

HARVARD

ALUMNI TRAVELS



ON THE ROAD TO CIVIL RIGHTS: MISSISSIPPI, ARKANSAS, TENNESSEE & ALABAMA MARCH 13-20, 2022 DETAILED ITINERARY

The history of the United States has been shaped by many movements, but perhaps one of the most significant is that of civil rights. On this program, trace the history of the civil rights movement, visiting the major sites—from Selma to the Little Rock High School—and meeting with many of the figures who were involved. Framed within the civil rights story are the histories of the music and cuisine of the South. Some of the most powerful and inspired creations of both Southern sound and cuisine were born out of hardship, and they continue to evolve as new populations, ingredients, and instruments influence regional culture. For those interested in social justice today, there are great lessons to be learned from these struggles in our history, where a profound demonstration of commitment, against all odds, succeeded. In the words of Dr. King: “Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.”

SCHEDULE BY DAY

B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, R=Reception, D=Dinner

SUNDAY, MARCH 13

JACKSON, MISSISSIPPI

Arrive in Jackson.

2.00pm. Meet in the hotel lobby to walk just over half a mile to the Mississippi Civil Rights Museum which opened in December 2017. This state-funded museum provides a honest and painful account of the Civil Rights Movement in Mississippi through a series of galleries packed floor to ceiling with photographs, texts and recordings. There are a total of eight galleries that branch off from a central rotunda that brings daylight into the museum. Inside the rotunda, an illuminated sculpture pulses and glows every 30 minutes (reminding you how quickly time passes at the museum) and gospel songs play. The idea is to begin and move, always staying left, from one gallery to the next one. The museum exhibits begins with the back story to the civil rights period – the European slave trade. From there the museum timeline moves through the Civil War, Reconstruction and the birth of Jim Crow and then moves to after World War II with a harrowing room which focuses on Emmett Till. Woven through the

galleries is a parallel record of resistance from activists like Medgar Evers.

This evening enjoy a welcome reception and dinner at the hotel.

Overnight: *The Westin Jackson (D)*

MONDAY, MARCH 14

JACKSON

This morning visit the Medgar Evers Home Museum, where Evers lived and was later assassinated in 1963. Here you will have the opportunity to meet with the museum’s curator, Minnie White Watson.

From here drive to Malaco Records, an American independent record label based in Jackson, that has been the home of various major blues and gospel acts, such as Johnnie Taylor, Bobby Bland, Z. Z. Hill, Denise LaSalle, Benny Latimore, Dorothy Moore, Little Milton, Shirley Brown, Marvin Sease, and the Mississippi Mass Choir. We will be meeting with co-founder Gerald “Wolf” Stephenson for a tour of the record company.

End the morning exploring Farish Street with local business owner Daniel Dillion. Farish Street was the thriving center of African-American life in Jackson during the Jim Crow era. In recent years the street has fared poorly with boarded up buildings and

vacant lots and a few lone businesses struggling to survive.

En route, pass by the stop by the former Greyhound Bus station, a site that played a prominent role in the 1961 Freedom Rides against segregation. Enjoy lunch at the Big Apple Inn, which has attracted celebrities like BB King and President Obama.

Stop by the Big Apple Inn where owner Geno Lee has opened especially to receive the group and provide everyone with an opportunity to sample a “pig ear” sandwich or a smoked sausage sandwich. Geno Lee is the fourth-generation owner of the Big Apple Inn. Today, the Big Apple Inn is known for its smokes and ears and for its service to the community.

Enjoy lunch at Johnny T’s Bistro and Blues before continuing on to the COFO Civil Rights Education Center where we will meet with Dr. Robert Lockett, Director of the Margaret Walker Center and an Associate Professor of the Department of History at Jackson State University. As a Civil Rights historian, Dr. Lockett’s expertise is on the modern Civil Rights Movement and the African-American experience. As director of the Margaret Walker Center at Jackson State University, Dr. Lockett has become an expert on Walker’s life and her experiences, especially as they related to the Black Arts Movement of the 20th century.

Depart the hotel for dinner tonight at Frank Jones Corner followed by a private performance by local musician McKinney Bluesman Williams.

Overnight: *The Westin Jackson (B, L, D)*

TUESDAY, MARCH 15

LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS

Depart Jackson this morning for Little Rock, driving through the beautiful flatlands of the Mississippi Delta. Stop by the BB King Museum to experience and learn about blues music, founded here in the Mississippi Delta. Afterwards, continue on to Baptist Town, best known as the final residence of Robert Johnson, the King of the Delta Blues Singers.

Enjoy lunch at Museum of the Mississippi Delta where Mary Hoover has prepared barbeque ribs for the group and, of course, her famous butter-roll.

Stop in at Hoover’s Store, owned by Sylvester and Mary Hoover. Tour the Back in the Day Museum, a

community museum exploring the history of the blues, Baptist Town, and African-American culture in the Delta.

Visit the Little Zion Missionary Baptist Church where blues legend Robert Johnson is buried. Continue on to the nearby town of Money, where the first marker on the Mississippi Freedom Trail was placed at the remains of the Bryant’s Grocery, the site associated with the murder of black teenager Emmett Till.

Make a stop in Sumner at the Emmett Till Interpretive Center, which exists to tell the story of the Emmett Till tragedy and point a way towards racial healing through arts and storytelling.

Enjoy an early dinner at a Sumner Grille. After dinner the group will continue on to Little Rock.

Overnight: *Burgundy Hotel (B, L, D)*

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 16

MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE

This morning visit Little Rock High School, now Central High School National Historic Site. The violent struggle over school desegregation here forced the nation to enforce African-American civil rights in the face of massive southern defiance during the years following the Brown decision, a major triumph of the movement. We have requested for Mrs. Elizabeth Eckford, one of the Little Rock Nine to meet with us during our visit.

Continue on to the William J. Clinton Presidential Center, housed in a gleaming modern space overlooking the Arkansas River. The center supports the Clinton library, foundation, and school. Meet with a docent Ann Kamps for a tour of the Clinton Presidential Center.

Eat lunch at the presidential center.

After lunch, walk to the Anne Frank exhibit right outside the center. The exhibit features a sapling from the tree outside the building where Frank and her family hid from the Nazis during World War II.

Continue on to Memphis. Upon arrival enjoy dinner at Rendezvous, where we have invited reformed racists and former KKK member, Scott Shepherd to join us.

Overnight: *Hu Hotel (B, L, D)*

THURSDAY, MARCH 17

MEMPHIS

Begin the morning at the Lorraine Motel, now the home of the National Civil Rights Museum. Martin Luther King, Jr. stayed at the motel on April 4, 1968. When he stepped out to talk to friends, a bullet struck him in the neck, taking his life instantly. Retrace some of the final footsteps of the most iconic leader of the civil rights movement and learn about the ongoing movement for racial justice and equality.

Next, walk across the street to the Legacy Building, the boarding house from where the assassin's shot was allegedly fired, which examines the investigation of the assassination, the case against James Earl Ray, and ensuing conspiracy theories.

Eat lunch at The Four Way Soul Food Restaurant.

This afternoon, focus on the music history of Memphis with a visit to the Stax Museum of American Soul which provides an insight inside the civil rights story set within the Memphis music scene. A fascinating exhibit traces the history of the Blues and its impact on American music.

A mile north is the Slave Haven Underground Railway house where dark cellars, hidden passageways, and trap doors were used by runaway slaves attempting to flee north to freedom. Dinner is at your leisure this evening.

Overnight: *Hu Hotel (B, L)*

FRIDAY, MARCH 18

MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA

This morning, travel to Birmingham to the 16th Street Baptist Church, where four young girls were killed in a bombing as they prepared to sing in their choir on September 15, 1963. The incident caused national outrage and gave rise to a momentum that led to the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. We have asked Carolyn McKinstry, who was inside the church during the bombing, to join your visit.

Across the Street is the historic Kelly Ingram Park, site of civil rights rallies, demonstrations and confrontations in the 1960s. Historic footage of police-attack dogs and high-powered fire hoses remain indelibly imprinted on the memories of those who saw the images on televisions and in

newspapers around the world in the 1960s. Sculptures throughout the park are vivid depictions of police dog and fire hose assaults on demonstrators, many of them children.

Enjoy lunch at a local restaurant with Carolyn McKinstry.

Drive about two hours to Selma where we will stop outside of the Brown Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church, the site of Malcolm X's address in support of voting rights, Dr. King's eulogy for Jimmie Lee Jackson, and Jackson's funeral. Three marches from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama began from this church, which also served as the temporary headquarters for the Southern Christian Leadership Conference.

Meet with Foot Solider, Annie Pearl Avery, whose civil rights work spans decades. Annie Pearl joined the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) at age sixteen. Eventually she became SNCC's project director for the voter registration effort in Hale County, Alabama. Annie Pearl will discuss with us her experience in the civil rights movement, as well as her experience walking across the Edmund Pettus Bridge on March 7, 1965 - Bloody Sunday.

You'll also visit the Selma Interpretive Center, located at the foot of the bridge where armed forces attacked the first wave of unarmed marchers during Bloody Sunday. Continue on to the Edmund Pettus Bridge to walk in memory of those who were beaten seeking the right to vote.

Next, continue along the 54 miles known as the Selma to Montgomery National Historic Trail. A series of marches along this route brought the conflicts of the voting rights movement into homes across the country. Stop at the Lowndes Interpretive Center, which screens a film about the marches and the memorial dedicated to Viola Liuzzo.

Dinner this evening on your own.

Overnight: *Renaissance Montgomery Hotel (B, L)*

SATURDAY, MARCH 19

MONTGOMERY

Begin the morning at the Dexter Avenue Parsonage where Martin Luther King Jr. lived while a pastor from 1954-1960. On January 30, 1956 the home was

bombed and on that day Dr. King made the personal commitment to non-violence.

Stop by the Civil Rights Memorial where Vietnam Veterans Memorial designer Maya Lin created a circular black granite table that records the names of the martyrs and chronicles the history of the movement in lines that radiate like the hands of a clock. Water emerges from the table's center and flows evenly across the top. Engraved on a curved black granite wall behind the table is Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s well-known paraphrase of Amos 5:24, "We will not be satisfied until justice rolls down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream."

End the morning at the Legacy Museum: From Enslavement to Mass Incarceration. Created by the Equal Justice Initiative, the museum looks into the history of racial injustice and the narratives that have sustained injustice across generations. The museum is situated on a site in Montgomery where enslaved people were once warehoused. A block from one of the most prominent slave auction spaces in America, the Legacy Museum is steps away from an Alabama dock and rail station where tens of thousands of black people were trafficked during the 19th century.

Enjoy lunch at a local restaurant.

After lunch visit the Equal Justice Initiative's National Memorial for Peace and Justice. The memorial is the nation's first memorial dedicated to the legacy of enslaved black people, people terrorized by lynching, African Americans humiliated by racial segregation and Jim Crow, and people of color burdened with contemporary presumptions of guilt and police violence. The Memorial for Peace and Justice was conceived with the hope of creating a sober, meaningful site where people can gather and reflect on America's history of racial inequality.

End the day with a briefing by staff members of the Equal Justice Initiative, an organization committed to ending mass incarceration and excessive punishment in the United States, to challenging racial and economic injustice, and to protecting basic human rights for the most vulnerable people in American society.

Overnight: *Renaissance Montgomery Hotel (B, L, D)*

SUNDAY, MARCH 20

DEPART FOR HOME

Depart for your independent travel to the airport for flights home. (B)