

**NOBODY'S
FREE
UNTIL
EVERYBODY'S
FREE**

- FANNIE LOU HAMER
FREEDOM SUMMER ORGANIZER
AND CIVIL RIGHTS ACTIVIST



HATTIESBURG VISITORS CENTER



VISITHBURG.ORG

Created in partnership with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Mississippi Development Authority



Follow the historic path of the civil rights movement

HATTIESBURG, MISSISSIPPI



FREEDOM SUMMER '64

Historians regard the Civil Rights Era of the 1960's as one of the three most important periods in the domestic history of the United States, the others being the Civil War and the Great Depression. For this reason, it is necessary that historic sites of the Civil Rights Movement in Hattiesburg be so marked in order to honor those who made this history as well as to educate all citizens.

Freedom Summer played a prominent role in the Civil Rights Movement in Mississippi. Hattiesburg was the largest Freedom Summer site in Mississippi with more than 90 volunteers from out of state, 3000 local participants and up to 675 Freedom School students. In 1964, the Council of Federated Organizations — COFO — launched the statewide voter registration drive known as Mississippi Freedom Summer.

Freedom Summer began with the South's initial Freedom Day on January 22, 1964. On this day, hundreds of Forrest County African American residents stood all day in the rain waiting to enter the Forrest County Courthouse in order to attempt to register to vote. Peaceful demonstrations such as this continued in front of the Courthouse throughout the spring. These protesters were

supported by volunteers from across the nation including 50 pastors from the National Council of Churches.

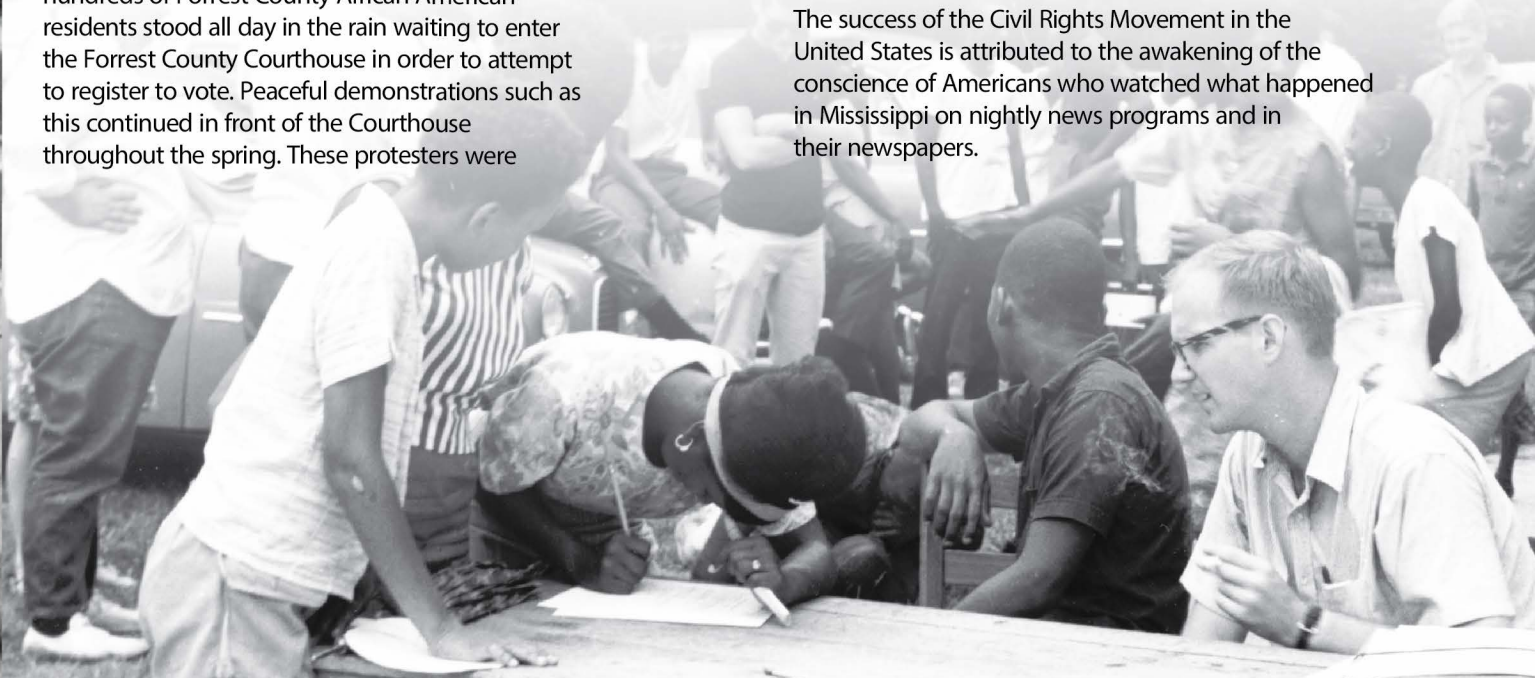
In July and August of that year, COFO workers and volunteers established Freedom Schools in seven area African American churches. Mass meetings were held at these churches and the congregations opened their homes to volunteers, housing and feeding them at the risk of violence and economic reprisal.

The Freedom Schools offered classes in subjects like civics and Negro History that were not taught consistently in the public schools. Enrollment in local Freedom Schools was so large that Hattiesburg was referred to as 'the Mecca of the Freedom School World.' Palmer's

Crossing Freedom School students authored the 'Declaration of Independence' that was adopted at the statewide convention of Mississippi Freedom Schools held in Meridian in 1964. The 'Declaration' was also included in the platform of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party that same year.

The success of the Civil Rights Movement in the United States is attributed to the awakening of the conscience of Americans who watched what happened in Mississippi on nightly news programs and in their newspapers.

FREEDOM DAY
JANUARY 22, 1964



AUDIO DRIVING TOUR

To access the Freedom Summer Trail audio tour, dial **866.3HATTIE**. An introduction to the tour will play. At any point during the tour, press the desired site number - 1, 2, 3... to hear an account of that site's role during Freedom Summer. Press # to proceed to the next site or press * to return to the previous site. To return to the beginning of the tour, press 0. We recommend you allow 90 minutes for the full tour.

START YOUR TOUR

Turn right out of the Visitors Center onto U.S. Highway 49. Stay in the far right lane which turns into the ramp for I-59 North toward Laurel. Go 5.5 miles and take Exit 73 for Monroe Road. At the end of the ramp, turn right on Monroe and go 1.6 miles to number 796.



VERNON DAHMER HOME

796 Monroe Road, Kelly Settlement - Original home destroyed by firebomb in January 1966

Hattiesburg African American businessman Vernon Dahmer was at the heart of the Freedom Summer movement. As NAACP president, Dahmer gave his full support to many civil rights activities. He is best remembered for his voting rights campaign banner, "If you don't vote, you don't count." He was tragically killed in 1966 when the Klu Klux Klan firebombed the house.

Audio narrated by Dahmer's widow Ellie

Proceed on Monroe Road for 3.8 miles. It will become Glendale Road. Continue thru the caution light/stop sign and drive 1.2 miles to the Highway 42 Bypass. Turn left onto Highway 42 and travel .8 miles to Dewey Street. Turn right and travel .1 miles to the church on the left.

TRUE LIGHT BAPTIST CHURCH

1101 Dewey Street
Congregation currently resides at 840 Main Street

Reverend W.D. Ridgeway served as Pastor in 1964.

Audio narrated by Milan Hoze



The next marker is directly across the street.

HATTIESBURG COMMUNITY CENTER

1100 Dewey Street - demolished
Now a vacant lot

This and other community centers functioned as Freedom School libraries and exhibition areas for the artwork of Freedom School students during Freedom Summer 1964. The centers also served as auditoriums for touring folk singers such as Pete Seeger, planning meetings for local civil rights activities and health care centers staffed by visiting doctors and nurses.

Audio narrated by Larry Blackman

Continue on Dewey Street and turn left onto East 10th Street. Take next right onto Memphis Street and drive .2 miles. Turn left onto East 7th Street and drive .1 miles where the church will be on your left.



ST. JAMES CHRISTIAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH
408 East 7th Street
Congregation currently resides at 705 Country Club Road

Was a mass assembly site in 1964 when Reverend W.M. Hudson served as Pastor.

Audio narrated by Milan Hoze

Continue on East 7th Street and take next right onto Mobile Street. The building is on the right in .1 miles.

HATTIESBURG MINISTERS UNION HEADQUARTERS MASONIC LODGE NO. 115
522 Mobile Street

This building, constructed in 1950, housed a Radio and Television Repair business and the Negro Masonic Lodge Number 115. It served as the headquarters of the Hattiesburg Ministers Union where local African American ministers helped to organize pastors taking a lead in the Civil Rights Movement. The union oversaw the arrival, lodging, meals, showers and civil rights activities of hundreds of Protestant pastors and Jewish rabbis from across the country.

Audio narrated by Raylawni Branch

Just ahead on the left is 507 Mobile Street, now marked by a City park.



WOODS GUEST HOUSE - FREEDOM HOUSE

507 Mobile Street - destroyed by fire on September 17, 1998

The Woods Guest House, also known as Freedom House, was built circa 1895 as a hotel for African Americans in a segregated society. It was located in the heart of Mobile Street, the "main street" of Hattiesburg's African American community. During Freedom Summer 1964, the hotel served as the headquarters of the Hattiesburg and Palmer's Crossing project and the headquarters of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party.

Audio narrated by Peggy Connor

Take immediate right onto East 5th Street. Church is .3 miles on the left.

ST. PAUL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

215 East 5th Street

A cornerstone of the community for decades, St. Paul was a Freedom School in 1964 under Pastor Reverend E.E. Grinnett.

Audio narrated by Milan Hoze

Continue on East 5th Street to Main Street. Turn left onto Main and travel .5 miles to the Library on your left.

HATTIESBURG PUBLIC LIBRARY

723 Main Street (now houses the Cultural Center)



The main branch of the Hattiesburg Public Library reflected the rest of the segregated society and only allowed white citizens to check out books and use other library services although it was funded by the taxes of all citizens. Several attempts were made by African American children to check out books during Freedom Summer 1964; however, they were denied.

Audio narrated by Umoja Kwanguvu

Continue one and a half blocks on Main Street to the Courthouse on the right.

FORREST COUNTY COURTHOUSE

Corner of Main and Eaton Streets

The Forrest County Courthouse was the focus of the Civil Rights Movement activists in Hattiesburg. Beginning on Freedom Day January 22, 1964 and continuing throughout the Spring, a "perpetual picket line" of peaceful demonstrators marched in front of the Courthouse for African American voting rights. Civil Rights Movement leaders and pastors came from all over the country to join locals in their march at the Courthouse.

Audio narrated by Reverend John Cameron and Daisy Harris Wade

Continue south on Main Street, which becomes Bay Street after the railroad tracks. From Hulett-Winstead Funeral Home on your right, drive .2 miles and take a left on Elizabeth Avenue. After the railroad tracks, turn right onto Williams Street. Take next left onto Rebecca Avenue. Drive .3 miles and turn left onto Klondyke Street. Take next right on Elizabeth. The church is on the left.

MORNING STAR BAPTIST CHURCH

1406 Elizabeth Avenue

Reverend Cloudy Lumzy served as Pastor in 1964 when the church served as a Freedom School.

Audio narrated by Cheryl Outlaw

Return to Klondyke. Turn right onto Rebecca. Turn left onto Williams. Travel .3 miles and turn right onto James. At the traffic light, turn left on Edwards Street. Drive .2 miles and turn right on Milton Barnes Avenue. Mt. Zion will be a half mile on your left at the corner of Spencer Street.

MT. ZION BAPTIST CHURCH

901 Spencer Street - rebuilt
Original demolished in 1993

Known locally as the "Civil Rights Church," Mt. Zion hosted a Freedom School in 1964 under Pastor Reverend F.L. Barnes. Four years later, on March 19, 1968, Reverend Martin Luther King spoke here - two weeks before his death.

Audio narrated by Doris Gaines

Turn left back onto Spencer and go .2 miles. Turn right onto Ruby Street and drive .4 miles. Turn left onto Martin Luther King Drive and drive .2 miles. Turn right onto Breland Avenue. The church lies at the corner of Breland and J.C. Killingsworth Drive.

BENTLEY CHAPEL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

611 Breland Street



Reverend L.P. Ponder served as Pastor in 1964 when this church served as a key organizational site.

Audio narrated by Jeanette Smith



Turn left onto J.C. Killingsworth Drive. Continue straight at the traffic light into Tuscan Avenue and drive one mile to a T-intersection. Turn right onto Edwards Street and travel 2 miles to Old Airport Road (at the Beverly Drive-In just before the Highway 49 Junction.) Turn left onto Old Airport and travel 1.4 miles. Turn right before the railroad tracks onto Sullivan Road. The church is on the right.

ST. JOHN UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

121 Sullivan Drive

Another site of a Freedom School, Reverend L.P. Ponder served as Pastor in 1964.

Audio narrated by Lillie Easton

Return to Old Airport Road. As you cross the railroad tracks, this street becomes Tatum Road. Drive .1 miles. The church is on the right.

PRIEST CREEK MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH

Old Airport Road
Palmer's Crossing

Reverend I.C. Allen served as Pastor in 1964 when this site served as a Freedom School.

Audio narrated by Dr. Sandra Adickes

Priest Creek Church parking lot is on south side of Tatum Road.

PALMER'S CROSSING COMMUNITY CENTER

Old Airport Road - demolished

Much like the Hattiesburg Community Center - site 3 on the tour - this Center served as a library and performance site for song and stage performed by supporters of the cause.

Audio narrated by Milan Hoze

THIS MARKS THE END OF THE TOUR

Return to Old Airport Road and travel northwest to Edwards Street. Turn left on Edwards Street. This will intersect with Highway 49.

