

## GO ON A JOURNEY THAT TOUCHES DEEP IN YOUR SOUL AND TAKES YOU TO THE MOUNTAINTOP - IN MEMPHIS

Self-guided driving tour of the African-American musical, religious, social and civil rights epicenter of Memphis.

Memphis was a melting pot and epicenter in the first half of the 20th century for the in-migration of sharecroppers and tenant farmers moving from the Mississippi delta to more northern urban cities. With time loosening the bonds of slavery at the turn of the century and the advent of mechanized farming thus making farm workers expendable, African-Americans began distancing themselves from the rural ways of the Old South. Beale Street was the "main street" of the African-American business, musical, employment and social life and activities of Memphis and the Mid-South. This self-guided Driving Tour starts at the National Civil Rights Museum and leads through Soulsville USA (the neighborhood just south of the Downtown core) past the Stax music facilities (Birthplace of American Soul Music) to Mason Temple and Clayborn Temple (ground zero for the civil rights movement in Memphis in the 1960s) and terminates at historic Church Park, located on the eastern fringe of the Beale Street Entertainment District.

**Begin at the National Civil Rights Museum, south parking lot at 450 Mulberry Street.**

**[0.0]** Turn right (north) onto Mulberry and view the Lorraine Motel site and balcony with wreath on rail in front of Room 306.

**[0.1]** Turn left (west) onto Butler to go to South Main. Turn left (south) onto South Main and view historic buildings (now an arts district) and vintage trolleys along their Main Street route.

**[0.2]** Turn left (east) onto G.E. Patterson Avenue. On the southwest corner sits Central Station (circa 1914) which services the AMTRAK daily City Of New Orleans passenger train from Chicago to New Orleans. This street was named in the honor of Bishop G.E. Patterson, long time pastor of the Temple Of Deliverance Church Of God In Christ (COGIC) further down the road.



**[0.3]** Site of the Beignet Café at 124 G.E Patterson (north side) and the former home of the Tri-State Defender weekly newspaper, founded in 1951. The Tri-State Defender relocated its offices to Beale Street in 2007 and has served the African-American community for almost sixty years. Across the street from the Beignet Café is the Marmalade Restaurant and Lounge, an African-American owned restaurant, a long-time fixture in the South Main area.

**[0.4]** Now crossing Third Street (U.S. Highway 61) and what is historically called "The Blues Highway". This highway "begins" in the heart of the Mississippi Delta at Clarksville, Mississippi and is the roadway that hundreds of sharecroppers in-migrated to Memphis in the middle of the 20th century, including numerous blues musicians venturing to Beale Street and Handy Park.

**[0.6]** On the south side of G.E. Patterson is the Temple Of Deliverance COGIC campus and sanctuary. Temple Of Deliverance was formed in 1975 and was the home pulpit form Bishop G.E. Patterson (1939-2007) for 32 years.

**[0.7]** Turn right (southeast) onto Mississippi Boulevard and cross over Danny Thomas Boulevard (named for the founder of St. Jude Children's Research Hospital in Memphis).

**[1.0]** At the southeast intersection of Mississippi Boulevard and Georgia Avenue are the T.H. Hayes Funeral Home and First Baptist Church Lauderdale facilities (both with historical markers posted in the front). T.H. Hayes was founded in 1902 and is one of the oldest African-American businesses in Memphis. The First Baptist Church Lauderdale was founded in 1865 as Beale Street Baptist Church, and the congregation split in 1877 to come to this location. Across the intersection to the southwest is Booker T. Washington High School, home of many distinguished African-American alumni.



Two historical markers are located at the school's entrance, one for the school and the second for Lucie Eddie Campbell, the first woman among early great African-American composers, composing over 100 songs from 1919-1967.

Proceed south on Mississippi Boulevard across Crump Boulevard **[1.4]** – E.H. Crump was elected four times as Mayor of Memphis with his first term beginning in 1910 and was political power in Memphis politics for the first half of the 20th century. Proceed to Walker Avenue **[1.8]** and the Four Way Grill, 998 Mississippi. The Four Way has been serving soul food since 1946 and is known for "rightly seasoned" foods.

**[1.8]** Turn left (east) onto Walker Avenue and at the southeast corner is the People's Grocery historical marker. People's Grocery is the site where the lynching of three African-Americans in 1892 inspired Ida B. Wells to begin her anti-lynching campaign in this country and abroad. Walker Avenue also has the honorary title of Dr. Fred C. Lofton Avenue. Dr. Lofton was the long time pastor (1972-2001) at the Metropolitan Baptist Church further down the road.

Driving east on Walker Avenue, there will be several historical markers including on the north side **[1.9]** Benjamin Albert Imes, influential leader pushing for the integration of public facilities in the 1880s; Second Congregational Church, founded in 1868 and on the National Register of Historical Places; and Hollis Freeman Price, Sr., the first African-American President of Lemoyne College. On the south side Metropolitan Baptist Church, founded in 1896; and Edward Shaw, the first African-American in Tennessee to run for U.S. Congress in 1870.

**[2.0]** Lemoyne-Owen College was established in 1868 and is Memphis' predominantly African-American liberal arts institution providing and educating students for urban-focused leadership, scholarship, service and professional careers. Steele Hall, erected in 1914 and C. Arthur Bruce Hall are two of Lemoyne-Owen's more historical structures.

**[2.1]** A statue of Dr. Willie W. Herenton, the first elected African-American Mayor of the City of Memphis, stands on the north side of Walker in front of the Renaissance Center and Neptune Street on the south has the honorary name of Coach Jerry Johnson Street, in honor of the long time men's basketball coach at Lemoyne-Owen (46 years from 1959–2005).

[2.2] On the north side of Walker is the rear grounds of 80-acre Elmwood Cemetery, founded in 1852, with over 75,000 graves and listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Some of the African-American leaders from the past two centuries buried here are Robert Church, Joseph Walker, A. Maceo Walker, Ernest Withers, Jimmy Lunceford, Ma Rainey II, T.H. Hayes, Odell Horton and Sister Thea Bowman.



[2.3] Turn right (south) onto College Street and on the left side [2.5] is the Historic Home of Memphis Slim, 1130 College, in the beginning stages of restoration. Memphis Slim (1915-1988) was a blues pianist, singer and composer of the genre known as "jump blues" and made over 500 recordings.

Across the street from Memphis Slim's Home is the STAX Museum of American Soul Music at the intersection of College and E. McLemore [2.6]. Turn right (west) onto E. McLemore and pull into the curb lane at 926 East McLemore, the "Birthplace of Soul Music" in America.

Stax Recording Company relocated to this location in 1959 and became the "Birthplace of American Soul Music" by placing 243 hits in the Top 100 R & B charts in the next 15 years from artists such as Otis Redding, Isaac Hayes, Sam & Dave, and Booker T & The MGs, and hit songs such as "Soul Man" and "Shaft". The Stax Museum of American Soul Music opened on site in 2003 and covers the legacy of the music, the artists and Soulsville, USA.

The building just west of the Stax Museum is the Stax Music Academy, founded in 2000, which provides viable, affordable options for mentoring and youth development, including the Snap! After School program and the Snap! Summer Camp. The Soulsville Charter School is also housed at this location.



Across the street from Stax is Towne Center, a new commercial center under construction and a symbol of rebirth in the community known as Soulsville USA.

Traveling west on East McLemore, [2.8] the next point of interest is the elegant six-room Roulhac Mansion Hotel, 810 E. McLemore, built in 1926 and listed on the National Register of Historical Places.

[2.9] On the south side of the street is a historic marker for the University of West Tennessee, which offered degrees in a variety of medical fields and played an important role in providing healthcare options for African-Americans in Memphis in the 1920s. Continue west on East McLemore to the intersection of Willie Mitchell Boulevard [3.3]. Willie Mitchell of Royal Studios, 1320 Willie Mitchell Boulevard, and HI Records was the legendary producer for such artists as the Rev. Al Green and Ann Peebles. Willie Mitchell recently passed away (January 5, 2010). [Note: Six blocks south (left) is Royal Studios].

[3.4] This stretch of E. McLemore is dedicated to Dr. Alfred Dewayne Hill, Sr., the long time pastor of Pilgrim Rest Baptist Church on the south side of the street.

Turn right (north) on Wellington Street, honorarily named Reverend J.L. Payne Avenue for the long time pastor of Greater Mt. Moriah Baptist Church [3.6].

[3.7] Turn left (west) onto Walker Avenue and continue to Mason Street [3.8]. Turn right (north) onto Mason and the World Headquarters of the Church Of God In Christ (COGIC) International denomination is on the right [3.9] at Mason Temple. Mason Temple is named for Bishop Charles Harrison Mason, founder of COGIC in 1907, a denomination with 5.5 million members worldwide in sixty countries. Mason Temple is the site of Dr. Martin Luther King's "I Have Been To The Mountaintop" speech on April 3, 1968 – the last public speech that Dr. King would deliver. Mason Temple was built in 1940 and restored in 1991.

Proceed north to Crump Blvd. [4.1] and turn left (west) onto Crump. Proceed to Third Street [4.5] and turn right (north). Head north on Third across G.E. Patterson [5.0] to Pontotoc Avenue [5.3] and turn right (east). One block east [5.4] is Clayborn Temple, site of the origin of the many marches on behalf of the 1968 Sanitation Workers strike. Built in 1891 and listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the last march of Dr. Martin Luther King's life originated from this location on March 28, 1968 (ended in violence several blocks later on Beale Street).



Turn left (north) at Hernando Street [5.4] and drive by Clayborn Temple to Linden Avenue [5.5] and FedExForum, home of the Memphis Grizzlies and site of the National Basketball Association's annual tribute to the legacy of Dr. King each year on the national holiday. Turn right (east) and head east on Linden past St. Patrick Catholic Church [5.6], founded in 1866, and the rear of Church Park. [5.7] On the north is Pentecostal Temple COGIC Church, pastored by Bishop J.O. Patterson, Jr., first African-American Mayor of Memphis (by succession procedure in 1982) and son of J. O. Patterson, Sr., former bishop of the Church Of God In Christ International denomination from 1968-1989.

Turn left (north) onto Danny Thomas Boulevard [5.7] and on the northeast corner of this intersection is the Universal Life Insurance Company building, built in 1923, and at one time the fourth largest African-American owned life insurance company in the nation. One block east of Universal Life on Linden Avenue is Mt. Olive CME Church.

Proceed north on Danny Thomas to Beale Street [5.9]. On the southeast corner is the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Labor Center, home of Local Chapter # 1733 of the A.F.S.C.M.E. union. One block east of the Labor Center is the Hunt-Phelan Bed & Breakfast. Hunt-Phelan is one of the oldest buildings in Memphis, erected between 1828-1832. Turn left (west) to head towards the Beale Street Entertainment District.

Church Park [6.0] is on the south side of the street. Church Park was established in 1899 by Robert Church, Sr., the South's first African-American millionaire. The Church family and legacy is honored here with historical markers for Mary Church Terrell, Sara Roberta Church and Robert Church, Jr. Another marker commemorates Church Park Auditorium, built by Robert Church, Sr. in 1899 as a public gathering place for African-American citizens, and at one time the largest such gathering place in the nation. President Theodore Roosevelt spoke here in 1902. A bust of Robert Church, Sr. sits on a pedestal in the center of the columns that outline the previous footprint of the auditorium.



Church Park encircles First Baptist Church Beale Street, founded in the 1840s, considered the "mother church" of African-American congregations in Memphis, and a gathering spot for many workers organizing during the 1968 Sanitation Workers' strike. President U.S. Grant spoke here in 1880.

On the north side of Beale Street is the site of the former Solvent Savings Bank, the onetime headquarters of Robert Church's empire and on the second floor, the offices of W. C Handy, Father of the Blues.

[6.1] The Beale Street Entertainment District begins at Fourth Street. On the northwest intersection is the W.C. Handy House & Museum. The house was moved in 1983 by the City to this location for preservation purposes. Heritage Tours of Memphis, a local tour company specializing in African-American tours and activities, operates the museum.



Beale Street is now blocked to vehicles on a daily basis between Fourth and Second Streets.

So, take a right (north) onto Fourth Street, drive one block to Peabody Place and turn left (west) to proceed to a parking lot on the south side of the street or a parking garage on the north side [6.2]. Please park the car and take the self-guided Walking Tour of Beale Street, or enjoy the many shops, restaurants and clubs of Beale Street ([www.bealestreet.com](http://www.bealestreet.com)).

If you are out of time, we hope that you enjoyed the driving tour of a part of the African-American heritage and culture of Memphis, Tennessee. Thank you!

Historic Districts – 4  
Honorary Avenues – 5

Historic Properties – 23  
Schools/Colleges - 6

Historical Markers – 18  
Churches – 15

### **Other Downtown Sites Within Short Driving Distance:**

**WDIA Radio Station**, 112 Union Avenue – Home of the first all-black formatted radio station programming in America; one block west of The Peabody Hotel.

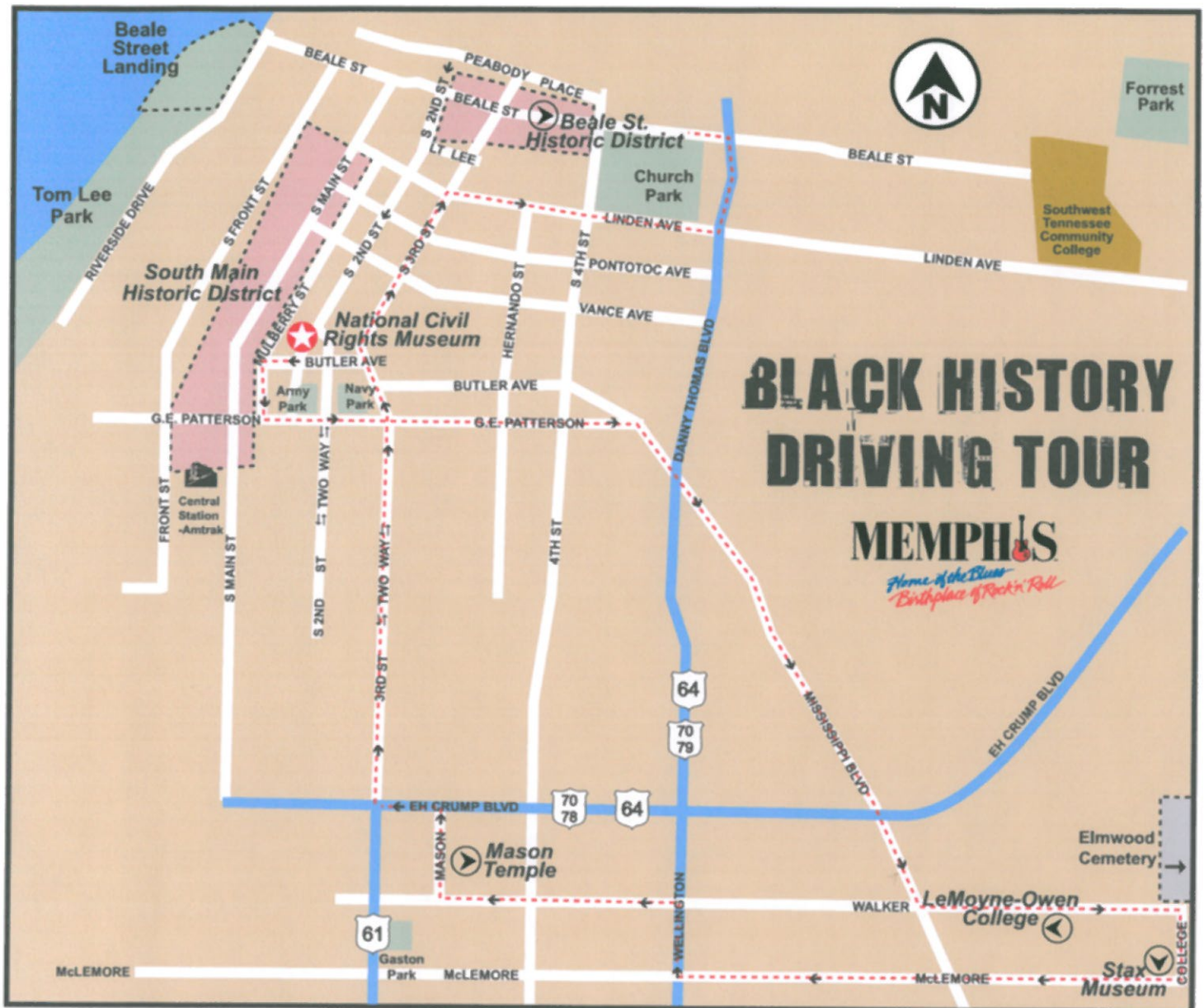
**Tom Lee Park**, Riverside Drive between Beale Street & Georgia Avenue – Two sculptures honor the memory of Tom Lee, a river worker that saved 32 lives one day from a sinking vessel in 1925.

**Aretha Franklin Birthplace**, 406 Lucy Street – In the Soulsville neighborhood three blocks east of Royal Studios and two blocks south of East McLemore Avenue.

**Slave Haven Underground Railroad Museum (Burkle Estate)**, 826 N. Second Street – Former way station on the Underground Railroad with displays and artifacts to depict the story of slavery and the role of the Underground Railroad. Eight blocks north of the Convention Center straight out Second Street.

**Collins Chapel CME Church**, 678 Washington Avenue – Established in 1841, before the founding of the CME denomination, known as the “mother church” of the CME. Four blocks east of the Downtown core.

**Safari House Museum and Cultural Institute**, 1035 Semmes – Features a private collection of African-designed art and artifacts which educate, share and inspire.



(Approximately One & 1/2 Hours & 6.2 Miles)

★ Begins at the National Civil Rights Museum, south parking lot at 450 Mulberry Street.

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|--------|---|-------|--|
| [0.0]  | Turn right (north) onto Mulberry Street   | [4.1] | Turn left (west) onto E.H. Crump Boulevard                                       |
| [0.05] | Turn left (west) onto Butler Avenue to South Main Street  | [4.5] | Turn right (north) onto Third Street. Head north on Third across G.E. Patterson. |
| [0.1]  | Turn left (south) onto South Main Street  | [5.3] | Turn right (east) onto Pontotoc Avenue   |
| [0.2]  | Turn left (east) onto G.E. Patterson Avenue   | [5.4] | Turn left (north) onto Hernando Street - Clayborn Temple                         |
| [0.4]  | Now crossing Third Street (U.S. Highway 61) and what is historically called "The Blues Highway" | [5.5] | Turn right (east) onto Linden Avenue - FedExForum.                               |
| [0.7]  | Turn right (southeast) onto Mississippi Boulevard and cross over Danny Thomas Boulevard         | [5.7] | Turn left (north) onto Danny Thomas Boulevard                                    |
| [1.0]  | Now at the intersection of Mississippi Boulevard and Georgia Avenue                             | [5.9] | Turn left (west) onto Beale Street   |
| [1.4]  | Now crossing E.H. Crump Boulevard   | [6.0] | Church Park  |
| [1.8]  | Turn left (east) onto Walker Avenue   | [6.1] | Turn right (north) onto Fourth Street - Beale Street Entertainment District      |
| [2.0]  | LeMoyné-Owen College  | [6.2] | Turn left (west) onto Peabody Place  |
| [2.3]  | Turn right (south) onto College Street  |       |  |
| [2.6]  | Turn right (west) onto E. McLemore Avenue - STAX Recording Company                              |       |  |
| [3.3]  | Willie Mitchell Boulevard   |       |  |
| [3.5]  | Turn right (north) on Wellington Street   |       |  |
| [3.7]  | Turn left (west) onto Walker Avenue and continue to Mason Street                                |       |  |
| [3.8]  | Turn right (north) onto Mason Street  |       |  |
| [3.9]  | Mason Temple  |       |  |

Beale Street is now blocked to vehicles on a daily basis between Fourth and Second Streets. Proceed to a parking lot on the south side of the Peabody Place or a parking garage on the north side, if you would like to park the car and take the Walking Tour of Beale Street or to enjoy on the many restaurants and clubs of Beale Street. Visit our mobile site ([m.memphistravel.com](http://m.memphistravel.com)) for other helpful information.