

ALABAMA CIVIL RIGHTS TRAIL



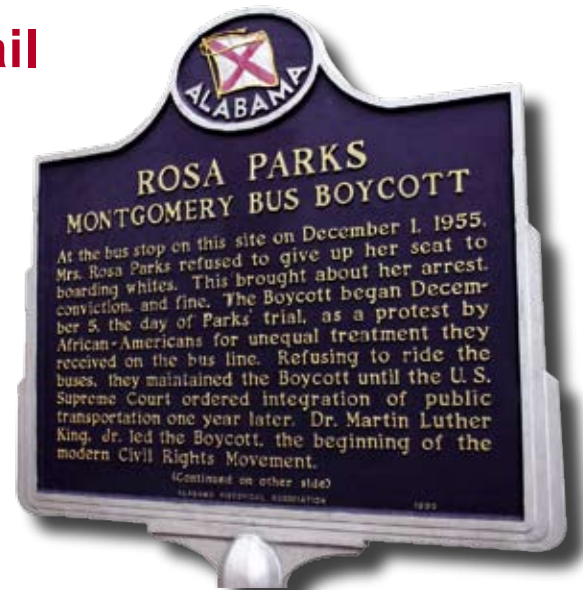
Walk along the Civil Rights Trail

Follow the footsteps of the civil rights pioneers – from Birmingham to Greensboro, Selma, Montgomery and Tuskegee – who triumphed in the struggle for racial equality in America.

Without the struggles for voting rights in the 1960s, Barack Obama could not have become president.

A few weeks after announcing his candidacy, he spoke in Selma in 2007 and paid tribute to leaders of the Civil Rights Movement who survived attacks and arrests during the violent demonstrations. “I stand on the shoulders of giants. What happened in Selma and Birmingham stirred the conscience of the nation.”

The night he accepted the Democratic nomination in Denver, he mentioned a 106-year-old woman who had seen great change in America. “She was there for the buses in Montgomery, the hoses in Birmingham, a bridge in Selma, and a preacher from Atlanta who told a people that ‘We Shall Overcome.’ Yes we can.”



“What happened in Selma and Birmingham stirred the conscience of the nation.”

- Barack Obama

The **Alabama Civil Rights Trail** has become a major international destination. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has selected Alabama churches as future World Heritage Sites. Two Baptist churches in Birmingham and Dr. Martin Luther King’s church in Montgomery will be the first World Heritage Sites in America linked to the struggle for civil rights.

Rev. Joseph Lowery, Barack Obama and activist Joanne Bland in 2007.



Photo by Jim Gavenus

Civil Rights Trail Map

American travel expert Arthur Frommer includes the Alabama Civil Rights Trail among the 12 new destinations in the world to see.”



“Alabama bears the scars of the civil rights era, and the monuments to that struggle inspire the courage to face new challenges.”
- The Washington Post

OVERVIEW

A Legacy of Change

During the Reconstruction period after the Civil War, amendments to the U.S. Constitution allowed freed slaves the right to vote and own property, leading to the election of Negroes to local offices and even Congress. By the end of the 19th century, however, Southern states passed laws limiting those freedoms and segregating Negroes from whites.

The conviction of nine Negro boys on rape charges involving two white girls aboard a freight train in north Alabama became an international sensation in the 1930s. The **U.S. Supreme Court** overturned the conviction of the **Scottsboro Boys** because Negroes had been excluded from the jury. It was one of the court's first civil rights decisions.

During World War II, Negro pilots who trained at **Tuskegee's Moton Field** achieved hero status for their skill and bravery over European skies. Although President Truman integrated the military, the **Tuskegee Airmen** returned to a segregated America as second-class citizens.



Tuskegee Airmen

A decade later, congregations in Negro churches — virtually the only institution not controlled by whites — conducted peaceful protests to overturn laws allowing segregation. In 1955, seamstress **Rosa Parks** was arrested after boarding a **Montgomery** bus at **Court Square** and refusing to give up her seat to whites.



Martin Luther King Jr.

A new Montgomery minister, **Martin Luther King Jr.**, was recruited to organize a boycott of city buses. This began the modern **Civil Rights Movement**. A year later, the **Montgomery Bus Boycott** ended when a U.S. Supreme Court decision ended segregated public transportation in 1956.

In **Birmingham**, Negroes were frustrated at not being allowed to vote, drink from the same water fountains as whites, or eat in white-owned cafes. After a series of protests in 1963 when the city's police clashed violently with marchers, racists bombed the **Sixteenth Street Baptist Church** and killed four black girls.



Segregated fountain exhibit, Birmingham Civil Rights Institute

Two years later, Negroes in **Selma** tried to march to the State Capitol to present their grievances. As the group left downtown, police attacked them at the **Edmund Pettus Bridge**. Undeterred, they completed their journey 18 days later. Worldwide coverage of the **Selma-to-Montgomery March** motivated Congress to pass the **Voting Rights Bill**.



Visitors at the National Parks Service Interpretive Center

As African-Americans gained the ability to vote and impact local ordinances, they swept their old foes from office and gained control of some local governments. **Gov. George Wallace** received their support in 1982, and he appointed many blacks to public offices and boards. African-Americans, 27 percent of the state's population, now occupy many positions of leadership in state and local government.

Many of the movement's **foot soldiers** today volunteer as guides at Alabama's museums devoted to civil rights. They bear witness to how the struggles of the past have improved their lives and those of their families in present-day Alabama.



A young tourist poses with Eric Blome's sculpture of Rosa Parks at the Rosa Parks Library and Museum.

MONTGOMERY

The city that had been known as the “Cradle of the Confederacy” has the dual distinction of being the “Birthplace of Civil Rights.”

Shortly after marrying his college sweetheart in Marion, Ala., 24-year-old **Martin Luther King Jr.**, preached his first sermon at **Dexter Avenue Baptist Church**, a block from the **Alabama State Capitol** where Southern secessionists had formed the Confederacy in 1861.

The next year in 1955, 42-year-old seamstress **Rosa Parks** was arrested for refusing to relinquish her seat on a city bus to whites as required by city ordinance. Negro ministers and lawyers, who had been waiting for a test case on the constitutionality of the law, recruited the reluctant young minister to lead a boycott of city buses.

King's stirring oratory galvanized the black community and made him the spokesman for the fledgling movement. Some 50,000 Negroes refused to ride the city's buses for 381 days until the U.S. Supreme Court struck down laws segregating public transportation.

The **Montgomery Bus Boycott** was the first major victory in the modern Civil Rights Movement. Dr. King became the acknowledged leader of the movement. His increased responsibilities prompted him to resign from church duties after four years. Meanwhile, Mrs. Parks and her husband moved north to establish an educational program for young people.

After “**Freedom Rider**” college students were attacked in Montgomery in 1964, for the first time federal authorities provided protection for civil rights demonstrators.

King's non violent leadership was recognized with the 1964 Nobel Peace Prize.

Voting rights advocates in Selma decided to take action by presenting their grievances to the governor, walking 54 miles along U.S. 80



Rosa Parks on city bus

MONTGOMERY



Interior of the Civil Rights Memorial Center

to the State Capitol in Montgomery. After police halted the first attempt, the federal courts became involved and provided protection to marchers so that they could go forward and finish their landmark journey.

As the **Selma-to-Montgomery Voting Rights March**, which began March 21, 1965, streamed into downtown Montgomery five days later en route to the Capitol, marchers passed the bus stop where Mrs. Parks had been arrested a decade earlier.



Some 25,000 marchers and out-of-state supporters, including Mrs. Parks, filled Dexter Avenue. The throng stretched from King's former church to the steps of the Capitol. "Segregation is on its death bed," King told the crowd.

Montgomery changed dramatically in the 50 years following Rosa Parks' arrest. The **Rosa Parks Library and Museum** opened on the 45th anniversary of her arrest.

Visitors to the city can now ride a replica of the 1953-era bus on which Mrs. Parks was arrested.



Bus exhibit, Rosa Parks Museum

Interpretive panels outside the former **Greyhound Bus Station** in Montgomery

tell the story of the 1961 Freedom Rides, using quotes and images of the people who participated. Mob violence that met interracial student bus riders at this station on May 20, 1961, shocked the nation and led to the ruling by the Interstate Commerce Commission that effectively ended segregation in interstate bus, train and air transportation. 210 South Court Street. 334-242-3184. Free.



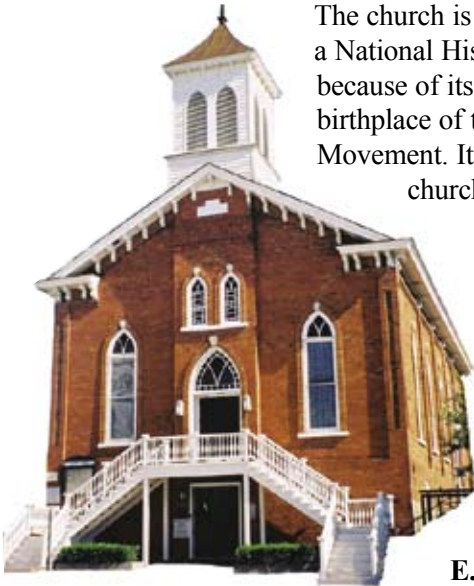
Interpretive panels outside the former Greyhound Bus Station



MONTGOMERY

Dexter Avenue King Memorial Baptist Church

WORLD HERITAGE SITE NOMINEE



The church is a National Historic Landmark because of its status as the birthplace of the Civil Rights Movement. It is the only church where Martin Luther King Jr., served as senior pastor. Enter through the ground-level doors to the basement where **Rev. David Abernathy**, NAACP activist **E.D. Nixon**, King and others vowed a bus

boycott following the arrest of Mrs. Parks. King's predecessor, **Dr. Vernon Johns**, had long advocated such action.

A large mural depicts the struggles of the movement and landmark moments in King's life. Construction on the church began in 1833.

A block behind the church is the **Civil Rights Memorial** designed by renowned sculptor Maya Lin, whose other best-known work is the Vietnam Memorial in Washington, D.C.

454 Dexter Avenue a block west of the State Capitol. 334-263-3970. Admission charged. Groups schedule at least a week ahead of visit. www.dexterkingmemorial.org

Sanctuary at Dexter Avenue King Memorial Baptist Church



Dexter Parsonage

Dexter Parsonage Museum

Rev. Martin and **Mrs. Coretta Scott King** lived in the Dexter church parsonage a few blocks southeast of the church from Sept. 1, 1954, until late 1959 when they moved to Atlanta. Mrs. King and their baby, Yolanda, were home when a bomb damaged the front porch one night during the boycott. The minister quickly arrived and quelled angry neighbors demanding revenge.

The Interpretive Center next door offers a short video presentation prior to tours of the parsonage.



Parsonage kitchen

The house is furnished with period furniture, some dating from the residency of the Kings. A photo of Gandhi in the study recalls the famed pacifist whose teachings were an inspiration to King.

303 S. Jackson Street south of Monroe Street. 334-261-3270. Admission charged (discount with Dexter Avenue King Memorial ticket). Tues.-Fri., 10AM-4PM, Sat. 10AM-2PM. Tours by appointment at other times. www.dakmf.org

MONTGOMERY



Photo by Amy Shell

Civil Rights Memorial

The Civil Rights Memorial Center

The Civil Rights Memorial designed by international artist Maya Lin is a block south of the church where Martin Luther King Jr. was pastor. It honors 40 individuals who died between 1954 and 1968 and encourages visitors to reflect on the struggle for equality.

After you read the names of the martyrs and a timeline of landmark events etched on its black granite table, walk up the entrance at mid block to enter the Civil Rights Memorial Center and learn the stories of the martyrs.

The “Here I Stand” exhibits chronicle important events that occurred downtown during the Civil Rights Movement. A short film in the 60-seat auditorium provides an overview of the movement. Visitors can sign a pledge to work for justice on the Wall of Tolerance.

400 Washington Avenue at South Hull Street. 334-956-8200. Admission charged. Mon.-Fri., 10AM-4:30PM, Sat. 10AM-2PM. www.splcenter.org

Rosa Parks Library & Museum & Children’s Annex

Multimedia presentations, period photography and several dioramas bring to life the story of Rosa Parks and the Montgomery Bus Boycott. A vintage municipal bus – used in the movie *The Long Walk Home* – is used to reenact the arrest of the respected Negro community leader. Visitors can have their photographs made while seated next to a life-size bronze sculpture of the “Mother of the Civil Rights Movement.”



Rosa Parks Museum

A replica of the 1953 bus on which Mrs. Parks was arrested operates in downtown Montgomery and makes stops at, or near, major attractions in the area.

Troy University. 252 Montgomery Street. 334-241-8615. Admission charged. Mon.-Fri., 9AM-5PM, Sat. 9AM-3PM www.montgomery.troy.edu/museum

Additional Sites

Holt Street Baptist Church was the site of mass meetings leading to the bus boycott. 903 South Holt Street. 334-263-0522. By appointment only.

The National Center for the Study of Civil Rights & African-American Culture highlights the involvement of the local community and Alabama State University students during the boycott and the Civil Rights Movement. 1345 Carter Hill Road. 334-229-4824.

City of St. Jude was the last campsite of the 1965 Selma-Montgomery March. 2048 West Fairview Ave. 334-265-6791. Mon.-Fri., 9AM-4PM by appointment.

A restored 1953-era bus transports passengers to downtown destinations





Sixteenth Street Baptist Church

BIRMINGHAM

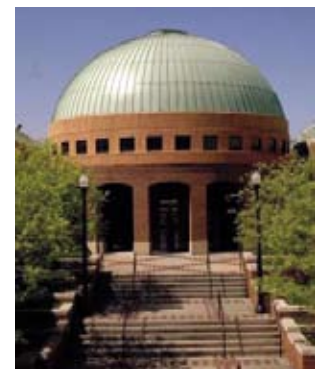
During the first half of the 20th century, blacks could not use the same public accommodations as whites, vote, or try on clothes in white-owned shops. Those who complained were often harassed or beaten by gangs linked to the police.

Dr. King and community leaders, including **Rev. Fred Shuttlesworth**, targeted the city's segregation laws in 1963. Police disrupted demonstrations with dogs and fire hoses. White-owned stores suffered economically and city leaders agreed to end discrimination.

Within days of King's "I Have a Dream" speech at the **March on Washington**, racists bombed a black church active in the movement, killing four little girls. The bombing prompted many reluctant whites to oppose the brutality

directed against Negroes. Many years later, three white men were convicted of the bombing.

Because many whites moved to Birmingham's affluent suburbs, African-Americans have dominated local government for the past several decades and elected **Richard Arrington**, the city's first black mayor. As a way to heal past divisions over race, Arrington encouraged turning former battlefields into shrines that are now visited by tourists from around the world. www.birminghamal.org



Civil Rights Institute

BIRMINGHAM



Birmingham Civil Rights Institute

The Birmingham Civil Rights Institute

One of the South's finest museums is part history lesson, part audience participation and part demonstration of how the city has evolved since the 1960s. Photos, videos, audio recordings and exhibits put visitors inside the integration movement.

Look for the cell where King wrote the famous "**Letter from the Birmingham Jail**" that urged religious bystanders to become active in the movement. Visitors can see "white" and "colored" drinking fountains and a 1950s lunch counter that symbolized segregation in public places. A replica of a Greyhound bus that was torched near Anniston, because black and white riders challenged the state's segregation laws, is also displayed. A statue of Rev. Fred Shuttlesworth honors the leader of Birmingham's 1963 demonstrations.

520 16th Street adjacent to Sixteenth Street Baptist Church and Kelly Ingram Park. 205-328-9696. Admission charged (except Sundays). Tues.-Sat., 10AM-5PM, Sun. 1-5PM. www.bcri.org

Sixteenth Street Baptist Church

The church suffered the deadliest moment in the history of the civil rights era. Days after a six-year court battle ended in favor of integrating Birmingham schools, and climaxing four months of demonstrations by blacks, Klansmen retaliated. On Sept. 15, 1963, they bombed the church, killing four girls in the basement who were preparing for Sunday School.

Photos on display in the basement show the damage of the dynamite blast. In the sanctuary, look near the pulpit for school pictures of the four girls. Look up in the balcony for a stained-glass depiction of a black crucified Christ and the words "You do it unto me." It was a gift from the people of Wales after the tragedy. The congregation of about 300 members holds an annual memorial service. Spike Lee's 1997 film *Four Little Girls* was nominated for an Oscar for best documentary.

1530 Sixth Avenue North. 205-251-9402. Admission charged. Tues.-Fri., 10AM-2PM, Sat. by appointment and during church Sunday services.

BIRMINGHAM

Bethel Baptist Church

Under the leadership of Rev. Fred L. Shuttlesworth, Bethel Baptist Church served as a staging ground for civil rights activities. It was headquarters for the Alabama Christian Movement for Human Rights (1956-1961), which focused on non violent protest against segregated accommodations, transportation, schools and employment discrimination. Built in 1926, the church was bombed three times between 1956 and 1962. The congregation moved to a new sanctuary a block away in North Birmingham.



Bethel Baptist Church

WORLD HERITAGE SITE NOMINEE



33rd Street at 29th Ave. N. 205-322-5360. Open by appointment.

Trio of ministers at Kelly Ingram Park

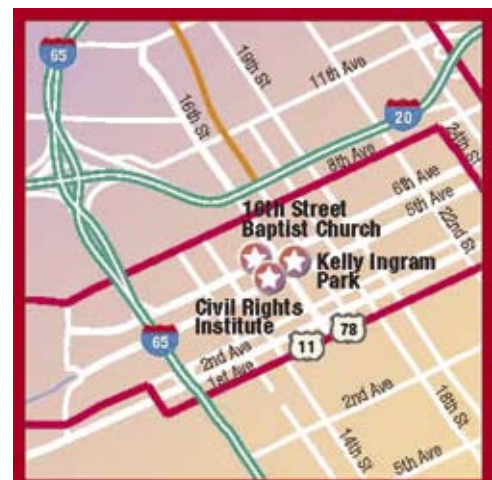


"I Ain't Afraid of Your Jail" sculpture, Kelly Ingram Park

Kelly Ingram Park

Blacks gathered in the public park in the spring of 1963 to march four blocks to City Hall to oppose racial discrimination. Walk through the now peaceful park to see artists' interpretations. The **Freedom Walk** sculptures include two children seen through jail bars, a trio of praying ministers, and an image of a dog menacing a man. Alabama's largest statue of **Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.**, faces the Sixteenth Street church. The park was named in 1932 for a local white fireman who was the first American sailor killed in World War I.

Bordered by 16th and 17th Streets and Fifth and Sixth Avenues.



SELMA



Photo by Jeff Greenberg

S ELMA

The public is invited to experience the Bridge Crossing Jubilee in Selma the first full weekend in March each year.

Activists held a series of marches in 1965 to protest the failure of white politicians to allow Negroes to vote. During a march 30 miles away in Marion on Feb. 18, police shot 26-year-old **Jimmie Lee Jackson** who was protecting his mother and grandfather from assault. His death inspired voting rights advocates to march to Montgomery and present their demands to Gov. George Wallace.



On March 7, 1965, **Rev. Hosea Williams** and **John Lewis** stepped from the pulpit of **Brown Chapel Church** and led a group of 600 toward Montgomery. After just six blocks, when they crossed the **Edmund Pettus Bridge** over the Alabama River, Sheriff Jimmy Clark's mounted deputies and state troopers dispatched by Wallace attacked the group with nightsticks and tear gas,

injuring dozens. Television networks interrupted regular programming to show film of what became known as "Bloody Sunday." The scene stunned Americans and national political leaders.

Two weeks later, religious leaders joined **Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.**, to support the local marchers. Under the watchful protection of Alabama National Guardsmen and Army troops, a court-ordered limit of 300 marchers walked along U.S. Hwy. 80 during the day and slept in the fields at night. They covered the 54 miles between Selma and Montgomery in four days and gathered without incident in front of the State Capitol.

Viola Liuzzo, a 39-year-old white mother of five from Detroit, was shot while shuttling marchers back to Selma. Her death outraged moderates, and **President Lyndon Johnson** was emboldened to push through Congress the stalled **Voting Rights Bill**.

SELMA

Selma-to-Montgomery National Historic Trail



The National Historic Trail begins at **Brown Chapel AME Church** and ends some 54 miles to the east at the **State Capitol** in Montgomery. A bust of Dr. King is in front of the church. From the Edmund Pettus Bridge, turn east onto Water Avenue and then left on Martin Luther King Street. Go four blocks to the church.

Open by appointment. **410 Martin Luther King Street.** 334-874-7897. www.selmaalabama.com

Voting Rights Trail Interpretive Center

The National Park Service center at the midpoint of the trail displays photographs and memorabilia.

U.S. 80, between mile markers 105 and 106 in White Hall in Lowndes County. 334-877-1984. Open daily from 9AM-4:30PM. www.nps.gov

Voting Rights Trail Interpretive Center



Edmund Pettus Bridge

The southern approach of the **Edmund Pettus Bridge** is where “a sea of blue” law enforcement officers attacked marchers with tear gas and nightsticks on “Bloody Sunday,” March 7, 1965. Visitors can walk across one of the most recognized symbols of the Civil Rights Movement. *USA Weekend* includes the bridge, along with Ellis Island, Jamestown and



Barack Obama at Brown Chapel AME Church

the Lincoln Memorial, among the “ten historic landmarks that bear proud witness to our nation’s enduring freedoms.” The bridge built in 1940 is named for a Confederate general and U.S. senator from Selma.

African-Americans return to Selma the first full weekend of March for the **Bridge Crossing Jubilee**. U.S. Sen. Barack Obama attended the event in 2007. U.S. 80 at Water Avenue. 334-875-7241.

Edmund Pettus Bridge



SELMA



Names of civil rights leaders are painted on the window at the National Voting Rights Museum. The Edmund Pettus Bridge is in the background.

National Voting Rights Museum

The modest museum showcases items and participants' stories related to the voting rights movement. Volunteer guides share their recollections of the struggle to gain the right to vote. Look for the window at the rear of the museum (pictured above) that overlooks the river and the Pettus Bridge to see names of civil rights leaders who were active in Selma.

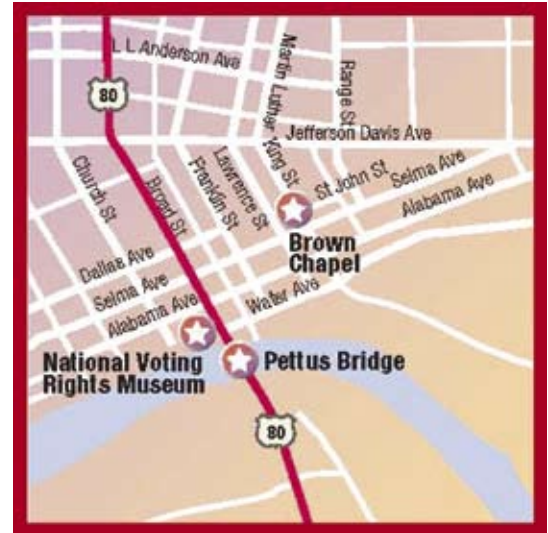
After President Lyndon Johnson signed the **1965 Voting Rights Act** on Aug. 6, some 7,000 Negroes registered to vote in Dallas County and defeated the segregationist sheriff who led the "Bloody Sunday" attack on marchers.

1012 Water Avenue, a half-block west of the Pettus Bridge. 334-418-0800.

Admission charged. Open weekdays; weekends by appointment. www.nvrmi.org



Old Depot Museum is housed in a restored 1891 railway depot. It includes artifacts from the Civil War and voting rights eras, plus rare African-American photography of early 1900s life. 4 Martin Luther King Jr. Street. 334-874-2197.



The Safe House Black History Museum

The house provided a safe haven for Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., from Ku Klux Klansmen during the Civil Rights era. See newspapers, photos, an 1860 slave auction document, and cement imprints of the hands of Lewis Black, founder of the Hale County Civil Improvement League, one of the first civil rights groups in the country. 2401 Davis St. 334-624-2030 or 334-624-4228.

TUSKEGEE



Tuskegee Airmen National Historic Site

TUSKEGEE

Dr. George Washington Carver's agricultural experiments made **Tuskegee Institute** the best-known Negro college in America. The Carver Museum is maintained by the National Park Service, which also operates **Moton Field**, home to the legendary **Tuskegee Airmen**. The pilots gained fame during World War II for their bravery and flying expertise. Because their flying skills equaled those of whites – defying racial stereotypes – the American military was desegregated in 1946.

Tuskegee Airmen National Historic Site

The **Tuskegee Airmen**, who helped end segregation in the Armed Forces after World War II, set the stage for legal challenges to segregation. View exhibits and audio-visual programs and enjoy guided walks to explore this preamble to the Civil Rights Movement. **Moton Field**, where the Tuskegee Airmen trained for flight, includes photos and artifacts depicting the era.



First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt's flight with pilot "Chief" Anderson in 1941 brought national attention to the training of Tuskegee Airmen.

1616 Chappie James Ave. One mile south of I-85 at Exit 38. 334-724-0922.

Tuskegee Institute National Historic Site

Booker T. Washington, the founder of Tuskegee Institute, was one of the most prominent black Americans of the early 20th century. The university campus offers various highlights.

Carver Museum features National Park Service exhibits that spotlight the legacy of black scientist George Washington Carver at Tuskegee Institute. His research on peanuts, sweet potatoes and other crops revolutionized Southern agriculture. Tuskegee University campus. 334-727-6390.

The Oaks is the elegant 1899 home of Tuskegee Institute president Booker T. Washington, designed by black architect Robert Taylor and built by students. The National Park Service operates the house museum on the **Tuskegee University** campus. 334-727-6390.

Tuskegee Human & Civil Rights Multicultural Center

This museum highlights the Tuskegee civil rights story, a 70-year saga that changed the course of American history. See how it all unfolds – from the covert civil rights activities of Booker T. Washington to a movement that integrated schools, city halls and America's political landscape. Also, view exhibits that tell of the region's dynamic multicultural history, including the infamous Tuskegee Syphilis Study. Located just minutes off I-85 exit 38, the downtown facility is the official visitor center for Tuskegee and Macon County. **104 S. Elm St.** 334-724-0800. www.tuskegeecenter.org



3 WORLD HERITAGE SITES

ALABAMA CIVIL RIGHTS TRAIL



Sixteenth Street Baptist Church • Kelly Ingram Park • Birmingham



Dexter Avenue King Memorial Baptist Church • Montgomery



Bethel Baptist Church • Montgomery