

UNITED STATES

CIVIL RIGHTS TRAIL

2020 TRAVEL GUIDE

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Alabama was a crucial battleground in the events that would shape our nation's civil rights story. From the Edmund Pettus Bridge, to bombing sites in Birmingham, to the steps of the State Capitol, discover the birthplace of the Civil Rights Movement. Learn from the leaders of our past and build on their hopes for a better future.

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they explore the museums, monuments and historic sites that commemorate the Civil Rights Movement. Visit Alabama and walk in the footsteps of those who changed the world.

To plan your group tour, contact Rosemary Judkins.

rosemary.judkins@tourism.alabama.gov • 334-242-4493

Sweet Home Alabama

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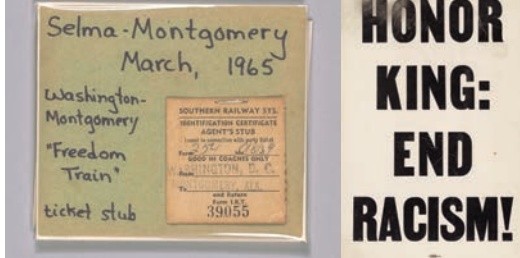
UNITED STATES

CIVIL RIGHTS TRAIL



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PUBLISHED FOR

TRAVEL SOUTH USA
www.TravelSouthUSA.com

3500 PIEDMONT RD. NE. STE. 210
ATLANTA, GA 30305
404-231-1790
WWW.TRAVELSOUTHUSA.COM

PUBLISHED BY

GROUP
THE TRAVEL LEADER
INC.

NICHE TRAVEL PUBLISHERS
301 EAST HIGH STREET
LEXINGTON, KY 40507
888-253-0455
WWW.GROUPTRAVELLEADER.COM
TO ADVERTISE:
KELLY@GROUPTRAVELLEADER.COM

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ON THE COVER:

A portrait at the Muhammad Ali Center depicts the boxing legend and civil rights activist. Artwork by Jack Magurany, J. Magurany Fine Art. See more at jackmagurany.com.

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WEST
VIRGINIA

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CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT TIMELINE



- 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, DC
- BOMBING OF 16TH STREET BAPTIST CHURCH**
BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA

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.

- 1964 **CIVIL RIGHTS ACT OF 1964 SIGNED INTO LAW BY PRESIDENT LYNDON JOHNSON**
- 1965 **"BLOODY SUNDAY" ON THE EDMUND PETTUS BRIDGE**
SELMA, ALABAMA
- VOTING RIGHTS ACT SIGNED INTO LAW BY PRESIDENT LYNDON JOHNSON**
- 1968 **MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. ASSASSINATED**
MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE
- CIVIL RIGHTS ACT OF 1968 SIGNED INTO LAW BY PRESIDENT LYNDON JOHNSON**





FORWARD THINKING

U.S. Civil Rights Trail is achieving destination status

Courtesy Muhammad Ali Center

BY BRIAN JEWELL

The civil rights movement of the 1950s and '60s shaped America and the world in powerful ways. Today, the places and people involved in those events are memorialized on the U.S. Civil Rights Trail (USCRT), a collection of more than 120 historic sites that is gaining both widespread attention and a growing list of members.

The trail is organized by the USCRT Marketing Alliance, which consists of 14 state tourism departments, as well as Destination D.C. leaders from the National Park Service and respected historians. The alliance was formed and the trail launched in 2018.

As a result of the organization's work, civil rights sites throughout the South are enjoying a surge in interest and visitation.

"The biggest impact has been that the topic of civil rights tourism is much stronger than ever before," said Lee Sentell, director of the Alabama Tourism Department and chairman of the USCRT Marketing Alliance. "Quite literally, the launch of the trail two years ago marked the beginning of it as a separate category in the industry.

THE MUHAMMAD ALI CENTER IN LOUISVILLE IS ONE OF SEVERAL NEW SITES TO JOIN THE U.S. CIVIL RIGHTS TRAIL THIS YEAR.

"We've been promoting civil rights sites for 15 years, and it was always thought of as a niche market," Sentell said. "But now, because so many other Southern states have embraced it, I think it's becoming a legitimate, regular category. People in our office have told us that they're hearing from a lot more tour operators and planners than ever before. It had been a uniquely Alabama product for the most part, but now it is much broader across the rest of the South."

Accolades and Accomplishments

Since its launch two years ago, the USCRT has been covered by a number of high-profile media outlets. It has also garnered several tourism industry awards.

The trail was recognized with a gold award for Best Destination in a Region from the International Travel and Tourism Awards in

- A movement started -
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BIRMINGHAM

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November 2019. In August, it was also awarded the Mercury Marketing Award for its marketing excellence. In the trail's second year, its website achieved more than 1 million page views.

Traffic to that website — civilrightstrail.com — has led to a quantifiable increase in consumer interest.

“Our ad agency’s research shows that about 35% of people participating in a survey have indicated that they are interested in civil rights as a travel product,” Sentell said. “In years past, that would have been in the single digits.”

New Members

The USCRT Marketing Alliance recently announced the addition of four new sites to the trail, which has continued to grow over the two years since its founding.

The additions include two attractions in Kentucky: the Muhammad Ali Center in Louisville and the SEEK Museum in Russellville. The trail also added the Beal Street Historic District and the WDIA Radio station, both in Memphis, Tennessee.

“We are delighted about the additions,” Sentell said. “We know they will make incredible additions to the trail as a whole, which continues to showcase how what happened here changed the world.”

The Muhammad Ali Center is a multicultural center and museum that captures the inspiration of Muhammad Ali’s life. In addition to learning about the boxing career and personal motivations of the legendary figure, visitors discover his work as an outspoken proponent of civil rights causes.

The SEEK Museum recognizes the work of journalist Alice Allison Dunnigan with a life-size bronze statue and exhibits about her achievements. This civil rights pioneer was the first African American woman admitted to the White House, Congress and Supreme Court press corps.

In Memphis, historic Beale Street was a thriving area for black commerce and culture during the time of the Civil War and later became a hub of community organization and demonstration during the civil rights movement. And WDIA was the first radio station in the country programmed entirely for the black community starting in 1947. Its signal reached through the Mississippi Delta to the Gulf Coast.

CIVIL RIGHTS ARTIFACTS ON DISPLAY AT THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY AND CULTURE



By Alan Karchmer, courtesy SNMAAHC

Pursuing World Heritage Designation

In addition to compiling and publicizing the trail, members of the USCRT Marketing Alliance have also been involved in a parallel effort to nominate significant places on the trail for inscription as UNESCO World Heritage Sites.

“There aren’t many World Heritage Sites — less than 1,400 throughout the world,” said Ed Hall, a consultant who is helping guide the marketing alliance’s UNESCO efforts. “So it’s kind of like the Good Housekeeping Seal; it says this is something worthwhile that will add value to your visit.”

The process has been underway for several years and will take at least two years more. But Hall said the plan is on track and on time.

Along with researchers from Georgia State University, Hall has worked with the National Park Service’s office of international affairs to send a list of significant civil rights sites to UNESCO’s International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS). If ICOMOS approves the list, a formal application will be sent to the World Heritage Committee, a group of 21 nations.

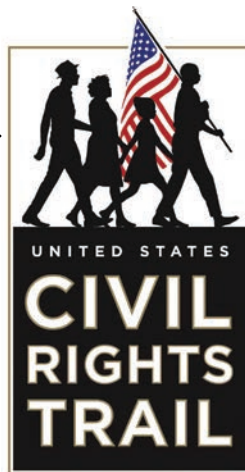
“Our preliminary document has gone to ICOMOS for evaluation,” Hall said. “Once we get that back, we’ll submit the formal application through the National Park Service to the World Heritage Committee. Our hope is we can get that done and be before the committee when it meets in July of 2021.”

The application process involves a fair amount of paperwork and red tape, and each site nominated will have to submit detailed documentation describing its historical significance and future viability. Sites that are inscribed on the World Heritage list should see significant increases in visitation, especially from international markets.

“At the end of the day, it will be worth all the time and effort we’re putting into it because these are significant sites that need to be preserved for the future,” Hall said. “The things that happened here had a dramatic influence in places like South Africa, Poland and even Tiananmen Square. So all the effort and bureaucracy is going to be worthwhile.”

Travelers planning a trip on the U.S. Civil Rights Trail can find all the latest news about civil rights sites and events at:

WWW.CIVILRIGHTSTRAIL.COM



“THE GREATEST” STOP ON THE CIVIL RIGHTS TRAIL



Muhammad Ali Center

Civil Rights history is woven throughout the fabric of Louisville. World-class museums, cultural centers and significant historical landmarks, like the Muhammad Ali Center, allow visitors to celebrate this history while experiencing Louisville's modern attractions and award-winning restaurants.

Learn more at [GoToLouisville.com/Travel-Professionals](https://www.gotolouisville.com/travel-professionals)



Photo by:  @stevegrider | #louisvillelove



Topeka, KS

● Independence, MO

● St. Louis, MO

● Louisville, KY ●
● Simpsonville, KY

● Russellville, KY

Nashville, TN

Memphis, TN

Little Rock, AR

● Scottsboro, AL

Sumner, MS

● Oxford, MS

Birmingham, AL

● Ruleville, MS ● Glendora, MS
● Money, MS

● Anniston, AL

● Philadelphia, MS
● Canton, MS

● Tuscaloosa, AL
● Tuskegee, AL

Jackson, MS

Selma, AL

Montgomery, AL

● Monroeville, AL

● Baton Rouge, LA

New Orleans, LA

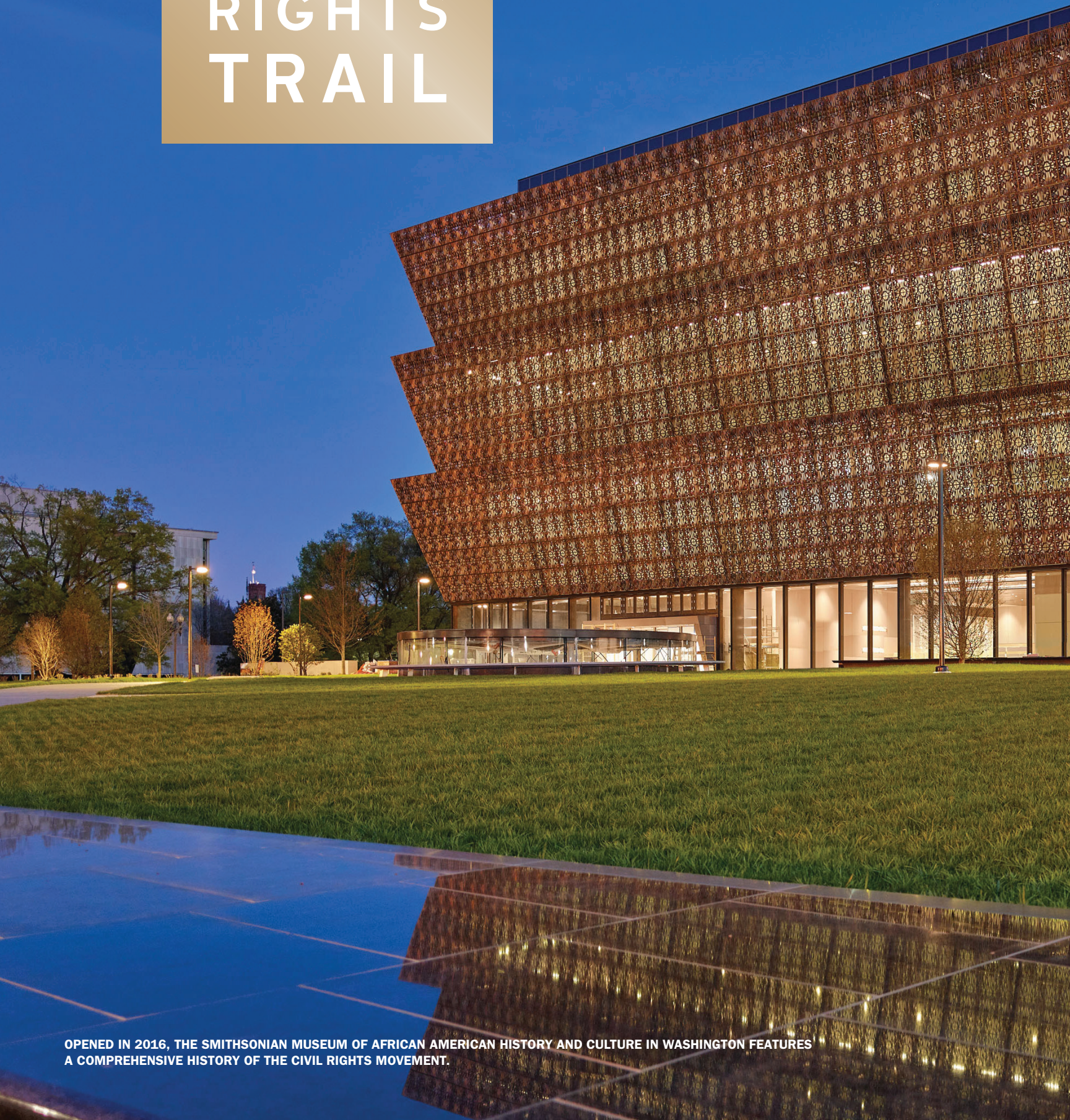
● Panama City, FL



CivilRightsTrail.com

UNITED STATES

CIVIL RIGHTS TRAIL



OPENED IN 2016, THE SMITHSONIAN MUSEUM OF AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY AND CULTURE IN WASHINGTON FEATURES A COMPREHENSIVE HISTORY OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT.



WHERE PAST IS PRESENT

Museums illustrate the struggle for civil rights

BY RACHEL CARTER

Though they collect, curate and classify historic artifacts, museums aren't actually about the past; they're about the future. Museums serve as a nation's collective memory. They preserve history so current and future generations can see it, know it and understand it.

One could argue that the American civil rights movement began after the American Civil War during the Reconstruction era, but the modern movement began in the mid-1950s in response to widespread racial segregation and legal discrimination toward black U.S. citizens. That may all seem like distant, dusty history to the children of today.

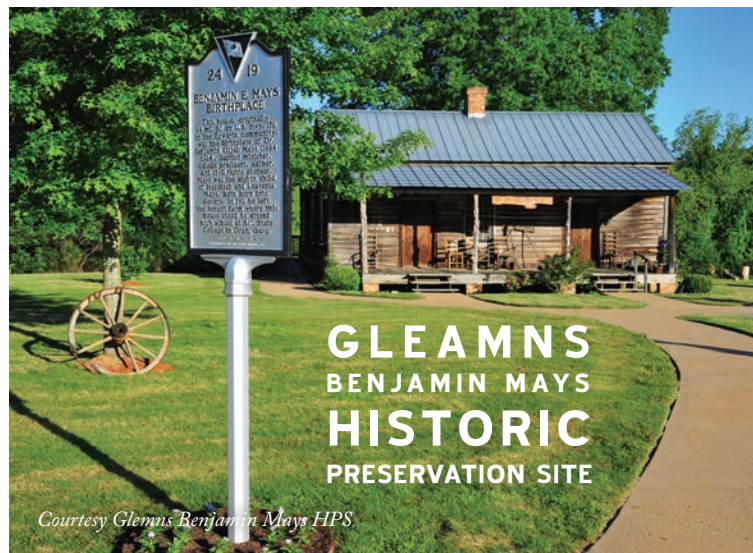
On the U.S. Civil Rights Trail, museums embody efforts to preserve all of that past — from slavery through the civil rights movement to current struggles for equal rights — and retell it for the betterment of our future.

Gleamns Dr. Benjamin E. Mays Historical Preservation Site

GREENWOOD, SOUTH CAROLINA

It has been said that no person in America has done more to elevate the black man than Dr. Benjamin E. Mays. He was one of the most influential leaders of the early civil rights movement, but “still so few people know him,” said Chris Thomas, executive director of the Gleamns Dr. Benjamin E. Mays Historical Preservation Site in Greenwood, South Carolina.

In a September 2004 *Ebony* article, Lerone Bennett Jr. wrote that Mays led a “ministry of manhood” that spanned 60-some years, 27 of which he spent as president of Morehouse College in Atlanta, where he educated, mentored and raised up civil rights leaders, including Martin Luther King Jr.



At the site, visitors can tour Mays’ birth home and a one-room schoolhouse, both of which were moved to the property. What looks like an old barn is a modern museum built in 2009 where exhibits feature artifacts like Mays’ Ph.D. robe, the dining room set from his home at Morehouse and the trunk he used while traveling abroad, helping to internationalize the cause of equal rights.

When Mays traveled to India in 1936, he met Mahatma Gandhi, and their conversation about pacifism laid the foundation for the civil rights movement.

The museum also has a 60-person auditorium where, at the end of a guided tour, groups can watch a movie about Mays’ friendship with author Margaret Mitchell. At the site, groups will also find a garden, a cotton field and a life-size statue of Mays.

MAYHOUSEMUSEUM.ORG

Rosa Parks Museum at Troy University

MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA

Many people don’t realize that Rosa Parks was seated legally in the “colored section” on the Montgomery city bus when she was told to give up her seat for a white man.

Visitors to the Rosa Parks Museum at Troy University in Montgomery, Alabama, will see a 1955 bus from the city’s fleet. Though it’s not the one Parks was riding December 1, 1955, when she was arrested, it’s where people today can watch a re-enactment film of what happened play through the bus windows.

The immersive exhibit is designed to evoke Parks’ experience; visitors even hear sirens when the police come, said museum director Felicia Bell.

The museum is designed to tell not only the story of Parks’ arrest but also how her act of resistance helped spark the Montgomery bus boycott.

Guests will see a 1955 “rolling church” station wagon — one of the



REV. ARTHUR PRICE JR.: A LOVE THAT FORGIVES



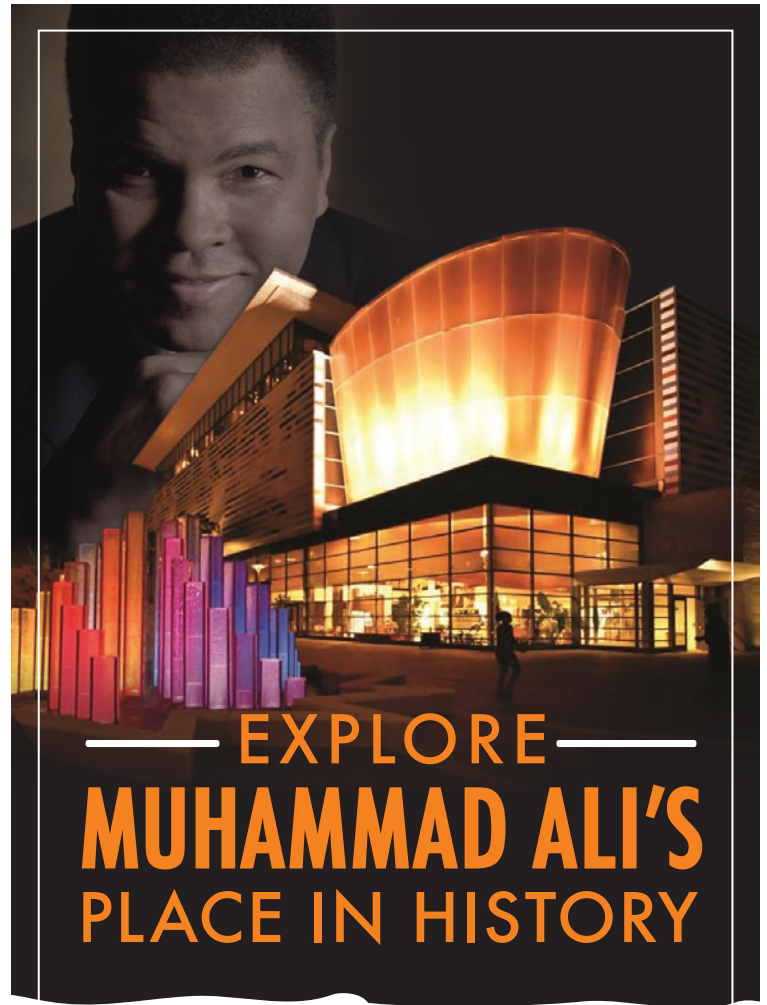
Eighteen days after the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom; 18 days after Martin Luther King Jr. said, "I have a dream"; 18 days after King implored the world to judge his children on the content of their character not the color of their skin, "[t]he response to the 'I Have a Dream Speech' in Birmingham was to bomb this church," said the Rev. Arthur Price Jr., pastor of the 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama.

Local Ku Klux Klan members planted the bomb, which detonated at 10:22 a.m., Sunday, September 15, 1963. It was Youth Sunday. That day's Sunday School lesson was "A Love That Forgives."

Five girls were in the ladies room when the explosion ripped open the building. Addie Mae Collins, Denise McNair, Carole Robertson and Cynthia Wesley were all killed, and Sarah Collins was blinded in one eye. More than 20 others were injured.

"We believe that the events that happened here in 1963 galvanized a generation, motivated a movement and made the bitter days of Birmingham better," Price said.

FOR MORE CIVIL RIGHTS STORIES, VISIT
[VIMEO.COM/CIVILRIGHTSTRAIL](https://vimeo.com/civilrightstrail)



EXPLORE MUHAMMAD ALI'S PLACE IN HISTORY



The Muhammad Ali Center in Louisville, Kentucky is proud to join the **U.S. Civil Rights Trail**, a collection of notable landmarks in the Southern states that played a pivotal role in advancing social justice during the Civil Rights Movement.

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civilrightstrail.com



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actual vehicles churches used to transport black passengers during the boycott — and learn about the strategies organizers used. Throughout the museum, visitors can watch first-person oral history interviews from people who participated in the boycott.

The temporary exhibit space is always changing. This summer, an exhibit will bring together items from slavery through the civil rights movement contributed by private collectors. In the fall, the space will feature an exhibit about Parks herself and the broader civil rights movement in Alabama. Guided tours are available for groups of 10 or more.

TROY.EDU/ROSAPARKS

Muhammad Ali Center

LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY

Muhammad Ali lived by six core principles: dedication, confidence, spirituality, conviction, respect and giving. At the Muhammad Ali Center in downtown Louisville, Kentucky, after visitors exit the orientation theater, they enter exhibit pavilions dedicated to each of those six core principles.



Courtesy Muhammad Ali Center



The Conviction pavilion is where guests learn most about Ali’s contribution to the civil rights movement. It demonstrates both the turbulence of the 1960s and how Ali’s beliefs “led him to take action in ways that were personally risky and publicly controversial,” said Jeanie Kahnke, senior director of public relations and external affairs. “He used boxing as a platform to speak out about what he cared about.”

At the pavilion’s entrance, guests walk through a cafe and hear “Get out of here; we don’t serve your kind.” That happened to Ali in 1960 after he won a gold medal at the 1960 Summer Olympics.

The center’s award-winning interactive exhibits explore Ali’s expansive life, including his humanitarian legacy and his sports legacy, his religious convictions and his legal fight as a conscientious objector to the Vietnam War. In September, the center will open an exhibit to commemorate the 60-year anniversary of Ali’s winning his gold medal.

Guided tours can be arranged and will lead groups through the pavilions. Visitors learn about Ali’s “Red Bike Moment” — the pivotal moment that steered him to boxing — and guests can even try shadow boxing with the Champ himself in Ali’s re-created training camp exhibit.

ALICENTER.ORG

Albany Civil Rights Institute

ALBANY, GEORGIA

During the Jim Crow era, the town of Albany, Georgia, “was totally segregated,” said W. Frank Wilson, executive director of the Albany Civil Rights Institute.

The Albany Movement began when student activists and a coalition of black-improvement associations launched a desegregation campaign in November 1961. The movement led to a series of marches and demonstrations, and local leaders eventually turned to King to bring national attention to their efforts.

EXPLORE GEORGIA

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. NATIONAL HISTORIC PARK

30312

BIRTH HOME
Atlanta

Photo Credit:
@capturedbymel



See the birthplace of a dream.

A humble testament to a mighty presence in American history, the childhood home of Martin Luther King Jr. sits at 501 Auburn Ave. in Atlanta, Georgia. As the northernmost location of Georgia's contribution to the Civil Rights Trail, it also serves as a great starting point for a hike through history.

The Civil Rights Trail spans over 100 locations across 15 states and was officially recognized as a national landmark by the National Parks Service in 2018. With Georgia arguably at the epicenter of the Civil Rights movement, heroic moments that defined a state and a nation are memorialized here. From The King Center in Atlanta, to the Albany Civil Rights Institute down south, to Midway, Georgia where thousands of Civil Rights leaders were trained, there is no shortage of enriching tributes that preserve the past and inspire the future.

Visit [ExploreGeorgia.org/history-heritage](https://www.exploregeorgia.org/history-heritage) today to chart your course along the Civil Rights Trail and walk in the footsteps of giants.



“[King] came here not to lead a movement; he came here to make a speech ... but he ended up making three speeches in one night,” Wilson said; the first at Shiloh, the second at Old Mount Zion Church across the street and the third back at Shiloh. The next day, King was arrested during a march to downtown, which led to daily arrests of students and activists.

When the Mount Zion congregation relocated in the late 1990s, the 1906 building was converted into the Albany Civil Rights Institute, and a museum addition was built. Guided 45-minute tours begin with an orientation film, and exhibits showcase documents, photographs and oral histories from people who participated in the movement. The church’s stained-glass windows and pews have been restored, so it “looks very much like it did when Dr. King spoke here,” Wilson said.

Visitors will also learn about Albany’s Freedom Singers. With advance notice, the institute can arrange for a private group performance or have Rutha Harris, one of only two surviving original Freedom Singers, meet with a group.

ALBANYCIVILRIGHTSINSTITUTE.ORG



**NATIONAL MUSEUM OF
AFRICAN AMERICAN
HISTORY AND CULTURE**

Courtesy SNMAAHC

**National Museum of
African American History and Culture**

WASHINGTON

Since opening in September 2016, the National Museum of African American History and Culture has become a fixture on Washington’s National Mall.

The building’s exterior is covered in a gleaming, bronze-colored architectural scrim. Inside, the Smithsonian Institution museum features nearly 37,000 artifacts, documents and photos that embody moments of African American life, history and culture. Some of the most striking pieces include Harriet Tubman’s personal hymnal, Louis Armstrong’s trumpet and a dress sewn by Rosa Parks.

One exhibit allows guests to sit behind the wheel of a 1940s Buick sedan to learn about the Green Book, which provided black travelers with a list of gas stations, restaurants and motels that were accommodating to black people during the Jim Crow era. Video plays on the inside of the windshield while an interactive touch-screen board allows people to “travel” from Chicago to Huntsville, Alabama, in 1949. Museum visitors must either choose stops listed as “friendly” in the Green Book or try their luck at other establishments.

The Musical Crossroads exhibit explores how African American music provided a voice for liberty, justice and social change. There, among 350-plus artifacts, visitors will see Chuck Berry’s Cadillac, Thomas Dorsey’s piano from Pilgrim Baptist Church and the clothing that opera singer Marian Anderson wore during her 1939 performance at the Lincoln Memorial. The Neighborhood Record Store features hundreds of album covers and an interactive exhibit where music fans can research music and music history.

NMAAHC.SI.EDU



**ROSA PARKS’ DRESS ON
DISPLAY AT THE NATIONAL
MUSEUM OF AFRICAN AMERICAN
HISTORY AND CULTURE**

Courtesy SNMAAHC



Shine Light on the Power of Courage.

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UNITED STATES

CIVIL RIGHTS TRAIL



A MONUMENT AT BROWN CHAPEL AME CHURCH IN SELMA COMMEMORATES THE CHURCH'S ROLE AS A CATALYST IN THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT.

HOW FIRM A FOUNDATION



Churches were pillars in the struggle for civil rights

BY RACHEL CARTER

Churches were at the very heart of the black community in the segregated South, and they became a mainstay of the civil rights movement. It was in churches that people met to discuss desegregation, to strategize and plan. It was where they gathered before marches, protests and sit-ins. It was where religious and community leaders, speaking from pulpits, inspired their congregants to act.

Churches organized and provided a network of station wagons, or “rolling churches,” as alternative transportation during the Montgomery bus boycott. Church leaders formed

the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. Activists gathered to begin their march for voting rights in a church.

And even when those churches and their congregations were targets of hate and unspeakable violence, the community remained a source of strength for the civil rights movement. Here are some of the pivotal places of worship recognized on the U.S. Civil Rights Trail.

New Zion Baptist Church

NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA

In January 1957 in Atlanta, a group of Baptist pastors and activists founded what would become the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), and the group was officially incorporated a month later in New Orleans. On Valentine's Day, religious and community leaders gathered at New Zion Baptist Church on the corner of Third and Lasalle streets to sign the forms that made the organization official and established an executive board of directors, which included Martin Luther King Jr. as president.

Now, visitors to New Zion Baptist Church have more to explore than the plaque mounted on the side of the church. In January 2019, the SCLC Memorial Walkway Pavilion opened to the public across the street from New Zion.

"The average New Orleanian not from that neighborhood has no idea that the SCLC was formed at the church," said Cole Halpern, president and interim executive director of Felicity Redevelopment, a nonprofit that works to combat blight and promote redevelopment in the Central City neighborhood.



Courtesy Ebenezer Baptist Church

Grover Mouton, head of the Tulane Regional Urban Design Center, wanted to change that, so the center partnered with Felicity several years ago to design and develop the pavilion as part memorial, part educational site, part public gathering area. The covered, open-air pavilion includes a walkway that features cutouts of nine of the original SCLC founders as well as a mural by a local artist.

[CIVILRIGHTSTRAIL.COM/ATTRACTION/
NEW-ZION-BAPTIST-CHURCH](http://CIVILRIGHTSTRAIL.COM/ATTRACTION/NEW-ZION-BAPTIST-CHURCH)

Ebenezer Baptist Church

ATLANTA

King grew up in the pews of Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta, where his father was pastor. He was baptized there as a baby, and his funeral was held there after his assassination in 1968. Between the bookends of King's remarkable life, the church was the setting of some of his most significant sermons and personal milestones.

King delivered his first sermon at the church's pulpit in 1947, and the congregation voted to license him as a minister shortly afterward. He was ordained in February 1948.

King joined his father as co-pastor at Ebenezer in November 1959 in a move to be closer to the Atlanta headquarters of the SCLC.

The church is part of the Martin Luther King Jr. National Historic Site, and in 2001, the National Park Service began a two-phase restoration of the 1922 brick church located in the Sweet Auburn neighborhood. Work included structural repairs and updated infrastructure. But the project also restored the appearance of the Heritage Sanctuary and fellowship hall to the years when King served as co-pastor with his father — from 1960 to 1968 — including preserving stained-glass windows and restoring the pipe organ. A new 1,700-seat church building called Horizon Sanctuary was completed on the site in 1999.



Courtesy New Zion Baptist Church

WANDA HOWARD BATTLE: REMEMBERING A PIONEER

In 1947, a new pastor arrived at Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery, Alabama. The Rev. Vernon Johns “was this fireball, controversial, unafraid of anybody and would stand up against the segregation of this city,” said Wanda Howard Battle, the church’s tour director.

That didn’t sit well with the wealthy, socially elite church members, but Johns was a forerunner of civil rights. He helped prepare the congregation for the work that came later, work led by Martin Luther King Jr.

Johns would tell them, “You may be the socially elite, but you’d better care about your brothers and sisters who are down the street being beat and jailed,” Battle said.

He resigned in 1952, and King became the pastor in 1954. Following Rosa Parks’ arrest, other pastors encouraged King to serve as spokesman for the Montgomery bus boycott, which started his journey to the forefront of the civil rights movement. King resigned as pastor of Dexter Baptist in 1960 “because the work was greater than Montgomery.”



FOR MORE CIVIL RIGHTS STORIES,
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MISSISSIPPI CIVIL RIGHTS MUSEUM - JACKSON, MISSISSIPPI

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The congregation welcomes visitors every Sunday both in person and online through its virtual Ebenezer Everywhere, and Heritage Sanctuary is open for tours daily.

EBENEZERATL.ORG

Mason Temple Church of God in Christ

MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE

Much has been said about King's final — some say prophetic — speech, which he delivered April 3, 1968, at Mason Temple Church of God in Christ in Memphis, Tennessee. He delivered the speech, which he wasn't even scheduled to give, the night before his assassination on the balcony outside his room at the Lorraine Motel.

During the address, King said, "Like anybody, I would like to live a long life. Longevity has its place. But I'm not concerned about that now. I just want to do God's will. And he's allowed me to go up to the mountain. And I've looked over. And I've seen the promised land. I may not get there with you. But I want you to know tonight that we, as a people, will get to the promised land."

Mason Temple was built between 1940 and 1945 as the centerpiece of the six-building campus that serves as the denomination's headquarters. The massive building acted as a hub of civil rights activities in the 1950s and 1960s. King wasn't scheduled to speak on the night of April 3, 1968, but when the crowd demanded to hear him, Rev. Ralph Abernathy, who was supposed to speak, called King at the motel and asked him to come address the crowd.

MASONTEMPLE.COM



Brown Chapel AME Church

SELMA, ALABAMA

Brown Chapel AME Church in Selma, Alabama, both the building and its congregants, played integral roles in the marches that led to the passage of the 1965 Voting Rights Act.

The 1908 brick building, with its two white-domed towers and intricate facade, was the starting point for the Selma-to-Montgomery marches. On the morning of March 7, 1965, known as Bloody Sunday, about 600 protesters gathered at Brown Chapel in defiance of the governor's ban on protest marches to walk to the state capital of Montgomery. At the Edmund Pettus Bridge six blocks away, troopers and deputies beat the nonviolent protesters with billy clubs, bullwhips and barbed-wire-wrapped tubing.

Today, Brown Chapel welcomes visitors, especially the Sunday during the city's annual Bridge Crossing Jubilee, held the first weekend of March. It's standing-room only during the festival, so the church places large screens, speakers and chairs outside to allow people to hear the sermon. Throughout the rest of the year, groups can also arrange guided tours through the church's tour coordinator.

The Selma and Dallas County Chamber of Commerce and Tourism Information bureau also works with two women who were students when they participated in the movement and now are licensed tour guides, said executive director Sheryl Smedley. Because protesters organized and marched from the church to the bridge, tours typically start at Brown Chapel and include the bridge and the Selma Interpretive Center.

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BROWN-CHAPEL-AFRICAN-METHODIST-EPISCOPAL-CHURCH



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Historic Liberty Hill AME Church

SUMMERTON, SOUTH CAROLINA

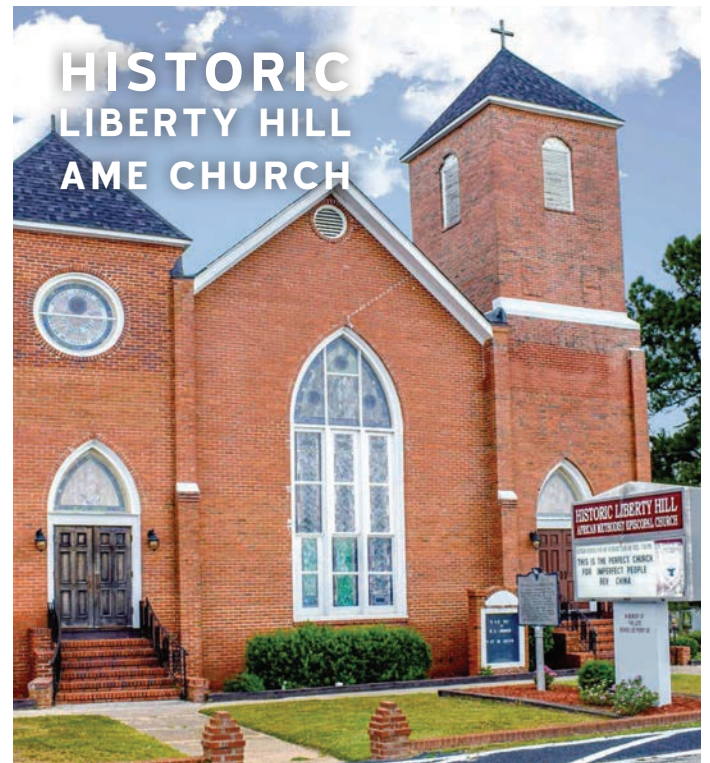
Liberty Hill AME Church in Summerton, South Carolina, was founded in 1867, only four years after emancipation and two years after the end of the American Civil War. But it was what happened inside in the 1940s and 1950s that contributed to the American civil rights movement.

Meetings held at Liberty Hill church during those years led to local court cases that helped bring about the U.S. Supreme Court's landmark 1954 ruling that desegregated public schools.

People began meeting in the church in the late 1940s to discuss desegregation. As a result of those meetings, some 20 plaintiffs signed a petition asking Clarendon County School District No. 22 to provide schools for black students that were equal to white-only schools, equipped with heat, electricity, running water, proper furniture and books.

The superintendent denied the petition. In 1950, a case known as *Briggs v. Elliott* was filed in Clarendon County with the argument that as long as schools remained segregated, education for black students would remain inferior. When the three-judge panel ruled against the plaintiffs, the case was appealed to the Supreme Court. *Briggs v. Elliott* became the first of five cases that together formed the *Brown v. Board of Education* case, in which the Supreme Court ruled that racial segregation of children in public schools was unconstitutional.

[CIVILRIGHTSTRAIL.COM/ATTRACTION/
HISTORIC-LIBERTY-HILL-AME-CHURCH14](http://CIVILRIGHTSTRAIL.COM/ATTRACTION/HISTORIC-LIBERTY-HILL-AME-CHURCH14)



Courtesy USCRT



TENNESSEE SITES

Embark on a journey of meaningful discovery and memories, where the past will enrich the present and inspire the future.



The U.S. Civil Rights Trail is a collection of churches, courthouses, schools, museums and landmarks that played a pivotal role in advancing social justice in the '40s, '50s and '60s. Tennessee's 12 stops tell the stories of the brave people who, through peaceful protests and legal actions, fought for their civil rights.

TENNESSEE SITES

Clayborn Temple MEMPHIS

Historic Beale Street District MEMPHIS

Mason Temple Church of God in Christ MEMPHIS

National Civil Rights Museum at the Lorraine Motel MEMPHIS

WDIA Radio Station MEMPHIS

Clinton 12 Statue and Green McAdoo Cultural Center CLINTON

Civil Rights Room at the Nashville Public Library NASHVILLE

Clark Memorial United Methodist Church NASHVILLE

Davidson County Courthouse and the Witness Walls NASHVILLE

Fisk University NASHVILLE

Griggs Hall at American Baptist College NASHVILLE

Woolworth on 5th NASHVILLE



For more information on each of Tennessee's trail sites, visit tncivilrightstrail.com.

UNITED STATES

CIVIL RIGHTS TRAIL



EDMUND PETTUS BRIDGE IN SELMA WAS THE SITE OF A DRAMATIC CIVIL RIGHTS MARCH AND ATTACK IN 1965 THAT BECAME KNOWN AS BLOODY SUNDAY.

JOURNEYS TO JUSTICE

Landmarks large and small remember lives devoted to equality

BY RACHEL CARTER

In one of his famed letters penned from his jail cell in Birmingham, Alabama, Martin Luther King Jr. wrote, “We know through painful experience that freedom is never voluntarily given by the oppressor; it must be demanded by the oppressed.”

The marches, sit-ins and protests of the civil rights era garner much of our modern-day attention, but social justice activists can be found in every decade, in every city, in every capacity: the daughter of former slaves who became a teacher and community activist, two men who started out selling death and burial insurance but ended up creating an organization that served the black community.

Social justice is demanded through coordinated campaigns and passionate protests, but it is also accomplished in small deeds and everyday goodness. Numerous sites on the U.S. Civil Rights Trail tell the stories of people who took a stand for justice in the face of opposition.

Edmund Pettus Bridge

SELMA, ALABAMA

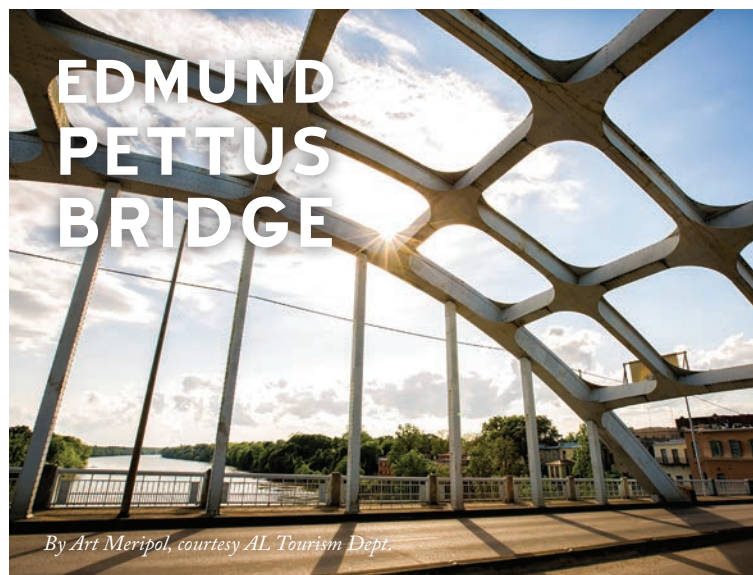
“This is Selma, Alabama. There are more Negroes in jail with me than there are on the voting rolls,” King wrote in the *New York Times* in February 1965.

After months of trying to register black voters in Dallas County, to no avail, activists took to the streets in early 1965. When King arrived to participate in the peaceful demonstrations, he and hundreds of other protesters were arrested.

Activists decided to take their cause to the state capital during a 54-mile march from Selma to Montgomery. On the morning of March 7, 1965, hundreds of demonstrators reached the Edmund Pettus Bridge only to be blocked by state troopers and sheriff’s deputies who knocked the protestors down, released tear gas and beat them with bullwhips, billy clubs and barbed-wire-wrapped rubber tubing.

The violent attack, which came to be known as Bloody Sunday, was broadcast around the nation, prompting thousands of supporters to flock to Selma. Two weeks later, King led the five-day march to Montgomery, helping to spur the passage of the 1965 Voting Rights Act.

Today, people make their own pilgrimage to Selma to walk across the bridge.



“They want to try to imagine what it was like that day in 1965 and experience a part of that history,” said Sheryl Smedley, executive director of Selma and Dallas County Chamber of Commerce and Tourism Information.

Visitors can learn about the marches at the Selma Interpretive Center, a free museum at the bridge’s base. Efforts are also underway to turn the neighboring building into a 100-person theater.

Every year during the first weekend in March, about 30,000 people flock to Selma for the annual Bridge Crossing Jubilee. On the Sunday of the festival, throngs of visitors gather to walk across the bridge to commemorate Bloody Sunday.

[NPS.GOV/SEMO](https://www.nps.gov/semo)

Memphis Tennessee Garrison House

HUNTINGTON, WEST VIRGINIA

Memphis Tennessee Garrison was a teacher in Huntington, West Virginia, who took that role beyond the classroom and into the community.

“She was a teacher by trade but also a teacher in life,” said Lori Thompson, vice president of the Carter G. Woodson Memorial Foundation and head of special collections at Marshall University.

Garrison was born in 1890 in Virginia to former slaves, and her father’s work as a coal miner took them to the coalfields of West Virginia. After earning her bachelor’s degree, Garrison began teaching in 1908, a career she continued until retiring in the early 1950s.

Garrison established the local NAACP branch in 1921 and was the national vice president of the NAACP board of directors in the mid-1960s. She also served as the community mediator for U.S. Steel Gary Mines, organized Girl Scout troops for African American girls, created a breakfast program for impoverished students during the Great Depression and created the Negro Artist Series.

Though Garrison died in 1988 at the age of 98, “people still talk



BERNARD LAFAYETTE JR.: WE SHALL OVERCOME



On May 20, 1961, a group of black and white Freedom Riders rode a Greyhound bus into Montgomery, Alabama, to continue efforts to desegregate bus terminals. At the Greyhound station, they were met by a mob of over 200 members of the Ku Klux Klan and Klan supporters.

"I said, 'Well, let's all join hands and sing 'We Shall Overcome.' That's what you do when you don't know what to do,'" said Bernard LaFayette Jr., who was leading one of the Freedom Riders groups that day.

They were singing that song when the mob closed in. The horde knocked James Zwerg over a railing and gashed open John Lewis' head with a crate. LaFayette ended up with three cracked ribs.

At the hospital, fellow rider William Barbee, who was badly beaten, looked at LaFayette and asked, "When are we going to Jackson?" — the next stop for the Freedom Riders.

"So if there was any question at all about whether we were going to Jackson, Mississippi, the question was answered right there. We going. Because that's the whole idea of a movement. You keep moving, no matter what happens."

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about her around here,” Thompson said. “She had such a mentorship impact in this area.”

When members of the Woodson foundation board heard that Garrison’s home was available in a tax sale, the foundation bought it to create a museum for black history in Huntington. Woodson was the Huntington historian, author and journalist who is known as the Father of Black History.

The foundation received National Historic Landmark status for the two-story house in 2017, and the organization is working to raise funds for the future museum.

**CIVILRIGHTSTRAIL.COM/ATTRACTION/
MEMPHIS-TENNESSEE-GARRISON-HOUSE**

Hayti Heritage Center

DURHAM, NORTH CAROLINA

The building that houses the Hayti Heritage Center in Durham, North Carolina, has had two lives: first, as the thriving St. Joseph’s AME Church, and now, as a cultural hub for the historically black community of Hayti (pronounced “hay-tie”).

Hayti began as a place for freed slaves to settle after emancipation. By the early 1900s, Parrish Street had been dubbed “Black Wall Street,” and Hayti had become so prosperous that it was considered a model for how black communities could thrive in the segregated South.



“This was the African American community of Durham,” said Angela Lee, executive director of the Hayti Heritage Center. “This was the only place where we could live and we could work and we could socialize.”

In 1970, the city built a freeway directly through the neighborhood, severing Hayti from downtown and displacing thousands of families and hundreds of businesses.

After the congregation relocated to a new building, the St. Joseph’s Historic Foundation established the Hayti Heritage Center in 1975 with the mission to use the 1891 steepled church as a cultural hub to preserve Hayti’s history and promote its heritage.

The center’s core programs are anchored in visual and performing arts; they include a concert series, annual music and film festivals, and art exhibitions that focus on local artists of color.

The center also offers walking tours of Hayti that usually start inside the center, where groups will see the sanctuary’s intricate pressed-tin ceiling and 24 stained-glass windows. Groups can also arrange for Q&A sessions with a local who shares stories of growing up in Hayti.

HAYTI.ORG

Mississippi Freedom Trail

Created in 2011, the Mississippi Freedom Trail commemorates the people and places in the state that played pivotal roles in the U.S. civil rights movement.

Today, the trail features more than 25 markers, including several in the capital city of Jackson. At the Greyhound Bus Station, a marker recognizes the Freedom Riders and the 300-plus people who were arrested in Jackson in the summer of 1961 for integrating public transportation facilities.

A marker at the Mississippi State Capitol commemorates the 1966 three-week March Against Fear that began in Memphis, Tennessee, and ended with a rally at the Capitol, where some 15,000 people gathered to hear notable speakers, including King. Guided group tours of the Capitol



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are available by reservation, and visitors can also take self-guided tours.

A marker at Medgar Evers' home remembers the Mississippi NAACP's first state field secretary, who was assassinated in his driveway in 1963. Groups can tour the Evers' house museum, which has been restored to look as it did when his family lived there, including his children's mattresses placed directly on the floor to reduce the chance that they could be shot through the windows of their home.

In Ruleville, Mississippi, groups can visit the Fannie Lou Hamer Memorial Garden, where they'll find Hamer's gravesite and a statue of the noted civil and voting rights activist.

**VISITMISSISSIPPI.ORG/THINGS-TO-DO/HISTORY-CULTURE/
CIVIL-RIGHTS**



Courtesy MS Freedom Trail

“No man or woman who tries to pursue an ideal in his or her own way is without enemies.”

– DAISY BATES

Arkansas Civil Rights Heritage Trail

LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS

The Arkansas Civil Rights Heritage Trail launched in 2011 to honor the people who fought for racial justice in Arkansas. The trail of 75-some brass markers, one for each honoree, begins in front of the Old State House Museum, and new markers are installed in the sidewalk along West Markham Street each year. Eventually, the trail will stretch to the William J. Clinton Presidential Library and Museum.

The markers serve as “daily reminders of where we’ve been and where we’re headed,” said Kiki Manneer, tourism sales manager for the Little Rock Convention and Visitors Bureau.

Groups can explore the names on the markers beyond the trail. Each of the Little Rock Nine, the first African American students to enroll in Little Rock Central High School in 1957, has a marker. The Little Rock Central High School National Historic Site is still an operating school, so guided tours are available on a limited basis, but groups will also find a visitor center and the preserved Mobil gas station.

During the desegregation, Daisy Bates, then-president of the Arkansas NAACP chapter, was a mentor and advocate for the Little Rock Nine. Tours of her preserved home can be arranged.

Also on the trail, visitors will find the names of John E. Bush and Chester W. Keatts, who in 1883 founded the Mosaic Templars of America, a black fraternal organization. The Mosaic Templars Cultural Center opened in 2008 with exhibits that focus on the city’s thriving West Ninth Street business district and the area’s black culture, black community and black-owned businesses during the Jim Crow era.

ARKANSASCIVILRIGHTSHERITAGE.ORG



Courtesy Little Rock CVB



— NEW ORLEANS —
PLANTATION
COUNTRY

visitnopc.com



One cannot step foot into New Orleans Plantation Country without experiencing the impact of slave culture. Their art, language, folklore and, of course, food are woven deep into the fabric of this region. First brought to Louisiana through capture and oppression, slaves are the historical foundation of agricultural and economic success of the area and its plantations.

Out here, you will learn about how the intelligence and skill of the enslaved dictated the architecture of the plantation estates and structures. Tours, memorials and knowledgeable guides present the perspectives of the enslaved through first-person narratives and educational exhibits. Hear about the lives of freed slaves, living during segregation under Jim Crow laws.

Explore local African-American owned businesses and family owned restaurants to further experience how African heritage is rooted in all aspects of history, and continues to shape the current landscape. Taste your way through Creole kitchens for an authentic understanding of the famous flavors that originated out here and are enjoyed around the world.

The immersive experiences available in New Orleans Plantation Country educate visitors and honor the history and culture of the enslaved throughout the River Parishes of Louisiana.



UNITED STATES

CIVIL RIGHTS TRAIL



FISK MEMORIAL CHAPEL IS A HISTORIC LANDMARK AT FISK UNIVERSITY, A SCHOOL ESTABLISHED TO EDUCATE FREED SLAVES IN NASHVILLE.

A NEW CHAPTER

Dynamic institutions rose to educate African Americans

BY RACHEL CARTER

The education of African American people, whether free or enslaved, was discouraged during the slave era in the U.S. — it was even illegal in many Southern states — because educated slaves were seen as a threat to slaveholders' power.

But that didn't stop enslaved people from seeking knowledge, which often became a communal effort on plantations. After the Civil War ended, freed slaves were so starved for an education, they would often walk miles in each direction to missionary schools for freed slaves.

For decades, they had to battle the prevailing belief that black people couldn't be educated, only "trained." They were forced to attend segregated schools that were often just tar-

paper-covered shacks with no heat, no books, no furniture.

The U.S. Supreme Court’s 1954 decision that “separate educational facilities are inherently unequal” marked the first step toward equality in education and was an important catalyst of the civil rights movement. Today, the U.S. Civil Rights Trail commemorates numerous schools and universities that played roles in advancing the cause of equality in education.

Berea College

BEREA, KENTUCKY

When abolitionist and minister John Fee founded Berea College in 1855, his vision was to create a “Utopian Experiment” that welcomed “all peoples of the Earth.” As a result, Berea was the first college in the South to admit both black and white students, as well as women.

Berea College and the town that grew up around it was essentially half black and half white and fully integrated for the next 50 years, but Jim Crow sentiments soon crept in. In 1904, Kentucky legislators targeted Berea with a law that banned educating black and white students in the same school — or even within 25 miles of each other.

Though the college was forced into a period of segregation, it never lost touch with its founding principles, spokesman Timothy Jordan said. Berea’s president and board paid for Berea’s black students to attend other schools while the college fought the law all the



way to the U.S. Supreme Court. They also split the college’s endowment and raised money to establish the Lincoln Institute for black students.

In 1950, Berea College was again able to enroll black students, and Berea students actively took up the civil rights cause in the 1960s.

Student guides lead groups on 50-minute historical walking tours that take guests into the Carter G. Woodson Center to learn about its namesake, known as the “Father of Black History,” who was a 1903 graduate of Berea. Visitors will also go inside the 1906 Phelps Stokes Chapel, which students built, and see Lincoln Hall, the school’s second-oldest permanent structure.

BEREA.EDU



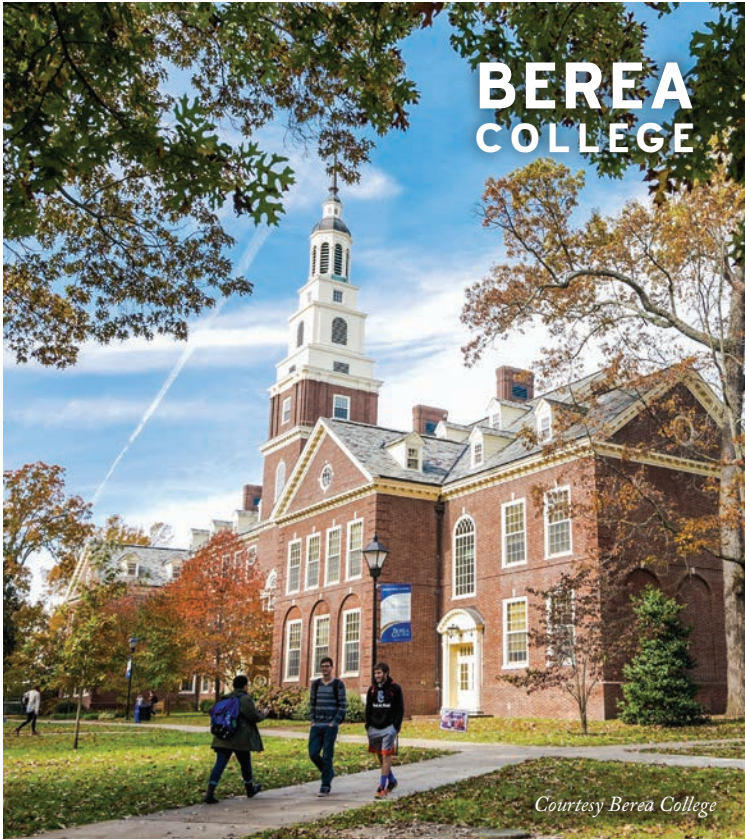
Dorchester Academy

MIDWAY, GEORGIA

Dorchester Academy was established in the 1870s as a missionary school to educate freed slaves. It opened its doors to students of every age and “was really the first school in the area where African Americans could get a high school education,” said Bill Austin, president of the Dorchester Academy Improvement Association. Hungry for knowledge, many students walked several miles each way to attend school; one made the 17-mile trek on foot twice a day.

But the school is best known for its role in the civil rights movement of the 1960s. The abandoned campus became the Southern Christian Leadership Conference’s (SCLC’s) primary site for its Citizen Education Program (CEP). The CEP was the foundation of the SCLC’s voter education project, which taught Southern blacks about their rights as citizens and prepared them to pass voter registration tests during each weeklong session. Students also learned the concepts and tactics of nonviolent direct action.

In less than two years, the SCLC trained nearly 2,000 teachers and leaders, who returned to their hometowns and, in turn, taught nearly



Courtesy Berea College

11,000 others. Dorchester was also the planning center for “Project C,” the SCLC’s successful March 1963 campaign to end segregation in Birmingham, Alabama.

At the site today, groups can schedule guided tours of the 1934 Georgian Revival-style dormitory, including the room where Martin Luther King Jr. stayed during his frequent visits, as well as the museum housed in the former school director’s two-bedroom home. Visitors can also explore the campus walking trail or tour the nearby Midway Museum.

DORCHESTERACADEMYIA.ORG

William Frantz Elementary School

NEW ORLEANS

Ruby Bridges was only 6 years old in 1960 when she became the first African American student to attend the previously all-white William Frantz Elementary School in New Orleans. Four federal marshals escorted Bridges and her mother to the school every day that year past furious crowds lobbing vicious slurs.

Though Bridges’ presence was meant to integrate the school, she and her teacher, Barbara Henry, spent most of the year alone while white students learned, ate and played without them and white teachers refused to talk to Bridges.

Today, a historical marker outside the school commemorates the integration, and a statue of Bridges stands in the school’s courtyard.



Photo Credits: Keenan Hairston and Visit Raleigh

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North Carolina is filled with many paths but only one U.S. Civil Rights Trail. Immerse your next group in the historical significance NC played in the fight for American civil rights. Visit F.W. Woolworth’s lunch counter, the catalyst for the sit-in movement, and other historical locations in our state.

NORTH CAROLINA **NC** VISITNC.COM

Room 2306 serves as the “Ruby Bridges Room,” which has been restored with 1960 period furnishings and decor. The building now houses Akili Academy, a charter school, and is not open for public tours.

Though Bridges gets much of the attention, three other African American girls integrated McDonogh No. 19 school that same year. One of them, Leona Tate, founded the Leona Tate Foundation for Change, which is working to preserve and repurpose the school as a museum and education center.

Louisiana is also working to create its own state civil rights trail that will connect to the U.S. Civil Rights Trail. State officials recently accepted site nominations for the trail, which could include physical markers at each site as well as “digital” markers online.

**CIVILRIGHTSTRAIL.COM/ATTRACTION/
WILLIAM-FRANTZ-ELEMENTARY-SCHOOL**

Fisk University

NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE

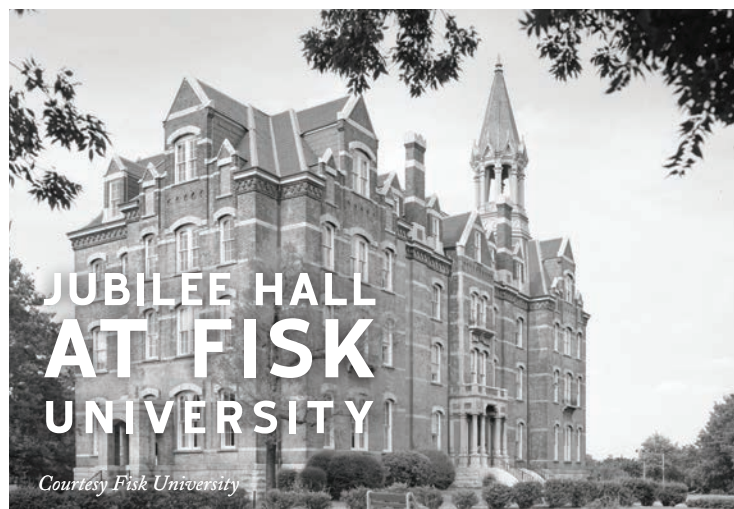
Barely six months after the end of the American Civil War, three men founded the Fisk School in 1866 in Nashville, Tennessee, to educate freed slaves of all ages. The school was incorporated as Fisk University in 1867 to train teachers to go back out into the communities and educate the freed slaves.

In 1930, the university was the first African American college to be accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.

From the Reconstruction era through present day, Fisk alumni form a roster of notable names, from Ida B. Wells, an African American journalist, abolitionist and suffragist who led an anti-lynching campaign in the 1890s, to current U.S. congressman and civil rights leader John Lewis.

“If you go through each decade, you can see Fisk graduates playing important roles in the direction of this country and the direction of civil rights,” said Fisk University provost Vann Newkirk.

Guided campus tours are available for groups. Jubilee Hall, the crown jewel of the campus, was built with proceeds from the Jubilee Singers’ 1871 U.S. tour and 1873 tour of Great Britain and Europe, which included a performance for Queen Victoria. The Fisk Jubilee Singers still perform worldwide, and groups might be able to arrange a performance with enough advance scheduling.



Visitors can also tour the 1892 Fisk Memorial Chapel and the main administration building, a Works Progress Administration-commissioned “architectural gem.” Guests can visit Fisk’s three on-campus art galleries and see the painting of the Jubilee Singers commissioned by Queen Victoria.

FISK.EDU

Tuskegee University

TUSKEGEE, ALABAMA

Tuskegee University was founded July 4, 1881, as the Tuskegee Normal School for Colored Teachers, and 25-year-old Booker T. Washington was hired as the school’s first principal.

The following year, Washington bought a former plantation with about 100 acres that became the core of the university campus, which today is also a designated national park, the Tuskegee Institute National Historic Site.

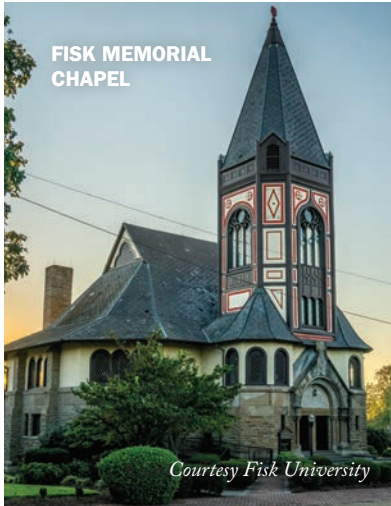
Renowned botanist, inventor and scientist George Washington Carver was a professor at the university from 1896 until his death in 1943.

In 1941, the U.S. Army Air Corps established a program at Tuskegee to train black aviators using Moton Field. The graduates became known as the Tuskegee Airmen, or Red Tails, the first African American military fighter and bomber pilots in the U.S. armed forces.

Guided group tours of the campus include Washington’s home, called the Oaks; the George Washington Carver Museum; the men’s gravesites in the campus cemetery; and the Legacy Museum, as well as other historic buildings. Groups can also visit the Tuskegee Airmen National Historic Site at Moton Field, about four miles from campus.

University archivist and associate professor Dana Chandler can also provide access and custom tours of the archives, which contain “lots of surprises.” Among the trove of artifacts are Carver’s notebooks, a 22-pound meteorite and singer Lionel Richie’s uniform. The Commodores all attended Tuskegee, but Richie was the only member to graduate, Chandler said.

NPS.GOV/TUIN



FISK MEMORIAL CHAPEL

Courtesy Fisk University

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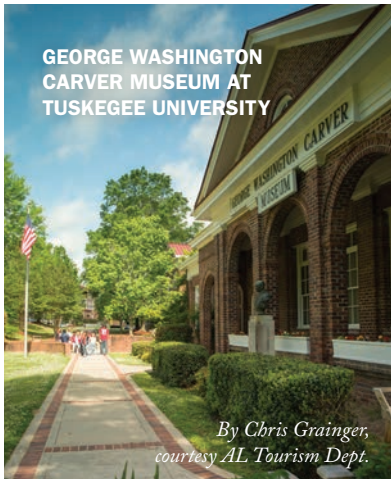
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“If you want to lift yourself up, lift someone else up.”
— BOOKER T. WASHINGTON



TUSKEGEE UNIVERSITY

By Chris Grainger, courtesy AL Tourism Dept.



GEORGE WASHINGTON CARVER MUSEUM AT TUSKEGEE UNIVERSITY

By Chris Grainger, courtesy AL Tourism Dept.



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DOROTHY LOCKETT HOLCOMB: FIGHTING FOR EDUCATION



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Rather than comply with a court order to desegregate, Prince Edward County in Virginia closed all public schools for five years.

"They decided if we have to integrate, we're just not going to have public schools at all," Dorothy Lockett Holcomb said. "So, in 1959, I was 10 years old, fourth grade and totally devastated without a school to go to."

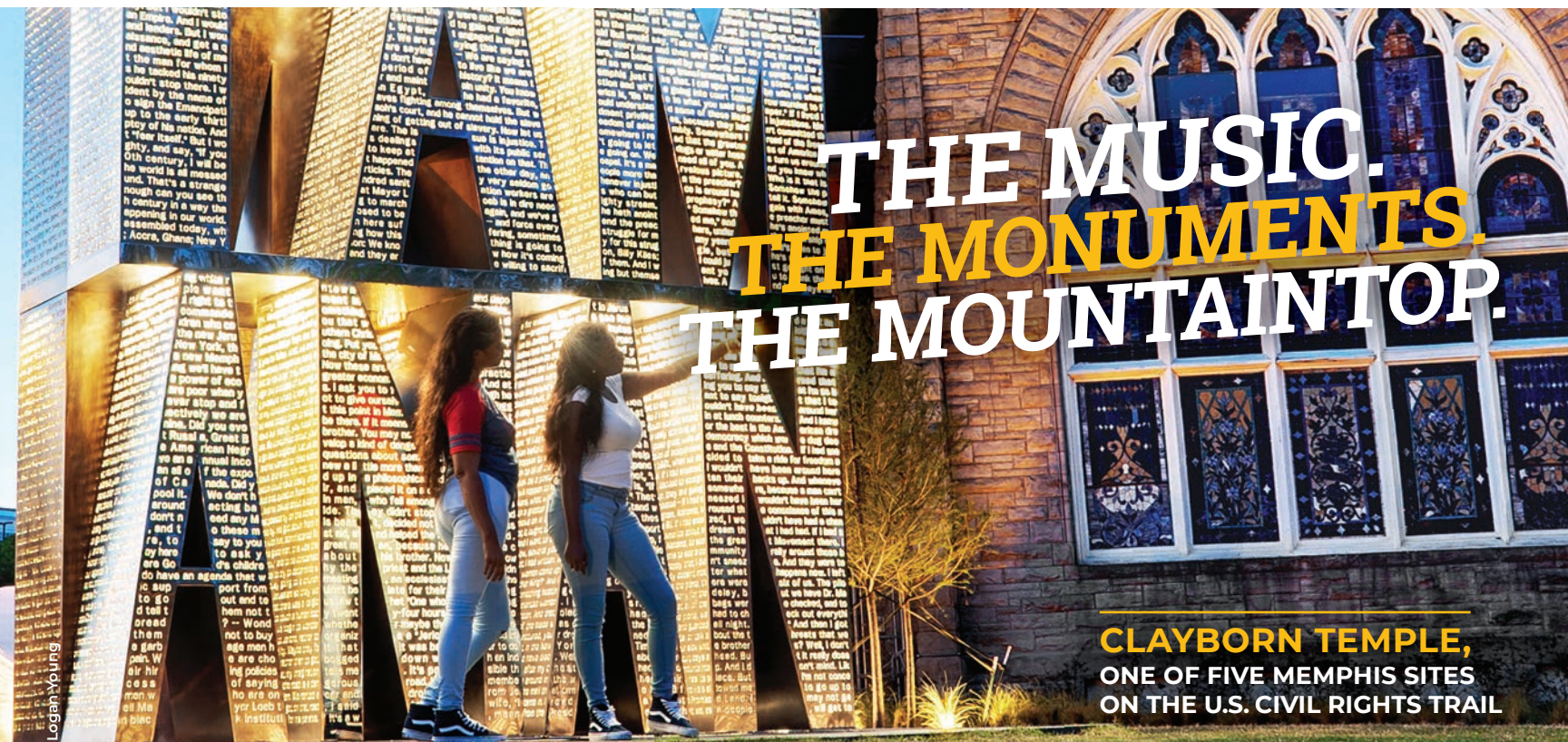
Her parents assured her she would get an education. Instead of walking one mile to her three-room school every day, she walked three miles each way to be tutored in a church basement.

"I did that for two years thinking that schools were going to open, but they never did."

Eventually, her father rented a dilapidated house in Appomattox County, where schools were still open, and they pretended to live there. He dropped Holcomb and her brother off every morning, and they would wait behind the house until they heard the bus coming.

When Prince Edward County schools reopened in 1963, Holcomb's family didn't return.

"The only thing my father said to me was, 'I'm not going to give them the chance to do that to you again.'"



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LITTLE ROCK NINE MONUMENT



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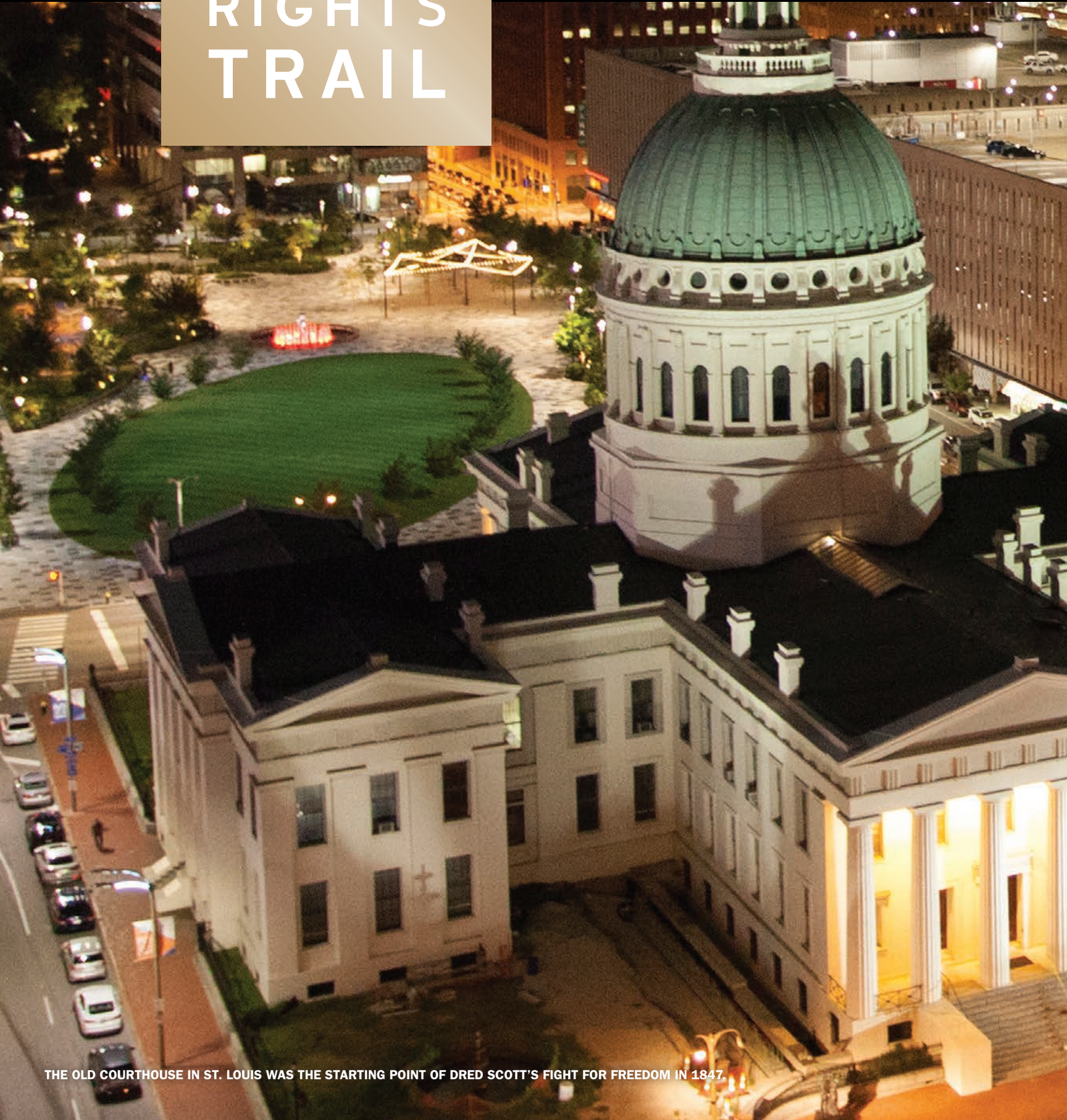
CLINTON PRESIDENTIAL CENTER



LITTLE ROCK CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL

UNITED STATES

CIVIL RIGHTS TRAIL



THE OLD COURTHOUSE IN ST. LOUIS WAS THE STARTING POINT OF DRED SCOTT'S FIGHT FOR FREEDOM IN 1847.

An aerial night photograph of a city street. On the left is a classical-style white building with a portico and columns, likely a courthouse. To its right is a modern building with a facade of vertical wooden slats. Further right is a tall, multi-story office building with many lit windows. A street with a bus and cars is visible between the buildings.

HALLS OF JUSTICE

America's courts ultimately shone for civil rights

BY RACHEL CARTER

The battle for civil rights was fought at lunch counters, on public buses and on city streets. But it was won in the courtroom.

It was in state and federal courts and, ultimately, in the U.S. Supreme Court that black Americans were

finally recognized as equal citizens who were entitled to the same treatment under the law as whites.

The Supreme Court's landmark 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* decision began the unraveling of Jim Crow in the South. Over the next decade, case after case, ruling after ruling dismantled the segregation of public parks, public transportation and public facilities for black citizens.

The U.S. Civil Rights Trail includes numerous courthouses and other spots where legal victories helped to propel the civil rights movement forward.

Old Courthouse

ST. LOUIS

Dred Scott and his wife, Harriet, began their fight for freedom at the Old Courthouse in St. Louis in 1847, when they filed their first suit to be freed from slavery. Eleven years later, the U.S. Supreme Court made its “heinous decision” in the case, which effectively ruled that African Americans were not citizens and had no right to sue, said Bob Moore, a historian with Gateway Arch National Park.

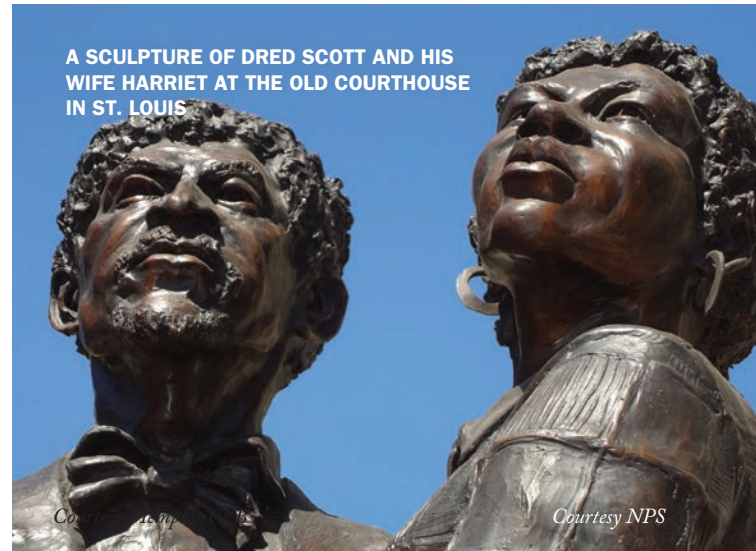
In an ironic twist, the Scotts were permanently freed two months later at the Old Courthouse after their ownership was transferred to an abolitionist congressman.

St. Louis suffragette Virginia Minor also took her civil suit to the court in 1873 to argue for women’s right to vote, gaining significant attention for voting rights for all U.S. citizens.

The courthouse will close to the public June 1 to undergo a major renovation that is slated to take at least 18 months. Though much of the work is infrastructure-related, the project will add new exhibits, including one about the Scotts and a brand-new gallery called “Pathways to Freedom” that will explore urban life for persons of color in St. Louis, both enslaved and free. The courtroom where the Minor case was heard will also be converted into an exhibit space exploring women’s voting rights.

When the courthouse reopens, groups can participate in mock-trial programs and take guided tours of the ornate structure, which was built between 1839 and 1862.

[NPS.GOV/JEFF](https://www.nps.gov/jeff)



A SCULPTURE OF DRED SCOTT AND HIS WIFE HARRIET AT THE OLD COURTHOUSE IN ST. LOUIS

Courtesy NPS

Courtesy NPS

Tallahatchie County Courthouse and Emmett Till Interpretive Center

SUMNER, MISSISSIPPI

In a courtroom at the Tallahatchie County Courthouse in Sumner, Mississippi, an all-white, all-male jury acquitted two men of the 1955 kidnapping, beating and lynching of 14-year-old Emmett Till. The jury deliberated for 67 minutes; one juror reportedly said, “If we hadn’t stopped to drink pop, it wouldn’t have taken that long.”

For the next 50 years, residents of Sumner and the surrounding area hoped the incident would fade into history. Instead, Till’s significance grew.

In 2006, Jerome Little, the first black president of the Tallahatchie County Board of Supervisors, formed the Emmett Till Memorial Commission. The following year, the commission delivered a formal apology to the Till family in a public ceremony in front of the courthouse.

Over the next several years, the group worked to restore the courtroom to its 1955 appearance and to create an Emmett Till museum. The restored courtroom and the Emmett Till Interpretive Center across the street opened in spring 2015.

At the center, groups will find community space along with some exhibits. At the courthouse, Benjamin Saulsberry, the center’s tour coordinator, leads visitors on guided tours or in facilitated conversations.

“We talk about the trauma that it took over 50 years to get to, as a county and as a community, to address that 50-year silence,” he said.

In August 2019, the center also launched the Emmett Till Memory Project, a mobile app for sites and historical interpretation related to the tragedy.

[EMMETT-TILL.ORG](https://www.emmett-till.org)



TALLAHATCHIE
COUNTY
COURTHOUSE

Courtesy Tallahatchie County Courthouse

OLD COURTHOUSE IN ST. LOUIS



Courtesy NPS

“There is no noise as powerful
as the sound of the marching
feet of a determined people.”

– MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.

Brown v. Board of Education National Historic Site

TOPEKA, KANSAS

Third grader Linda Brown had to walk six blocks to the bus stop and then ride a bus to Monroe Elementary School, a school for black children. Meanwhile, an all-white elementary school was only seven blocks from her home. Her father was one of 13 parents who filed a class-action lawsuit against the Topeka Board of Education for operating segregated schools. The U.S. Supreme Court’s landmark 1954 ruling in the case declared it was unconstitutional for states to establish separate public schools for black and white students.

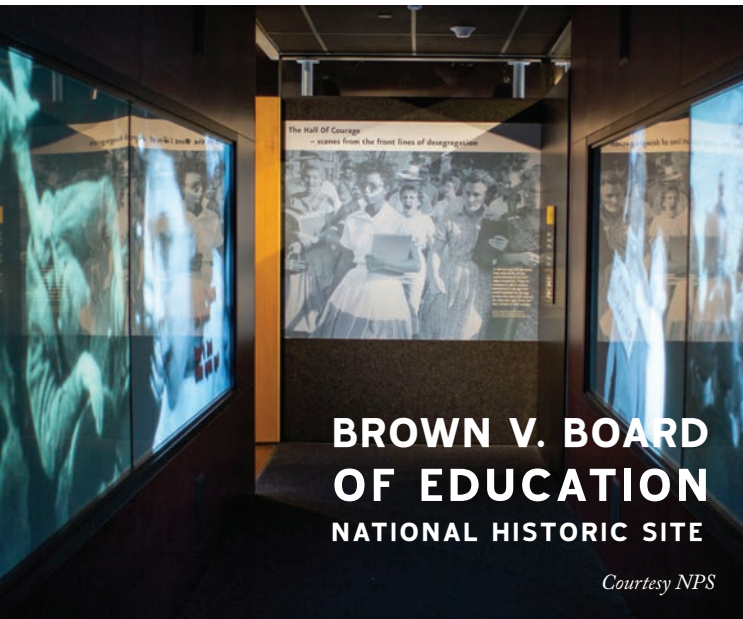
Today, Monroe Elementary is the Brown v. Board of Education National Historic Site. Two galleries recount the barriers to education that African Americans had to overcome and the civil rights movement following the Supreme Court ruling.

The site recently completed a \$500,000 refresh of its exhibits to make them more tactile, engaging and accessible. Evocative wall photos were added where visitors can write their thoughts anonymously on a sticky note “to leave it there for the next visitor to grapple with,” said program manager Enimini Ekong. “The sticky notes are the most jarring. People will come along and see this conversation and see this is where we’re at.”

An oral history booth will soon be added so visitors can record their thoughts about the site and their experience.

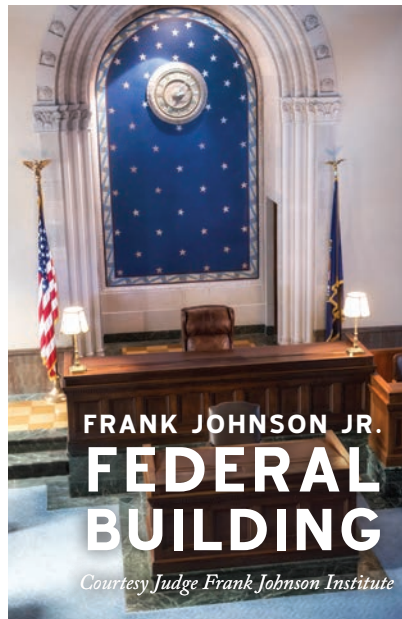
In the Hall of Courage, guests see and hear the vicious slurs that were yelled at the first black students at Little Rock Central High School in 1957, and visitors can also watch a 30-minute film in the auditorium. Guided group tours are available for up to 90 people, and ranger presentations can be arranged.

[NPS.GOV/BRVB](https://www.nps.gov/brvb)



BROWN V. BOARD OF EDUCATION NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE

Courtesy NPS



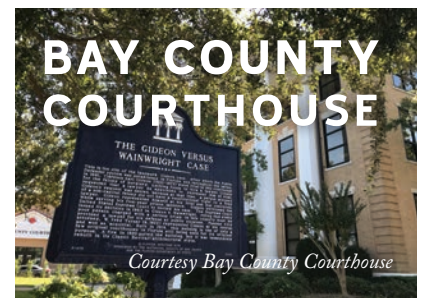
FRANK JOHNSON JR. FEDERAL BUILDING

Courtesy Judge Frank Johnson Institute



JUDGE FRANK
JOHNSON JR.

Courtesy Judge Frank Johnson Institute



BAY COUNTY COURTHOUSE

Courtesy Bay County Courthouse

Frank M. Johnson Jr. Federal Building and United States Courthouse

MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA

While Rosa Parks' case was bogged down in state courts, two attorneys strategically filed a separate case to challenge Montgomery, Alabama's segregation of city buses.

When a three-judge panel that included Judge Frank M. Johnson struck down the city's ordinance segregating buses in 1956, it marked the first time the Supreme Court's *Brown v. Board of Education* rationale — that separate but equal is unconstitutional — was applied outside of public education.

"Judge Johnson ruled on numerous cases over the next decade that sort of dismantled Jim Crow," said Thomas Rains, executive director of the Judge Frank M. Johnson Jr. Institute, a new nonprofit whose mission is to promote understanding of the Constitution and the independent judiciary.

Johnson's rulings ended segregation of city parks, interstate buses and terminals, the city airport, city libraries and the YMCA.

Today, the 1933 Frank M. Johnson Jr. Federal Building and U.S. Courthouse in downtown Montgomery is still an active courthouse. Judge Myron Thompson sits in what was Johnson's courtroom, which has been restored.

With sufficient notice and advance scheduling, groups "can come in and see the courtroom, which is really ground zero for the civil rights movement," Rains said. He or one of the court's judges can also speak to groups before Rains takes them to the nearby library to see Johnson's desk and his Presidential Medal of Freedom.

THEJOHNSONINSTITUTE.ORG

Bay County Courthouse

PANAMA CITY, FLORIDA

When Clarence Earl Gideon was charged with burglarizing the Bay Harbor Pool Room in 1961, he couldn't afford an attorney. And when he appeared in the Bay County Courthouse in Panama City, Florida, the judge refused to appoint one for Gideon, forcing him to mount his own defense at trial. When the jury convicted Gideon, the court sentenced him to five years in state prison.

From his prison cell, Gideon appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court, using the prison library for reference and writing on prison stationery. The Supreme Court overturned his conviction in the renowned *Gideon v. Wainwright* case, unanimously ruling that states are required under the Sixth Amendment to provide an attorney to defendants in criminal cases who cannot afford to hire their own.

Two years after his initial trial, Gideon was retried at the same courthouse — and was acquitted.

A historical marker about the Gideon case sits outside the 1915 yellow-brick courthouse in downtown. The building is still an operating county court, so it's open to the public, but visitors must go through a security checkpoint. It's also one of 14 sites on the historic downtown walking tour, and Destination Panama City can assist with requests for step-on guides.

CIVILRIGHTSTRAIL.COM/DESTINATION/PANAMA-CITY

DAVID JORDAN: REFLECTING ON JUSTICE



Mississippi state Sen. David Jordan was a college student in September 1955 when his professor told the class to read newspapers about the Emmett Till murder trial.

When school let out that day, Jordan said, "Let's go to Sumner." His classmate drove Jordan and his brother to the town. They walked into the packed courtroom while the funeral home director was testifying about the appearance of Till's body.

Order was scarce in the court; people were doing pretty much whatever they wanted to do, Jordan said. During a recess, Till's killers "were drinking cokes and laughing."

"I could tell nobody was serious about it; kind of a mockery of a trial," he said.

Jordan and his classmate shared their firsthand account of the trial for their class project. They got an "A."

"Looking back on it, I knew they were not serious," Jordan said of the trial. He added, "It was just a mockery of justice. They didn't intend to do anything because they were never serious."

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YOU'VE HEARD OF DRED SCOTT.

See where his case—and the Civil Rights Movement—began.



Step into history at the Old Courthouse in St. Louis where Dred Scott famously fought for his freedom from slavery. Ultimately, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that Scott was not considered a citizen and had no right to sue – but his bold move marked the beginning of the Civil Rights Movement in America. Learn more about this landmark event in the historic courthouse where it all began at the newly renovated Gateway Arch National Park.

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