



"Bryant's Grocery"
Freedom Trail Marker
Money Road, 33.652535, -90.208619
 On an August night in 1955, Chicago teenager Emmett Till was kidnapped and murdered after a chance encounter with the wife of this store's owner. The outrage following this incident galvanized the emerging Civil Rights Movement.

"Black Power Speech"
Freedom Trail Marker
Broad Street & Avenue N
 On the night of June 12, 1966, SNCC (Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee) Chairman Stokely Carmichael



rallied a crowd of protestors in this park with shouts of "We want black power!" Greenwood was the midpoint of James Meredith's "March Against Fear" from Memphis to Jackson. Carmichael and two other marchers had been arrested for pitching tents on a school campus. By the time they were bailed out, more than 600 marchers and local people had gathered in the park, and Carmichael seized the moment to voice the "black power" slogan, which fellow SNCC worker Willie Ricks had originated.

First SNCC Office
616 Avenue I
 This two-story brick building housed Robert Burns' photography studio and provided office space for SNCC's first Greenwood operative, Sam Block, in the summer of 1962. After Block was attacked and beaten, SNCC sent field secretaries Lawrence Guyot and Luvaughn Brown in to work with Block. Several incidents of intimidation and vandalism were directed at the SNCC office, and Mr. Burns requested that the office be relocated.

Second SNCC Office
McLaurin Street & Avenue G
 After leaving the Avenue I office, SNCC

workers set up shop in a building that stood on this site. By 1963, local participation in Civil Rights activities was growing, accelerated by the supervisors' decision to halt commodity distribution. The Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), Council of Federated Organizations (COFO), Southern Christian



Leadership Conference (SCLC) and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) joined with SNCC to promote voter registration and literacy efforts. On the night of March 24, 1963, a fire destroyed much of the records and equipment in this office.

Third SNCC Office
708 Avenue N
 From 1964 to 1968, the two-story building on this lot served as SNCC's national headquarters. On the same block, directly across from Broad Street Park, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, NAACP and Congress of Racial Equality also had offices.

Union Grove M.B. Church
615 Saint Charles Street
 Union Grove was the first Baptist church in Greenwood to open its doors to Civil Rights activities when it participated in the 1963 Primary Election Freedom Vote. Comedian and activist Dick Gregory spoke at the church in the spring of that year as part of his campaign to provide food and clothing to those left in need after Leflore County Supervisors discontinued federal commodities distribution.

St. Francis Center
709 Avenue I
 This Catholic Church structure served as a hospital for blacks and a food distribution center in the years before the Civil Rights Movement. The *Center Light* newspaper was published here over a fifteen-year period. Father Nathaniel Machesky, along with CMC minister William Wallace and AME pastor M.J. Black, coordinated the 1967 boycott of local businesses from this site.



CHANGE BEGAN HERE

GREENWOOD AND LEFLORE COUNTY, MISSISSIPPI



Photo by The Greenwood Commonwealth.

"Emmett Till Square at Rail Spike Park"
Johnson St. & Howard St.
 The bronze statue stands 9 feet tall in remembrance of the young Till whose brutal kidnapping and murder acted as a catalyst for the civil rights movement. The statue stands just 10 miles from Bryant's Grocery where the 14-year-old was accused of flirting with shopkeeper Carolyn Bryant.

Emmett Louis Till
The brutal murder of 14-year-old Emmett Till in 1955 awakened the nation and mobilized the American Civil Rights Movement.

Birth of a Movement
"In the meetings everything—uncertainty, fear, even desperation—finds expression, and there is comfort and sustenance in talkin' 'bout it."
 — Michael Thelwell, SNCC Organizer

In the middle of the 20th century, Greenwood and Leflore County witnessed a slow but certain shift in the winds of justice, a gathering spirit of hope and promise and determination that what had been taken for so long would be taken no more. Those with deep roots in the Delta joined their voices with those from far away and vowed that they would not be turned back. Their steps can be traced, even today, along the streets in and around Greenwood.



225 Howard Street • Greenwood, MS 38930
 (662) 453-9197 • www.visitgreenwood.com



First Christian Church
(now East Percy Street Christian Church) 100 East Percy Street
 Reverend Aaron Johnson allowed SNCC organizers to hold a meeting in his sanctuary after the Elks Lodge refused to host any more gatherings. Local blacks packed the room for preaching, testimonies and singing, energizing both young and old for the struggles yet to come.

Elks Hart Lodge
106 East Scott Street
 Cleveland Jordan, a Greenwood farmer who had challenged the voter registration laws as early as 1951, used his influence in the black Elks Lodge to make it available for Sam Block's SNCC meetings in 1962. This arrangement ended after just two events, when lodge members bowed to pressure from the Citizens Council and closed their doors to SNCC.

Jennings Temple Methodist Church
320 Avenue G
 This church served as a polling place for the 1963 Primary Election Freedom Vote, the first time many local blacks had enjoyed the opportunity to cast a ballot. On March 16, 1968, Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. spoke at Jennings Temple, just a few weeks before heading to Memphis in support of striking sanitation workers. He would be assassinated there on April 4, 1968.

Friendship M.B. Church
Avenue E & Noel Street
 After its offices burned in March of 1963, COFO's headquarters was moved to Friendship Baptist Church, whose congregation and minister had reluctantly joined the movement for Civil Rights. When Friendship stepped up its participation, 31 ministers signed a pledge endorsing the growing efforts in Greenwood.

Reno Cafe
310 West McLaurin Street
 Workers like Sam Block of SNCC operated on a shoestring budget and were largely dependent on the kindness of friends and business owners to keep food on their tables and roofs over their heads. The Reno Cafe's proprietors were known by movement organizers to be generous and quietly supportive of the activities going on in their neighborhood.

Turner Chapel AME Church
717 Walthall Street
 This African Methodist Episcopal Church served as a gathering place during the August, 1963, Primary Election Freedom Vote. Many blacks voted for the first time in their lives, although their ballots were rejected by the Leflore County Democratic Party. A few months later, during the November general election, thousands of blacks across Mississippi turned out to vote.

Wesley United Methodist Church
800 Howard Street
 This church served a critical role in the distribution of donated food and clothing through SNCC and COFO efforts during the winter of 1962-1963. From this location,



SNCC Executive Secretary James Forman led a large group of protesters toward City Hall, where they were met by city officials and police, including one off-duty officer with a leashed German Shepherd. After the confrontation, the crowd returned to Wesley Church with renewed determination.

Booker's Place
211 Walthall Street
 Booker Wright owned a small restaurant and worked as a waiter at Lusco's, a segregated restaurant for whites only. It was well known among community organizers that good meals and fellowship were always available at Booker's Place. Wright lost his waiter's job as a result of heartfelt remarks made about

his daily struggles with racism during a 1965 interview for an NBC News documentary, *Mississippi: A Self Portrait*.

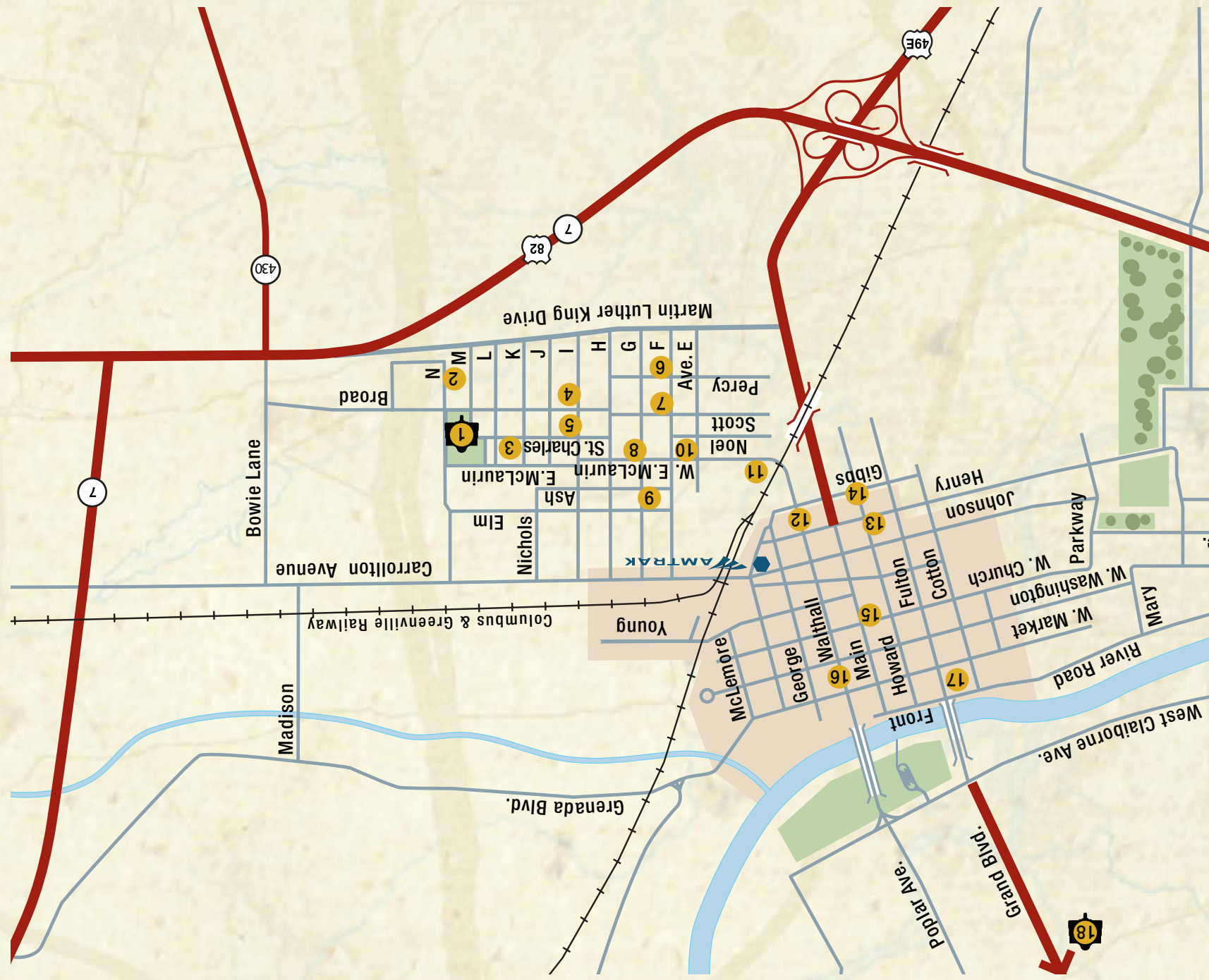
Greenwood City Hall
Main & Church Streets
 The city's 1930 Art Deco administration building also housed the Police Department in the 1960s, leading to several notable confrontations as marchers were arrested and jailed. Frequent clashes between city officials and movement organizers occurred on the lawn and in the hallways.



Leflore County Courthouse
306 West Market Street
 This imposing building became the flash-point for Civil Rights protests, with frequent marches and demonstrations. Newsmen and photographers from around the world set up on the corner of Fulton and Market streets to record the clashes between Greenwood's authorities and the growing body of aspiring voters.

GREENWOOD CIVIL RIGHTS HISTORY SITES

- 1 "Black Power Speech" Trail Marker**
Broad Street & Avenue N
- 2 Third SNCC Office**
708 Avenue N
- 3 Union Grove M.B. Church**
615 Saint Charles Street
- 4 St. Francis Center**
709 Avenue I
- 5 First SNCC Office**
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- 6 First Christian Church**
(now East Percy Street Christian Church)
100 East Percy Street
- 7 Elk's Hart Lodge**
106 East Scott Street
- 8 Second SNCC Office**
McLaurin & Avenue G
- 9 Jennings Temple Methodist Church**
320 Avenue G
- 10 Friendship M.B. Church**
Avenue E & Noel Street
- 11 Reno Cafe**
310 West McLaurin Street
- 12 Turner Chapel AME Church**
717 Walthall Street
- 13 Emmett Till Statue**
209 W Johnson St
Greenwood, MS 38930
- 14 Wesley United Methodist Church**
800 Howard Street
- 15 Greenwood City Hall**
Main & Church Streets
- 16 Booker's Place**
211 Walthall Street
- 17 Leftlore County Courthouse**
306 West Market Street
- 18 "Bryant's Grocery" Trail Marker**
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A Marching for freedom
Corner of Gibbs and Main streets
Civil Rights icons Martin Luther King Jr., Stokely Carmichael and Andrew Young lead a group of protesters through the streets of Greenwood in June of 1966.

B Arrested
306 West Market Street
By the mid 1960s, the Greenwood Police Department had an organized auxiliary to provide additional manpower in their efforts to curtail the marchers and demonstrations. Here a policeman and his auxiliary arrest Reverend Kinloch.

C March Against Fear
329 West McLaurin Street
Reverend Martin Luther King Jr. is front and center as marchers head up the incline of the Illinois Central Railroad crossing from West McLaurin Street to Walthall Street.

D Leflore County Courthouse
310 West Market Street
The Leflore County Circuit Clerk's office was the scene of much activity as organizers from around the nation arrived in Greenwood for an all-out voter registration effort. As a result, wave upon wave of disenfranchised citizens marched almost daily to the Leflore County Courthouse. Poll taxes, literacy tests and a requirement to correctly interpret a section of the Mississippi Constitution had long been employed to prevent black citizens from becoming qualified voters.

E Music and the Movement
306 West Market Street
In 1963, Bob Dylan entertains a group of SNCC volunteers in Greenwood, Mississippi singing 'Only a Pawn in Their Game,' a song about the murder of activist Medgar Evers.

F Segregation forever
325 Main Street
Public transportation facilities were segregated throughout the south. Local vandals intent on reminding travelers of the "rules" spray painted "Colored Only" and "White Only" on Greenwood's Greyhound Bus station. The crudely scrawled writing defaced every corner of the building.

G Dogs to spread fear
315 Fulton Street
The Greenwood Police Department added a K-9 unit in an effort to further intimidate local demonstrators. The German Shepherd is seen here lunging toward a protester as a group of marchers makes their way toward the Leflore County Courthouse.

H An urgent message
616 Avenue H
Reverend Martin Luther King Jr. sent this urgent telegram to then President John F. Kennedy, urging him to personally intervene in behalf of the citizens and civil rights workers engaged in voter registration efforts in Greenwood, Mississippi.



Bob Filch photos (A and C) courtesy Stanford University Libraries



F



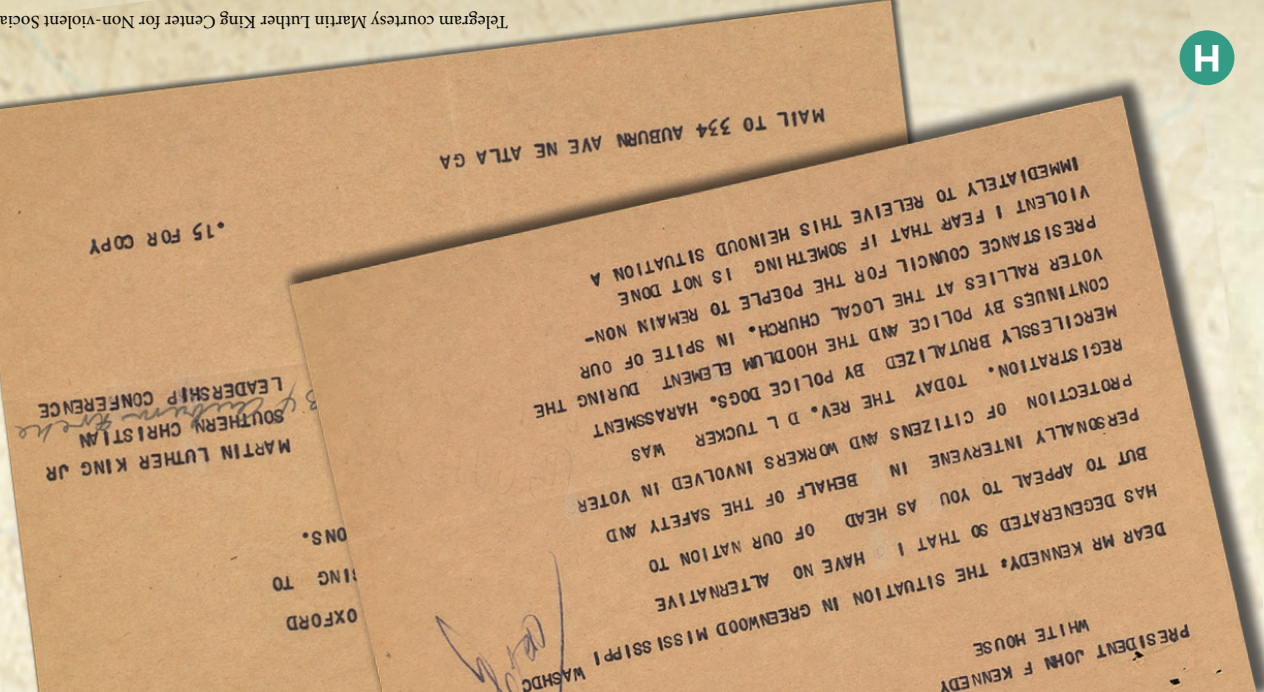
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H



A booklet Driving Tour of Civil Rights Landmarks - Greenwood Mississippi was produced by the Hanner Institute at Jackson State University in 2007. www.jsu.ms.edu/hannerinstitute/
The Greenwood Sites Project was organized by the Greenwood Convention and Visitors Bureau in partnership with the Mississippi Delta National Heritage Area.

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Danny Lyon photo