that embodies both the movement's leadership and Black culture past and present. That history can now be experienced by visitors following the U.S. trail with stops along the Jacksonville Civil Rights Trail. This series of 40 markers spread throughout Jacksonville educates visitors about places in the city that contributed to its tapestry of Black culture and heritage.

Markers on the Jacksonville Civil Rights Trail tell powerful stories of the movement in downtown Jacksonville, including "Ax Handle Saturday" in 1960, during which 40 Black demonstrators staged sit-ins at whites-only lunch counters and were met with violence by 150 white men carrying axe handles and baseball bats. In addition to memorializing places of turmoil and triumph, the trail also highlights sites like LaVilla neighborhood, which was called the "Harlem of the South" and is home to gems like the Ritz Theatre and Museum. Visitors will also find markers related to the lives of some prominent civil rights leaders, including the birthplaces of James Weldon Johnson and John Rosamond Johnson, writers and composers of "Lift Every Voice and Sing," the hymn that became known as the Black National Anthem.

VISITJACKSONVILLE.COM



Courtesy Tennessee Tourism

Texas & Pacific Railway Depot

NATCHITOCHES, LOUISIANA

Architecture can instantly transport one into the past, and visitors can experience that feeling at the Texas & Pacific Railway Depot in Natchitoches, Louisiana. The historic depot serves both as a jarring reminder of the segregated South and as a powerful tool for educating visitors. In 2026, it was added to the U.S. Civil Rights Trail and became the 13th site in Louisiana's Civil Rights Trail.

The building, constructed in 1927, is one of the last examples of segregated architecture still in existence in the state, with preserved separate entrances, waiting areas, ticket counters, bathrooms and signage for "white" and "colored" passengers. Visitors can observe the juxtaposition between the polished "white" waiting room and the plain "colored" waiting room, though the depot was located adjacent to the heart of the Black business community in Natchitoches. After the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which outlawed segregation in public places, the depot ceased regular passenger service, though it would be several years before the city fully desegregated. The city of Natchitoches donated the depot in the 1980s.

Today, it serves as the visitor center for the Cane River Creole National Historical Park. The National Park Service meticulously restored the building, even obtaining replica signage so that visitors can experience the grim reminder of the Jim Crow South.

NPS.GOV/CARI



Courtesy Visit Jacksonville


AN EXHIBIT AT THE
RITZ THEATRE & MUSEUM
Courtesy Visit Jacksonville



Courtesy Cane River National Heritage Area

Museum of Christian & Gospel Music

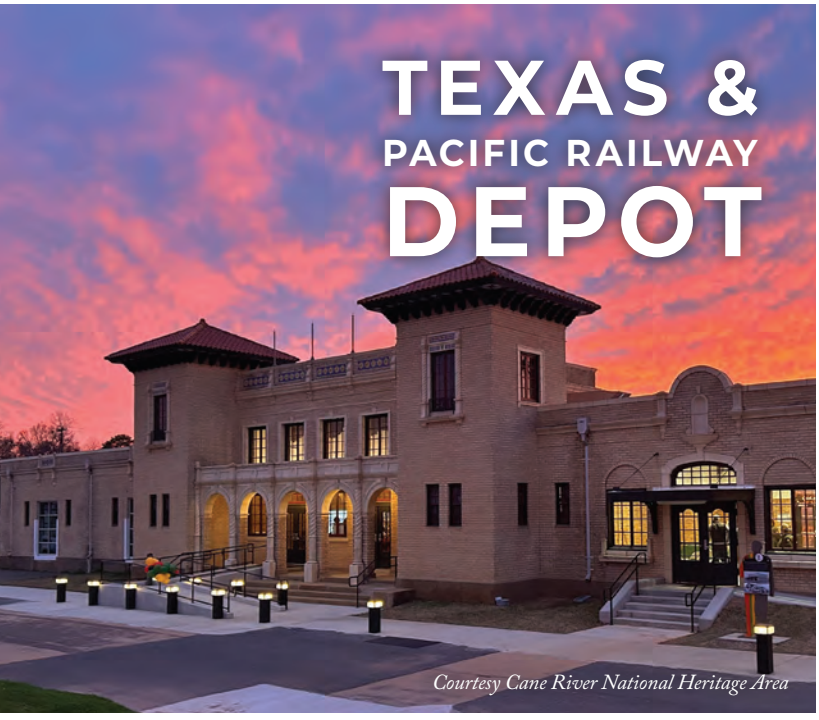
NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE

Gospel music has deep roots within Black culture, and vice versa. Throughout the Civil Rights Movement, soulful notes of hymns acted as a medium for buoying Black voices, giving demonstrators courage and moving other Americans to recognize their fight for equality. That's why it seems natural that the Museum of Christian & Gospel Music in Nashville, Tennessee, should be recognized on the nation's official Civil Rights Trail.

The museum, which opened in late 2025, can be found downtown in Music City, not far from other iconic music and civil rights attractions. The 11,000-square-foot museum is a vision brought to life by the Gospel Music Association, and it contains both rare artifacts and immersive exhibits highlighting the history of the genre. The works of prominent gospel musicians, such as Thomas Dorsey, Reverend James Cleveland, Mahalia Jackson and Charles A. Tindley, are explored across themed galleries in the museum. Original sheet music for "Lift Every Voice and Sing" can also be found within the museum. Interactive displays let visitors experience the music for themselves, with opportunities to remix iconic songs.

The museum uses timed entry to maintain quality guest experience and is open Monday through Saturday, with extended evening hours on Thursdays.

CGMMUSEUM.ORG



Courtesy Cane River National Heritage Area



FXBG

CIVIL RIGHTS TRAIL



FREEDOM, A WORK IN PROGRESS

The Civil Rights Trail in Fredericksburg, Virginia follows the stories and sites of the local Civil Rights movement and highlights the role of Black residents in Fredericksburg's history.



FXBG
City of Fredericksburg, VA

FxbgCivilRightsTrail.com
540-373-1776

Jefferson Street Sound Museum

NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE



Courtesy Tennessee Tourism

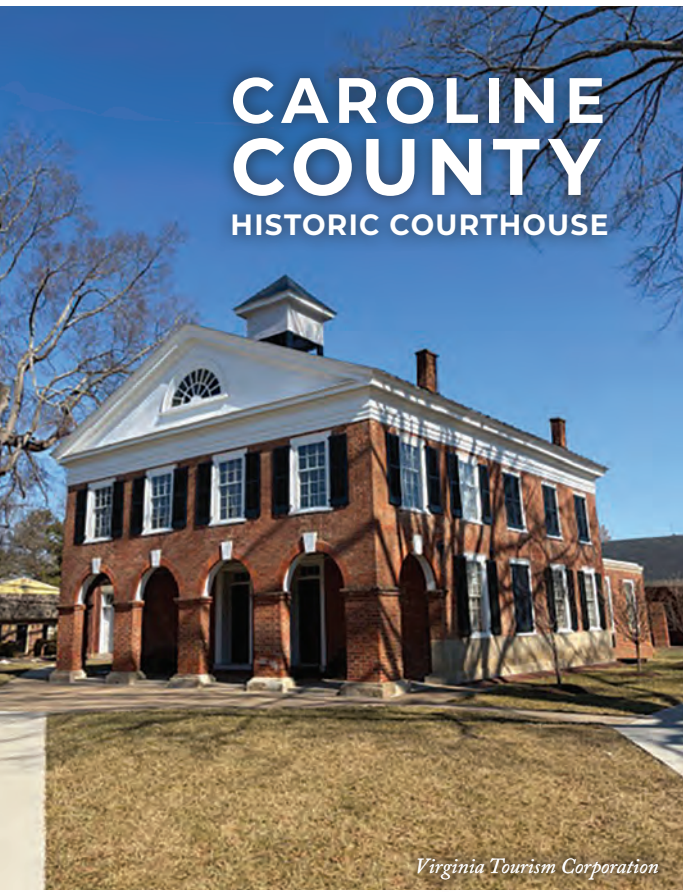
Jefferson Street has always been at the heart of Nashville's Black community. It's home to several historically Black colleges and universities: Fisk University, Tennessee State University and Meharry Medical College. In 1960, more than 3,000 protestors marched down Jefferson Street to the Davidson County Courthouse in response to the bombing of Civil Rights attorney Z. Alexander Looby's home and got the mayor to concede the immorality of segregated lunch counters. Jefferson Street was also a hotbed of nightclubs where Black rhythm and blues performers flourished.

Capturing that legacy, the Jefferson Street Sound Museum was founded in 2011 by Lorenzo Washington. Housed in a historic 1909 building, the museum features a music production studio, a rehearsal hall, and museum galleries with artifacts and exhibits preserving Nashville's Black music scene and the city's Black heritage more generally. The museum frequently collaborates with local schools and local and national visitors to offer music and arts programs. Visitors can schedule private tours during the week, or they can visit the museum on Saturdays to participate in a public tour, which occurs every hour on the hour from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

JEFFERSONSTREETSOUND.COM

Caroline County Historic Courthouse

BOWLING GREEN, VIRGINIA



Virginia Tourism Corporation

Interracial marriage was only legalized broadly throughout the U.S. in 1967, when the Supreme Court decision in Loving v. Virginia determined anti-miscegenation laws were unconstitutional under the 14th amendment. This landmark civil rights case was brought to the Supreme Court by Richard and Mildred Loving, who were married in Washington, D.C. Richard, a white man, and Mildred, a Black woman, were arrested, charged and pled guilty to violating Virginia's anti-miscegenation law at the Caroline County Courthouse. The couple were sentenced to one year in jail, though the judge agreed to commute the sentence if the Lovings left Virginia. They attempted to have their convictions overturned but were denied appeals at the local and state level. Finally, in 1967, the U.S. Supreme Court agreed to hear their case, and one couple's determination toppled anti-miscegenation laws throughout the country.

The Caroline County Historic Courthouse campus, including the courthouse, former sheriff's office and the jail, are located on Bowling Green's Main Street. The campus was added to the country's official Civil Rights Trail and stands as a reminder of the hard-fought journey to legalize racial equality in marriage. The 1830s courthouse is still an active courthouse today and is unavailable for tours, but the former sheriff's office has been converted into an arts and cultural space, which travelers can arrange to visit.

CO.CAROLINE.VA.US

PEOPLE BEHIND *THE* PLACES

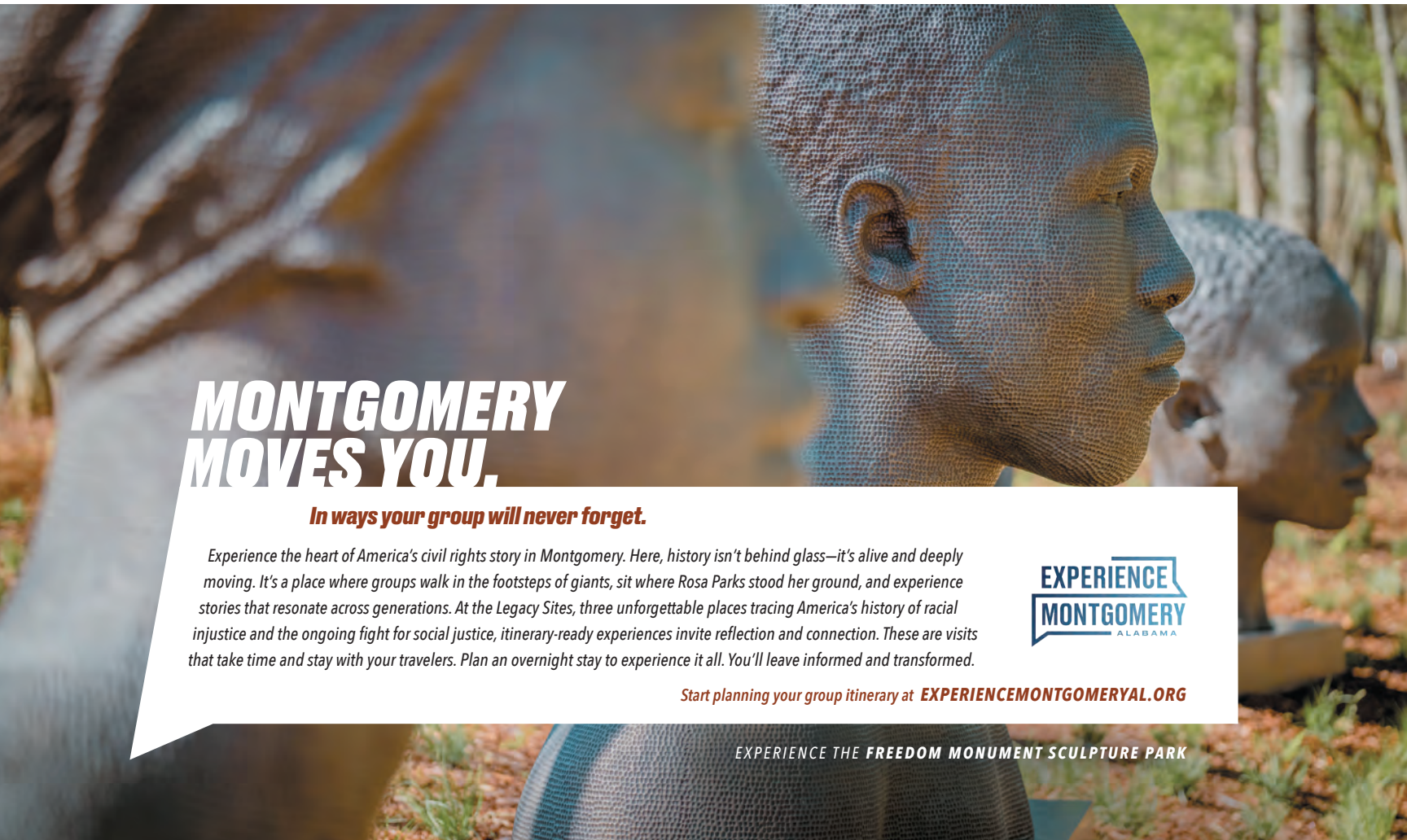


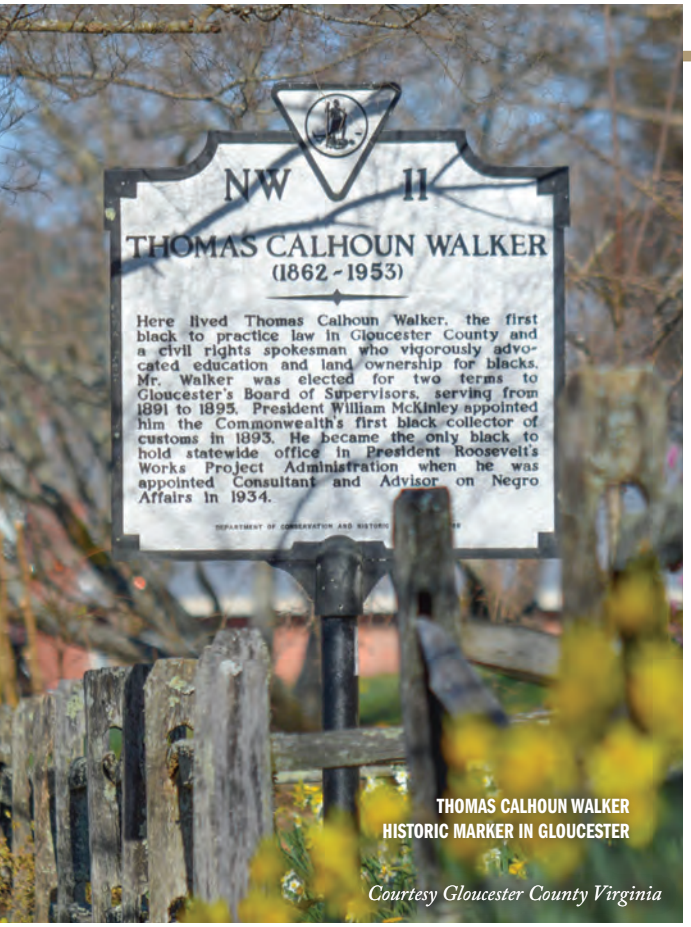
ELAINE TURNER

BY LAURYN LEMONS

Elaine Turner's work is the perfect reflection of civil rights stories extending beyond their familiar 1960s scope. As a lifelong history enthusiast and community and cultural advocate, Turner co-founded Heritage Tours in 1983 in Memphis, Tennessee, alongside her sister Joan. This African American tour company educates travelers about Civil Rights Movement history from the 1960s onward in Tennessee. It is often recognized as one of the first tour companies of its kind in the country.

Sharing stories of African American history, Heritage Tours has a strong emphasis on youth engagement. Turner, who spent 15 years teaching, remains an educator through her role in the company. She is also the director of two civil rights museums: the Slave Haven Underground Railroad Museum and the W.C. Handy Memphis Home & Museum. Turner's work welcomes visitors to explore the cultural legacy of the Civil Rights Movement in Memphis, and Heritage Tours has attracted visitors from all over the world.





THOMAS CALHOUN WALKER
HISTORIC MARKER IN GLOUCESTER

Courtesy Gloucester County Virginia

Gloucester Museum of History

GLOUCESTER, VIRGINIA

Gloucester County, Virginia, was home to several Civil Rights heroes whose inspiring actions led to change. Irene Morgan refused to give up her seat on a segregated Greyhound bus in 1944, more than 10 years before Rosa Parks did the same in Montgomery, Alabama. Robert Russa Moton succeeded Booker T. Washington as the leader of Tuskegee Institute and advised five U.S. presidents. And Thomas Calhoun "T.C." Walker, who was born enslaved, became Gloucester's first Black lawyer.

Each of these leaders made their mark on history in the decades leading up to the Civil Rights Movement. This history is explored in the Gloucester Museum of History, housed in a 1770 building in downtown Gloucester that was once a tavern.

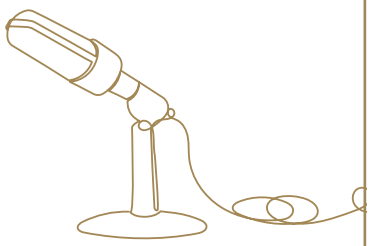
The museum brings the area's history to life with more than 3,000 artifacts and includes exhibits about these prominent civil rights icons. It also hosts an African American Heritage Trail and free driving tour, which has 12 stops and markers. The trail features the area's Black churches, schools and historic sites connected to prominent names in the movement, as well as some lesser-known local heroes whose stories still inspire visitors today. It also offers a virtual museum tour and is a great stop for field trips and group tours.

GLOUCESTERVA.GOV



Courtesy Gloucester County Virginia

VIRGINIA:
THE MOVEMENT
ARRIVES IN
FREDERICKSBURG



UNITED STATES
CIVIL
RIGHTS
TRAIL


KENTUCKY
FIND WHAT MOVES YOU
CHANGING OPINIONS
History You Don't Just Learn. You Experience It.
The Civil Rights Movement didn't end in history books. It lives on in the places, people and stories that shaped our nation, and continue to shape us.
We invite you to explore our sites on the U.S. Civil Rights Trail as well as sites on Kentucky's African American Heritage Trail.
Visitors, residents, commuters and day trippers are invited to experience all that makes our New Kentucky Home a welcoming place to visit, live, work and play.
TEAM KENTUCKY
New Kentucky Home
MUHAMMAD ALI CENTER, LOUISVILLE
KENTUCKYTOURISM.COM

LOUISIANA CIVIL RIGHTS TRAIL

MAKING RIGHTS REAL

A TRAIL HONORING TRAILBLAZERS.



PLAN YOUR TRIP AT →
LouisianaCivilRightsTrail.com

On the Louisiana Civil Rights Trail, discover the real-life heroes who strategized, organized, preached, marched, boycotted, stood up, sat down, and sang for change. Real people who dedicated themselves and their lives to Making Rights Real.

PLAN A ROAD TRIP THROUGH HISTORY IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF LOUISIANA'S CIVIL RIGHTS PIONEERS ON THE

LOUISIANA CIVIL RIGHTS TRAIL.



† THE 1967 MARCH FROM BOGALUSA TO BATON ROUGE.









LOUISIANA
ITINERARY



DAY ONE
NEW ORLEANS

Begin in New Orleans at the Louisiana Civil Rights Museum inside the Ernest N. Morial Convention Center, home to Dreamcube, an immersive VR experience featuring firsthand stories from witnesses and participants. Then dine at **Dooky Chase's Restaurant,** where national and local civil rights leaders once held secret strategy sessions upstairs when integration was illegal. That historic upstairs dining room is now open to visitors once again.

DAY TWO
NEW ORLEANS

Go to William Frantz Elementary, where 6-year-old Ruby Bridges became the first Black student to integrate an all-white public school. Continue to **McDonogh 19 Elementary School,** where Leona Tate, Tessie Prevost, and Gail Etienne were escorted by federal marshals that same day. It is now a Civil Rights Interpretive Center owned by Tate. End at **New Zion Baptist Church,** birthplace of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, led by Dr. King.

DAY THREE
BATON ROUGE

Start your Baton Rouge tour at Mount Zion Baptist Church, where Rev. T.J. Jemison organized the nation's first bus boycott in 1953. Two years later, Dr. King used strategies developed here for the Montgomery Bus Boycott after Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat. Continue to the **Old State Capitol,** where organizers arranged carpools, and gather beneath the Bicentennial Oak, where boycotters waited for free rides.

DAY FOUR
BATON ROUGE

At A.Z. Young Park near the **State Capitol,** a marker honors the 105-mile Bogalusa to Baton Rouge March for civil rights. Led by A.Z. Young, the march grew from 25 to 600 participants, guarded by 2,500 National Guardsmen and State Troopers, ending at the Capitol steps with a list of grievances to Gov. John McKeithen. Nearby, **the Kress marker** commemorates 1960 lunch counter sit-ins that led to arrests and expulsions of Southern University students.

LOUISIANA OFFICE OF TOURISM

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D.C.'S NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY AND CULTURE CONTAINS MORE THAN 40,000 ARTIFACTS.

Halls of Honor

Museums tell the stories of the movement

BY CYNTHIA BARNES

Museums are more than just repositories of history — they're time capsules that give context to the past while telling stories that inspire the future. This is especially true of the museums along the U.S. Civil Rights Trail that document the Civil Rights Movement and highlight its leaders, milestones and enduring legacy.

From Albany, Georgia, to Washington, D.C., these institutions preserve the stories of men and women who risked everything for freedom. Each museum offers immersive exhibits featuring artifacts, photographs and personal testimonies that bring pivotal moments to life — the sit-ins and marches, the court decisions that changed a nation, and the efforts to fulfill the American promise of "liberty and justice for all." Walking through these museums allows visitors to witness history, to honor the sacrifices behind hard-won victories and to celebrate progress while also learning about the work that must continue. These five signature museums are essential stops for anyone seeking to understand America's ongoing journey toward true equality.

By Alan Karchmer, courtesy NMAAHC

National Museum of African American History and Culture

WASHINGTON, D.C.



This year marks the 100th anniversary of Black History Month, which African American historian Carter G. Woodson established as Negro History Week in 1926 to highlight African American contributions to society. President Gerald Ford extended it to a monthlong observation 50 years later, and the National Museum of African American History and Culture — the 19th museum of the Smithsonian Institution — welcomed its first visitors in 2016. Its more than 40,000 artifacts comprise the country's only national museum that exclusively documents African American life, history and culture.

Located on the National Mall, the stunning structure is worthy of a visit for its architectural deign alone, marrying classical Greco-Roman form with a three-tiered corona inspired by Yoruban crowns. The entire building is wrapped in an elaborate bronze-colored metal lattice, paying homage to the delicate metalwork crafted by enslaved African Americans.

Fifteen exhibitions trace the journey of African Americans from the transatlantic slave trade through the Civil War and Civil Rights Movement to the present day, highlighting achievements and contributions to sports, science, politics, arts and entertainment, and military service, to touch on just a few. The museum's 355-seat Oprah Winfrey Theater provides a state-of-the-art venue for screenings and performances, while the award-winning Sweet Home Cafe celebrates both traditional and modern African American foodways.

NMAAHC.SI.EDU

Muhammad Ali Center

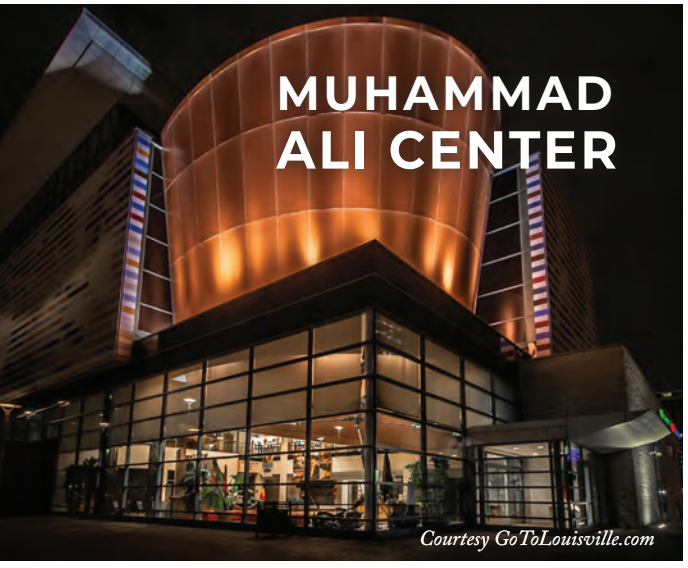
LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY

Born Cassius Marcellus Clay Jr. in Louisville, Kentucky's West End, the man the world would come to know as Muhammad Ali was not only the world's most famous boxer, but also a passionate humanitarian and Civil Rights activist. From Olympic gold medalist to three-time World Heavyweight Champion to conscientious objector and internationally recognized humanitarian, "The Greatest" spent most of his time outside the boxing ring devoted to the pursuit of peace.

"Muhammad Ali is Louisville's hometown hero," said Rosanne Mastin, communications and public affairs manager for Louisville Tourism. "He was very proud to be in Louisville, and his center reflects both his boxing career and his legendary status as a champion. But it also really focuses on his life after boxing and what he called the six core principles, which inspired this museum. He was alive when the museum was built [Ali died in 2016] and had ownership over what the galleries would hold. He didn't want people to go to some other city and learn about him. He wanted people to come to his hometown, to Louisville."

Those core principles are illustrated in the center's six pavilions — Spirituality, Conviction, Confidence, Dedication, Giving and Respect — that give insight into Ali's history and approach to life. Other permanent exhibits include the (Float Like A) Butterfly Garden, as well as on-demand videos with original broadcast commentary of Ali's greatest and most memorable fights like the "Rumble in the Jungle" against George Foreman and the "Thrilla in Manila" against Joe Frazier.

ALICENTER.ORG









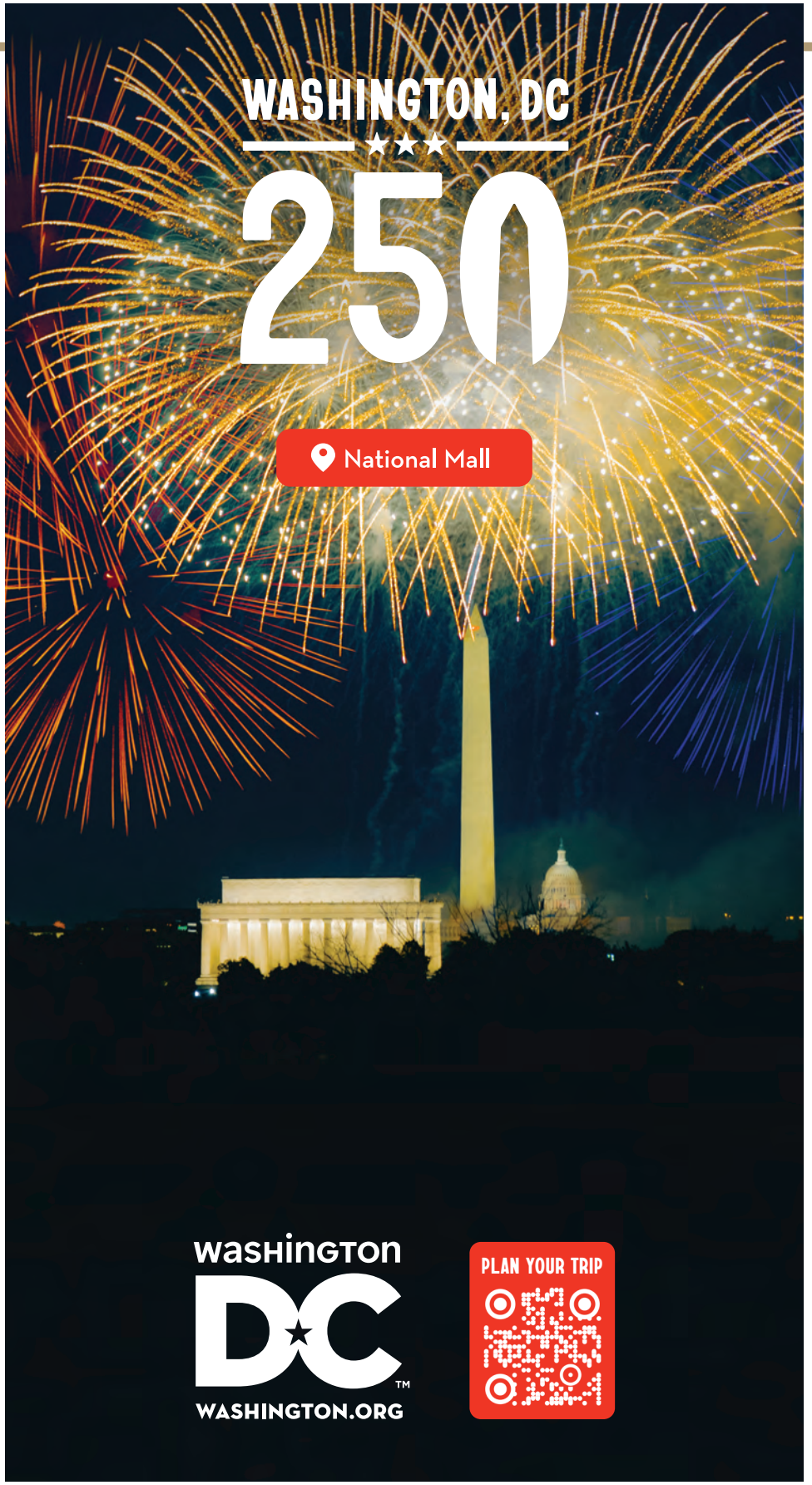
Courtesy NMAAHC



WHAT HAPPENED HERE CHANGED THE WORLD

CIVIL RIGHTS TRAIL OVERVIEW

UNITED STATES CIVIL RIGHTS TRAIL



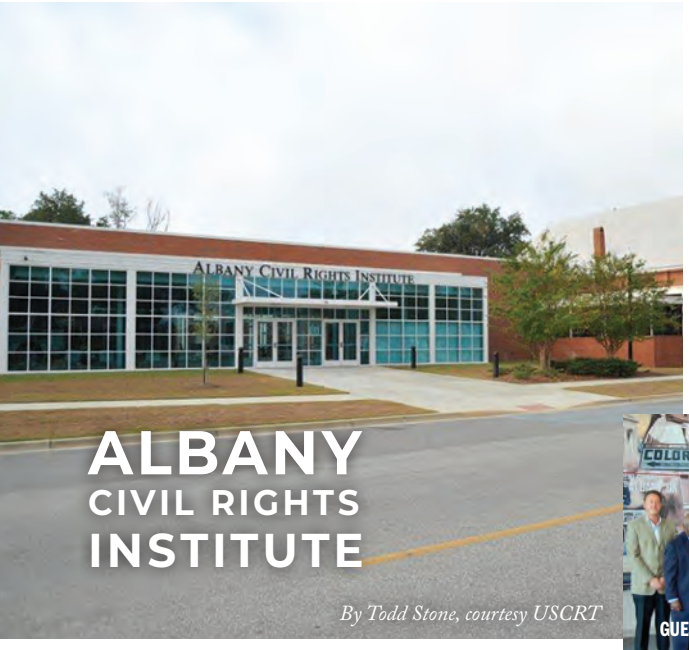
Albany Civil Rights Institute

ALBANY, GEORGIA

The Albany Movement was a desegregation and voters' rights coalition formed in 1961 in Albany, Georgia, and was the first mass Civil Rights Movement with the goal of ending all forms of racial discrimination and of desegregating an entire community. More than 1,000 African Americans were jailed during the demonstrations, including Martin Luther King Jr., who spoke at the Mt. Zion Baptist Church. King failed in his Albany efforts, but lessons learned from the experience informed his strategy for the Birmingham campaign, which eventually led that city's government to change its discrimination laws. Albany is the home of singer Ray Charles and is also where music became an integral part of the movement. A group known as the Freedom Singers formed there, singing at Albany State University and Mt. Zion Baptist Church and later accompanying freedom riders throughout the South and performing throughout the country to raise funds for the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee.

The museum is housed in the restored 1906 church, and it contains photographs, artifacts and oral histories, along with educational exhibits that detail the Albany efforts, from voter registration to nonviolent protest, song, economic boycotts and legal actions. The Freedom Singers perform spirituals, gospel hymns and freedom songs interspersed with narrative at the museum on the second Saturday of each month.

VISITALBANYGA.COM



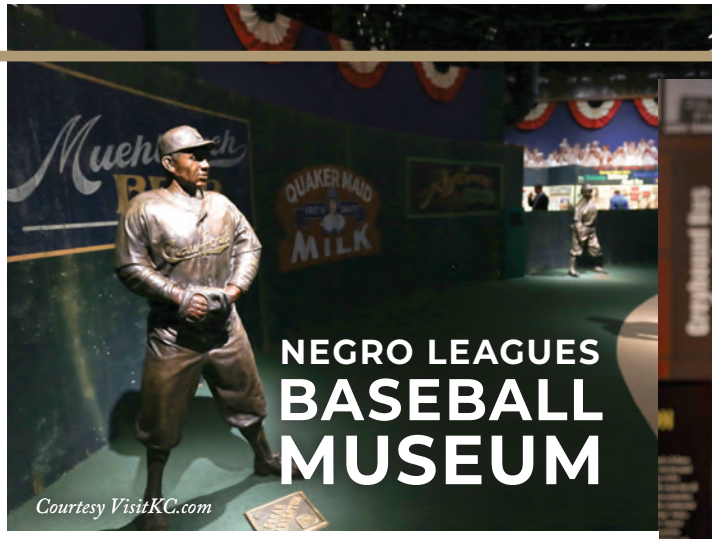
ALBANY CIVIL RIGHTS INSTITUTE

By Todd Stone, courtesy USCRT



GUESTS AT ALBANY CIVIL RIGHTS INSTITUTE

Courtesy USCRT



NEGRO LEAGUES BASEBALL MUSEUM

Courtesy VisitKC.com

Negro Leagues Baseball Museum

KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI

Institutionalized segregation affected every facet of American life, including sports. The powerful history of the men — and women — who played in the segregated Negro leagues is brought to life at the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum in Kansas City, Missouri, through exhibits that showcase the athletes' lasting impact on the sport and on society.

"The Negro Leagues Baseball Museum is certainly one of Kansas City's most acclaimed museums and is really a special place," said Makenzie Wolters, communications manager for Visit KC. "The Negro leagues were founded in Kansas City in a former YMCA that's on the National Register of Historic Places and just a few buildings down from the museum itself. It's the only museum in the world that is dedicated to the history of Black baseball in the United States. So, you're not going to find anything else like it, and visitors are really getting a unique experience."

The permanent collection features hundreds of artifacts, including jerseys, baseballs, memorabilia and mementos of the leagues, as well as a documentary film narrated by actor James Earl Jones. The centerpiece is Field of Legends, a baseball diamond filled with life-size bronze sculptures of famous players where visitors can feel like they're part of the game. Jackie Robinson's historic achievement in breaking baseball's color barrier is well-documented, along with the highs and lows that Black athletes experienced in the Negro leagues and in Major League Baseball.

NLBM.COM

PEOPLE BEHIND *THE* PLACES

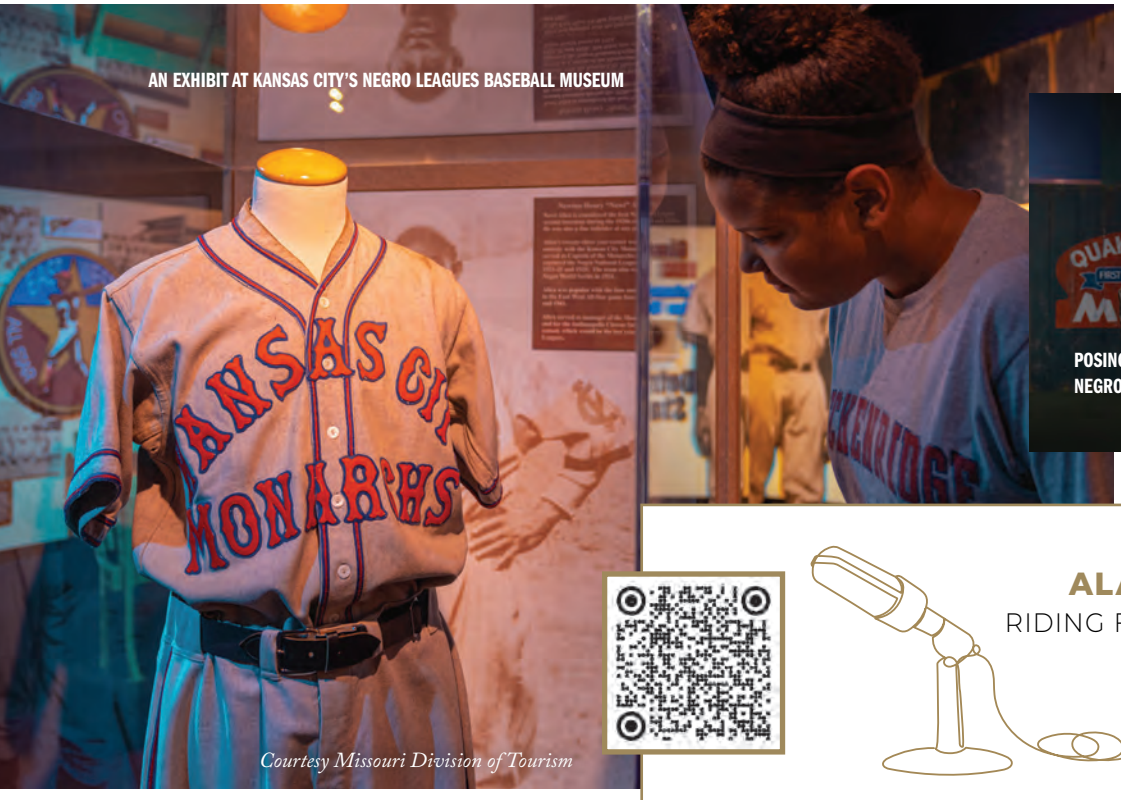


HEZEKIAH WATKINS

BY LAURYN LEMONS

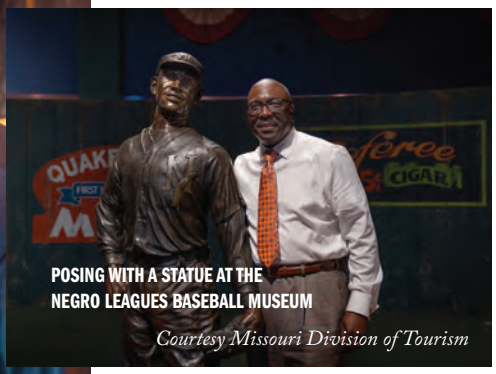
A life of civil rights work for Hezekiah Watkins began in 1961, when he was only 13 years old. Inspired by the televised Freedom Riders, Watkins set out to see them in action. This act led to him being mistaken for a member of the movement, and he eventually made history by becoming the youngest person taken to the infamous Parchman Farm, also known as the Mississippi State Penitentiary.

Today, Watkins is an important figure at the Mississippi Civil Rights Museum in Jackson, where he continues to push for justice and youth education by sharing his own experiences. He strives to help children better understand the privileges they have and to take advantage of them. He serves as a museum guide and a speaker throughout the state and highlights a variety of destinations to visit for people interested in civil rights history, including the Smith Robertson Museum and Cultural Center, as well as the Mississippi Blues, Freedom and Writers trails.



AN EXHIBIT AT KANSAS CITY'S NEGRO LEAGUES BASEBALL MUSEUM

Courtesy Missouri Division of Tourism



POSING WITH A STATUE AT THE NEGRO LEAGUES BASEBALL MUSEUM

Courtesy Missouri Division of Tourism

ALABAMA:
RIDING FOR FREEDOM

UNITED STATES CIVIL RIGHTS TRAIL

Brown v. Board of Education National Historical Park

TOPEKA, KANSAS

Commemorating the U.S. Supreme Court's landmark 1954 decision ending racial segregation in public schools, the Brown v. Board of Education National Historical Park in Topeka, Kansas, is housed in Monroe Elementary School, one of the city's four elementary schools that served Black children.

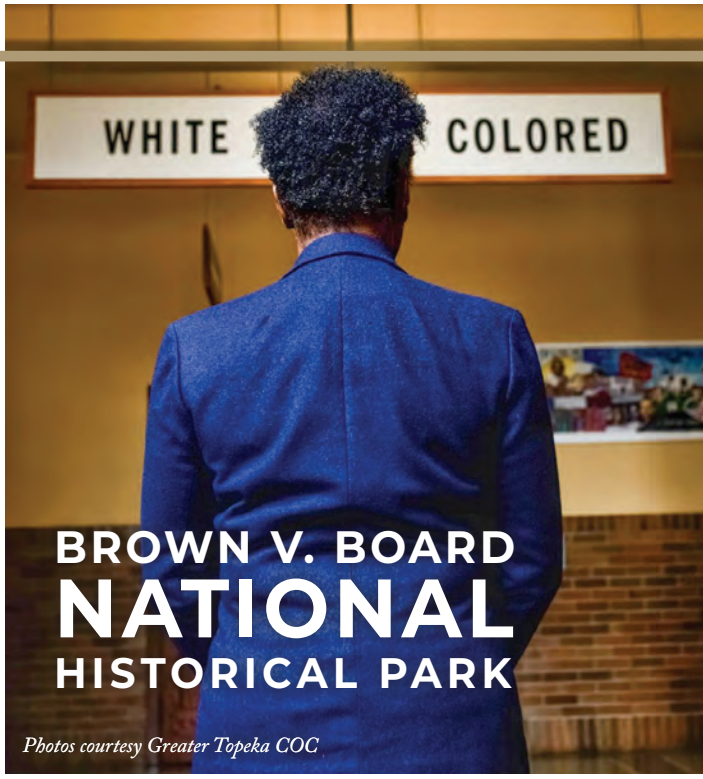
"What visitors don't often understand is that there were five cases that the Supreme Court decided together, not only from Kansas, but also South Carolina, Virginia, D.C. and Delaware," said James Williams, park superintendent. "So, we try to give a sense of the variety of issues that were involved in those different places and how the story played out in each one of those."

Four exhibits illustrate what educational opportunities were like for African Americans from Reconstruction after the Civil War to the Brown decision and then subsequent decisions that carry the story up to the present day. Visitors can view videos of oral history clips from former students who experienced segregation in schools and listen to protest music from the Civil Rights Movement.

"Most of our visitors were not alive when there was that sort of blatant segregation in many parts of the country," Williams said. "We have signs saying 'White' and 'Colored' that labeled restrooms and water fountains. It makes an emotional connection. We try to immerse them in the experience of what it was like and the courage that it took for people to file lawsuits, to sign their names. Part of our mission is to honor the civil rights stories of struggle, perseverance, activism and the pursuit of educational equity."

Outside the building, visitors can picnic, enjoy the historic playground or take a relaxing stroll. The park is located at the trailhead of Landon Trail, the only trail in America that connects and crosses both the Santa Fe Trail and the Oregon Trail.

NPS.GOV/BRVB



Photos courtesy Greater Topeka COC

WHAT HAPPENED HERE CHANGED THE WORLD

BROWN V. BOARD OF EDUCATION



MONROE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL IN TOPEKA



TOPEKA'S BROWN V. BOARD MURAL



TWO OFFICIAL STOPS. ONE INSPIRING JOURNEY.

LOUISVILLE EST. 1778

GoToLouisville.com

Explore Louisville's U.S. Civil Rights Trail experiences-- from the immersive Muhammad Ali Center to the historic Downtown Civil Rights Trail. Discover the Louisville locations sharing powerful stories of courage, leadership, and change.

U.S. CIVIL RIGHTS TRAIL


SEE THE MOVEMENT
FOR CIVIL RIGHTS
ILLUMINATED
IN MISSISSIPPI.
COURAGE
VISIT
MISSISSIPPI
James Meredith Statue
The University of Mississippi | Oxford





MISSISSIPPI
ITINERARY

DAY ONE
GLENDORA, SUMNER & RULEVILLE

Begin in Glendora, where the **Emmett Till Historic Intrepid Center** deepens understanding of his 1955 murder. Continue to Sumner's **Tallahatchie County Courthouse,** the trial site that drew national reporters into its sweltering second-floor courtroom. Then travel to Ruleville's Mississippi Freedom Trail marker honoring Fannie Lou Hamer and her powerful 1964 Democratic Convention testimony.

DAY TWO
PHILADELPHIA & JACKSON

Begin in Philadelphia at Mount Zion United Methodist Church, where a Mississippi Freedom Trail marker honors Chaney, Goodman, and Schwerner and recalls their 1964 murders that reignited a national outcry. Continue to Jackson to explore the powerful galleries of the **Mississippi Civil Rights Museum** and visit the **Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument,** preserved as a testament to courage and sacrifice.

DAY THREE
JACKSON, CANTON & MCCOMB

In Jackson, visit two Mississippi Freedom Trail landmarks: the **Greyhound Bus Station,** where Freedom Riders were arrested in 1961, and the **Tougaloo Nine marker** honoring students who defied segregation. Continue to the **Canton Freedom House marker,** the last surviving CORE Freedom House, then to McComb's markers including the **Aylene Quin marker** and the **McComb Bombings marker,** which honor the community's civil rights struggle.

DAY FOUR
HATTIESBURG & BILOXI

Spend the morning exploring the Hattiesburg 1964 Freedom Summer Trail, a 16-site tour retracing Mississippi's largest voter-registration campaign, with audio reflections at each stop. End along the Gulf Coast at the **Biloxi Wade-Ins marker,** where Dr. Gilbert Mason Sr.'s 1960 protests helped integrate local beaches.



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UNITED STATES CIVIL RIGHTS TRAIL

UNITED STATES

CIVIL RIGHTS TRAIL

NEW SITES SIGNATURE MUSEUMS



A MARKER OUTSIDE THE INTERNATIONAL CIVIL RIGHTS CENTER & MUSEUM IN GREENSBORO COMMEMORATES THE WOOLWORTH'S SIT-IN.

Footsteps of History

Plan a pilgrimage to these Civil Rights sites

BY CYNTHIA BARNES

Chattel slavery and racial segregation were only abolished with great struggle and sacrifice. For more than a century across the United States, African Americans and their abolitionist allies put their safety on the line during marches, demonstrations, sit-ins and other activities with two goals: freedom and equality. The locations of these acts remain as touchstones, where history was made and where heroes — both were leaders and ordinary citizens — were revealed. These settings allow today's visitors to honor the past and to connect with the anti-slavery and Civil Rights movements.

Standing where activists marched, organized and faced violence provides something no textbook can describe. From bridges to churches to lunch counters, these are sites where people confronted injustice. Visiting them transforms dates and names into lived experiences, offering opportunities for reflection and inspiration.

Courtesy USCRT

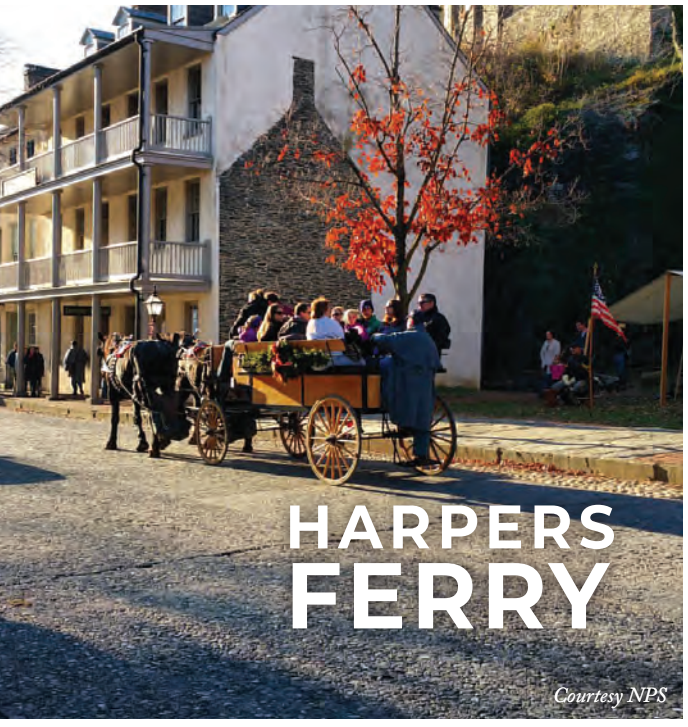
Harpers Ferry National Historical Park

HARPERS FERRY, WEST VIRGINIA

The issue of slavery divided the United States from its very inception, but the anti-slavery proponents of abolition largely limited themselves to impassioned speeches and entreating pamphlets. That all changed in Kansas, where a bloody guerilla war was waged between those for and against slavery. One of the most militant abolitionists was John Brown, who brought the war back East in a daring raid on the largest federal arsenal at Harpers Ferry, West Virginia, in October of 1859. Brown and his heavily armed party took possession of the arsenal, arresting citizens and arming slaves before being overpowered by Colonel Robert E. Lee.

Brown was promptly convicted of treason and executed. Mourned as a martyr by some and decried as a terrorist by others, Brown's daring raid undeniably heightened the tensions that would help ignite the coming Civil War. At Harpers Ferry National Historical Park, visitors can tour John Brown's Fort, the armory's fire engine and guard house where Brown and his raiders barricaded themselves during their final stand against federal forces, along with 24 other restored 19th-century buildings. The park also includes the Heyward Shepherd Monument, which honors the free Black man who was killed by Brown's men to become the first casualty of the raid.

NPS.GOV/HAFE



Courtesy NPS



International Civil Rights Center & Museum

GREENSBORO, NORTH CAROLINA

"We don't serve Negroes here."

That was the message at many places throughout the Jim Crow South, but that began to change on February 1, 1960, when four Black college freshmen sat down at the whites-only F.W. Woolworth lunch counter in Greensboro, North Carolina. They returned — and were joined by others — day after day, in a movement that soon spread along the East Coast and throughout the South. Though sit-in participants remained peaceful, demonstrators were arrested, some attacked with fire hoses and tear gas. The state police fired into a crowd of demonstrators on the campus of South Carolina State University, killing three students and injuring 27 other participants. On July 25, after about 70,000 people had participated in sit-ins, the Woolworth's lunch counter desegregated.

"We operate in the landmark itself — the landmark is part of our exhibit," said Will Harris, a professor at the University of Pennsylvania and the center and museum's principal scholar. "And the full-scale, 55-seat lunch counter room is the centerpiece of our artifacts and of our tour. Then we have 13 additional galleries that are used to present the story."

The 35,000-square-foot museum's 14 permanent exhibits include pictures, artifacts, and video narratives and re-enactments, along with interactive components. "We do a narrative tour of the whole Civil Rights Movement at the time that lasts about an hour and 15 minutes to an hour and a half," Harris said. "There's also a recorded tour with our best guides, which can be accessed for as long as visitors choose to watch. Then visitors can walk through the exhibits and do their own reading and check things out."

SITINMOVEMENT.ORG





By Carol Highsmith, courtesy NPS

Lincoln Memorial

WASHINGTON, D.C.

During his last public speech on April 11, 1865, Abraham Lincoln became the first president to advocate for Black voting rights — albeit only for males who had served in the U.S. military or who were deemed "intelligent." Four days later, Lincoln, who had issued the Emancipation Proclamation that freed 4 million enslaved people and overseen the Union victory, was assassinated. The war was over, but the battle for civil rights had just begun.

Nearly 60 years after his death, the monument to the martyred president was dedicated in a ceremony that had seats of honor for Confederate veterans and armed soldiers to segregate Black onlookers from the white crowd. Forty-one years later, Martin Luther King Jr. addressed a crowd estimated at a quarter million people from the steps of the Lincoln Memorial, delivering his "I Have a Dream" speech during the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom in Washington, D.C. The march was a seminal moment for the Civil Rights Movement, helping galvanize lawmakers to pass the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

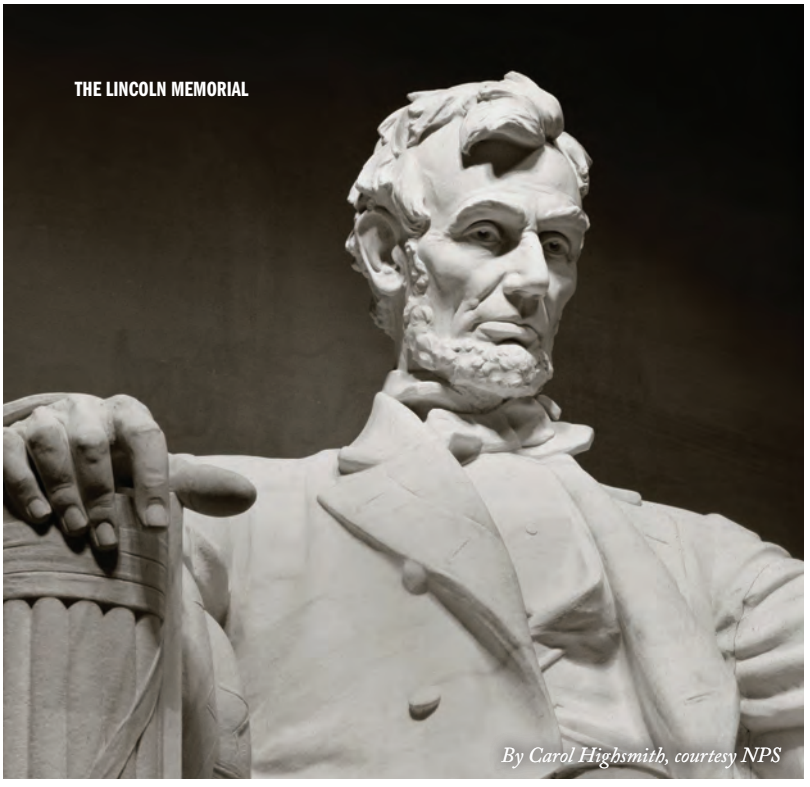
From the Reflecting Pool to the central chamber containing the colossal marble statue of the 16th president, visitors ascend 87 (four score and seven) granite marble steps. The National Mall and the monuments on it are open to the public 24 hours a day, 365 days per year, and the Lincoln Memorial is particularly stunning by moonlight.

NPS.GOV/LINC



THE WOOLWORTH'S COUNTER AT THE INTERNATIONAL CIVIL RIGHTS CENTER & MUSEUM

Courtesy USCRT

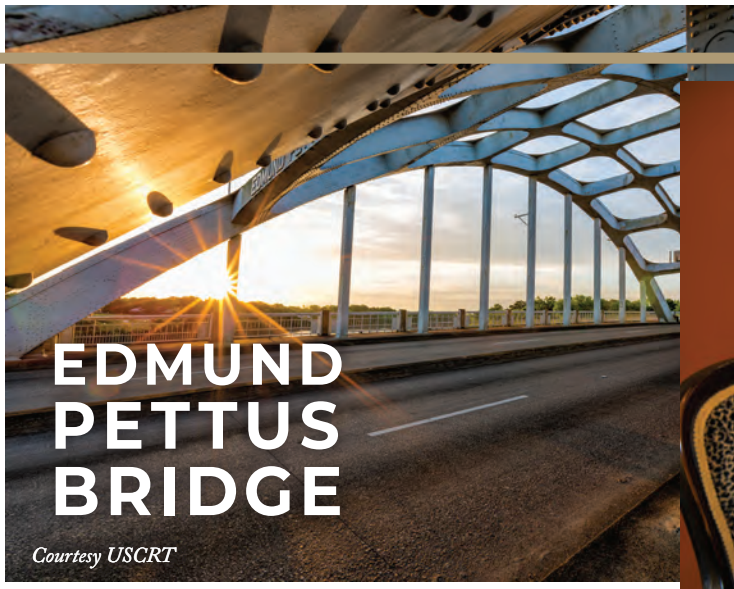


THE LINCOLN MEMORIAL

By Carol Highsmith, courtesy NPS

Edmund Pettus Bridge

SELMA, ALABAMA



Courtesy USCRT

The revolution was televised on March 7, 1965, as some 600 citizens gathered at Brown Chapel A.M.E. Church in Selma, Alabama, to march 54 miles to Alabama's capitol in Montgomery, demanding the right to vote. Six blocks from the church on the Edmund Pettus Bridge — named in honor of a Confederate General and leader of the Ku Klux Klan — state troopers and vigilantes savagely clubbed the marchers and slashed them with bullwhips, as a horrified nation watched "Bloody Sunday" on their living room televisions.

The aftermath of the brutality shocked the entire country. Two weeks later, Martin Luther King Jr. and 3,200 protesters completed the march. Congress passed the Voting Rights Act, and President Lyndon B. Johnson signed it into law on August 6, 1965. Echoing the language of the 15th Amendment, the landmark piece of legislation prohibits states from imposing any "voting qualification or prerequisite to voting, or standard, practice, or procedure … to deny or abridge the right of any citizen of the United States to vote on account of race or color."

The bridge still stands and is now a National Historic Landmark where visitors can follow in the footsteps of those undaunted activists. Next to the infamous bridge, the National Voting Rights Museum and Institute is the starting point of the Selma to Montgomery National Historic Trail. The museum has an interpretive center with galleries that explore the movement and the day that changed history.

NVRMI.COM

Canton Freedom House Civil Rights Museum

CANTON, MISSISSIPPI



Courtesy USCRT

One of the country's "Big Four" Civil Rights groups, the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) was founded in 1942 in Chicago by interracial students and focused on nonviolent direct action. CORE supported Martin Luther King's Montgomery bus boycott and organized integrated freedom rides in 1961.

In 1964, CORE and other groups organized "Freedom Summer," sending more than 1,000 volunteers (largely students, but also clergy, lawyers and healthcare workers) to Mississippi to assist local activists in organizing protests, registering voters and teaching Black children in "Freedom Schools." Hundreds of journalists also descended on the state, and "Freedom Houses" became headquarters and havens where activists lived and worked.

In the small town of Canton, Mississippi, Black business owners George and Rembert Washington rented a house at 838 George Washington Avenue to freedom rider and CORE activist George Raymond, and it quickly became a community hub for local and visiting activists, including Martin Luther King Jr. The Washingtons paid a heavy price. Segregationists

ALABAMA:
MARCHING
FOR THE VOTE

UNITED STATES
CIVIL
RIGHTS
TRAIL



PEOPLE BEHIND *THE* PLACES

ANGELA DA SILVA

BY LAURYN LEMONS

St. Louis, Missouri, proclaimed February 7, 1992, as "Angela da Silva Day," recognizing Angela da Silva's commitment to acknowledging civil rights through art. This is far from the extent of da Silva's work, which encompasses ongoing efforts to preserve Black culture through public education and her writings. Since the late 1970s, da Silva has promoted the recognition of Black history in Missouri and throughout the United States for many years.

In 1979, da Silva co-founded the Deep Morgan Neighborhood Arts Council, bringing attention and education to lesser-known aspects of Black culture. In 1998, da Silva founded the National Black Tourism Network to celebrate important figures of the Civil Rights Movement in Missouri as a part of her passion for Black travel. She also organizes the Mary Meachum Freedom Crossing Celebration in Mississippi each year and frequently stages similar reenactments to commemorate civil rights figures and important events.

forced suppliers to halt deliveries to their grocery store, their gas pumps were removed, and the house on Washington Avenue was targeted with Molotov cocktails and gunshots. In June 1964, vigilantes threw a bomb, shattering the front windows. Still, the Washingtons and the activists stood firm.

Today, the Washingtons' grandson, Glen Cotton, has restored the modest frame structure, which is the last standing Freedom House in the state that was used by CORE. It now serves as the Canton Freedom House Civil Rights Museum, honoring the sacrifices of his family and the people who fought to bring racial justice to Mississippi. (Three CORE volunteers — James Chaney, Andrew Goodman and Michael Schwerner — were tortured and murdered in nearby Neshoba County by members of the Ku Klux Klan.) The restored structure houses photographs, artifacts and exhibitions documenting its importance to the community and to the movement itself. The museum is open Monday through Friday by appointment only.

FREEDOMHOUSECANTON.ORG



TENNESSEE

TNVACATION.COM

THE U.S. CIVIL RIGHTS TRAIL

is a collection of churches, courthouses, schools, museums and other landmarks that played a pivotal role in advancing social justice in the 1950s and 1960s.



TNCIVILRIGHTSTRAIL.COM

Scan to download the digital passport.





By Raphael Tenschert



By Raphael Tenschert

TENNESSEE
ITINERARY

DAY ONE
MEMPHIS

Visit the **National Civil Rights Museum** at the **Lorraine Motel**, where Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. spent his final moments fighting for justice before his assassination on April 4, 1968. Explore exhibits tracing the fight for equality. End the day on **Beale Street**, where Memphis' soul — its music, struggle, and triumph — still reverberates.

DAY TWO
MEMPHIS

Stand inside **Mason Temple Church of God in Christ**, where Dr. King gave his stirring "Mountaintop" speech. Visit the **Withers Collection Museum & Gallery**, showcasing Ernest Withers' powerful Civil Rights photography. Reflect at **Robert R. Church Park**, honoring the South's first Black millionaire. End at **Stax Museum of American Soul Music**, where artists like Otis Redding and Isaac Hayes provided the soundtrack for a movement that changed the world.

DAY THREE
NASHVILLE

Walk the historic grounds of **Fisk University**, where student activists trained for nonviolent protests. Honor Congressman John Lewis on Rep. John Lewis Way, named for the Freedom Rider and Civil Rights leader. Inside the **Nashville Public Library Civil Rights Room**, explore photos and firsthand accounts of the movement. Then, visit the **National Museum of African American Music**, where the influence of Black artists on American culture comes to life.

DAY FOUR
CLINTON

In 1956, 12 Black students integrated **Clinton High School**, the first public high school in the South to do so. **The Green McAdoo Cultural Center** shares their courageous story through immersive exhibits. Just beyond, **Clinton High School** stands as a testament to their sacrifice. In this quiet town, their legacy lives on — a reminder of the challenges they faced and the doors they opened for generations to come.


By Andrea Behrends Photography

TENNESSEE

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CIVIL RIGHTS TRAIL

NEW SITES SIGNATURE MUSEUM



THE HARRY T. & HARIETTE V. MOORE CULTURAL COMPLEX HONORS TWO CIVIL RIGHTS ACTIVISTS KILLED IN 1951.

Uncommon Courage

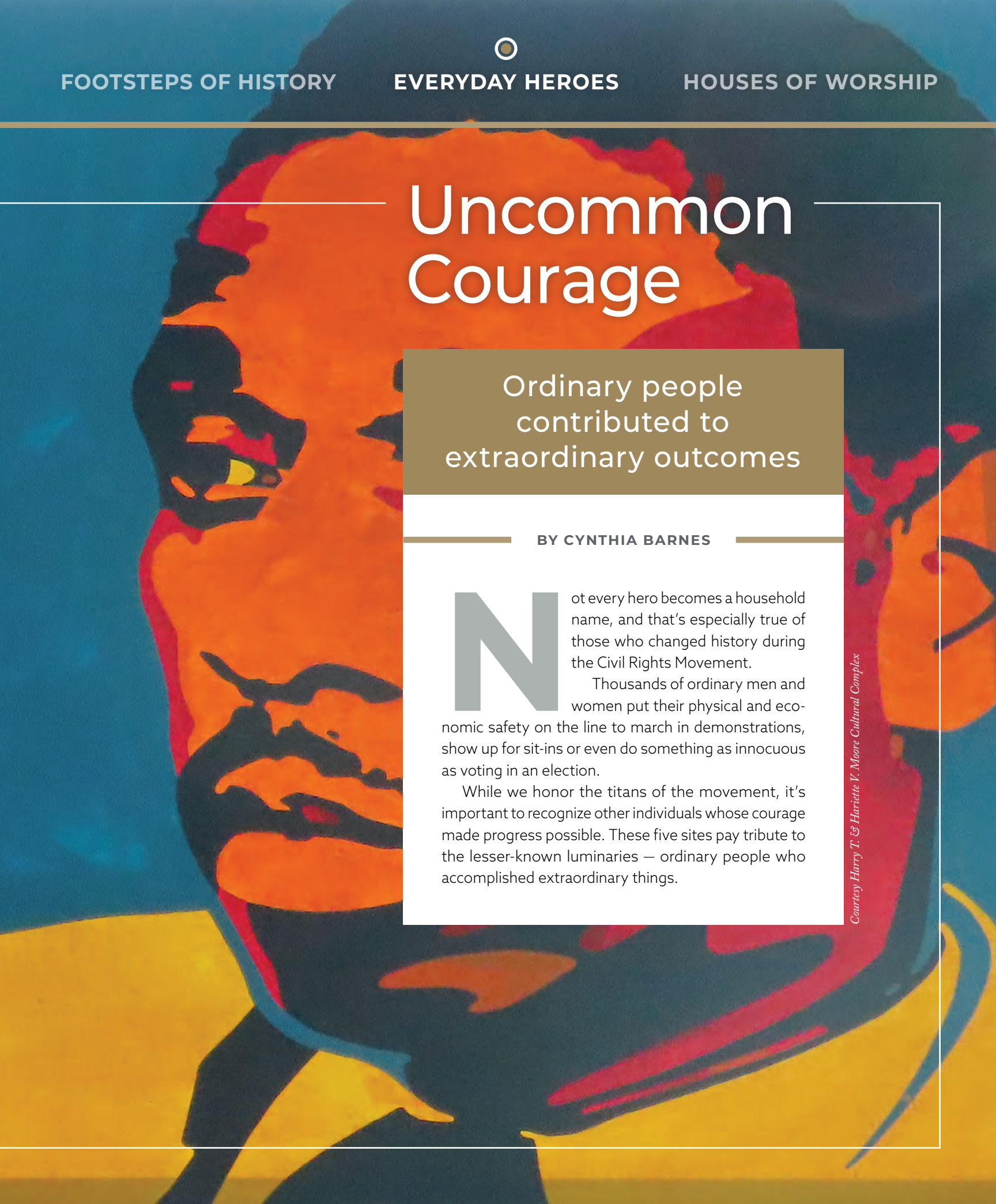
Ordinary people contributed to extraordinary outcomes

BY CYNTHIA BARNES

Not every hero becomes a household name, and that's especially true of those who changed history during the Civil Rights Movement.

Thousands of ordinary men and women put their physical and economic safety on the line to march in demonstrations, show up for sit-ins or even do something as innocuous as voting in an election.

While we honor the titans of the movement, it's important to recognize other individuals whose courage made progress possible. These five sites pay tribute to the lesser-known luminaries — ordinary people who accomplished extraordinary things.



Courtesy Harry T. & Harriette V. Moore Cultural Complex

L.C. and Daisy Bates House Museum

LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS

The 1954 Supreme Court's Brown v. Board of Education decision was only the beginning of the battle to end racial segregation in schools, and the fight in Little Rock, Arkansas, was particularly fierce. The brick veneer two-bedroom home at 1207 West 28th Street may appear modest, but it served a crucial role in the efforts to desegregate Central High School.

"[Central] was considered to be the premier public institution that existed in Little Rock during that period of time and also was one of the most renowned on a national scale," said Larry Hicks, tour consultant for the L.C. and Daisy Bates House Museum. "It was a school that people from all over the country wanted to have their children attend because they offered AP courses. That was extremely unusual for that time period, and it was creating an opportunity for young people to be able to make a seamless transition from public high school into college."

Daisy Bates was the president of the Arkansas chapter of the NAACP, and she spoke on behalf of the Black students who attempted to attend Central in 1957 and became known as the Little Rock Nine.

"Dr. Martin Luther King was a very good friend of Mrs. Bates," Hicks said. "And she was the only woman who spoke at the 1963 March on Washington."

Other important figures who visited were Thurgood Marshall, who became the Supreme Court's first Black justice in 1967, and actors and activists Ossie Davis and Ruby Dee.

The Bates' activism was not appreciated by pro-segregationists, who burned crosses on the home's lawn, shot through the windows and, on one occasion, targeted it with a bomb. Today, the home is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

NPS.GOV



Courtesy Bates House & Museum



Courtesy Historic Columbia Archive

Modjeska Monteith Simkins House

COLUMBIA, SOUTH CAROLINA

One of South Carolina's greatest human rights advocates has largely slipped from the pages of history. But in her time, Modjeska Monteith Simkins was both a powerhouse and a firebrand, passionately devoted to civil rights and determined to make her place in the movement. Born in 1899 and trained as a teacher, Simkins began working in public health as the director for South Carolina Tuberculosis Association before being fired, largely as a result of her increased involvement with the state's NAACP.

"When people look back on the Civil Rights Movement in South Carolina, they remember key male figures for the most part," said Katharine Allen, director of education and interpretation for Historic Columbia. "There were male organizers who did a lot of amazing work. But in their own recollections, they did not discuss her role in the movement."

Simkins' role in working for full civil rights was significant. One of the founders of the state NAACP conference, she was elected to the first executive board and was the first chair of the state programs committee. She also worked closely with Joseph DeLaine on the school lawsuit for desegregation of Clarendon County Schools — one of the cases that challenged the "separate but equal" doctrine in the Brown v. Board of Education case in Topeka, Kansas.

"I think what a lot of people would be surprised to know that are visiting from out of state is that, of the cases that make up Brown v. Board of Education, the one filed in South Carolina came first," Allen said. "Simkins was instrumental in organizing and getting the parents in Clarendon County organized. There's amazing photographs of that period, including the petition that was signed, not just by the parents, but by the kids themselves."

The exhibits in Simkins' home, which she bought with her own money in 1932 and lived in until her death 60 years later, focus largely on primary sources. Group tours are available and can be combined with the Mann-Simons Site, a collection of spaces owned and operated by the same Black family from at least 1843 until 1970.

HISTORICCOLUMBIA.ORG

Fannie Lou Hamer Memorial Statue & Gardens

RULEVILLE, MISSISSIPPI

"Nobody is free until everybody is free."

These were the words of Fannie Lou Hamer, a woman born into deep poverty who nonetheless became a passionate humanitarian and a fierce advocate for civil rights. The youngest of 20 children, Hamer worked as a sharecropper until the age of 44, when she attended a 1962 meeting of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), an experience that led her to becoming a voting rights activist and a tireless crusader for human rights. A brutal beating in 1963 at the hands of police — who also forced Black prisoners to participate — didn't silence Hamer. She helped established the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party and spoke on its behalf the following year at the Democratic National Convention in Atlantic City.

Hamer, whose early life was shaped by hunger, established the Freedom Farm Cooperative to tackle hunger and poverty, and she was also instrumental in the formation of the National Women's Political Caucus (NWPC) to expand opportunities for women's political participation.

Hamer died of breast cancer in 1977 at the age of 59. A driving tour of Ruleville, Mississippi, allows visitors to see the church where she attended her first civil rights meeting and other important stops, including the memorial park where she and her husband are buried and where a bronze statue honors her tireless legacy.

FANNIELOUHAMERSAMERICA.COM



Courtesy Visit Mississippi



"You have the right to an attorney"



These words transformed lives, and their story begins at the Bay County Courthouse, a historic landmark on the U.S. Civil Rights Trail. Immerse yourself in history, then wander through Downtown Panama City, explore museums, and savor waterfront dining featuring fresh Gulf seafood.

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Harry T. & Harriette V. Moore Cultural Complex

MIMS, FLORIDA



Courtesy Harry T. & Hariette V. Moore Cultural Complex

It was Christmas night, 1951, and educator and civil rights activist Harry Moore was at home with his wife, Harriette, who was also an educator and activist, celebrating the couple's 25th wedding anniversary. A bomb that had been planted under their bedroom floor exploded and killed Harry almost instantly. Harriette died nine days later. No one was arrested for the couple's killing; it would be more than 50 years before the case was reopened and four members of the Ku Klux Klan were identified as being involved in the murders.

"The Moores were pioneer civil rights leaders in Florida whose work laid the foundation for the modern Civil Rights Movement before it gained national attention in the '50s and the '60s," said Sonya Mallard, coordinator of the Harry T. & Harriette V. Moore Cultural Complex in Mims, Florida. "They dedicated their lives to justice, equality and education for African Americans. The Moores didn't wait for history to change. They risked their lives to change it. Their legacy challenges us to stand for justice — even when it comes at a cost."

Harry Moore served as the executive director of the Florida NAACP, fighting for equal pay for Black and white schoolteachers and working with legal counsel Thurgood Marshall to successfully overturn the conviction of four Black males (two of whom were teens) wrongfully accused of raping a white woman. Marshall went on to become the first African American Supreme Court Justice, and the state of Florida posthumously exonerated the "Groveland Four" in 2021.

Today, a replica of the yellow frame home where the Moores lived is part of a complex that honors the couple's work for equality. The complex also includes a 12-acre park and a 5,000-square-foot cultural center.

HARRYHARRIETTEMOORE.ORG

Whitney M. Young Jr. Birthplace

SIMPSONVILLE, KENTUCKY

Soldier, social worker, educator, urban planner and presidential confidant: Whitney M. Young Jr. played all these roles and more. Born in Simpsonville, Kentucky, just 20 miles from Louisville, Young grew up on the campus of the Lincoln Institute, where his father presided over a prestigious boarding school for Black students established by Berea College. After serving in the Army, Young studied social work and became president of the Urban League's Omaha, Nebraska, branch before serving as dean of social work at Atlanta University and rising to the rank of state president of Georgia's NAACP and national president of the Urban League.

"Whitney M. Young Jr. was very instrumental in working with John F. Kennedy and encouraging the president to support the March on Washington," said Janette Marson, CEO and president of ShelbyKY Tourism. "He was an incredibly powerful civil rights leader and spoke at the march. He was influential with three presidents, helping to author President Johnson's War on Poverty. And when he died, President Nixon delivered his eulogy."

Tours are available by appointment only through the Lincoln Foundation at 502-585-4733.

NPS.GOV



Courtesy Kentucky Tourism

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THE EVERS
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UNITED STATES
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PEOPLE BEHIND *THE* PLACES



MYRLIE EVERS-WILLIAMS

BY LAURYN LEMONS

From holding a multitude of important corporate positions in the communications field to becoming a published author, Myrlie Evers-Williams has a decorated career as a civil rights activist. She has focused on causes like voting rights, education and fair housing for many decades. She and her husband, famed civil rights activist and martyr Medgar Evers, accompanied each other on the journey of investigative civil rights activism work in the 1950s and '60s, making them vulnerable to racist attacks. He also helped her start the first National Association for the Advancement of Colored People's (NAACP) Mississippi State Office. After Evers' 1963 assassination, Evers-Williams continued the fight to further human rights.

Since her husband's death, she has published autobiographies and civil rights-themed books. To continue Evers' legacy, she started the Medgar & Myrlie Evers Institute in Jackson, Mississippi, which maintains the goal of strengthening Black communities and their quality of life.

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A DISCOVER South Carolina PODCAST

Explore historic sites across South Carolina that pay tribute to the brave men and women who fought against inequality as you learn more about the fight for civil rights in South Carolina on the podcast, "A Legacy of Courage," at ***SCLegacyofCourage.com***





Caroline County Court House



Gloucester Museum of History

TWO NEW SITES. TWO DEFINING MOMENTS.

ONE POWERFUL VIRGINIA STORY.

Group travelers have even more to explore along the U.S. Civil Rights Trail in Virginia. Two new sites invite travelers to experience where courage challenged injustice and ordinary people changed the course of history.

At the Historic Caroline County Courthouse Campus in Bowling Green, visitors stand at the site of the 1959 arrest of Richard and Mildred Loving, whose case led to the landmark Supreme Court decision that ended bans on interracial marriage nationwide.

In Gloucester, the Gloucester Museum of History brings civil rights stories to life through powerful exhibits and a self-guided driving tour highlighting pioneers like Irene Morgan, whose refusal to give up her seat helped dismantle segregation in interstate travel.

Together, these sites deepen Virginia's Civil Rights Trail experience—offering authentic, accessible stops ideal for group itineraries seeking education, reflection, and inspiration.

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Start planning your group journey to discover Virginia's expanding Civil Rights Trail.

UNITED STATES

CIVIL RIGHTS TRAIL

NEW SITES SIGNATURE MUSEUMS



16TH STREET BAPTIST CHURCH IN BIRMINGHAM HAS SERVED AS A CORNERSTONE FOR THE CITY'S BLACK COMMUNITY.

Sacred Spaces

These churches were ground zero for activists

BY RACHEL CRICK

Powerful hymns, uplifting sermons and churches that served as hubs for organizers — faith was often found at the very center of the Civil Rights Movement.

With their roots often dating back to the early 19th century, many Black churches are proud pillars of the movement. They were gathering places for demonstrators to learn the basics of peaceful protesting. They were the sites of changemaking speeches and sermons. And, sometimes, they bore witness to the violence and grief of the hard-fought march toward equality. Many of them are still sites of profound faith and courage today.

Here are five churches along the U.S. Civil Rights Trail where travelers can worship and witness history.

Courtesy USCRT

Historic Ebenezer Baptist Church

ATLANTA



Courtesy Explore Georgia

In the heart of Atlanta's Sweet Auburn neighborhood, the city's longstanding hub for Black commerce and culture, travelers will find one of the Civil Rights Movement's most significant worship sites. The Historic Ebenezer Baptist Church is now part of the Martin Luther King Jr. National Historical Park and is significant for its connections to the civil rights icon and leader. It's the church where King was baptized and became an ordained minister, and it's where thousands of mourners gathered for King's private funeral service after his assassination in 1968. The funeral procession and public service at Morehouse College were attended by an estimated 50,000 to 100,000 mourners. King's father continued to preach at the church until 1975. Beyond its ties to King and his family, the church was a spiritual home for much of Atlanta's Black community. The building, constructed in 1922, is no longer used for worship services, as the congregation moved to a more modern sanctuary in 1999. The National Park Service is maintaining and restoring the historic building as part of the park.

The park service offers ranger-led church talks daily at 11 a.m., 2 p.m. and 3 p.m. These talks take visitors inside the church to hear about its significance to the Civil Rights Movement and its connections to King's faith, life and legacy. While they're at the park, groups can explore dozens of other preserved historic buildings, including Fire Station No. 6 and King's boyhood home, where visitors can hear a ranger-led presentation several times each day.

NPS.GOV/MALU



Courtesy USCRT

16th Street Baptist Church

BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA

On Sunday, September 15, 1963, a tragedy struck in Birmingham, Alabama, that would shock the nation and ultimately inspire action. This tragedy was the bombing of the 16th Street Baptist Church, which killed four young Black girls who were attending Sunday school. The violence spurred sympathy for the Civil Rights Movement and became a catalyst for the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; some historians even consider it the turning point in the movement. But beyond being the site of the bombing, the church had been a pillar of Birmingham's Black community since the 1880s, when it was built. It was the first Black church in the city, and its pastor, Reverend William Reuben Pettiford, founded the Alabama Penny Savings Bank, the state's first Black-owned bank. The church was also the site of many prominent civil rights speeches and is where demonstrators were organized and trained.

Visitors to the church enter through the basement and watch an educational video to kick off their tour. The basement of the church acts as a museum with educational panels that tell the in-depth story of the bombing and the impact it had on the city and the nation. The church's powerful collection of historic artifacts includes a clock that stopped at 10:22 a.m., the exact time of the bombing, the communion table from the day of the bombing and a letter from one of the convicted bombers. After viewing the museum, visitors will head upstairs to the church sanctuary, where they can see and touch original pews, learn about the church's history and hear the story of the Wales window, a contribution from the people of Wales.

"It never escapes me, not only the impact the church had on the community, but that you get to literally touch the space," said Terrence Brown, executive director of education and the visitors center at 16th Street Baptist Church. "You get an opportunity to learn about how people heard about the tragedy that took place in '63 and decided that they wanted to do something about it."

16THSTREETBAPTIST.ORG

PEOPLE BEHIND *THE* PLACES



ROSETTA MILLER-PERRY

BY LAURYN LEMONS

At 90 years old, Rosetta Miller-Perry remains an active member of Tennessee's Black community, building it up through work in real estate, civil rights and journalism, even after a lifetime of civil rights activism. She worked for the United States Civil Rights Commission and was the Nashville Area Director of the United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission for many years.

In 1992, Miller-Perry founded Tennessee's first Black newspaper, the Tennessee Tribune, for more coverage of Black-owned businesses and communities. Throughout her journalism career, she brought attention to issues like education and health. She also created the Anthony J. Cebrun Journalism Center in 1998, which focuses on preparing young people for the journalism industry. She received the National Newspaper Publishers Association Award in 2019 and earned a place in the Tennessee Women's Hall of Fame, leaving behind an impressive legacy of bettering Tennessee.

Mother Emanuel AME Church

CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA

Affectionately known as "Mother Emanuel," Mother Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, South Carolina, was established in 1816. It was subjected to several raids during which worshipers were arrested; during one incident in 1822, the church was burned down, and 35 men were executed for their role in a slave revolt plot.

The current building was constructed in 1891 and has hosted several prominent civil rights speakers, including Booker T. Washington, Martin Luther King Jr. and Wyatt Tee Walker. The church has also overcome recent adversity. The Charleston church shooting took place at the Mother Emanuel AME Church on June 17, 2015, when a white supremacist opened fire during a Wednesday night Bible study. Nine people were killed, including the senior pastor and state senator Clementa C. Pinckney. A memorial for the victims, called the Emanuel Nine Memorial, broke ground in 2023, proving the church's message of resilience and hope continues to triumph despite the violence its congregation has endured.

Mother Emanuel invites visitors to worship each Sunday at 10 a.m. The church offers tours to groups of 10 or more by appointment, Tuesday through Saturday, and a historian will provide historical lectures upon request. Visitors will learn about the church's long history, its role in Charleston's Black community and its role in the development of the African Methodist Episcopal denomination.

MOTHEREMANUEL.COM



Courtesy USCRT

New Zion Baptist Church

NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA



Like many other cities in the South, New Orleans has its share of landmark sites pertaining to the Civil Rights Movement. From the location of lunch-counter sit-ins and boycotts on Canal Street to the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals, where judges ruled in favor of integrated schools, many of these sites are recognized on the official U.S. Civil Rights Trail. Another recognized site is New Zion Baptist Church, found on the corner of Third and LaSalle streets. In 1949, the unassuming brick building became the home of the New Zion Baptist congregation, which originally formed the church in 1921. It would go on to play a critical role in the Civil Rights Movement in New Orleans, becoming an unofficial local headquarters of the movement. In 1957, Baptist pastors and civil rights activists met in the church to form the Southern Leadership Conference, later known as the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC). The organization chose Martin Luther King Jr. as its first president, and its key focus was organizing nonviolent demonstrations and protests against segregation.

Though it's not open for organized public tours, the church is recognized on many self-guided history trails and tours in New Orleans. A placard outside the church educates visitors about the vital role it played in organizing the movement and its leadership. Plans are in the works for a nearby memorial enshrining the accomplishments of SCLC and its founding activists.

Mason Temple Church of God in Christ

MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE



One of the pillars of Black history and community in Memphis, Tennessee, is the Mason Temple Church of God in Christ. Named for Charles H. Mason, who founded the predominantly Black denomination known as the Church of God in Christ, the famous Memphis church was constructed in the 1940s. At the time of its completion, it was one of the largest gathering places in Memphis and was also the largest Black-owned church building. The massive sanctuary can seat 7,500 and is the centerpiece of six buildings that form a campus. The church is also the world headquarters of the denomination.

But it's perhaps most famous as the site of the last speech of a great civil rights leader. On April 3, 1968, the night before he was assassinated outside his room at the Lorraine Motel, Martin Luther King Jr. gave his famous "I've Been to the Mountaintop" speech at Mason Temple. Thousands gathered in the sanctuary to hear King's speech, given in support of Memphis' striking sanitation workers. But that was not the only speech King delivered at Mason Temple. Nearly a decade earlier, in 1959, King spoke there at a freedom rally. The church was also the site of Mason's funeral in 1961, and the church founder is entombed in a marble vault in the foyer.

The church is a short distance from some other key civil rights sites, including the National Civil Rights Museum at the Lorraine Motel and the Stax Museum of American Soul Music. While it's not open for regularly scheduled tours, visitors can glimpse the inside of the church by worshiping there.

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WHAT HAPPENED HERE CHANGED THE WORLD

16TH STREET BAPTIST CHURCH

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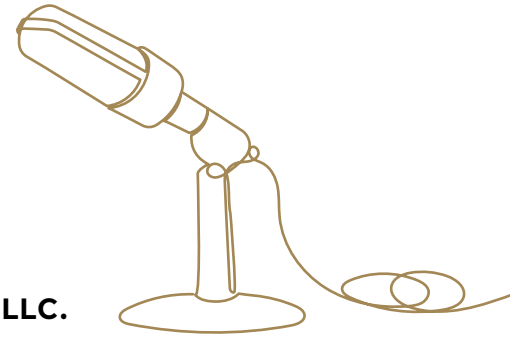
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