*Introduction*

*We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness.*

Thomas Jefferson's stirring words, written in 1776 in our Declaration of Independence, defined the promise of America--freedom and equality for all. The words rang hollow, however, for the millions of African Americans held in slavery prior to the Civil War, and later denied political, economic, educational, and social equality by unjust laws and social customs. This National Register of Historic Places Travel Itinerary tells the powerful story of how and where the centuries-long struggle of African Americans to achieve the bright promise of America culminated in the mid-20th century in a heroic campaign we call the modern civil rights movement. Many of the places where these seminal events occurred, the churches, schools, homes, and neighborhoods, are listed in the National Register of Historic Places and are included in this itinerary.

Throughout history, African Americans resisted their slavery and later second-class citizenship. Opposition took many forms, from the passive resistance of slaves who performed poor work for their masters, to slave revolts, to slaves escaping to freedom on the [Underground Railroad](http://www.nps.gov/nr/travel/underground/), to African Americans' participation in the Abolitionist movement and their joining the Union army during the Civil War. During this trying period African Americans preserved their heritage and social institutions.

Following the Civil War this country moved to extend equality to African Americans with the passage of the 13th Amendment to the Constitution (1865) which outlawed slavery, the 14th Amendment (1868) which made citizens of all persons born in this country and afforded equal protection of the laws to all citizens, and the 15th Amendment (1870) which provided the right to vote to all citizens, regardless of race (In 1920, the 19th Amendment was ratified giving women the right to vote). This promising start soon faltered during the tensions of Reconstruction (1865-1877) when federal armies occupied the South and enforced order.

The genuine reform impulse of Reconstruction was the "first" civil rights movement, as the victorious North attempted to create the conditions whereby African Americans could freely and fully participate in this country as citizens. It was a noble experiment in bi-racial harmony, and, had it succeeded, there probably would have been no need for a "second" civil rights movement.

Exhausted by the efforts and divisions of the Civil War and Reconstruction and the longing for the country to reunite, the white advocates of equality were overcome by the forces of reaction, and the fate of African Americans was turned over to the individual states. Many states adopted restrictive laws which enforced segregation of the races and the second-class status of African Americans. The courts, the police, and groups such as the Ku Klux Klan all enforced these discriminatory practices.

African Americans responded in a variety of ways. Booker T. Washington (1856-1915), the early 20th century's leading advocate of black education, stressed industrial schooling for African Americans and gradual social adjustment rather than political and civil rights. The charismatic reformer Marcus Garvey (1887-1940) called for racial separatism and a "Back-to-Africa" colonization program. But it was a different path, one that emphasized that African Americans were in this country to stay and would fight for their freedom and political equality, that led to the modern civil rights movement and is the focus of this National Register of Historic Places Travel Itinerary.

In visiting the 49 places listed in the National Register for their association with the modern civil rights movement, as well as the Selma-to-Montgomery March route--a Department of Transportation designated ["All-American Road"](http://www.byways.org/pages/index.html) and a National Park Service designated [National Historic Trail](http://www.nps.gov/semo)--two things will be apparent. First, although they had white supporters and sympathizers, the modern civil rights movement was designed, led, organized, and manned by African Americans, who placed themselves and their families on the front lines in the struggle for freedom. Their heroism was brought home to every American through newspaper, and later, television reports as their peaceful marches and demonstrations were violently attacked by law enforcement officers armed with batons, bullwhips, fire hoses, police dogs, and mass arrests. The second characteristic of the movement is that it was not monolithic, led by one or two men. Rather it was a dispersed, grass-roots campaign that attacked segregation in many different places using many different tactics. On this itinerary you will learn about the people and places associated with one of the most important chapters in our history.

The properties included in the itinerary are related to the modern civil rights movement, that is, with a few exceptions, the events of the post-World War II period, and especially the 1950s and 1960s. The focus of the itinerary is the African American freedom struggle, and does not include the attempts of other minority groups, such as Asians, Hispanics, or Native Americans, to obtain equality. The list of properties included in the itinerary does not represent all of the sites important in the civil rights movement; a number of these places have yet to be recognized by National Register listing. The 49 properties have been nominated by the States and listed in the National Register over the years, and do not represent a systematic effort to survey, identify, and list all important civil rights sites in the National Register. Visitors may be interested in [Historic Hotels of America](http://www.nationaltrust.org/historic_hotels/index.asp), a program of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, located near the places featured in this itinerary, including [Boone Tavern Hall of Berea College](https://www.nps.gov/nr/travel/civilrights/ky1.htm).

This travel itinerary was prepared as a cooperative project between the U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, and the U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration. Both agencies have formally recognized the historic significance of the Selma-to-Montgomery march of 1965. Congress has designated, and the National Park Service administers, the Selma-to-Montgomery National Historic Trail based on the route's national significance in American history. The Federal Highway Administration has designated the march route as an All-American Road.

**Diary Entries Regarding Jim Crow Laws:**

**More Water-Cooler Crow**

I am 53 years old and will never forget the first time I got to taste "colored" water. I just knew it would be as special as kool-aide. I was in a department store in Pittsburg, Kansas. Imagine my disappointment when it tasted just like "white" water.

I became embarrassed and proud all at the same time. I think that set my mind then and there, this was wrong.

**My College Roommate - Another Special Memory**

Since my Mother and Father were from the Pittsburg, KS area, we decided it would be good for me to go to college there. We lived in Jacksonville, Florida; it was 1966. The only black person I had EVER known by name was a sales counter clerk at downtown May-Cohns. Her name was Annie, and my friend Sugie and I would always make a point to visit her.

You guessed it, my first roommate in college was a black girl named Lilene. My grandparents helped me move into my room, and we suspected she was black by some of the hair care products on her dresser. My grandmother and I decided that this could be a real good learning experience and I should look forward to it. I didn't tell my parents until the end of the first week. The next day, the Dorm Monitor called me to her room. She said she had noticed I was from the South and had a black roommate and wanted to make sure I was doing OK. Having just told my parents, I was sure this came from them. They had called my Father's brother, a Kansas state senator, who had gone to the college Dean and told them "She gets a new roommate by Monday, or she's out of here."

I cried with despair and righteous anger. I went to my Uncle and demanded to know what was going on. He had me call my parents from his house. My Father said he had many business associates that would be offended to know his daughter was rooming with a black girl. My Mother said, you don't have to tell them.

For the first time in my life, I stood up to them and said, "Come and get me. There is not one person on this campus that will point me out and say 'She has a n-- for a roommate,' but if I get another roommate for that reason, everyone will point at me and say 'Who does she think she is?'" I'm glad I never had to stand up to them again, I picked my battle wisely and I won my right to choose for myself how I would live my life.

Sadly, the beginning of the second week, we switched with the girls across the hall, that were in the same situation. If I had it to do again, I would not. But we all did remain friendly and by the end of 2 years, we had all become close.

**Memphis on Spring Break**

In the spring of 1967, two of my friends and I came to Jacksonville for spring break. On the drive back to school, we were low on gas and approaching Memphis, it was late. The highway was road-blocked and we were forced to enter the town. There were no streetlights, no cars, and no people. What was going on? The first thing we saw was some broken flowerpots in the road. Shortly after, on a side street, we saw 3 cars driving without lights in a tight group made up of two police cars and one civilian car. There were four men riding in every car. What is going on? We saw this formation several more times, made up of two and one, of either police or National Guard. This was really bizarre; I've never since seen anything like it. We finally found a taxicab and hailed him down. We were then surrounded by the formation of three cars and 12-armed men, one car in front, one car in back and one car on the side of us. They told us Martin Luther King, Jr. had been assassinated this day and the city was on a complete blackout. They told the taxi driver to take us to their depot and let us get gas and to then lead us out of town. I got to experience first hand the aftermath of a pivotal point in history.

There was a march on Broadway in Pittsburg the next day. I was very young. I stood on the sideline and watched. As you can see, I haven't always made the right choice. There is a long way to go, but at least Jim Crow is gone.

Beckie Leone  
Jacksonville Beach, FL