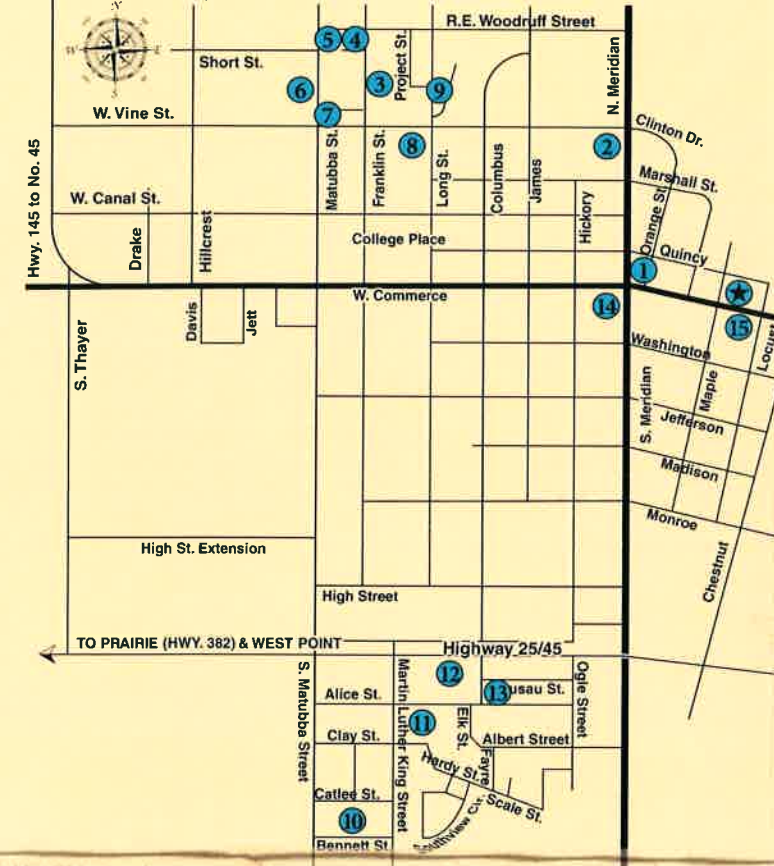
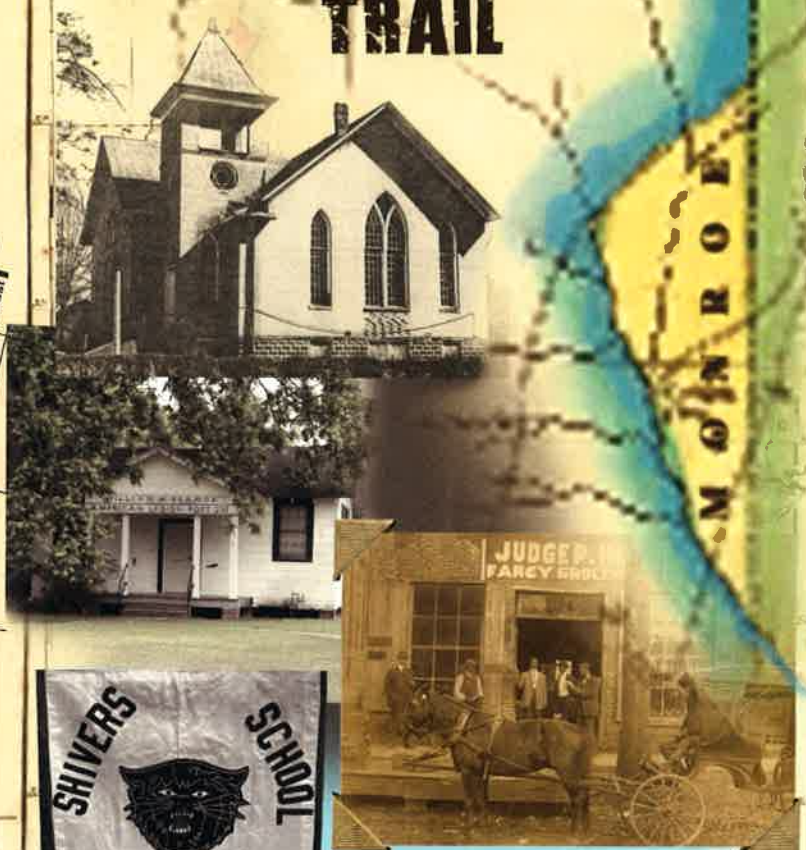


★ Aberdeen Visitors Bureau

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| 1 Aberdeen Blues Mural                    | 9 Neuberger Park & Library                          |
| 2 James Creek Missionary Baptist Church   | 10 The St. Rest Masonic Lodge                       |
| 3 The Green Schoolhouse                   | 11 General Lee Young                                |
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# ABERDEEN BLACK HISTORY TRAIL



## Black History Trail

*A Brief History of Aberdeen as it relates to B*

Aberdeen was founded in 1837 and by 1848 it was the county seat city in Northeast Mississippi and a center for business, commerce, Aberdeen became the Federal District Court serving the Northern

The Tombigbee River allowed the steamboats to haul cotton away goods for consumption. After the war many black people left the r the downtown was already established, enclaves formed around t "Ville" on the north side, "Methodist Town" on the east side and "C membership in many cases dictated where people chose to live.

Families with children were drawn to areas with schools.

### *A Brief History of the Black History Trail*

Our Trail focuses attention on African-Americans who made their s areas. It also includes an array of homes, buildings, schools and chu endeavor seeks to include individuals from all walks of life, Ministe business owners. Our aim is to shine light on these leaders who l Finally, those voices are now silent but their stories remain to be ex

Enjoy your tour safely and drive with caution, especially near schools and parks.

*Welcome to beautiful Aberdeen, Mississippi!*

*We hope you enjoy visiting our shops, restaurants, and outdoor activities while you are here. We social distancing, etc) to provide you with a fun and healthy visit. We're glad you're here! #visitM*



**Aberdeen Visitors Bureau**  
204 E. Commerce Street  
Aberdeen, Mississippi 39703  
662-369-9440 • AberdeenMs.org  
#visitMSresponsibly

## Driving Directions

Start your tour at the Visitors Bureau at the clock on Commerce St. Proceed west to the corner of Commerce and Meridian. Turn right to view the Blues Mural and Marker.

1. **The Aberdeen Blues Mural** was completed in 2011 as an educational visual to enhance our Mississippi Blues Trail Marker. It highlights three great bluesmen from our area: Bukka White was known for his Country Blues, Howlin' Wolf – Chicago Blues and Albert King, a left-handed guitarist, known as the Velvet Bulldozer, depicted Soul Blues. Each October, Aberdeen celebrates our blues heritage with the Bukka White Blues Festival.

Go 4 blocks north to the corner of Vine St. and Meridian. The James Creek Church is on your left. Turn left onto Vine St.

2. **James Creek Missionary Baptist Church** was organized in the late 1800s under a Brush Arbor, that is to say it met outdoors until the building was constructed in 1905 in the Darracott community. It was moved to its current site in 2010 to save it. Dwight Stevens, who owns the property where it now sits, restored the building and it is used for weddings, musical events and community services.

Go 4 blocks west on Vine St. to the corner of Franklin St. Turn right next to Belle Elementary School.

3. **The Green Schoolhouse** on North Franklin, built in 1912 and torn down in 1957, was important as a source of inspiration to educate African-Americans. According to recorded history, this building was painted dark green and took the name of "The Green Schoolhouse". Teachers and Students moved to Aberdeen to obtain their secondary education. Many people from the surrounding area boarded on the north side of Aberdeen since it was the only secondary school for African-Americans for miles around. The Bearcat flag, pictured on the front, was the school mascot.

After the Green Schoolhouse was torn down, the middle school was constructed on the same site. The school was named Shivers Junior High to honor Professor J. R. Shivers, a former principal at the Green Schoolhouse. Later the name was changed to Belle-Shivers to honor Preston Belle who was principal from 1964 to 1995. The elementary school gained the title Belle Elementary to honor both Preston and India Belle, a long-time teacher who was a strong influence on many young minds.

After viewing the school area proceed to the end of the block to see the Pilgrim Rest Missionary Baptist Church.

4. **Pilgrim Rest Missionary Baptist Church** was formed after a tornado demolished the First Missionary Baptist Church on North Matubba Street. Plans were made to rebuild that church but financial problems led to a division in the congregation. Some members decided to build a separate church on the corner of North Franklin Street and R.E. Woodruff Street. Mr. Bradley of Bradley Lumber Company donated the lumber and materials to build the church. In gratitude, he was named an honorary deacon and is listed on the cornerstone.

Turn left at the corner of R.E. Woodruff Street to view the home of Dr. Woodruff.

5. **The Home of Dr. Robert Ellison Woodruff** is on your left. Dr. Woodruff was a beloved and respected physician who served the whole Aberdeen community from 1926 until 1979. His office was on Meridian Street. He was an extremely important member of the community and helped to raise funds for many civic projects and educational causes. He was honored recently by having the new apartment complex on Canal Street named Woodruff Manor.

Turn left at the end of the block onto Matubba St. The First Missionary Baptist Church is on the right.

6. **The First Missionary Baptist Church** was organized in 1865. The original building on Matubba Street burned in 1890. The structure was rebuilt on the same site but it was destroyed by a tornado in 1920. Again, it was rebuilt on the same site. Part of the congregation broke away to form the Pilgrim Rest Missionary Baptist Church. The area around these churches became known as Baptist Ville or simply "The Ville".

Turn left at the end of the block onto Vine St. to view the center of Baptist Ville.

7. **Robert "Bob" Stovall** owned and rented several properties which included apartment living, pool room entertainment, and the Silver Dollar Café operated by Mrs. Pearl Lockett who fed the neighborhood when times were hard.

Westbrooks Funeral Home was formed from a 1936 partnership. The American Burial Association was established by Mr. Ernest and Mrs. Fannie Key Westbrooks.

1949: in order to better serve the community, Westbrooks Grocery at 519 West Vine was established to enhance the lives of others by meeting their physical needs.

1959: Westbrooks Funeral Home made its home at 607 West Vine Street, which is in its present location and serves as a professional funeral facility to care for loved ones.

The Masonic Temple Lodge West Vine Street (Ville) is a fraternal organization whose goal is to make better men out of good men. It has served as a facility to mentor young men and women for the purpose of character building for the good of the community.

Proceed on Vine across the corner of Franklin St to view the Shivers Home

8. **Shivers Home** Located at 511 West Vine Street, the home served as the residence of Professor J. R. Shivers, who served as principal, and Mrs. Minnie Shivers who inspired her students by delivering instruction in English. Both were role models in the field of Education for African-American youth. Today, the home serves as a reminder of these great educators who peacefully influenced the lives of others during tumultuous times.

Travel on Vine St. one block to Long Street. Turn left onto Long to view the Library and Newberger Park.

9. **Newberger Park** was established Jan 11, 1929 as the first park for African-Americans. Land was donated by Joseph Newberger, the President of the Federal Compress in Aberdeen, MS. The Black Library was built in 1939, by funds raised by Dr. R. E. Woodruff and Dr. W. A. Evans. Two of the Librarians were Miriam Sykes Henley and Mrs. Robert Stovall. Later in 1982, the library became the W. H. Beaman American Legion Post #231.

Follow Long St. north to R.E. Woodruff Street and turn left. Turn left again on Project St. Follow Project St. back to Long St. and turn right. Follow Long St. to Commerce St [5 blocks]. Turn right on Commerce and go to the traffic light. Get in the left turn lane and turn left on Matubba St to go "Out South". Cross Hwy 25/45 and go 4 blocks to Bennett St. Turn left on Bennett to see the St. Rest Masonic Lodge.

10. **The St Rest Masonic Lodge** has been a pillar of strength with a goal to recruit young men and women to become better role models within their community and to train them to become better servants in their houses of worship.

At the end of the block turn left onto Martin Luther King Drive to view General Young's Home and Park.

11. **General Lee Young** was the longtime leader of the local Chapter of the NAACP. He was named President in 1966 when the Chapter was formed at Morgan Chapel CME. His home is located on the right. The original home was the scene of racial violence when it was bombed and destroyed. This was his later home where he maintained his office and welding business. General Young joined Dr. Martin Luther King on his march in Selma and the march in Washington, DC where Dr. King gave his famous "I Have a Dream" speech. Even though he called himself a man of "little formal education", General Young became a leader in civil rights in our area. Ahead on the right is General Young Park named to honor this local leader.



**General Young Park** was established as a Memorial to remind us of the dedicated life of a man who sought justice for all. He marched and walked with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in order that he could share and enrich the lives of others. Let us not forget his "self-made" Chevrolet truck which led all Dr. Martin Luther King Jr holiday celebrations. The national holiday was first observed on Monday, January 20, 1986.

Continue back to Hwy 25/45 and turn right to view St Peter Methodist Church.

12. **St. Peter United Methodist Church** is located on the right of Hwy 25 South. It was consecrated in 1971. The life of any community lies within the houses of worship. Lifeboat and St. Paul Methodist Church played a vital role in the spiritual development of so many parishioners during this era. Rev Preston C Belle and wife India Belle played a vital role in the history of The United Methodist Church in Aberdeen. The membership from Lifeboat United Methodist Church came as an outgrowth of weekly meetings which led to a desire for an organized Methodist Church. St. Paul United Methodist Church was built in 1906 on the southeast corner of Chestnut and Jackson streets. After it was taken for Urban Renewal the two churches came together in a merger to establish St. Peter United Methodist Church.

Turn right at the ne on the corner of Wa

13. **Morgan Chap** who donated the building remained of the local chapter president. The cor in the area were a chapter's formation

At the end of the str 25/45 then get in th Meridian back to th you enter the Black On the right is Para

14. **Merchant Ro** has long been a p beautiful architect Sam Blevins. He use in the cabinet busin and Funeral Suppl including an ice cre in the middle of th on Saturdays. It wa

Turn right on Comm Station.

15. **Roger Cooper** in the community fo Rust College and tai another degree at mechanically inclin "overqualified" for

Mr. Cooperwood Church and served served one term as His contributions t is still known as "t park has been nam

In conclusion Methodist Town no 1960s. St Paul Metho Jackson Streets. It wa it were also destroyed side of town "The Gr way for project housi destruction of old ne people to transition t

Enjoy your time in A