WHAT HAPPENED HERE
CHANGED THE WORLD
ARKANSAS

TENNESSEE HAS 14 Stops

By weaving together people, places, and events from the era of the Civil Rights Movement, the National Civil Rights Trail connects and commemorates the past. An immersive and educational travel experience, the stories that shifted the course of history for our nation.

The Trail is a living history tour that honors the role of 13 Southern states including Arkansas and Tennessee in the civil rights movement and celebrates the work of the brave people who, through peaceful protests and legal action, fought to secure their American civil rights.

By combining the events, people, places, and stories that defined the Movement, the trail connects and commemorates the past will enrich the present discovery and memories, where the past will inspire the future.

The map above highlights the stops, the Trail Sites, that are significant to the Civil Rights Movement.

TENNESSEE VISITORS CENTER

The visitors center is located on the campus of Fisk University, a historically Black institution. The first floor features a display of the Civil Rights Room at the Nashville Public Library. The second floor contains the Museum of African American Music and the David F. Crockett and Beale Street Hall of Fame. The collection includes a saxophone played by James Earl Jones, a Civil Rights era camera, and a tape recorder that played the letters that Dr. Martin Luther King wrote while in jail.

GUIDED TOURS

CIVIL RIGHTS ROOM AT THE NASHVILLE PUBLIC LIBRARY

Visit the extensive art collection in the Carl Van Vechten Gallery. You can also visit the Museum of African American Music and its famous alumni including Ida B. Wells-Barnett, Thurgood Marshall (the first African American Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court) and U.S. Representative John Lewis. You can also visit the Davidson County Courthouse and the Witness Walls.

DEADEND STREET

Travel to Beale Street Historic District in Memphis. The Race Track Café is a site of the first sit-in lunch counter at a Woolworth’s in the South. As one of the original “five and dime” stores, it’s the site of the first lunch counter sit-ins during the 1960s. As the Woolworth is expected to reopen in May 2023, it will serve as the centerpiece of the movement.

EAST MCLEMORE AVENUE

The nationally recognized National Civil Rights Museum is located in the heart of the Beale Street Historic District. The museum has memorialized the balcony of the Lorraine Motel, where Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated on April 4, 1968. Tours are available by appointment. Located next to the museum is the National Civil Rights Museum at the Lorraine Motel and the Peabody Hotel.

THE LIGHT OF LOVE

The Griggs Hall, the first building constructed on the campus of American Baptist College was a seminary for Black students. It became the center for non-violent training and activity in the Southern Christian Leadership Conference annual meeting there in 1961. At the church and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. had the Southern Christian Leadership Conference.

CLARK MEMORIAL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Travel to Mulberry Street in Memphis and visit the National Civil Rights Museum. The balcony of the Lorraine Motel is a site of the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. on April 4, 1968. The museum is located in the heart of the Beale Street Historic District.

STAX MUSEUM OF AMERICAN SOUL MUSIC

Stax Records created a Black brand of Southern soul music as an integrated company during the height of the Civil Rights Movement. Visit the exhibits with fascinating artifacts telling the story of Stax Records and American soul music. The museum pays special tribute to the artists who recorded there, as well as other American soul legends.

DAVIDSON COUNTY COURTHOUSE AND THE WITNESS WALLS

Witness Walls tell stories of the events and people who made history. Walk among the walls to stand in front of the center, which is free and open to the public. The room archives stories with oral histories and firsthand photographs, but also provides a guided experience of the space or enjoy a self-led tour.

Fisk University

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