

RALEIGH, N.C. (January 11, 2023) — A motor lodge from the Jim Crow era. An advocate for equality who mentored tennis great Althea Gibson. A student-led campaign that mobilized a city. These histories are among 11 designated for markers on the [N.C. Civil Rights Trail](#), a project being developed by the [N.C. African American Heritage Commission](#).

The newly selected sites in Greensboro, Wilmington and Fayetteville join 14 designated in 2022 on a trail that spans the state. When completed, the path will feature up to 50 markers that highlight protests and community organization, milestones and court cases, points of interest and other sites of significance to North Carolina's Civil Rights story. With support from the [William G. Pomeroy Foundation](#) and [Visit North Carolina](#), the trail complements the 15-state [U.S. Civil Rights Trail](#).

"It's easy to think of history only as it relates to the past," said Wit Tuttell, executive director of Visit NC. "The stories on the Civil Rights Trail connect to the present in their reflection of triumph and the ongoing struggle for equality and social justice. By leading us to places where these histories happened, the trail inspires appreciation with the potential to motivate us to move these efforts forward."

With the approach of Martin Luther King Jr. Day and Black History Month, destinations on the N.C. Civil Rights Trail invite exploration. The ideas below lay out options for cities from the newly designated sites; find a similar [guide](#) for Shelby, High Point and Raleigh based on 2022 trail markers.

Greensboro

Occupying the former F.W. Woolworth department store where the 1960s sit-in movement was launched, the [International Civil Rights Center & Museum](#) makes [Greensboro](#) a top-tier destination for civil rights travel. Other sites and histories enrich the experience.

- [Historic Magnolia House](#). Newly added to the N.C. Civil Rights Trail, this former Green Book motel has risen on the landscape with a glorious restoration that culminated in 2021's reopening for overnight stays. Part of the National Trust for Historic Preservation's Historic Hotels of America registry, Magnolia House welcomed a distinguished list of luminaries during the Jim Crow era. Travelers can sleep in rooms where Jackie Robinson, James Baldwin, Tina Turner and others once stayed, enjoy dinner or a Shoe Box lunch, and attend a concert or other event.
- [N.C. A&T University](#). At the nation's largest HCBU, the [February One](#) monument honors the four alumni who propelled a national movement with the 1960 Woolworth sit-in. In the sculpture by faculty member [James Barnhill](#), the [Greensboro Four](#) stand 10 feet tall outside the [Dudley Building](#), home of the campus art galleries.
- [Gillespie Golf Course](#). The N.C. Civil Rights Trail site includes this municipal course where six Black players fought for the right to play. The U.S. Supreme Court ruled against them, but the case sparked [political change](#) that led to opening Greensboro's municipal facilities to all.
- [Support Black-owned businesses](#). Savor the fare at [Stephanie's](#) or [Dame's Chicken & Waffles](#), and pick up something sweet at [Black Magnolia Southern Patisserie](#) or [Savor the Moment Bakery & Dessert Café](#). Enjoy drinks and live music at [Elm Street Lounge](#).

Fayetteville

This [fast-growing city](#) of 209,000 is distinguished by more than the presence of Fort Bragg, the largest post in the U.S. Military. A 2022 [Lending Tree survey](#) placed the Fayetteville metro at the top of the list for percentage of Black-owned businesses. History notes that the North Carolina city was the first among scores of places named for the Marquis de Lafayette, the Revolutionary War

hero and author of “The Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen,” and the only one he visited. Points of interest for Black history travelers:

- **Downtown Fayetteville.** The N.C. Civil Rights Trail will commemorate 1963’s student-led protests, which activated the community and led to the end of discrimination at leading downtown businesses. The trail marker will be placed outside [Fascinate-U Children’s Museum](#), which is near the [Market House](#), a landmark with slavery ties that have prompted a rethinking of how the building confronts its past.
- **Museum of the Cape Fear Historical Complex.** This state-owned regional museum covers four centuries of history, including Fayetteville’s role in the Civil War. Within the complex, the Poe House includes a focus on Black history and social change during the turn of the 20th century. The museum is included on Fayetteville’s [African American Heritage Trail](#), which covers more than 20 sites.
- **82nd Airborne & Special Operations Museum.** Signature attraction brings heroic stories to life. Exhibits include one for the “[Triple Nickles](#),” the first all-Black parachute infantry platoon. Include a ride on the immersive Pritzker Simulator in your visit.
- **Support Black-owned businesses.** Spend a day at [Sweet Valley Ranch](#), a must-visit agritourism attraction with seasonal specialties and year-round appeal. Head to Hope Mills and family-friendly [Dirtbag Ales](#) for food, brews, music and events, or for total relaxation at the [Cave Halo Therapy & Spa](#). Treat yourself to the fare at [Uptown’s Chicken & Waffles](#) from Chef Judith Cage of Food Network fame, or go for the specialties at [Heart and Soul Soul Food and Lounge](#).

Wilmington

Black history fills the Port City. 1862: An enslaved artisan rowing his way from bondage to service in the Union Navy. 1865: U.S. Colored Troops mopping up after the Battle of Fort Fisher. 1898: White supremacists leading a mob to overthrow the city’s elected officials. 1971: [Ten Black citizens](#) being wrongfully convicted (and ultimately pardoned as innocent) of arson and conspiracy. A new N.C. Civil Rights Trail marker honoring changemaker [Hubert Eaton Sr.](#) adds dimension to Wilmington’s story and more reason for quality time exploring the city. A few starting points:

- **Guided or self-guided tour.** Two guided tours incorporate everything from the [Wilmington Coup](#) to the contributions of [Althea Gibson](#) mentor Eaton, a physician and acclaimed tennis player who led efforts to improve education and health care for Black residents. Groups can book the shuttle for [wilmingtonNColor Heritage Tour](#); Journey Wilmington’s walking tour can be arranged by emailing spellerislah@yahoo.com. Self-guided options include the app-based [African American History Tour](#) from Wilmington History Tours and the downloadable [Guide to Wilmington’s African American Heritage](#) brochure.
- **Cameron Art Museum.** The nation’s first park dedicated to the U.S. Colored Troops opened at the museum in November. Its centerpiece is sculptor Stephen Hayes’ “[Boundless](#),” cast from descendants of the USCT soldiers who [battled](#) Confederate forces here after the fall of Fort Fisher.
- **Bellamy Mansion Museum of History and Design** and **Poplar Grove Plantation.** These sites on the [Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor](#) trace the stories of the owners and enslaved residents of Bellamy Mansion in downtown Wilmington and Poplar Grove northeast of the city. The 22-room Bellamy mansion includes work by [William B. Gould](#), the escaped master plasterer who served in the Union Navy. Poplar Grove is open in February for Black History Month tours; the site opens for the season in late March.
- **Cape Fear Museum of History and Science.** Exhibits span a remarkable history, including the Civil Rights era and the Wilmington Ten plus hometown hero Michael Jordan.
- **Airline Gardens.** Come for the garden splendor and the legacy of [Minnie Evans](#), a self-taught artist who worked here as gatekeeper. A bottle chapel pays tribute to her artistry.
- **Support Black-owned businesses.** For destination dining, Chef Keith Rhodes’ [Catch](#) seafood restaurant attracts everyone from local diners to Hollywood stars in town for film projects. Enjoy more choice fare at [Nippy’s Soul Food Restaurant](#), [Sweet D’s Cuisine](#) and the newly opened [On Thyme Restaurant](#). Or plan a pop-up meal with [Luxe Picnic Co.](#)

For destinations and organizations interested in becoming part of the N.C. Civil Rights Trail, the application process is open through September 29. Find details [here](#).

About the N.C. Civil Rights Trail:

An initiative of the N.C. African American Heritage Commission with support from Visit North Carolina and the International Civil Rights Center & Museum, the N.C. Civil Rights Trail is being developed with community involvement across the state. Forty to 50 sites will be designated with at least 10 in Tier I and 2 rural North Carolina counties in alignment with Gov. Roy Cooper's [Hometown Strong](#) initiative. Completion of the program is targeted for 2024 at a cost of \$173,500 to cover a full-time program coordinator; development of a digital GIS map; development of an interactive web portal, featuring at least 150 sites; and up to 50 physical community-based markers.

About the N.C. African American Heritage Commission:

Created in 2008, the African American Heritage Commission is a division of the N.C. Department of Natural and Cultural Resources. The commission works across the department to preserve, protect and promote the state's African American history, art and culture for all people. Its endeavors include the identification of heritage sites, compiling resources for educators, extending the work of national programs such as the National Park Service's Network to Freedom Underground Railroad, and independent initiatives including Oasis Spaces: Green Book Project. aahc.nc.gov

About the William G. Pomeroy Foundation:

The William G. Pomeroy Foundation is committed to supporting the celebration and preservation of community history; and to raising awareness, supporting research and improving the quality of care for patients and their families who are facing a blood cancer diagnosis. One of their initiatives is helping people to celebrate their community's history. They meet this by providing grants to obtain signage in the form of roadside markers and plaques. Since 2006, they have funded over 1,300 signs across the United States, all the way to Alaska. Wgpfoundation.org

About Visit North Carolina:

Visit North Carolina is part of the [Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina](#). Established in 2014, the EDPNC is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation that oversees the state's efforts in business and job recruitment and retention, international trade, and tourism, film and sports development. The mission of Visit North Carolina is to unify and lead the state in developing North Carolina as a major destination for leisure travel, group tours, meetings and conventions, sports events and film production. For more information on North Carolina's destinations and travel assets, go to VisitNC.com.

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