

Lift Ev'ry Voice

African American Heritage Landmarks and Legacies in Florida's Capital City

African Americans have played a key role in shaping modern day history and culture in Florida's Capital City. The contributions and achievements are obvious today and some are not so obvious but are nonetheless tremendously significant. For example, Slave labor built the Historic Capitol and fabricated the bricks that pave many of the downtown streets. Tallahassee



also played an integral role in the Civil Rights movement. And there is Florida A &M University (FAMU), the oldest historically black public university in Florida, with its famed Marching 100.

Downtown, the beautifully restored 1838 **First Presbyterian Church** (102 N. Adams Street; (850) 222-4504) still has its original slave gallery. The 1920 **Knott House** (301 E. Park Avenue; (850) 922-2459; www.museumoffloridahistory.com) is one of several homes George Proctor built for white customers on upscale Park Avenue. Union General Edwin McCook read the **Emancipation Proclamation** from the Knott House steps on May 20, 1865. Every year a reenactment is held at the Knott House and in the park to recreate this momentous event.

The Riley House & Museum (419 E. Jefferson Street; (850) 681-7881; www.rileymuseum.org) was built in 1890 by John G. Riley, a prominent educator, on the fringe of Smokey Hollow, once a working-class neighborhood whose residents included the mother of jazz greats Nat and Cannonball Adderly, as well as Wallace Amos, creator of Famous Amos cookies.

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The 1841 **Union Bank Building/Black Archives** (219 Apalachee Parkway; (850) 599-3020) was once the National Freedman's Bank for newly emancipated slaves and today houses displays from FAMU's Black Archives.

Southeastern Regional Black Archives Research Center and Museum

(Carnegie Library building on FAMU campus; (850) 599-3020; www.famu.edu/blackarchives) houses one of the most extensive collections of African American artifacts and source material in the Southeast.

South of town heading towards the coast in Woodville, the **Battle of Natural Bridge Historic State Park** (7502 Natural Bridge Road; (850) 922-6007;

www.floridastateparks.org/naturalbridge) took place in March 1865 when a Union force of troops, including two regiments of U.S. Colored Troops, landed in the vicinity of the St. Marks Lighthouse hoping to capture Tallahassee. The Union advance was halted by the Confederates at the Battle of Natural Bridge and the Union troops retreated back to the coast. The Battle of Natural Bridge Reenactment, one of the largest such events in Florida, is held annually in early March.

Go off the beaten path to the **Bradfordville Blues Club** (7152 Moses Lane; (850) 906-0766; www.bradfordvilleblues.com), an authentic chittlin' circuit blues club, recently designated with a National Blues Trail marker. This place gets hoppin' on the weekends and is often a frequent stop for some of the nation's best blues performers.