



***The Mobile  
African-American  
Heritage Trail  
School Bus Tour  
and  
Teacher's Guide***

*Revised February 8, 2011*

# AFRICAN AMERICAN HERITAGE TRAIL

MOBILE, ALABAMA

## **Our Sincerest Thanks to:**

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City Councilman William Carroll, District 2

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Archives

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## TEACHER DOCENT GUIDE

### **History comes alive on the African-American Heritage Trail!**

Tours enlighten Mobile's culturally diverse heritage by linking historic contributions and events with significant locations. Forgotten chapters of history are remembered through the stories of courage and contributions from Mobile's ethnically diverse past.

As we strive to provide students in Mobile County with knowledge of our history, we would like to thank you for your support of the Mobile African American Heritage Trail School Bus Tour. Your participation is integral to the success of this initiative. Students will benefit greatly by learning more about our history and how individuals can make a difference in the community. We encourage you to go to the ***Education Page*** of this website for educational resources before, during, and after the school bus tour. Thank you again for your continued support.

## DOCENT SCRIPT

### WELCOME

You are about to go on a ride into the past where ordinary people are able to achieve extraordinary things with a whole lot less than we have today. There are no cars, cell phones, or computers. But there is a will and determination to better themselves and their community.

In 1702, this City by the Bay was founded by d'Iberville and his brother Bienville. Shortly after their arrival, the slave ship arrived. Many of the French and African descendents still live upon the land deeded to their ancestors on Mon Louis Island. Other descendents live at Mobile's first settlement at 27 mile Bluff which is known today as the Chastang and Mount Vernon area.

Driver proceeds on Royal ST.





**Ft. Conde**

Look to your left and see Fort Conde'. The early French settlers moved south to this flat piece of land known to the Native Americans as "the onion fields" or Ft Conde'. Fort Conde' was named for the cousin to King Louis XIV. Construction of the first wooden Fort began in 1711 and was finished in 1717. The brick fort was started in 1723 and completed in 1730 by African and Native American slave labor. Five brick masons were among the first free persons of Color. The current Fort Conde' replica is one third the size of the original fort.

Question: When was the City by the Bay (Mobile) founded?

Answer: 1702



**Direct Driver to proceed on Royal St. crossing Dauphin, St. Francis, St. Louis Street.  
Start Narration as you cross Dauphin Street**



**John Ragland's Slave Market**

**(On the left as you move up Royal Street)**

Slave labor was the main business of Mobile. As landowners got bigger and grew more cotton, they needed more slaves to work their plantations. With the increase of slaves sold, business grew. It was dependent on the Bay for trade and business as opposed to farming on Plantations on surrounding agricultural areas. The slaves were brought into Mobile Bay and brought up the Mobile river, unloaded and held in a three story building - John Ragland's Slave Market. They were stripped of their clothes, dignity, and freedom. Grease was applied to their bodies to hide bruises and cuts. Slaves stood on a block and were sold to the highest bidder. That happened here in this place all those years ago. Because Mobile is a port located on the water, it became a major trading place in the business of Slavery.

Question: What fueled Mobile's economy?

Answer: Slave Labor

Go right on Congress- left on Water St. to I-165. Start talking when you turn on Water St.



**Clotilda – ( I65)**

We will now follow the route that the *African survivors* of the last slave ship, the **Clotilda** took as they were smuggled into the United States in **1860**. They were brought up the Mobile River that flows to our right. Although it was legal in 1860 to buy and sell slaves in America, it was illegal to bring them into the country or import them. Legislation was passed in **1808** to outlaw this practice and the penalty for this crime was death by hanging. In April of 1860, the 86-foot long and fast schooner Clotilda, was rebuilt and turned into a slave ship by Timothy Meaher. **Captain William Foster** was hired to set sail for Africa and purchase the Africans by Timothy Meaher, a very wealthy landowner.

Upon arrival on the Western Shores of the African Coast, Foster bought 110 Africans for \$100 a piece on behalf of Meaher from the Kingdom of Dahomey according to Sylviane Diouff’s book, Dreams of Africa in Alabama. Meaher could sell the the Africans for about \$1,000 a piece yielding a profit of \$99,000. In today’s money this would equate to \$990,000 or close to \$1 million.

Question: What was the name of the last slave ship brought to the United States?

- A. Mayflower
- B. Pinta
- C. Clotilda

Answer: C

Question: How much did Captain Foster pay for each of the Africans? \_\_\_\_\_

Answer: \$100



**(Turning on Bay Bridge Road)**

On its return, the Clotilda arrived at night on the Mobile River. It got past the federal authorities and hid in the marsh of Bayou Sarah near **Magazine Point or as it is known today, Africatown**. Magazine Point was property owned by Timothy Meaher. Sometime after the ship arrived in Africatown, the Clotilda was burned to get rid of the evidence. Federal authorities discovered what happened only after the ship was burned and many of the Africans had been hidden and sold. With little evidence, the government did not press charges. After the Civil War ended in 1865, many of the freed Clotilda slaves traveled back to Mobile and settled here at **Africatown**.

Question: Where did the freed Clotilda slaves settle? \_\_\_\_\_

Answer: Africatown

Continue on I-165 to Bay Bridge Rd, turn right on Cut-off Rd and back right with a u turn in the Africatown Mobilization parking lot. Driver pauses at parking lot facing the Africatown

Cemetery for discussion. Turn left on cutoff and immediately left on Bay Bridge Rd.



**Africatown**

(From the Welcome Center)

According to oral history, the enslaved Africans returned to Africatown after the Civil War when they were freed because they wanted to return to the place that the Clotilda ship first brought them. If they were ever able to return to Africa, it would be from this place where they had first arrived. Although they never got to return to Africa, they remembered their African languages and their African ways and taught their children about Africa. When the Africans died, they were buried in this Cemetery across the street. The Africatown Grave yard has a historic marker that tells about them. There are two sides of the grave yard. The north side is the oldest side. **Cudjo Lewis** is buried here on the north side. He was the longest living African survivor of the Slave ship.

Question: What was the name of the longest living survivor of the slave ship experience?

- a. Cudjo Lewis      b. Coltilda Lewis      c. Henry Lewis

Answer: A



**Union Baptist Church**

Look to your left at **Union Baptist Church** organized in **1869** by **Rev. Henry McCrea** and was founded by the survivors of the Clotilda. The Africans learned about God and became Christians. The Union Baptist Church is made with red bricks. It has stained glass windows and a steeple. It also has the African- American Heritage Trail Plaque. The African names of many of the founders of Union Baptist Church are written on the plaque along with the African Language for that name. For instance some of the Church founders names were:

American Name

African Name

African Language

Peter Lee  
Lottie Dennison

Gumpa  
Kanko

Fon  
Yoruba

Question: What is the name of the church founded by survivors of the Clotilda?

Answer: Union Street Baptist Church

**Return down I 165 to right on Broad, then left on Lawrence, to right on Congress and right on Dr. Martin Luther King Blvd. Pull to the right after passing the Archives before reaching Tunstall and stop at MLK and Tunstall to discuss National African American Archives, Finley's Drug Stores, Stone St. Church, and Johnson Allen Mortuary as all are visible from that corner.**

Proceed down Dr. Martin Luther King Blvd.



**National African American Archives**

We are now moving to the Dr. Martin Luther King Business District. From here we will discuss four significant sites. To your left is the National African American Archives. **George B. Rogers**, a famous architect designed The National African American Archives in 1931. He made it a small look alike or replica of the Downtown Library building that he had also designed. This building was originally designed to be a **library** for the African American community during the Jim Crow era or the time when all public places were separate or segregated. The big library downtown was for White people and this much smaller version of the Downtown Main library was for black people. This was the only Library provided for the Black Community until the 1960's when the Jim Crow era came to an end and all public places were desegregated. Today, it is the only **African-American Museum and Archives** in the City.

Question: The National African American Archives was a:

- a. Courthouse
- b. Church
- c. Library
- d. School

Answer: C



**Finley's Drug Store**

Next to the National African American Archives was Finley's Drug Store. The building was leveled by an Urban Renewal project in the late Sixties.

**James Finley** opened five drugstores. These stores were the first chain of drug stores owned by an African American in Alabama. James Finley also helped less fortunate and poor people in the community to improve themselves. A person that helps others in their city and neighborhoods to better themselves is called a Community Advocate. Mr. Finley served as the Vice President of the Neighborhood Organized Workers. This was a movement made up of ordinary people. This grass roots movement utilized Dr. Martin Luther King's non-violent process of boycotting, picketing, and marching as a means to bring about new jobs and equality in Mobile. Finley and the NOW leadership went to court and won a suit that made "at large" elections illegal in the state of Alabama. The law was changed so that Legislators now run from the districts or neighborhoods where they live. This Court decision allowed black people to be elected to political office all over the state of Alabama for the first time.

Question: Who started the first African-American owned *chain* of drug stores in the State of Alabama?

A. James Finley B. H. Roger Williams C. John Smith

Answer: A



**Stone Street Baptist Church**

Look in front of you and you will see Stone Street Baptist Church. It is the mother of all African-American Baptist Churches in Mobile and Alabama. It is the **oldest baptist church** in the state of Alabama. It was organized in **1806** by Slaves freed by their Master. According to oral history, the Master was worried by bad dreams and headaches that moved him to free the slaves. You could say that his conscience was bothering him. Richard Fields led the black congregation that met originally under a Bush tree on Stone Street Road. The church was moved to this location in 1870. In 1931, this building was constructed during the height of the Depression when people had no money or food, by its congregation or members that attended the church. This Church is listed in the **National Register of Historic Places.**

Question: What is the name of the **oldest Baptist church** in the state of Alabama?

Answer: Stone Street Baptist Church



**Johnson-Allen Mortuary**

(turn the corner and look to your right)

To your right is Alabama's oldest black-owned Mortuary, the founder was **A.N. Johnson** in 1894. A.N. as he was called sold this Mortuary to Clarence Allen and Edgar Harney in 1904. Upon the death of Harney, Clarence Allen asked A.N. Johnson to return as a partner creating **Johnson-Allen Mortuary**. The Allen family has continuously owned and operated the funeral home since 1904.

Question: What is the name of Alabama's oldest black-owned Mortuary?

Answer: Johnson-Allen Mortuary



**Proceed to Heart of Mary on right.**



**Most Pure Heart of Mary Catholic Church**

Now we approach Most Pure Heart of Mary Catholic Church, the **first African-American Catholic Church** in Mobile. It was founded by Jesuit or Missionary Priests in **1899**, for the Creole children that were descended from the early settlers of Mobile. The church's simple wooden structure was built in **1908**. The church grew to become a major help within the African American Community. Nuns and priests were jailed in non violent protests as the Church supported the Civil Rights movement in Mobile during the late sixties. Weekly meetings for the **Neighborhood Organized Workers** NOW, were held at the school's cafeteria. Remember from Mr. Finley?

Question: What is the name of the first African-American Catholic Church in Mobile? \_\_\_\_\_

Answer: Most Pure Heart of Mary Catholic Church



**Proceed up the Avenue.**

**Davis Avenue**

(As you are riding down Dr. Martin Luther King Ave. start talking at Broad and Mlk Ave.)

The street that we are riding down, Dr. Martin Luther King , Jr. Avenue used to be named Davis Avenue. Davis Avenue was the business district, ironically named for **Jefferson Davis**, the President of the Confederacy during the Civil War. The segregation of Jim Crow made this the main street for business in the African-American Community. At a high point in the sixties, Davis Ave was lined with African-American Businesses such as grocery stores, drug stores, doctors, dentist, lawyer, barbers, restaurants, clothing stores and everything needed to support the community’s health and survival.

Question: Who is Davis Avenue named after? \_\_\_\_\_

Answer: Jefferson Davis

Question: What is the name of this Street today?

Dr. Martin Luther King Avenue



**Proceed up the Ave.**



**Dave Patton**

(after the second traffic light on the Avenue begin script)

**Dave Patton** started out as the **owner of a hauling business**. He later became one of the most successful Real Estate Bussiness men or entrepreneurs in Mobile. Patton built this beautiful Mediterranean styled two-story home that is as beautiful as Dauphin Street Mansions. Patton also constructed many Mobile roads and **laid the foundations for buildings such as Murphy High School, Lyon’s Park, Saenger Theatre, and the Alabama State Docks**. You will hear more about Dave Patten later.

Question: Which buildings did Dave Patton lay the foundation for?

- A. Murphy High School
- B. Lyon’s Park
- C. Saengar Theatre
- D. All of the above

Answer: D



### **Franklin Memorial Primary Health Mall**

*As you pass Ann St., begin to discuss Dr. Franklin.*

*Driver, pull over if you can to right.*

Coming up on the left is the **Franklin Memorial Primary Health Mall**. It stands as tribute to **Dr. James Alexander Franklin**. Franklin took care of the health of the black community for over 55 years. He was known to have waited on over 100 patients a day. Dr. Franklin was the first African-American to graduate from the University of Michigan in 1914. Franklin suffered a stroke on his way to a house call. He died at the age of 86 in 1973.

Question: Who is Franklin Memorial Primary Clinic named in honor of? \_\_\_\_\_

Answer: Dr. James Alexander Franklin

**Proceed up the Ave for a couple of blocks Bus driver, please see if there is a place where we can pull over safely, because our next stops are across the street from each other.**



### **C. First Johnson**

On your right is the home of **C. First Johnson**. He was an elevator Operator in 1885. But by 1899, he had founded the first black life insurance company in Mobile, the **Union Mutual Aid Association**. By 1911, the insurance company thrived as C. First had agents in over 8 states. By the roaring 20's, Johnson had written over nine million dollars of insurance, and paid out over 3 million.

Question: What was the name of the first black owned insurance company in Mobile?

Answer: Union Mutual Aid Association

Question: What was the name of the founder?

Answer: C. First Jownson



**Dunbar and Central High School**

(Across the street from C. First Johnson)

Look to your left at Dunbar / Central High School. This school took old books and generated new ideas. Under the direction of Dr. W.A. Caldwell, Dunbar was built on this location in 1924. After a fire in 1947, the school relocated under Dr. Benjamin Baker and was named the new Central Campus of Dunbar. The *Central* stuck and the school was renamed Central High School. Central High School became the cultural center of Black Mobile during the 50's and 60's when there was segregation. Musical programs, Plays, and Mardi Gras Coronations were held at this school's Auditorium. Today, this building is the Nursing School for Bishop State Community College.

Question: \_\_\_\_\_ opened the new Central Campus of Dunbar in 1947.

Answer: Dr. Benjamin Baker

Question: What is this school now? Bishop State Community College



**Vernon Zioncheck Crawford**

On your left, you will see the office of Vernon Zioncheck Crawford. He was the first African-American from Mobile to pass the State's Law Bar and was later the founder of the first African American Law Firm in Mobile. Crawford helped other African American Attorneys to become great lawyers and leaders in the community like A.J. Cooper, who served as the first African American mayor of Prichard; Michael Figures, who served in the Alabama State Senate; Cain Kennedy, a Mobile County circuit judge. Crawford won many lawsuits including the Birdie Mae Davis v. Mobile County School Board which desegregated Mobile's schools. He also stood before the U.S. Supreme Court, winning the landmark case of Bolden v. the City of Mobile which changed the city's form of government to its current mayor-city council form of government.

Question: What was the name of the case which changed the city's structure to its current mayor-city council form of government?

Answer: Bolden v. the City of Mobile



**Turn left on Lafayette St.**



**The Campground**

**The Campground** -This area has been designated as an **Historic District** by the City of Mobile. The area was a major **Campground of the Confederate Soldiers during the Civil War. Later the Union Soldiers moved into the area during their occupation of the City.** After the Emancipation Proclamation, many **newly freed** African-Americans populated this vacated area. Later the domestic help lived in these shotgun homes and continued to support the Spring Hill and Dauphin Street Mansions. Domestic help could be seen carrying baskets of clothes on their heads to and from the affluent neighborhoods well into the fifties.

Question: Who populated this area after the Emancipation Proclamation?

Answer: newly freed slaves

Question: Why were the houses called Shotgun Houses?

Answer: Because you can shoot a shotgun through the front door and the bullet would come out through the back.

**Turn left on Congress and travel toward Broad Street.**



**The Broad Street Academy**

Now we approach the **Broad Street Academy** which was the **first Public High School in Mobile for African-Americans.** Look to your left. It was founded in **1887** and **William A. Caldwell became its first Principal.** With the changing population of the sixties, the school was closed and purchased by **Bishop State Community College.** It was renamed as the Caldwell-Richardson Hall. Mr. Nathaniel Richardson's name was added as he was a noted educator at Caldwell Elementary School. The brick two story building serves today as a teaching facility and administrative space. **It is the oldest building and is located at the entrance of the Bishop State Community College Main Campus.**

Question: What was the name of the first Public High School in Mobile for African-Americans?

Answer: The Broad Street Academy

**Turn Right on Broad Street.**





### Unity Point Park

Unity Point Park features sculptures of former Mobile Mayor Joseph Langan and civil rights activist John LeFlore shaking hands. These community leaders worked together to advance the plight of black Mobilians during the civil rights strife of the 50's and 60's. The Park was named and dedicated to these leaders for their close working relationship and their efforts to promote unity between the races.

Question: True/False

Union Point Park has sculptures of Joseph Langan and John LeFlore shaking hands

Answer: True



Turn left on Dauphin St and start narrating. Slow down at Wintzell's in front of plaque.



### Dr. H. Roger Williams

Dr. Williams opened Live and Let Live Drug Store on the ground floor of this location in 1901. Although he was born on a Louisiana sugarcane plantation, H. Roger Williams graduated from the Bowen Institute of Pharmacy in 1896 and from Meharry Medical college in 1900. Live and Let Live Drug Store was the first African American owned drugstore in Mobile. The building operates today as Wintzell's Oyster House.

Question: Dr. H. Roger Williams was born on a \_\_\_\_\_ plantation in the state of \_\_\_\_\_.

Answer: sugar, Louisiana



Stall and pull over before Lawrence St.





**Dr. T.N. Harris**

*Proceed on St. Francis to Dr. T.N. Harris on left- ask Bus driver to pull to the left in space at the corner of Warren and St. Francis.*

Licensed to practice medicine in 1900, **Dr. T.N. Harris** was one of Mobile's first African-American Physicians. He graduated in 1899 from Meharry Medical College in Nashville Tennessee with dual degrees in dentistry and medicine. He partnered with **A.N. Johnson to operate People's Drug Store that we just passed around the corner.** In 1905 Dr. Harris established the first medical clinic for Blacks with a trained nursing staff and operating facilities on this site.

Question: Who was one of the first Mobile African-American Physicians?

- A. Dr. T. O. Harris
- B. Dr. T. N. Meharry
- C. Dr. T. N. Harris

Answer: C



**Keep Talking John LeFlore**

Across the street is **John LeFlore's office.** You saw his statue in Unity Point Park. Leflore's office was located on the second floor of this building. He founded the Non Partisan's Voter's League after the NAACP had been outlawed in 1927. LeFlore's work with other NPVL officials such as Abe Flanagan and Wiley Bolden, helped others to recognize the significance of the black vote. LeFlore became a legislator in the **Alabama State House of Representatives in 1974.**

Question: What office was John LeFlore voted into in 1974?

- A. Governor of Alabama
- B. State House of Representatives
- C. District Judge

Answer: B



**Proceed on St. Francis Street turning left on Dearborn St.**



**Creole Fire Station #1**

Look to your right at **Creole Fire Station #1**. It was the first volunteer fire company in Alabama, founded in 1819 by members of Mobile's Creole community. This building was designed by famed Mobile Architect James Hutchinson in **1869**. Note the word spelled out in the brickwork along with the number 1. This building was the Business and Cultural Center for the Creole Community for many years hosting their private Mardi Gras Balls, weddings, and other social activities.

Question: What was the first volunteer fire company in Alabama?

- A. Creole Fire Station #1      B. Creole Fire Station II      C. Creole Sub Station #1

Answer: A



**Turn back left on Dauphin Street**



**The Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception**

**The Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception** is the oldest church in Mobile and in the State of Alabama. It is also the keeper of the records and documentation of Mobile's diverse origin, or the births, marriages, and deaths of the **Creole de Color, or those born of French, Spanish, and African descent**. The Cathedral has safeguarded these documents that are the oldest records on the Gulf Coast some signed by Bienville and d'Iberville themselves.

Question: What is the name of the oldest church in Mobile?

Answer: The Cathdral of the Immaculate Conception



**Turn right on Joachim and pause at Conti Street**



**Wallace Turnage**

Wallace Turnage was a seventeen year old slave who wanted freedom very badly. He tried many times to escape. Finally, he became free on his fifth try. He was owned by Collier Minge. Mr. Minge was a wealthy Cotton Broker that lived in a house where the Saenger is today. Mr. Turnage escaped by walking 25 miles to Mobile Bay. He hid by the Fowl River for three weeks. Then, he paddled a row boat into the Bay. Sailors in a Union Navy gunboat saved him from drowning. In August 1864, he was taken to Fort Gaines and freed. He later moved to New York City and wrote his autobiography.

The Saenger Theater was built in the place of Collier Minge's home. Who later cleared the land and laid the Foundation for the Saenger Theater? Dave Patton.

Question: How many times did Mr. Turnage try to escape before he became free?

Answer: 5



***Proceed on Joachim. Turn left on Church then turn left on Royal St. parking in front of the Museum while Teacher returns the PA system and Driver Directions.***

### CONCLUSION

I hope that all of you have enjoyed our ride into Mobile's past on today. We learned about our ancestors from long ago. Today, you heard about their struggles and you learned about their determination and courage to overcome hardships and to succeed. From this point forward, recognize their accomplishments and remember their stories of bravery and sacrifice. Know that you too can achieve great things just like they did. Search and learn about the ancestors in your family. What did they do? How did they live?

Always remember, you can't know where you're going until you know where you've been.