

Arkansas Civil Rights Heritage Trail

1.

Historic West Ninth Street

Broadway Street at West Ninth Street

As early as the 1840s and expanding into the 1880s, both black and white businesses existed in what is now known as Downtown Little Rock. By the late 1800s, a prolific, centrally located, black social and business corridor dominated West Ninth Street. In 1898, D. B. Gaines, a local black physician who also served as pastor of Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church, wrote a book titled Racial Possibilities as Indicated by the Negroes of Arkansas. The last chapter, “Colored Business Directory of Little Rock,” documents the existence of a vibrant commercial hub with nearly twenty churches and hundreds of black business people. The black district was home to doctors, dentists, lawyers, and entrepreneurs such as restaurateurs, newspaper publishers, drug store operators, barbers, tailors, and trades people. This city-within-a-city served the needs of the black community from the 1880s through the 1950s. Gaines described the conditions in the community and offered a representation of the resources and capabilities of black people of the state. West Ninth Street saw its heyday between the 1870s and the 1950s. Since the 1960s, a number of factors, including desegregation, urbanization, urban renewal, and the construction of I-630, have led to its decline.

2.

Lynching of John Carter

West Ninth Street and Broadway Street

On May 4, 1927, Little Rock witnessed its worst episode of racial violence in the twentieth century. Thirty-eight year old African American John Carter allegedly “assaulted” two white women on the outskirts of the city. A white mob hunted Carter down, hung him from a telegraph pole, and riddled his dead body with hundreds of bullets. The mob transported Carter’s body downtown and then dragged it through the streets tied to the back of an automobile. Thousands of white onlookers gathered at West Ninth Street and Broadway, the heart of the black business district. There the mob tore pews from Bethel AME Church, one of the city’s largest and oldest black churches, and threw Carter’s body onto a makeshift funeral pyre. The mob only dispersed when Gov. John E. Martineau sent in Arkansas National Guardsmen because the Mayor, Chief of Police, and Sheriff “could not be reached.” No charges were ever brought against any of the perpetrators. During the Jim Crow era, white lynch mobs murdered at least 284 black people in Arkansas, the second highest per capita number of lynchings in any state outside of Mississippi.

3.

Mosaic Templars of America

501 West Ninth Street

The Mosaic Templars of America was formed as a business in the late 1870s by Arkansas freedmen John E. Bush and Chester W. Keatts to provide insurance and other services to black people, and was incorporated as a fraternal organization in 1882. The Mosaic Templars name was derived from the biblical Moses who led his people out of bondage and relates to black America's journey out of slavery. By the 1920s the Templars' organization extended to 26 states and six Caribbean nations. At the time, as one of the largest black-owned business enterprises in the world, Templars' holdings included the original insurance company, a building and loan association, a publishing company, a business college, a nursing school and a hospital. For more than 40 years, the Templars Headquarters Building and the adjoining Annex and State Temple buildings on Broadway anchored the city's black business district on West Ninth Street. Like many businesses, black and white, the Templars did not survive the era of the Great Depression. Though the original Headquarters building burned in 2005, the Mosaic Templars Cultural Center is modeled on the original design. Exhibits highlight black business and self-achievement from Reconstruction to the 1950s in Arkansas and the nation.

4.

Mosaic Templars Cultural Center

501 West Ninth Street

Free Admission

The Mosaic Templars Cultural Center and Museum collects, preserves, interprets and celebrates Arkansas's unique African American political, economic, and social achievement from 1865 to 1950. The Center resides in the footprint of the original Mosaic Templars of America National Headquarters and Annex Buildings. The permanent museum exhibits depict historic West Ninth Street as a thriving commercial and social hub, focusing on the black entrepreneurship, Templars organization, and the legacy of black legislators. Between 1868 and 1893, eighty-five African Americans served in the Arkansas General Assembly. The majority served in the House, with nine in the Senate. Election laws passed in 1891, together with a poll tax in 1832, ended the election of African Americans to the legislature. No black person served again until the General Assembly in 1973. In addition to community educational programs, the Center offers a genealogy research room, an art collection created by local talent, and a well-stocked store. The Center's third floor features a replica of the original Headquarters Building auditorium and the Arkansas Black Hall of Fame galleries. The Center is a museum of the Department of Arkansas Heritage and admission is free.

5.

Taborian Hall and Dreamland Ballroom

800 West Ninth Street

National Register of Historic Places

Built 1918

Completed in 1918, Taborian Hall stands as one of the last reminders of the once-prosperous West Ninth Street African-American business and cultural district. West Ninth Street buildings included offices for black professionals, businesses, hotels, and entertainment venues. In 1916, the Knights and Daughters of Tabor, a fraternal insurance organization, hired local black contractor Simeon Johnson to enlarge an existing building to accommodate their activities, other offices and a ballroom. During World War I, black soldiers from Camp Pike came to the Negro Soldiers Service Center here. In World War II, Taborian Hall was home to the Ninth Street USO, catering to black soldiers from Camp Robinson. By 1936, Dreamland Ballroom hosted basketball games, boxing matches, concerts and dances. A regular stop for popular black entertainers on the "Chitlin' Circuit," Dreamland hosted Cab Callaway, Count Basie, Duke Ellington, Ella Fitzgerald, Louis Armstrong, B.B. King, Earl "Fatha" Hines and Ray Charles. Arkansas's own Louis Jordan also performed here. Between the 1960s and 1980s, West Ninth Street declined, and many buildings were demolished. In 1991, Taborian Hall was renovated to house Arkansas Flag and Banner. Once again, Dreamland Ballroom hosts concerts and social events.

6.

First Missionary Baptist Church

701 South Gaines Street

National Register of Historic Places

1882

Established in 1845, First Missionary Baptist Church is one of the oldest black congregations in Arkansas. The first church building was completed by 1847, with the current Gothic Revival building constructed in 1882. In 1891, more than 600 blacks gathered here to protest the state's recently enacted Separate Coach Law that required racial separation in passenger cars and separate waiting rooms in train stations. They marched from the church to the then state capitol, now the Old State House., to dispute laws that denied black people their constitutional rights. Historians cite that black boycotts in Little Rock, Pine Bluff, and Hot Springs on May 27, 1903, the first day of the streetcar law, caused a 90 percent drop in black patrons on Little Rock streetcars. In May 1958, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., traveled to Little Rock here to attend the graduation ceremony of Ernest Green, the first African American to graduate from Central High School. In 1963, four months before the famous "I Have a Dream" speech, Dr. King visited Little Rock to provide the First Missionary Baptist Church's 118th anniversary sermon.

7.

Philander Smith College Historic District

900 West Daisy Gatson Bates Drive

National Register Historic District

National Register of Historic Places:

Wesley Chapel 1927

U. M. Rose School (Cox Administration Building) 1915

Philander Smith College is Little Rock's oldest historically black educational institution. It was established in 1877 as Walden Seminary, by the African Methodist Episcopal Church to educate ministers. Its name changed after an endowment in 1882 by the widow of Illinois philanthropist Philander Smith. Wesley Chapel has always been associated with the college's activities. The enslaved William Wallace Andrews founded Wesley in 1854 on land donated by his owner, U.S. Senator Chester Ashley. In 1864, parishioners celebrated their freedom with a "Parade of Emancipation." Pastors at Wesley included Rev. J. C. Crenshaw, president of the Little Rock NAACP, and Rev. Negail Riley, leader of the Black United Fund. In the 1960's, Philander Smith students participated in "sit-ins" at downtown lunch counters. Noted alumni include Dr. Joycelyn Elders, former U.S. surgeon general; professional athletes Elijah Pitts of the Green Bay Packers; Hubert "Geese" Ausbie of the Harlem Globetrotters; and Milton Pitts Crenshaw, a Tuskegee Airman; James Hal Cone, a pioneer of black liberation theology; Lottie Shackelford, former Mayor of Little Rock; Al Bell, founder of Stax Records and former president of Motown Records; and Stephanie Flowers, Arkansas State Senator.

8. Cemeteries: Mount Holly, Oakland and Fraternal Historic Park, Haven of Rest, and National Cemeteries

Mount Holly Cemetery: Broadway at Twelfth Street, est. 1843

Oakland and Fraternal Historic Cemetery Park: 2101 S. Barber, est. 1863

Haven of Rest Cemetery: 1702 Twelfth Street, est. 1903

National Register: Mount Holly, Oakland, Fraternal, National

African Americans and important civil rights leaders are interred in several local cemeteries. Mount Holly Cemetery is the final resting place of enslaved people, who were buried in their owner's family plots, and the graves of several free blacks in the mid-1800s. One notable black leader buried here is Nathan Warren, founding pastor of Bethel AME Church. A marker is dedicated to Quatie Ross, wife of Cherokee Chief John Ross, who died along the Trail of Tears in 1839. Oakland and Fraternal Historic Cemetery Park is composed of several cemeteries serving different communities: Oakland, Confederate, National, Jewish, and Fraternal (a historically black cemetery). Civil rights advocates buried in Fraternal include Mifflin Wistar Gibbs, John E. Bush, Charlotte Andrews Stephens, Dr. John Marshall Robinson, Isaac Gillam, Sr. and Jr., Asa I. Richmond, as well as members of the influential Pankey and Ish families. Haven of Rest Cemetery is the largest cemetery for black people in Little Rock. Among the graves here are those of Daisy Gatson Bates, civil rights activist and mentor to the Little Rock Nine; attorney Scipio Africanus Jones; and Rev. Joseph Booker, president of Arkansas Baptist College.

9.

Mt. Zion Baptist Church

908 South State Street

National Register of Historic Places

1927

Mt. Zion Baptist Church was organized in 1877 and is one of the earliest black congregations in Little Rock. The church was rebuilt in its current location in 1927 under the leadership of Rev. Fred T. Guy. From the late 1800s to the present, local church leaders, their congregants, grassroots groups, civic organizations, fraternal societies, and black business owners fought for equal rights. A warrior in the community and tireless human rights advocate, Rev. Fred T. Guy, Mt. Zion's pastor, challenged Superintendent of Schools Virgil Blossom and the Little Rock School Board to desegregate schools in 1957. "Next to the law of God, the Constitution of the United States means the most to me. When you start to tinker with the Constitution, it becomes awfully important to us," said Rev. Guy.

10.

Arkansas Baptist College

1621 Martin Luther King, Jr., Drive

National Register of Historic Places: Main Building 1885

Arkansas Baptist College, established in 1884 by Rev. E. C. Morris and the National Baptist Convention, trained black students to become ministers and teachers. One of the earliest historically black colleges in the state, Arkansas Baptist College was first hosted by neighborhood churches, including Mt. Zion Baptist. In 1885, the College finally settled at what is now 16th and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Drive. Reverend Joseph A. Booker was appointed president of Arkansas Baptist College in 1887 and served for nearly forty years. Born into slavery, Booker was later educated at Nashville Institute in Tennessee. He not only scored early success for the college but also won acclaim as editor of *Baptist Vanguard*, a weekly publication produced on campus. Noted as a staunch opponent of Jim Crow segregation laws in Little Rock, Booker fought the Separate Coach Law of 1891. In 2006, the College launched the African American Leadership Institute and in 2015 the Scott Ford Center for Entrepreneurship and Community Development. Dr. Fitzgerald Hill has directed the resurgence of Arkansas Baptist College, securing federal grants and recruiting more students.

11.

Central High School Neighborhood Historic District

1500 S. Park Street

National Register Historic District

The Central High School Neighborhood Historic District developed in the late 1880s, after a streetcar company built West End Park there in 1885. The area was a middle-class, interracial, mixed-use neighborhood with large homes and cottages and several schools and churches. Union and Capitol Hill

schools educated the African American residents. St. Bartholomew's Catholic Church and school served an African American congregation. African American and white residents worked as clergymen, barbers, chauffeurs, mail carriers, clerks, and with the railroad and service industries. The neighborhood was also home to white and black lawyers, doctors, teachers and businessmen. By 1894, West End Park included a baseball field, becoming home to the city's first minor league baseball team, the Little Rock Travelers. Negro League teams, including the Little Rock Reds, Cadets, and Greys, also played there. In the late 1920s, the park site was chosen for the new Little Rock High School for white students. Quigley Stadium, the school's football field, was built in 1936 by the Works Progress Administration (WPA), replacing Kavanaugh Baseball Field. The neighborhood continues to have a vibrant mix of working class blacks and whites.

12.

Central High School

1500 S. Park Street

National Historic Landmark

1927

In September 1957 Little Rock's Central High School made headlines around the world in a struggle over school desegregation. In its 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* decision, the United States Supreme Court declared an end to segregated schools. Little Rock drew up a gradual plan for desegregation starting with Central High. The local branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People opposed the plan on the grounds that it was too slow moving, but the federal courts upheld it. The night before the school was due to desegregate, Gov. Orval Faubus surrounded Central with National Guard soldiers. The next day, black students were denied entry. Eventually, Faubus was persuaded to remove the soldiers. When nine black students attempted to desegregate the school, a white mob formed outside. The students were removed for their safety. Finally, President Dwight D. Eisenhower sent in federal troops to desegregate the school. Even then, the ordeal of the Little Rock Nine was not over. They suffered numerous attacks inside the school. At the end of the school year Ernest Green, the only senior in the group, became the first black student to graduate from Central in May 1958.

13.

Central High School National Historic Site and Visitors Center

Visitor Center: 2120 W. Daisy Bates Drive

School: 1500 S. Park Street

National Historic Landmark

1927

In September 1957, Central High School was at the center of international attention when Gov. Orval E. Faubus ordered the National Guard to prevent nine black students from attending. President Dwight D. Eisenhower later federalized the National Guard and sent in federal troops to escort the students to class. The school became a crucial battleground in the struggle for civil rights. Dramatic media images of the conflict seared themselves into public memory. The Little Rock Central High School National Historic Site

and Visitor Center opened in September 2007 to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the school's desegregation. The interactive displays include interviews with the Little Rock Nine and historic video clips. The Center presents a broad view of civil and human rights struggles in the United States and around the world. Central High School is the only functioning high school in the United States to be located within the boundary of a national historic site.

14.

Daisy Bates House Museum

1207 West 28th Street
National Historic Landmark
c. 1950s

This was the home of L.C. and Daisy Bates, civil rights activists and co-owners and publishers of the *Arkansas State Press* newspaper. During the 1957 school desegregation crisis of Central High School, the home functioned as headquarters for the "Little Rock Nine," the first black students to attend the school. The Bates' home provided a safe-haven for "the Nine." It was a refuge, a place to study and receive counseling to contend with frequent harassment by white students and other staunch segregationists who demonstrated outside the school. "The Nine" also visited with the NAACP legal team of Thurgood Marshall and Wiley Branton, who worked on the school desegregation case of *Aaron v. Cooper*. Daisy Bates, a mentor to the Nine, was president of the Arkansas State Conference of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP.) For taking a stand against segregated schools, L.C. and Daisy Bates had numerous missiles hurled at their home during the school crisis and had several fiery crosses—an emblem of the white terror organization the Ku Klux Klan—burned on their lawn. Segregationists mounted a boycott of the *Arkansas State Press* newspaper, putting it out of business in 1959.

15.

"Testament" Sculpture

North Lawn of Capitol Grounds
2005 by John and Cathy Deering

The Little Rock Nine: Ernest Green, Minnijean Brown, Elizabeth Eckford, Thelma Mothershed, Melba Pattillo, Gloria Ray, Terrence Roberts, Jefferson Thomas, Carlotta Walls: Congressional Gold Medal recipients with much in common. "...our parents were strict, no-nonsense types"..."served as teachers, preachers, or well-established professionals"..."All our folks were hardworking people who had struggled to own their homes, to provide a stable life for their families"..."we share the same family values traditional to all small-town Americans." Melba Pattillo Beals. "I'll tell you one thing: it was my dad who lost his job"..."It was my mother who got the terror calls"..."It was my mother who was frightened for my life"..."they were the heroes of this." Minnijean Brown Trickey. "Somewhere along the line, [staying at Central High] became an obligation. I realized that what we were doing was not for ourselves..." Elizabeth Eckford. "In Little Rock, every possible decision had a racial component: where you could live, where you could go to school, whether you could work or not, whether you could get a bank loan...who you could

marry. This made no sense to me, especially as I discovered there is no such thing as race.” Terrance Roberts

16.

Arkansas State Capitol

One Capitol Avenue at Woodlane Street
National Register of Historic Places
1915

Free admission

The Arkansas state capitol has been the site of a number of civil rights events over the years. In 1964, Ozell Sutton, a local African American leader, was denied service at the capitol’s basement cafeteria because of his race. The cafeteria then reincorporated as a private members-only club to avoid integration. A number of conflicts occurred when local black students from Philander Smith College and an interracial group of Arkansas Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee members tried, on several occasions, to desegregate the cafeteria. In 1965, the courts finally ordered the cafeteria to open its doors to blacks and whites on an equal basis. In 1968, after the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr., Arkansas governor Winthrop Rockefeller held a memorial service on the capitol steps for the slain civil rights leader—the only southern governor to make such a gesture of reconciliation. His actions are credited with limiting the impact of the violence that rocked other cities in the wake of the King assassination. In 2005, John and Cathy Deering’s “Testament” bronze sculpture of the Little Rock Nine was dedicated on the north side of the building. It was the first civil rights monument erected on the grounds of a southern state capitol.

17.

Paul Laurence Dunbar School Neighborhood Historic District

1100 Wright Avenue
National Register Historic District

The Paul Laurence Dunbar School Historic District played an important role as the center of Little Rock’s African American community from the mid-1800s to the mid-1900s. Development began around Wesley Chapel, organized in 1853. The neighborhood expanded after the Civil War to become home to many African Americans noted for their success in a number of fields, including business, politics, religion, education, law, music, and medicine. Among the historically black institutions that were founded in the neighborhood and remain there today are several churches, including Wesley Chapel United Methodist, Bethel A.M.E., Mount Pleasant Baptist, Mount Zion Baptist, and Union A.M.E.; and two colleges, Arkansas Baptist and Philander Smith. The existing Dunbar School replaced an older high school that was named for Mifflin Gibbs, a prominent African American lawyer and political leader who lived in the neighborhood. Today, Gibbs Elementary School continues the recognition of Gibbs.

18.

Paul Laurence Dunbar High School

1100 Wright Avenue

National Register of Historic Places

1929

After Little Rock High School (now Central High School) was completed in 1927, the building of Paul Laurence Dunbar High School was completed in 1929. Money came from the Rosenwald Fund, founded by Julius Rosenwald, president of Sears, Roebuck and Company, and from local black residents. Local blacks insisted on adding college preparatory classes to the vocational-industrial ones that were offered in black schools at the time. The building, modeled after the white high school, housed grades seven through twelve plus a junior college. Black students came from all over Arkansas to take advantage of its educational opportunities. When Horace Mann High School opened as a segregated school in 1956, Dunbar became a junior high school. A Dunbar-Mann Alumni Association, whose members live throughout the country, still helps to support both schools. In the 1930s, Charlotte Andrews Stephens, the first black public school teacher in Little Rock, was on the faculty at Dunbar, completing seventy years of teaching with the district. In the 1940s, Sue Cowan Williams, English Department chair, lost her job when she sued the Little Rock School District for equal pay for black and white teachers.

19.

Sue Cowan Williams Library

1800 South Chester Street

In 1945, Sue Cowan Williams successfully sued the Little Rock School District for equal pay for black and white teachers. The existing inequality in pay clearly did not meet the stipulation of “separate but equal” treatment of African Americans required by the law. Williams was chair of the English Department at Dunbar High School. She had attended Spelman College in Atlanta, Talladega College in Alabama, and the University of Chicago. These impressive credentials made her an ideal standard bearer for the suit. Local lawyers, along with the NAACP’s Thurgood Marshall, successfully appealed Williams’ case to the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals in St. Louis. In the meantime, however, Williams’ contract was not renewed at Dunbar. After working several other jobs, she was eventually rehired in 1952. She remained at Dunbar until her retirement in 1974. Williams died in 1994. In 1997, the tenth library in the Central Arkansas Library System was dedicated as the Sue Cowan Williams Library in her honor.

20.

Horace Mann High School

100 East Roosevelt Road

1956

Horace Mann Senior High School opened in 1956 as one of two new Little Rock public high schools, after the 1954 U. S. Supreme Court *Brown v. Board of Education* school desegregation decision. Mann was built in the predominantly black eastern part of Little Rock, while Hall High was in a predominantly affluent and white western area of residence. This plan ensured that, in practical terms, both schools would

remain racially segregated. The assignment of an all-black teaching faculty to Mann and an all-white teaching faculty to Hall underscored this intent. After Mann was built, the school board transferred black students from Dunbar High, the city's existing segregated black high school, to Mann. Dunbar then became a junior high school. Teachers were divided and reassigned, new principals were named, and the school mascots respectively became the "Dunbar Bobcats" and the "Horace Mann Bearcats." The schools are now Horace Mann Arts and Science Magnet Middle School and the Dunbar International Studies Magnet Middle School. In 2012, both alumni groups combined to form the National Dunbar Horace Mann Alumni Association.

21.

MacArthur Park

503 East Ninth Street

National Historic Landmark for the Camden Expedition

National Register: Arsenal Building 1840

Free Admission

MacArthur Park was Little Rock's first city park. The Quapaw Line Marker here denotes the western survey line of land that the Quapaw Indians were allowed to retain after ceding ancestral lands to the U.S. government in 1818. The Indian Removal Act of 1830 forced southeastern tribes to relocate to what is now Oklahoma, with several routes passing through Arkansas. To protect citizens against the perceived danger of the forced Indian migration, a federal arsenal was built in Little Rock in 1840. During the Civil War, both Federal and Confederate forces used the arsenal. In 1864 it served as the launch point of the Camden Expedition, during which black troops from the First and Second Kansas Colored Infantry fought with distinction. It became a city park in 1892 when the arsenal closed. In 1942, it was named MacArthur Park in honor of 5-Star General Douglas MacArthur, whose father was stationed at the Arsenal when he was born in 1880. Today, the building houses the MacArthur Museum of Arkansas Military History. East of the Museum is the Arkansas Korean War Veterans Memorial. The bronze statues include an African American soldier. This symbolizes the end of racial segregation in the U.S. military forces during that war.

22.

Pike-Fletcher-Terry House

411 East Seventh Street

National Register of Historic Places

c. 1840

In 1958, in this stately antebellum home, seventy-six-year-old Adolphine Fletcher Terry helped to organize the Women's Emergency Committee to Open Our Schools (WEC). Always involved in civic activities, she was dismayed that the four high schools in Little Rock remained closed rather than become integrated. Mrs. Terry told Arkansas Gazette editor Harry Ashmore that "It's clear to me that the men are not going to take the lead in turning this thing around and so the women are going to have to." She organized the Women's Emergency Committee (WEC). When segregationist school board members tried to fire forty-four teachers and administrators who supported integration in the public schools, the WEC worked with

a group of businessmen who had organized a Stop This Outrageous Purge (STOP) campaign to elect new school board members who favored integration. High schools were reopened with token integration in August 1959. The WEC operated in secret because of concerns about harassment or worse. In 1998, on the fortieth anniversary of its founding, the names of WEC members were released for the first time. Those names are now etched in the window panes of the house.

23.

Arkansas Studies Institute
401 President Clinton Avenue

The Arkansas Studies Institute building is a Central Arkansas Library System (CALs) facility. It houses both the Butler Center for Arkansas Studies (a CALs department) and the Center for Arkansas History and Culture, a department of the University of Arkansas at Little Rock (UALR). Exterior and interior panels are featured showing Arkansas African American life through historic photographs. Both archives offer genealogy and photography collections, and visual, audio and reference materials relating to African American history and civil rights topics in Arkansas. The Encyclopedia of Arkansas History and Culture, a Butler Center project, has many entries on African American history. The Arkansas Sounds music collection contains materials relating to black musicians William Grant Still, Florence Price, Louis Jordan, Sister Rosetta Tharpe, and Al Bell. The Butler Center's galleries feature local art, jewelry and crafts, many by Arkansas black artists. The UALR Center for Arkansas History and Culture contains extensive archives, including virtual exhibits relating to the Civil War, Gov. Winthrop Rockefeller, and the city of Little Rock. Adding another dimension to the struggle for civil rights are documents and art from the World War II Japanese American Relocation Camps at Rohwer and Jerome, Arkansas, and two large Jewish history collections.

24.

Concordia Hall
409 President Clinton Avenue
1882

The Jewish community in Little Rock began with the immigration of Central European Jews before the Civil War. In 1957, Jonas Levy was elected to the City Council and served as mayor during the Civil War. As immigration grew significantly after the war, the first Jewish congregation in Little Rock was chartered in 1866 as B'Nai Israel. The 1870 temple was replaced in 1897 with a larger one at Broadway and Capitol Avenue. Four Jewish families operated department stores on Main Street: Kempner, Blass, Pfeifer and Cohn. Many other smaller merchants owned business throughout central Arkansas. During the 1880s, the Porbeck and Bowman Building housed a wholesale grocery and liquor distributorship downstairs. The Concordia Association, a Jewish social club, was located upstairs. The building is now part of the Central Arkansas Library system's Institute for Arkansas Studies. The building's ground-floor gallery was renamed Concordia Hall in 2009 by the Butler Center. During the 1950s many Jews were active in the Civil Rights movement, including Rabbi Ira Sanders and those who joined the Women's Emergency Committee to Open the Schools (WEC).

25.

Historic Arkansas Museum

200 East Third Street

National Register: Hinderliter Grog Shop c. 1826

Galleries free; fee for historic buildings tour

The Historic Arkansas Museum interprets early Arkansas history through Little Rock's oldest buildings, a medicinal herb garden, and modern exhibits. "Giving Voice" is a permanent memorial to the 138 men, women and children enslaved by Nineteenth Century landowners where the museum now stands. An African American character representing the mid-1800s is regularly included in the living history presentations. Changing exhibits in the museum's seven galleries often include ones related to African American history and local artists with African American heritage. On-line exhibits and educational materials relate to this history. "We Walk in Two Worlds," a permanent exhibit, tells the story of the Caddo, Osage, and Quapaw tribes who first lived in Arkansas. The Native American voice shapes the exhibit, which includes pottery, clothing, and weapons.

26.

Old State House Museum

300 West Markham Street

National Historic Landmark

1836

Free admission

The 1836 Old State House, the oldest standing state capitol building west of the Mississippi River, was a center of political activity for many years. During the Civil War, Union and Confederate forces alternately occupied it. During Reconstruction, with many black men registering to vote, eight African Americans were delegates to the 1868 Constitutional Convention, held in this building. The new constitution recognized the equality of all persons before the law, provided suffrage for freedmen, and required a system of free public education for blacks and whites (in separate schools.) By 1874, twenty black men were serving in the Arkansas General Assembly. In 1891, African American Senator George W. Bell and Representative John Grey Lucas gave inspiring speeches against the Separate Coach Law. Now a museum, the Old State House exhibits include ones relating to African American history. "On the Stump: Arkansas Political History" explains civil rights issues from statehood (1836) into the twentieth century. Its collections, which are searchable on-line, include quilts by black Arkansans, photographs by African American photographer Geleve Grice, and music by Louis Jordan. Portions of the Arkansas Slave Narratives, collected by the Works Progress Administration in the 1940s, are available on the web-site.

27.

Joseph Taylor Robinson Memorial Auditorium

426 West Markham Street
National Register of Historic Places
1940

In March 1974, Little Rock hosted the second National Black Political Convention at the Joseph T. Robinson Auditorium and Doubletree Hotel. The first convention was held in Gary, Indiana, in 1972, and garnered much publicity, producing a National Black Political Agenda that included demands for the election of a proportionate number of black representatives to Congress, community control of schools, and national health insurance. The Little Rock convention was co-convened by Congressman Charles Diggs of Detroit, Michigan, Mayor Richard Hatcher of Gary, Indiana, and poet Amiri Baraka. Plenary speakers included Atlanta Mayor Maynard Jackson and comedian and activist Dick Gregory. Jesse Jackson was also in town for the convention. The convention featured a moving testimonial and tribute to local civil rights leader Daisy Bates at Central High School. For many years, the lower Exhibition Hall of Robinson Auditorium hosted many concerts, dances and sporting events, popular with black audiences. However, because the large concert hall upstairs had segregated seating, Duke Ellington declined to play there in 1961. Louis Armstrong played to the first integrated audience in 1966 after the 1964 Civil Rights Act ended segregation in public facilities and accommodations.

28. **The Trail of Tears, the Quapaw Line and Native Americans in Arkansas**

Trail of Tears Park, 5700 Asher Avenue

The land that became Arkansas was originally occupied by the Osage, Caddo, Chickasaw, Tunica, and Quapaw Indians. The Quapaws lived in the Mississippi Delta until 1818, when they were forced to retreat to a swampy area in Central Arkansas. Drawn by surveyors, the Quapaw Line marks the boundary between land designated for white settlers and the Quapaw Indians. Markers for the Quapaw Line can be found from *La Petite Roche* in Riverfront Park to MacArthur Park. The historic area of downtown Little Rock takes its name for the *Quapaw Quarter* from the tribe that lived here. The Trail of Tears Park, on the University of Arkansas at Little Rock (UALR) campus, commemorates routes used by many tribes leaving their ancestral lands after the Indian Removal Act of 1830. Noting the thousands who stopped to rest near a creek, now called Coleman Creek, markers explain the history of the Southwest Trail and the forced migration of Native Americans. Additional markers for the Trail of Tears, mainly associated with the Cherokee Removal, are located in the Riverfront Parks of both Little Rock and North Little Rock. The Sequoyah National Research Center at UALR holds the largest collection of Native American expression in the world

29.

The Bracero Program and Latina/o Arkansans

Mexican Consulate
3500 South University Avenue

In the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s, the Bracero Program brought thousands of Mexican workers into the Arkansas delta to address labor shortages. This was an early federally-sponsored program for Mexican farm workers. Although white landowners welcomed them, Juan Crow and Jim Crow existed side-by-side as Mexican workers suffered from and fought against the prevalent racial and ethnic discrimination prevalent in the region. Braceroes challenged discrimination and the economic exploitation that underpinned it. One particularly successful campaign resulted in the establishment of the first minimum wage for farm workers in the Arkansas Delta, something that had been fiercely resisted in the past and from which both black and white farmers benefitted. After the farm program ended, some braceros became permanent legal residents, bringing their families to the state. More recently, Latinos have moved to northwest Arkansas in record numbers, fueled by the growth of jobs in the poultry industry. This part of the state now has one of the fastest growing Latino populations in the country. Little Rock is among one of a small number of cities in the United States that is home to a Mexican Consulate.

30.

Arkansas Civil Rights Heritage Trail

Various locations along Markham Street and President Clinton Avenue

The Arkansas Civil Rights Heritage Trail was launched in 2011 by the UALR Institute on Race and Ethnicity. Each year, a theme is chosen to honor a particular group of people who were active in Arkansas's civil rights movement. Year by year, the trail grows. The plan is that over time the trail will stretch from the current starting point at the Old State House, down West Markham Street and President Clinton Avenue to the Clinton Presidential Library and Museum, and then back up the other side of the street to opposite the Old State House.

31.

Freedom Riders and Sit-In Demonstrators

Plaque at 201 West Markham Street
Markers at 300 West Markham Street

In 1961, the Freedom Rides spread across the South to place pressure on local communities and the federal government to implement court-ordered desegregation of bus terminal facilities. Little Rock's first Freedom Riders, a contingent of five members of the St. Louis branch of the Congress of Racial Equality, arrived on the evening of July 10 at the Mid-West Trailways bus station at Markham and Louisiana. A plaque there marks the site and tells the story of the Little Rock Freedom Rides. The pressure exerted by the Freedom Rides, together with an Interstate Commerce Commission order to desegregate, led to the integration of all Little Rock's bus terminals on November 1, 1961. Five markers also commemorate Philander Smith College students involved in sit-in demonstrations between 1960 and

1962, as well as members of the Arkansas Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee. SNCC (pronounced “snick”) was active in Arkansas from 1962 to 1967.

32.

Downtown Desegregation
One Chamber of Commerce Plaza

In January 1963, Little Rock set in motion a process that ended segregation in its downtown businesses. Following student sit-ins coordinated by the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee and Philander Smith College students, in November 1962 white businessmen and merchants formed a secret Downtown Negotiating Committee to set out a timetable for change in consultation with black community representatives. On January 1, 1963, lunch counters in downtown Little Rock began to serve black customers on an equal basis. Downtown hotels desegregated their facilities. Drinking fountains and restrooms had their “White” and “Colored” signs removed. In June, movie theaters desegregated. In October, city restaurants desegregated. That same year, Robinson Auditorium, the Arkansas Arts Center, and city parks desegregated. In April 1963, in Jet magazine, James Forman, executive secretary of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, hailed the city as “just about the most integrated...in the South.”

33.

**The Little Rock Nine, Daisy and Luscious Christopher ("L.C.") Bates,
and Attorney Christopher C. Mercer**
101 East Markham Street

The Little Rock Nine—Minnijean Brown, Elizabeth Eckford, Ernest Green, Thelma Mothershed, Melba Pattillo, Gloria Ray, Terrance Roberts, Jefferson Thomas, and Carlotta Walls—were the first students to desegregate Central High School in September 1957. After Gov. Orval Faubus initially sought to block their entry to the school by using the National Guard, they eventually entered Central High School with an escort of federal troops sent by President Dwight D. Eisenhower. Daisy Bates was the mentor to the Little Rock Nine throughout their ordeal, as president of the Arkansas State Conference of National Association for the Advancement of Colored People branches. She co-owned Little Rock’s Arkansas State Press black newspaper with her husband L.C. Bates. The couple was victimized because of their support for school desegregation. Their home was attacked on a number of occasions and a boycott by segregationists put their newspaper out of business. Attorney Chris Mercer was a local NAACP assistant to Daisy Bates throughout the school crisis. He was one of the first “six pioneers” to desegregate the University of Arkansas Law School in the late 1940s and early 1950s.

34.

Healthcare Pioneers

St. Vincent's Plaza in the River Market

Healthcare has long been a civil rights issue. In the age of segregation, many blacks were denied healthcare by white physicians and hospitals under Jim Crow laws. African American physicians-such as Cleon A. Flowers, Sr., and John Marshall Robinson-played important roles in serving the black community. Nurse Lena Lowe Jordan founded the Lena Jordan Hospital in Little Rock in the 1930s. Edith Mae Irby desegregated the University of Arkansas Medical School in Little Rock in 1948. Dr. Irby paved the way for other black students and professors at the school. Thomas A. Bruce promoted access to quality healthcare to the underserved. Henry W. Foster became dean of Meharry Medical College in Tennessee. Billy Ray Thomas and Phillip Leon Rayford worked to increase underrepresented groups in the medical profession. Samuel Lee Kountz pioneered organ transplants. Joycelyn Elders, a UAMS graduate and director of the Arkansas Department of Health, served as the surgeon general of the United States during the presidency of Bill Clinton.

35.

Politics and Law

Scott Street and East Markham Street

Politics and Law have been two central pillars in civil rights struggles. The honorees here have contributed to those struggles in Arkansas in a number of ways. Annie Mae Bankhead was a community activist in Little Rock's black College Station neighborhood; Charles Bussey was Little Rock's first black mayor; Jeffery Hawkins was unofficial mayor of Little Rock's black East End neighborhood; I. S. McClinton was head of the Arkansas Democratic Voters Association; Irma Hunter Brown was the first black woman elected to the Arkansas General Assembly; Mahlon Martin was Little Rock's first black city manager; Richard L. Mays and Henry Wilkins III were among the first blacks elected to the Arkansas General Assembly in the twentieth century; Lottie Shackelford was Little Rock's first black woman mayor; Wiley Branton was head of the Southern Regional Council's Voter Education Project in the 1960s; William Harold Flowers laid the foundations for the Arkansas State Conference of NAACP branches; Scipio Africanus Jones defended twelve black prisoners after the 1919 Elaine Race Riot; Olly Neal was the first black district prosecuting attorney in Arkansas; and John Walker for over five decades has been involved in civil rights activism in the courts.