

## ***Walking Through Black History***

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*African Americans built Columbus, while working for the full rights of citizenship.*

Established in 1827, and located in the rich agricultural region known as the Black Belt, urban slavery thrived in this antebellum, industrialized river town. Trained as skilled artisans and industrial workers, at the eve of the Civil War 37% of the city's 9,621 residents were enslaved (1860).

During Reconstruction (1865 and 1877), the federally appointed Freedmen's Bureau negotiated wages and provided legal assistance to challenge violence against former slaves across the South. African Americans built institutions to worship, educate, develop political leadership, and empower their community. However, a significant number also took advantage of the American Colonial Society's free passage to the west African nation of Liberia. In two sailings (1867 and 1868) saw almost 500 folks emigrating from the lower Chattahoochee Valley, primarily from Columbus and secondarily from Eufaula (Alabama). Racial segregation in public facilities established through a series of "Jim Crow" laws and customs, enshrined the region's ideology of white supremacy. By 1908 African Americans were again completely disenfranchised, having lost their voting rights.

From the 1870s to the 1950s, thousands of rural African Americans migrated to Columbus to build a better life. After World War II, black soldiers returned from fighting fascism abroad to demand freedom at home. In the post-war era, the city's first African American suburb of Carver Heights was built. Men and women led the fight for civil rights in the city and across the state. And by the 1970s, African Americans held elected local offices and enjoyed desegregated public facilities. Today the state's third largest city has a minority-majority population of 192,00: 45% African American, 41% White and 7.5% Hispanic or Latino.

**Slave Cabin:** Walking behind the Walker-Peter-Langdon House, you will easily find an urban slave cabin. Cramped, crowded and airless, this was 'home' to as many as 15 slaves who would sleep in it's loft. This structure was moved from its original home thought to be located on 13th Street.

**Dillingham St. Bridge:** Engineering innovator and slave, Horace King (1807-1885) built Columbus' first bridge across the Chattahoochee River in 1838. Post-Civil War period he continued to build bridges and warehouses in the region.

**Hatcher & McGehee Slave Depot:** In the depot that once stood at this corner, the Hatcher & McGehee Company sold 455 men, women and children between April 1858 and April 1869. This company was one of four slave auctioneers in the city.

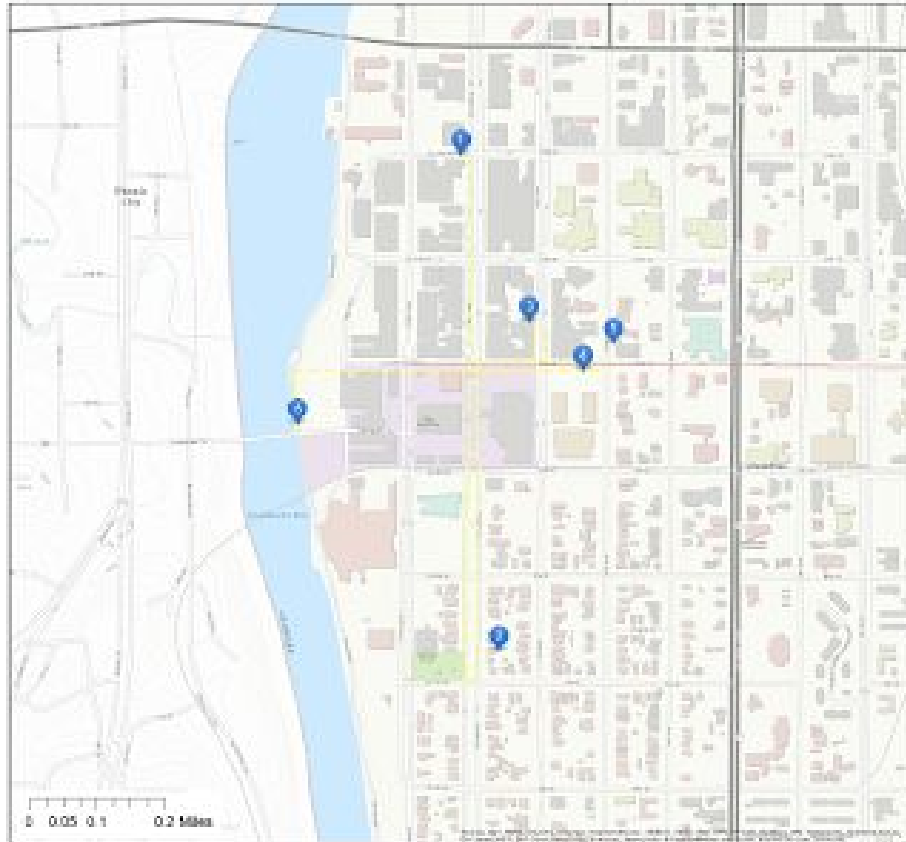
**Dr. Thomas Brewer's Office:** A "physician for the social ills of society," Brewer (1894-1956), led colleagues in establishing the city's National Association of the Advancement of Colored People chapter (NAACP) in 1939. He was shot to death. His killer was not charged.










**1912 Streetcar "Lynching":** Acquitted that day in the accidental shooting of a 12-year-old white child, Teasy McElhenny (African American, aged 14), was kidnapped from the court by twenty-five men. Hijacking a streetcar at this corner, they took Teasy to the end of the line and riddled his body with bullets. Two men were tried, neither were convicted.

**County Courthouse:** Denied the right to vote at this courthouse on July 4, 1944, preacher and barber Primus King (1900-1986) brought a suit that in 1946 re-established the right of African Americans to vote in primary elections. Previously, the Democratic Party had claimed that primary elections were the private affair of the party.

## Walking Through Black History Walking Tour

(a subsection of a larger 5 mile history tour)



-  Dillingham Street Bridge
  -  Slave Cabin
  -  County Court House
  -  Dr. Brewers Office
  -  Street Car Lynching
  -  Hatcher & McGeehee Slave Depot
-  Walking Tour
-  MLK Trail
-   
**NORTH**