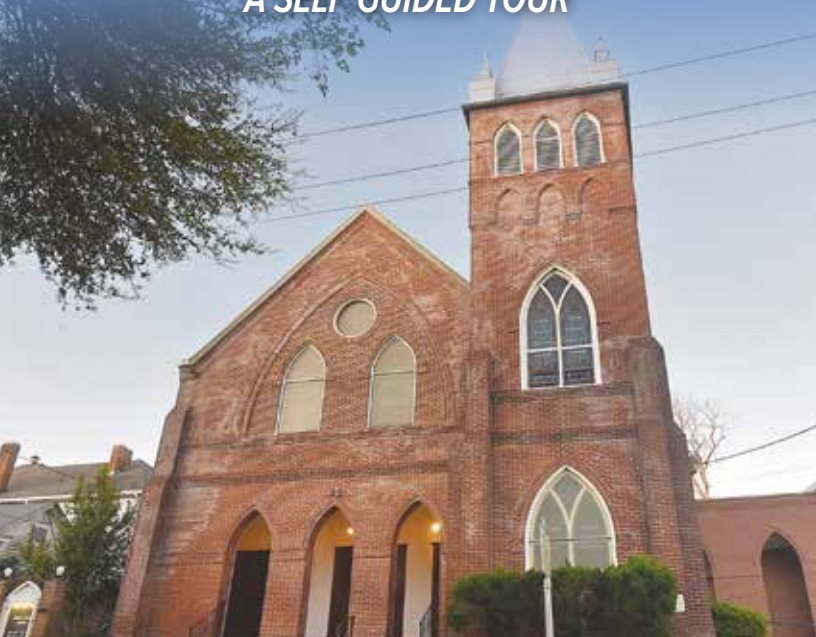




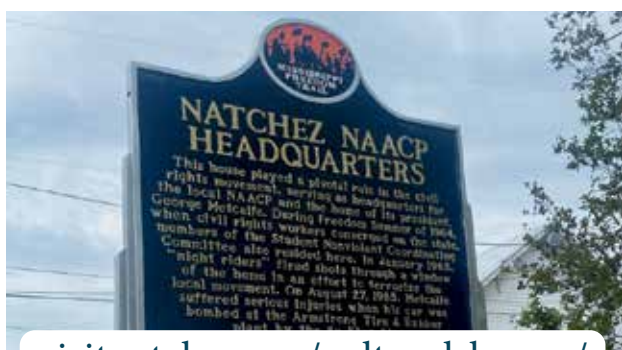
NATCHEZ

AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY TRAIL

A SELF-GUIDED TOUR



SPONSORED BY VISIT NATCHEZ
CITY OF NATCHEZ
NATCHEZ MUSEUM OF AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY AND CULTURE
HISTORIC NATCHEZ FOUNDATION



visitnatchez.org/cultural-legacy/



NATCHEZ IS A CITY OF CHANGE AND TRANSFORMATION.

The changes are seen in the creation of new attractions that include historical monuments, museums, renewed storytelling, Black History programs, and nationally published articles, all of which present Natchez as a city that's rich in cultural history. It is a city now known for its diversity and its inclusion when it comes to race, religion, and historical offerings.

601.492.3000



GREETINGS

On behalf of the City of Natchez and NAPAC, the Natchez Association of the Preservation of African American History and Culture, we invite you to explore this special publication, a unique history of Natchez and those significant individuals who worked so hard to build it. We are grateful to The Natchez Democrat, Historic Natchez Foundation, Visit Natchez, and all who have made the telling of this story possible.

For many years, ever since its founding in March of 1990, NAPAC through its Natchez Museum of African American History and Culture has been telling this story, educating both locals and visitors from all corners of the globe on the history of the African American community in Natchez. The story is an amazing one, from its beginnings with the earliest arrival of Africans in the Natchez area in the 1700's, through the challenges of slavery, reconstruction, and the struggle for civil rights, to the current time where the achievements of many noted African American Natchezians are now celebrated.

Since 2023, working together with community partners and the Natchez Monument Company, NAPAC and the City of Natchez have embarked upon a signage campaign to identify historical sites of significance to the African American and Civil Rights history of Natchez. This NAPAC Self-Guided History Tour takes the vision of its founders to the next level – and we give tribute to our founders, Judge Mary Lee Toles and the group of ladies she inspired, Josie Gilchrist Camper, Mary White, Flora Terrell, Patricia Washington, Juanita Jones, and Patricia Powers.

Enjoy the stories. May this publication inspire you to dig deeper and discover the true history of Natchez. Ours is an amazing story.



DAN GIBSON



BOBBY DENNIS

*Sincerely,
Dan M. Gibson
Mayor of Natchez*

*Bobby Dennis
Managing Director, NAPAC Museum*

This brochure is published by Visit Natchez in partnership with the City of Natchez, Natchez Museum of African American History and Culture and Historic Natchez Foundation. Copyright 2024.

1.



THE DR. JOHN BANKS HOUSE
9 ST. CATHERINE ST.



Dr. John Banks was the first African American doctor in Natchez. His home at 9 St. Catherine St. was built in the Queen Anne style about 1892 and was remodeled in the Colonial Revival style after about 1905. The Banks House also served as the headquarters for the local chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) during the Civil Rights Movement. In 1997, Dr. John Banks' grandson, Frank Robinson, moved back to Natchez to restore the home which had fallen into disrepair. Rose Hill Missionary Baptist Church has operated the Banks House as a historic house museum since 2011.

2.



BRUMFIELD SCHOOL
100 ST. CATHERINE ST.



George Washington Brumfield was born in 1866 in Yazoo County, Mississippi, and moved to Natchez in the 1890s. For more than 25 years he was principal of the African American schools of the city including the Union School, the first public school built by the City of Natchez for African American students. Brumfield School was constructed at 100 St. Catherine Street in 1925. During racial segregation, Brumfield was a social center for the African American community. Its auditorium hosted performances of jazz musicians including Lazander Kinds, Joe Jennings, Robert Hinds, and Robert Granville. Brumfield closed in the 1980s and was later rehabilitated as apartments.

3.



THE FORKS OF THE ROAD

105 LIBERTY ROAD



Before the Civil War, Natchez served as the second busiest slave-trading market in the Deep South. In 1833 the traders were pushed out of the city limits to a site known as the Forks of the Road at the intersection of Liberty Road and D'Evereux Drive, one mile east of downtown Natchez (where, historically, the road to Liberty, MS intersected with the road to Washington, MS). The Washington Road carried chained coffles of enslaved men, women, and children who had been force-marched down the Natchez Trace from Virginia, Maryland, and Kentucky to the market at Natchez. The slave market operated until the arrival of Federal troops on July 13, 1863. It then served as a base of operations for the US Colored Troops until its destruction in 1864.

4.



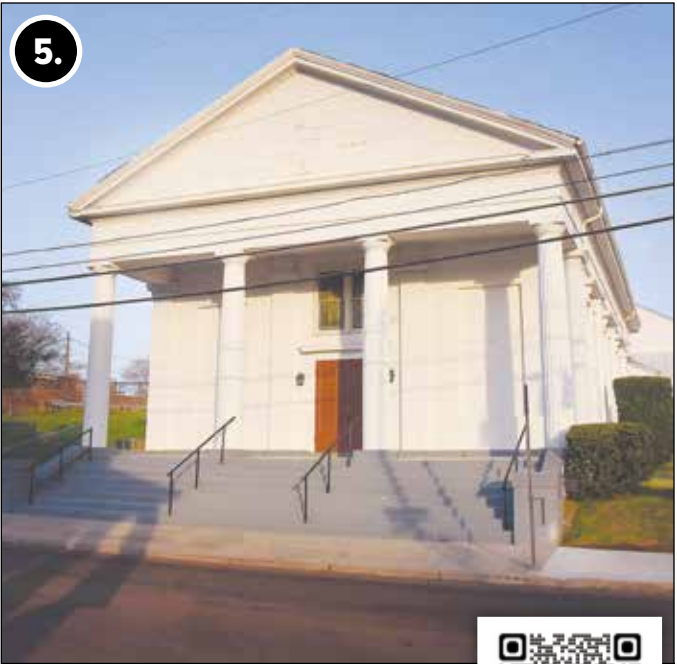
PROUD TO TAKE A STAND MONUMENT

207 JEFFERSON ST.



The City of Natchez, with the assistance of the Parchman Ordeal Committee, commissioned a monument in memory of the turbulent Civil Rights Movement, to honor those who were imprisoned and died fighting for equal rights. It sits at the corner of Jefferson and N. Canal streets, on the grounds of the Natchez City Auditorium. In the fall of 1965, after the city had imposed an injunction against public protests, more than 500 protestors and marchers were arrested in Natchez and held in the city auditorium before many of them were sent to Parchman Penitentiary. More than 1,200 people joined a march in support of the movement. A subsequent boycott, led by the NAACP, brought about an agreement with, and concessions from, the City of Natchez. In October 2015, fifty years later, the City of Natchez issued an official apology for its actions and recognized the survivors of the Parchman Ordeal and the families of those participants who were deceased, as well as the participants and families of those who were detained in Natchez but not actually sent to Parchman.

5.



ZION CHAPEL A.M.E. CHURCH
228 N. DR. M.L. KING ST.



Hiram R. Revels, who had been born free in North Carolina, was the pastor of Zion Church in 1866 when the congregation acquired the 1858 church building from the Second Presbyterian Church. Revels had worked to raise US Colored Troops units prior to coming to Natchez. He then served in the Mississippi Legislature, which in 1870 elected him to the United States Senate, making Revels the first black man to serve in either house of Congress. The church at 228 N. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. St. was described as the “largest, most intelligent, wealthiest, and most influential church in the Mississippi Conference” in the 1902 Cyclopedia of African Methodism in Mississippi.

6.



WILLIAM JOHNSON HOUSE
210 STATE ST.



Known as the Barber of Natchez, William Johnson began his life as a slave in 1809 but was freed by his owner (who was likely his father) at age 11. He was a prominent mixed-race barber in Natchez and the wealthiest of the town’s antebellum community of free people of color. Johnson, who was also a slave owner, raised his family at his home at 210 State Street and kept a diary that chronicled a broad spectrum of activities in the bustling town until his murder in 1851. Today, his published diary is an important resource for the study of antebellum Southern culture, free blacks, African–American History and American History in general. The William Johnson House today is a unit of Natchez National Historical Park.

7.



RHYTHM NIGHT CLUB
5 ST. CATHERINE ST.

On April 23, 1940, a large number of the African American community gathered at the Rhythm Club at 5 St. Catherine Street to hear the Walter Barnes Orchestra from Chicago. Two hundred nine African Americans perished after a fire broke out, possibly caused by a match or cigarette igniting the petroleum-sprayed moss which had been used as decoration. At the time, this was the second most deadly fire in American history and led to major revisions in fire safety protocol nationwide. The tragedy virtually wiped out a generation of Natchez young people, with lasting impacts to the community. Nearby Zion Chapel AME Church served as a triage hub for the victims; many of those who died are buried in a mass grave at Watkins Street Cemetery.



8.



ANGELETY HOUSE
180 ST. CATHERINE ST.

Located at 180 St Catherine St., this 1850s cottage was occupied by the Emile Angelety family at the turn of the 20th century. Angelety was an African American brick mason contractor who also operated a wood yard on St. Catherine Street. The City of Natchez acquired the cottage and restored the house as part of a 1970s urban renewal project that demolished entire neighborhoods of historic buildings for construction of new housing along St. Catherine Street. Today the building serves as headquarters for the Southwest Mississippi Chapter of the National Coalition of 100 Black Women, Inc.



9.



RICHARD WRIGHT'S GRANDMOTHER'S HOUSE
20 WOODLAWN AVE.

Richard Wright's grandmother's house located in the historic Woodlawn district is where the author spent his early childhood years.



10.


ROBERT SMITH HOUSE
107 S. BROADWAY ST.


The Smith-Bontura-Evans House at 107 S. Broadway is a historic house and business built by Robert D. Smith, a free African American who built the combined building for his livery business and a Greek Revival residence between 1851 and 1858. Like William Johnson, Robert Smith lived in antebellum Natchez as part of the largest community of free people of color in the state of Mississippi. This largely middle-class community provided respectable jobs for barbers, carriage drivers, brick masons, seamstresses, and bakers.

11.


BLACK BUSINESS DISTRICT
ST. CATHERINE STREET

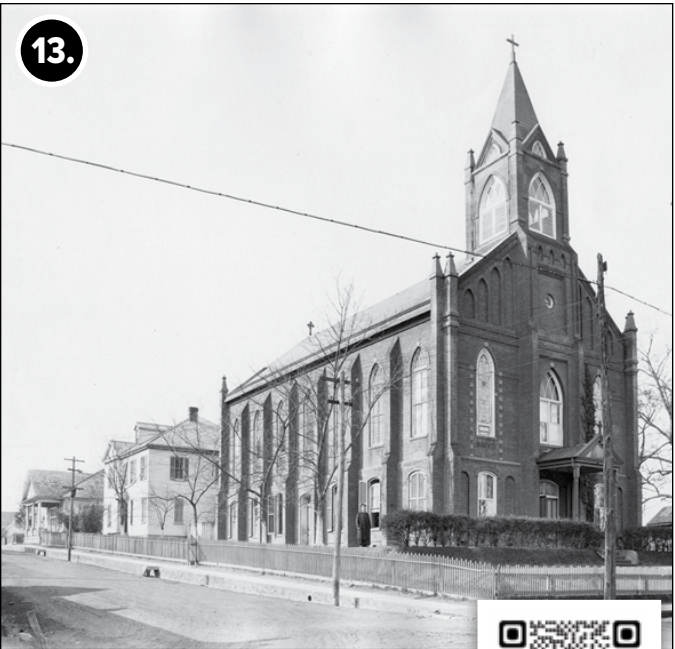

From Black entrepreneurs to leaders of the Civil Rights Movement, this district showcases the legacy of African American businesses and community centers in Natchez.

12.


HENRY J. AND IDA PAGE DUMAS HOUSE
69 ST. CATHERINE ST.


Henry managed the Dumas Pharmacy at 707-09 Franklin Street, a building that also housed the medical practice and sanitarium of his brother Dr. Albert W. Dumas, Sr. In 1940 Dr. Dumas served as the president of the National Medical Association, the national organization of African American doctors. Henry and Ida Dumas bought the house in 1907, and their family owned the house throughout the 20th Century.

13.



HOLY FAMILY CATHOLIC CHURCH
30 ST. CATHERINE ST.



In 1889, Bishop Thomas Heslin started the first parish for Roman Catholic African Americans in Mississippi. The first small frame church was located on Beaumont Street, but in 1894 the congregation dedicated the Victorian Gothic brick church that stands today at the corner of Orange Avenue and St. Catherine Street. In 1899 the Josephine Society of the Sacred Heart, a Baltimore society focused in ministering to African Americans took charge of the church. They assumed ownership of the property in 1904. Their strong commitment to social justice had a profound effect on the Civil Rights Movement in Natchez. Father William Morrissey especially emerged as a Civil Rights leader in Natchez, working closely with the NAACP. He encouraged his parishioners to integrate schools in Natchez.

14.



WATKINS STREET CEMETERY
1300 WATKINS ST.



This cemetery at 1300 Watkins Street was begun in 1909 by the purchase of 17 acres. It was then known as The Colored Peoples Cemetery. Today the grounds are maintained by volunteers, county workers, and a spirited civic group. Notable burials here at rest include a common grave with many persons who died in the Rhythm Club Fire. A new memorial gives tribute to this tragedy.



1. The Dr. John Banks House
9 St. Catherine St.

2. Brumfield School
100 St. Catherine St.

3. The Forks of the Road
105 Liberty Road

4. Proud to Take a Stand Monument
207 Jefferson St.

5. Zion Chapel A.M.E. Church
228 N. Dr. M.L. King St.

6. William Johnson House
210 State St.

7. Rhythm Night Club Memorial Museum
5 St. Catherine St.

8. Angelety House
180 St. Catherine St.

9. Richard Wright's Grandmother's House
20 Woodlawn Ave.

10. Robert Smith House
107 S. Broadway St.

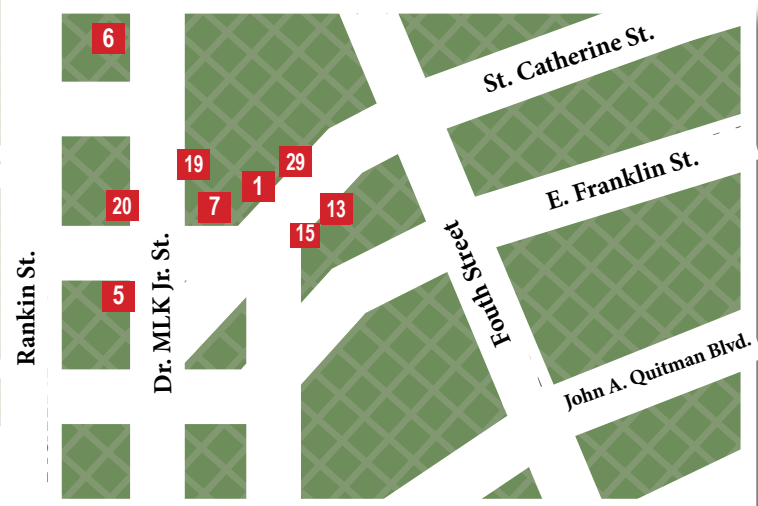
11. Black Business District
St. Catherine Street

12. Henry J. and Ida Page Dumas House
69 St. Catherine St.

13. Holy Family Catholic Church
30 St. Catherine St.

14. Watkins Street Cemetery
1300 Watkins St.

15. The Sidney and Sarah Russell House
28 St. Catherine St.



16. Site of the Claiborne Barland House

84 St. Catherine St.

17 Concord Quarters

301 Gayosa Ave.

18 Mazique-West House

403 N. Dr. M.L. King St.

19. Leon Donnan's Barber Shop

319 N. Dr. M.L. King St.

20. Mackel Funeral Home

300 N. Dr. M.L. King St.

21. Rose Hill Missionary Baptist Church

607 ½ Madison St.

22. The Bud Scott House

1011 N. Union St.

23. Professor Samuel Owen House

1002 North Union St.

24. St. John United Methodist Church

323 N. Dr. M.L. King St.

25. Site of The Louis Winston Home

67 St. Catherine Street

26. Natchez College:

1010 North Union Street

27. Beulah Missionary Baptist Church

710 Beulah St.

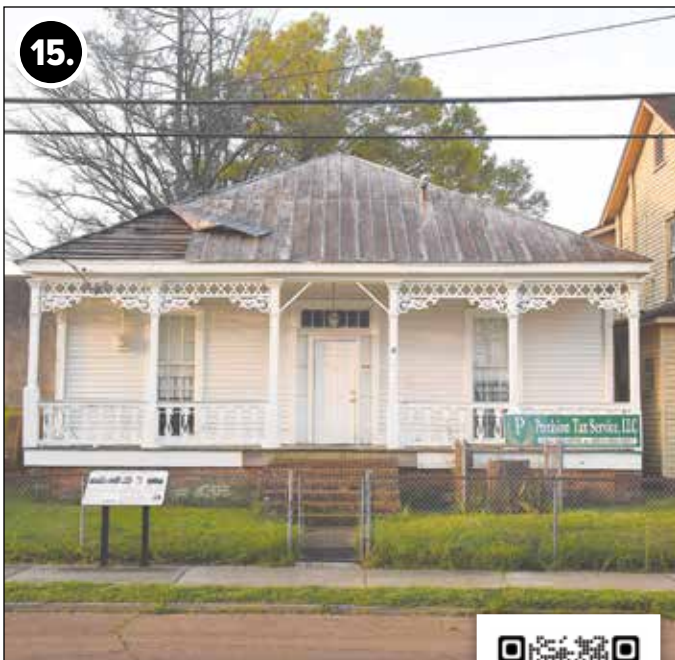
28. The Jessie H. Winston House

81 E. Franklin St.

29. The George F. Bowles House

13 St. Catherine St.

15.

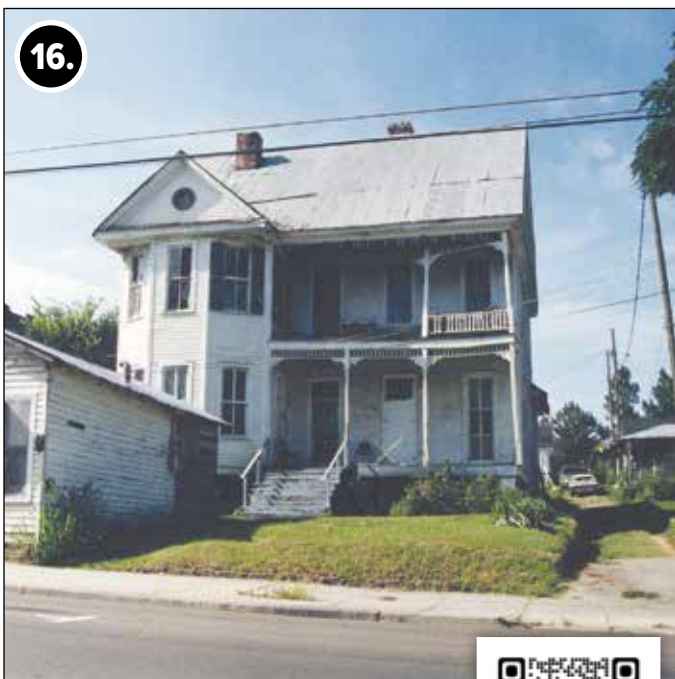


THE SIDNEY AND SARAH RUSSELL HOUSE
28 ST. CATHERINE ST.



Eliza Smith, an antebellum “free woman of color,” purchased property on St. Catherine Street in 1850s. Her daughters and their families built new houses on the property in the 1880s. The home at 28 St. Catherine Street was the home of Sarah Smith Russell and her children. Son Louis Kastor became one of the city’s most successful African American businessmen and built a house across the street that became Webb Funeral Home.

16.



SITE OF THE CLAIBORNE BARLAND HOUSE
84 ST. CATHERINE ST.



This Queen Anne style house was built in the 1890s for Walter and Alice Claiborne Barland and stood at 84 St. Catherine Street until it was demolished in the 1990s. The store that once stood in front of the house no longer exists. Walter Barland was a successful Natchez merchant who operated a grocery and dry goods store at 603 Franklin Street. Alice Barland was an African American born to an unknown member of the family of congressman and historian J.F. H. Claiborne of Adams County. Alice died in 1913 and Walter in 1914.

17.



CONCORD QUARTERS
301 GAYOSA AVE.



Concord Quarters at 301 Gayosa Avenue is all that's left to interpret a significant period in Spanish History. Concord mansion was built in 1794 as home to the Spanish governor of the Natchez District, and Concord Quarters, the slave dwelling, in 1819. Today, it is a tour home and museum and includes the 1844 original inventory of the enslaved African and African American men, women and children of old Concord.

18.



MAZIQUE-WEST HOUSE
403 N. DR. M.L. KING ST.



This house was owned by the Mazique and West families, whose ancestors were formerly enslaved. In 1919, Alexander Mazique Jr. purchased the house from the Byrne family to serve as a townhouse to provide his children with better educational access. In 1966, George and Artimese West purchased the house, which was located near their business, West Funeral Home. George West was a major figure in the civil rights movement. He became the first African American elected to the Natchez Board of Aldermen since Reconstruction, and his wife later served as the city's first African American alderwoman.

19.



LEON DONNAN'S BARBER SHOP

319 N. DR. M.L. KING ST.



In the 1960s, a crucial time for civil rights, the two-story wood-frame building at 319 North Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. St. became a key meeting place for the Deacons for Defense and Justice in Natchez. Historians have described the building as a command post — “the hotbed workplace” of the founder of the Natchez Deacons — and “an observation point” for keeping an eye on the Ku Klux Klan. The building played a pivotal role where militants gathered to talk and plan actions in the Natchez civil rights movement and observe the KKK located in a store directly across the street. The site is part of the Mississippi Freedom Trail.

20.



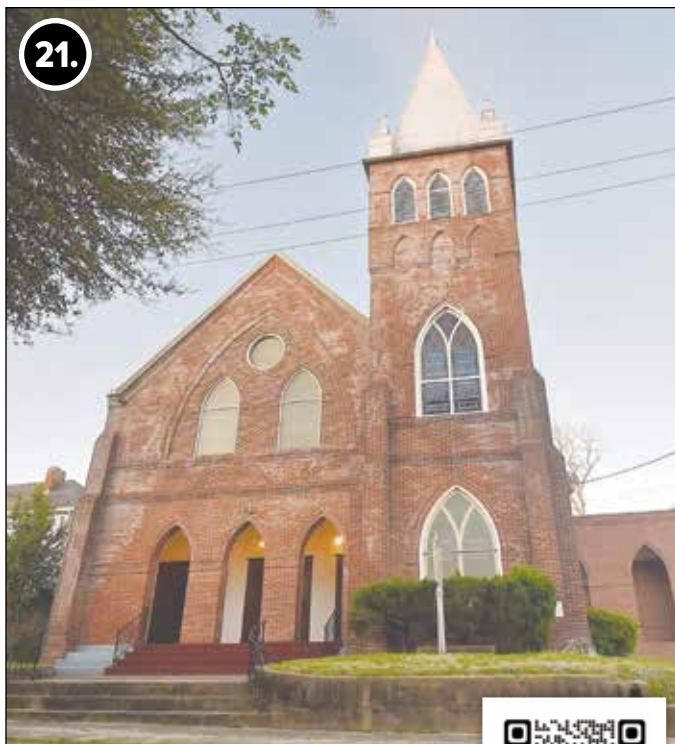
MACKEL FUNERAL HOME

300 N. DR. M.L. KING ST.



In 1871, during Reconstruction, Natchez elected a black mayor, Robert Wood, and an integrated board of alderman. Natchez was the only Mississippi town to elect an African American mayor during Reconstruction. At the end of the Civil War, Wood worked as a printer in a local photographic business. He would later serve the city and county as both postmaster and sheriff. Robert Wood's descendants today operate Robert D. Mackel and Sons Funeral Home, 300 North Martin Luther King Street, the city's oldest funeral business

21.



ROSE HILL MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH
607 ½ MADISON ST.



Rose Hill Missionary Baptist Church of Natchez, Mississippi traces its origins as far back as 1837 in a shared legacy with First Baptist Church and later Wall Street Baptist Church, two predominantly white congregations in Natchez. It is however recognized as the oldest organized black Baptist congregation in Mississippi and the oldest African American church in Natchez. Today, Rose Hill Missionary Baptist Church, situated at 607 ½ Madison Street is a state historical landmark. The church's interior and exterior have been well-preserved throughout numerous generations. Members have also maintained the church's original pulpit furniture, early 20th Century lighting fixtures, and varnished millwork. Rose Hill continues to be a beacon in the community.

22.



THE BUD SCOTT HOUSE
1011 N. UNION ST.



Clarence "Bud" Scott, Sr. led one of the most popular dance bands in the Mississippi-Louisiana region for several decades beginning around 1900. Scott (1876-1938), a lifelong Natchez resident, was renowned among both white and black audiences. His band, which often carried 12 to 15 pieces, used various names, including the Syncopators and, on one 1902 theatrical bill, Bud Scott and his Senegambian Assistants. The group kept pace with the times, evolving from a ragtime string band into a hot jazz outfit and then a swing orchestra with a horn section.

23.


PROFESSOR SAMUEL OWEN HOUSE
1002 NORTH UNION ST.


This prominent African American was president of Natchez College for many years. The historic institution was supported originally by African American Baptists of Mississippi and gained a fine reputation under Professor Owen's direction

24.


ST. JOHN UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
323 N. DR. M.L. KING ST.


St. John's at 323 N. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Street is one of the oldest African-American church buildings in Natchez. The brick church has served as a place of worship for its congregation since about 1886.

25.


SITE OF THE LOUIS WINSTON HOME
67 ST. CATHERINE STREET


Louis J. Winston, son of a prominent white planter and an enslaved mother, was born in 1844. After the Civil War, Winston served as a policeman, sheriff, tax assessor, and long-time clerk of court. He was also a practicing attorney and planter. Winston founded the Colored Building and Loan Association, which financed the sales of new houses to African Americans. He was also the manager of the Mississippi Cooperative and Benefit Association. Louis Winston's tombstone is the only tombstone in the Natchez City Cemetery surmounted by a bronze bust. The bust was sculpted and signed in 1921 by Isaac Scott Hathaway (1872-1967), an African American sculptor born in Lexington, Kentucky.

26.



NATCHEZ COLLEGE
1010 NORTH UNION STREET



Natchez College was a historically Black private educational institution located on North Union Street in Natchez. Natchez Seminary had been founded on this site by the American Baptist Home Mission Society of New York in 1877, with 20 previously enslaved persons studying to ministers and teachers; the school relocated to Jackson in 1882 and grew to become Jackson State University. Natchez College was then formed in 1884 by an effort of the Baptist State Missionary Convention led by George W. Gayles. The school became a junior college in the 1960s and closed in 1989.

27.



BEULAH MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH
710 BEULAH ST.



This church at 710 Beulah Street played a major role in meetings during the civil rights era of the 1960s in Natchez and was the site of arrests during the Parchman Ordeal in 1965.

28.



THE JESSIE H. WINSTON HOUSE
81 E. FRANKLIN ST.



Jessie “Mr. Jeff” Winston was born on Christmas Day in 1910. Winston was a barber for 89 years, which made him the longest-working barber in the City of Natchez. He was 101 when he gave his last haircut. His barbershop, where he worked for many years, is located behind his home. Winston worked for many years at Armstrong Tire and Rubber Company, from where he retired. His friends and family described him as a family man who was filled with humor and a compassionate man who cared for those in need. Winston died on April 15, 2020, at the age of 109.

29.



THE GEORGE F. BOWLES HOUSE
13 ST. CATHERINE ST.



Bowles was born enslaved on June 20, 1844, in Charleston, S.C. However, he acquired his freedom before the start of the Civil War. In 1875, Bowles was admitted to the bar of Mississippi, and in 1878, he was appointed colonel of a militia. One year later, he became chief of police. It was during this decade that he married Laura E. Davis, a member of a prominent black family. Bowles served as member of the state House of Representatives from Adams County. Additionally, he was a successful businessman, inventor, newspaper publisher, and philanthropist. Bowles built his house between 1886 and 1892 in the architectural style of Eastlake. It is located in the Hospital Hill neighborhood on the very site that was home to Natchez’s first public hospital building, the Mississippi State Hospital, built in 1813. Bowles died in his home on Dec. 26, 1899, at the age of 55.



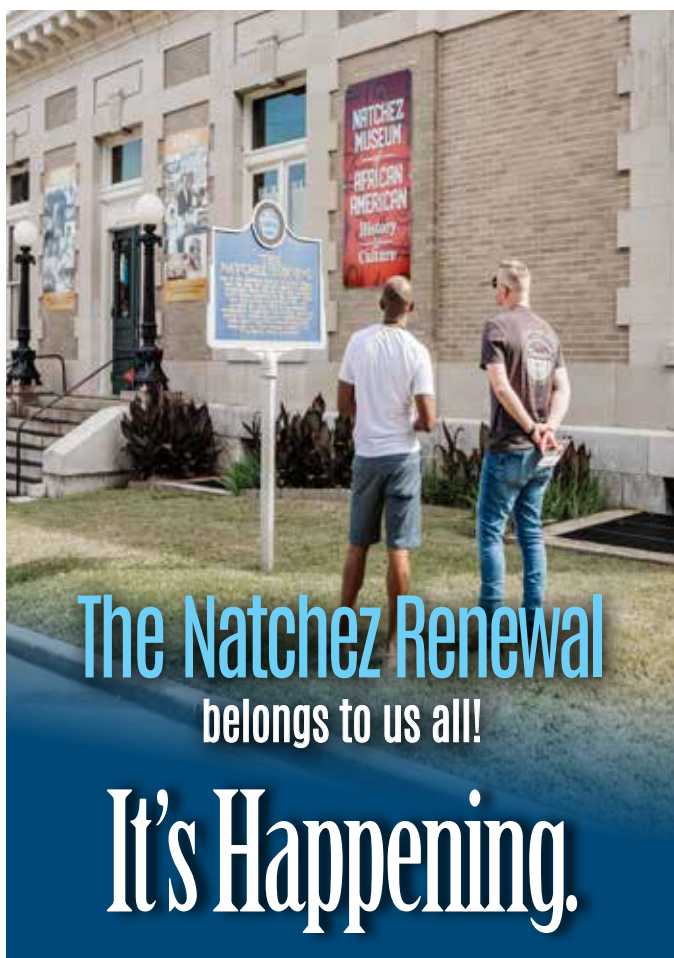
HISTORIC NATCHEZ FOUNDATION

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Natchez.org





The Natchez Renewal belongs to us all! It's Happening.

Jobs. New Businesses. Workforce Training. Healthcare. Infrastructure.
Parks & Recreation. African-American Site Signage. Forks of the Road.
The U.S. Colored Troops Monument campaign. NAPAC Museum
improvements. Revels Plaza Downtown Plan progress.
Cruise Line Docks. A blooming Movie Industry and more!

We're making our mark on history together!



Follow The Natchez Renewal!



It's Happening in Natchez.
Support The NATCHEZ RENEWAL.