



Mississippi Civil Rights Sites Special Resource Study

2022



Brownell Orders Probe Of Mississippi Voting

NATION SHOCKED, VOW ACTION IN LYNCHING OF CHICAGO YOUTH

'Murder,' White Says; Promises Prosecution

Urge Eisenhower To See That 'Justice Is Served'

Chicago Defender
Largest Great Migration
NATIONAL

Blood On Their Hands ...

Thousands



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

On May 5, 2017, Congress passed Public Law 115-31, which directed the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a special resource study (SRS) of nationally significant civil rights sites in the state of Mississippi (see appendix A for a copy of this legislation). Based on the legislated directive, this special resource study investigates nationally significant civil rights sites for their potential inclusion as new national park system units in Mississippi.

Mississippi is essential to understanding the African American struggle for civil rights in the United States. Considered the “Birthplace of the Modern Civil Rights Movement,” the sustained fight for African American freedom and equality in Mississippi has had a profound impact on the state, nation, and world. These events heightened the visibility of the movement and helped foster important social and political transformations. Mississippi’s triumphs and tragedies were important catalysts for change, helping to shape a more democratic and just America. These civil rights advances benefitted not only African Americans, but all the nation’s citizens. The sites described in this special resource study have been examined for their nationally significant contributions to civil and human rights activism. Evaluation of these sites also reflects the National Park Service’s ongoing commitment to represent the United States’ diverse citizenry and ensure a more complete history.

The law identified the following five sites to be included in the study:

- The home of the late civil rights activist Medgar Evers, located at 2332 Margaret Walker Alexander Drive, Jackson, Mississippi
- The site of Bryant’s Store, located at the intersection of County Road 518 and County Road 24, Money, Mississippi
- The Tallahatchie County Courthouse, located at 100 North Court Street, Sumner, Mississippi
- The Old Neshoba County Jail, located at 422 East Myrtle Avenue, Philadelphia, Mississippi
- The site of the former office of Dr. Gilbert Mason, Sr., located at 670 Division Street, Biloxi, Mississippi

Because the study legislation is not limited to these five study sites, other nationally significant Mississippi civil rights sites were identified and added to the list of potential sites to be studied and evaluated (see chapter 2, “Methodology for Resource Identification”). As directed by Congress, this special resource study evaluates each site using established criteria for evaluating the national significance, suitability, feasibility, and need for direct National Park Service (NPS) management that must be met for a site to be considered for inclusion in the national park system as a new unit. The legislation further requires that the study process follow 54 USC 100507 and that the Secretary of the Interior submit a report containing the

results of the study, along with any recommendations from the Secretary, to the House of Representatives Committee on Natural Resources and the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

RESOURCE OVERVIEW

As directed by Public Law 115-31, resources studied in this report include the five sites identified in the legislation (Tallahatchie County Courthouse; Bryant's Store; Medgar Evers' home; former office of Dr. Gilbert Mason, Sr.; and Old Neshoba County Jail). The study team also considered over 220 other sites that are related to the history of civil rights in Mississippi. These additional sites were not specifically listed in the legislation but identified through research, scholarly review, and public input. These sites consist of a variety of buildings, structures, landscapes, and objects across the state of Mississippi. The National Park Service consulted a variety of subject matter experts to inform the application of SRS criteria, including a Mississippi-based group of historians, professors, museum directors, and activists.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

National Park Service *Management Policies 2006*, section 1.3, directs that proposed additions to the national park system must meet four legislatively mandated criteria: (1) national significance, (2) suitability, (3) feasibility, and (4) need for direct NPS management. This study finds that many resources within the study area meet all four criteria. Therefore, per requirements of 54 USC 100507, the study includes management alternatives that describe what the National Park Service considers to be the most effective and efficient approach to protecting significant resources and providing for public enjoyment. If legislation for the establishment of a new unit or units is drafted, it may draw from study findings and these management alternatives but does not have to. Ultimately, this information is provided to inform Congress and the president of the broad spectrum of options available and the communities, stakeholders, and potential partners that are critical for engagement should they choose to act on this study's positive findings and designate these sites as a national park system unit. The findings for each of the sites analyzed are described as follows.

Criterion 1 – National Significance

In total, 22 individual sites, including three districts, were found to have national significance under SRS criterion 1. These sites/districts are: (1) “Emmett Till sites,” a discontinuous historic district consisting of 11 sites in Leflore, Sunflower and Tallahatchie Counties, Mississippi; (2) “1964 Freedom Summer sites,” a discontinuous historic district consisting of seven sites in Neshoba and Lauderdale Counties, Mississippi; (3) M.W. Stringer Grand Lodge, Jackson, Mississippi; (4) Taborian Hospital in Mound Bayou, Mississippi; (5) Isaiah T. Montgomery House in Mound Bayou, Mississippi; and (6) Lyceum – The Circle Historic District at the University of Mississippi, Oxford, Mississippi. Both NPS staff and external Mississippi-based scholars, historians, and subject matter experts with expertise in civil rights history have informed these national significance findings. Of the five sites identified in the study legislation, the Medgar Evers home was not fully evaluated because Congress designated it the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument via section 2301 of the John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management, and

Recreation Act of 2019 (PL 166-9); the Tallahatchie County Courthouse and the Bryant's Store were included in the Emmett Till sites; the Old Neshoba County Jail was included in the 1964 Freedom Summer sites; and the former office of Dr. Gilbert Mason, Sr. did not meet the SRS criterion for national significance.

Criterion 2 – Suitability

All of the nationally significant sites were also found to be suitable additions to the national park system under SRS criterion 2 for suitability. The sites represent historic events, resources, and themes that are not interpreted or available for public visitor experience and understanding at comparable sites within and outside of the national park system. The sites also fill underrepresented topic areas identified in the *National Park Service System Plan* (2017) that are related to the history of civil rights in the United States.

Criterion 3 – Feasibility

Nine (9) of the 22 sites that meet the SRS national significance and suitability criteria are also found to be feasible based on their ability to fully meet all or most feasibility factors. Key feasibility factors include a site being of sufficient size and appropriate configuration to ensure sustainable resource protection and visitor enjoyment, current land ownership patterns amendable to the operations of a national park unit, minimal economic and socioeconomic impacts, minimal potential threats to the resources, and the anticipated costs associated with the development, management, and operations of a potential national park unit.

For the Emmett Till sites, five (5) of the eleven (11) contributing historic sites are found to be feasible for potential inclusion in a national park unit based on the history of Emmett Till's lynching in the Mississippi Delta. The five feasible historic sites are the Bryant's Grocery Store (along with the adjacent Ben Roy's Service Station) and East Money Church of God in Christ Cemetery site in Money, Mississippi; Glendora Cotton Gin (along with the adjacent community center) in Glendora, Mississippi; Graball Landing River site in Glendora, Mississippi; and the Tallahatchie County Courthouse (and nearby interpretive center) in Sumner, Mississippi. Five (5) of the 11 Emmett Till-related historic sites are found to be conditionally feasible, which means that current conditions that make the site infeasible now could change in the future. These five sites are the Moses (Mose) Wright Home site in Money, Mississippi; Seed Barn in Drew, Mississippi; J. W. Milam Home site and King's Place Juke Joint site in Glendora, Mississippi; and Tutwiler Funeral Home site in Tutwiler, Mississippi. One (1) site, the Tallahatchie County Jail in Charleston, Mississippi, is infeasible due to its continued use as a county jail for the indefinite future.

For the 1964 Freedom Summer sites, three (3) of the seven (7) contributing historic sites are found to be feasible. These are Mt. Zion Methodist Church site in Philadelphia, Mississippi; the Burned Station Wagon site in rural Neshoba County, Mississippi; and the Neshoba County Courthouse Square in Philadelphia, Mississippi. The Old Neshoba County Jail in Philadelphia, Mississippi, is found to be conditionally feasible due to the property's recent change in ownership and modifications to the building. Three (3) of the seven (7) sites found infeasible are the murder site and the earthen dam site in rural Neshoba County and the US Post Office and Courthouse in Meridian, Mississippi.

The M.W. Stringer Grand Lodge in Jackson, Mississippi, is found to be feasible as an individual site because the lodge has a high potential to be considered as a partner-managed site within a potential national park unit.

The Isaiah T. Montgomery House in Mound Bayou, Mississippi, is conditionally feasible to reflect the owner's independent plans to interpret the significance of the site but also has the possibility of future NPS involvement. The Taborian Hospital in Mound Bayou, Mississippi, is not feasible to reflect the owner's long-term plans that are independent of a national park unit. The Lyceum – The Circle Historic District in Oxford, Mississippi, is not feasible, due to the University of Mississippi's desire to continue to administer, maintain, and preserve the site, as well as interpret its civil rights history.

Criterion 4 – Need for Direct NPS Management

Some of the sites that meet the SRS national significance, suitability, and feasibility criteria are also found to need direct NPS management based on an evaluation of the most effective and efficient alternatives for protecting significant resources and providing opportunities for appropriate public enjoyment.

For the Emmett Till sites, there is a need for direct NPS management for the Bryant's Grocery Store and Ben Roy's Service Station, East Money Church of God in Christ Cemetery site, Glendora Cotton Gin and Community Center, Graball Landing River site, Tallahatchie County Courthouse and Emmett Till Interpretive Center because (1) these sites lack coordinated interpretation and cohesive context for a quality visitor experience; (2) aspects of the historic significance of Emmett Till's lynching, such as socioeconomic contexts and their consequences, are not being fully interpreted at these sites; (3) privately owned sites are not open for public interpretation and education; and (4) there is a current lack of financial resources for long-term historic preservation at several sites. The National Park Service would be the clearly superior management entity for all of these sites.

Of the three (3) 1964 Freedom Summer sites found to be feasible, only the Mt. Zion Methodist Church site meets SRS criterion 4 (need for direct NPS management). Direct ownership would be the superior management model for the Mt. Zion Methodist Church. Because the Burned Station Wagon site requires minimal direct NPS management and because the Neshoba County Courthouse Square is actively used by the county, partnerships to develop interpretive opportunities would be the superior management model for these two sites.

The M.W. Stringer Grand Lodge does not demonstrate a need for direct NPS management by the National Park Service because the site is being well-preserved and managed by its current owner, the fraternal Most Worshipful Stringer Grand Lodge organization. Instead of direct ownership and management by the National Park Service, a partnership with the organization could fulfill the potential for NPS interpretive opportunities at this site.

NPS Management Alternatives

Two concepts were developed as the most efficient and effective way to protect significant resources and provide opportunities for public benefit and inspiration.

The first concept involves a national park unit consisting of multiple Emmett Till sites across the Mississippi Delta, which would include the Bryant's Grocery Store site, Ben Roy's Service Station, and East Money Church of God in Christ Cemetery site in Money; the Glendora Cotton Gin and Community Center; the Graball Landing River site in Glendora; and the Tallahatchie County Courthouse and Emmett Till Interpretive Center in Sumner. This concept proposes that all of these sites be acquired by the National Park Service for direct management. Potential inclusion of additional partner sites in Tutwiler and Charleston should also be considered. If conditions change in the future regarding the sites with unclear landowner intentions, they should all be considered for acquisition and addition to the park for direct NPS management.

In cases in which full acquisition and management is not possible, a partnership with the respective property owner and the National Park Service could be explored to provide visitor access, interpretation, and/or facilities for NPS staff and operations. The national park system has many examples of formal partnerships with nonfederal partners who manage resources within or near the boundary of an established national park unit, including partners who manage resources that are related to a park's purpose and national significance.

The total estimated one-time development costs, including acquisition, for the direct NPS management of these sites is \$11.7 million. Annual operating costs would range from \$3.0 to \$3.5 million. The estimated staffing requirements for this district would be 27 total staff, comprising 5 park and program managers, 8 facilities specialists, 8 interpretation and education specialists, 2 law enforcement rangers, 2 natural and cultural resource specialists, and 2 administrative specialists.

The second concept involves the creation of a Mississippi Freedom national park unit initially comprising four key sites: the Mt. Zion Methodist Church site, the Burned Station Wagon site, the Neshoba County Courthouse Square in Philadelphia; and M.W. Stringer Grand Lodge in Jackson. This concept proposes that only the Mt. Zion Methodist Church site be acquired by the National Park Service for direct management. Acquisition of the entire 5.6-acre Mt. Zion Methodist Church property is proposed to support NPS operations and visitation. The Burned Station Wagon site, Neshoba County Courthouse Square, and M.W. Stringer Grand Lodge would be partner-owned sites for which the National Park Service could enter into agreements to support NPS interpretation. If conditions change in the future regarding the Old Neshoba County Jail, it should be considered for acquisition and addition to the park for direct NPS management.

The total estimated one-time development costs, including acquisition, for the NPS management of these four sites is \$2.9 million, which includes contributions to preserve and interpret partner sites. Annual operating costs would be approximately \$1.8–\$2.3 million. The estimated staffing requirements for this district would be 18 total staff, comprising 4 park and program managers, 5 facility specialists, 5 interpretation and education specialists, 1 natural and cultural resource specialist, and 3 administrative specialists.

Other Opportunities for Preservation

The National Park Service recognizes that, beyond the findings of this study, there is strong public support and many potential opportunities for enhancing the interpretation and preservation of the civil rights resources evaluated in this study. These opportunities could be pursued by property owners and local advocates independently of a national park unit designation.

Many of the study sites are within existing national heritage areas. National heritage areas are designated by Congress as places where natural, cultural, and historic resources combine to form a cohesive, nationally important landscape. Through their resources, national heritage areas tell nationally important stories that celebrate our nation's diverse heritage. The Mississippi Delta National Heritage Area encompasses the Emmett Till sites, the Taborian Hospital and Isaiah T. Montgomery House sites in Mound Bayou, and many more important civil rights sites that are significant at the state and local levels. The Mississippi Hills National Heritage Area in the northeast part of the state includes Lyceum – The Circle Historic District in Oxford. The Mississippi Gulf Coast National Heritage Area includes Dr. Gilbert Mason, Sr.'s medical office in Biloxi. There may be opportunities for property owners, as well as museums and educational organizations, to engage more with their local national heritage area's coordinating entity. Unlike many national park units, national heritage areas are lived-in landscapes. National heritage area partnerships foster pride of place and an enduring stewardship ethic. The coordinating entities that administer them collaborate with communities to determine how to make heritage relevant to local interests and needs. In this way, national heritage areas are a grassroots, community-driven approach to heritage conservation and economic development. These entities can involve public-private partnerships and support historic preservation, natural resource conservation, recreation, heritage tourism, and educational projects.

Owners of sites that are significant for African American civil rights in Mississippi, as well as many more related sites, can apply to participate in the African American Civil Rights Grants Program, which is funded by the Historic Preservation Fund administered by the National Park Service. Additionally, the NPS African American Civil Rights Network encompasses properties, facilities, and interpretive programs that present a comprehensive narrative of the people, places, and events associated with the African American civil rights movement in the United States. Other civil rights properties in Mississippi may also qualify for grant opportunities from the NPS Underrepresented Community Grant Program, which provides funding to support the identification, planning, and development of nominations for the designation of national historic landmarks to increase representation of Black, indigenous, and other communities of color.

Additionally, properties that meet the SRS criteria for national significance and suitability criteria might qualify for recognition as an NPS affiliated area. Affiliated areas can be established legislatively by Congress or through administrative action by the Secretary of the Interior under the authority of the Historic Sites Act of 1935 (54 USC section 320101 et seq.). Affiliated areas are not national park units but are typically owned and administered primarily by nonfederal entities.

Federal funding for affiliated areas varies on a site-by-site basis. Historically, Congress has authorized federal funding for some affiliated areas in enabling legislation or through the annual appropriations process. However, under the Historic Sites Act, as amended, an administratively designated site (i.e., affiliated areas designated by the Secretary of the Interior) may not receive federal funding unless Congress specifically appropriates funding for that site. In some of those cases, affiliated areas receive no federal funding but may receive technical assistance from National Park Service (Congressional Research Service 2019).

To be eligible for affiliated area designation, proposed areas must (1) meet the same standards for significance and suitability that apply to units of the national park system; (2) require some special recognition or technical assistance beyond what is available through existing NPS programs; (3) be managed in accordance with the policies and standards that apply to units of the system; and (4) be assured of sustained resource protection, as documented in a formal agreement between the service and the nonfederal management entity. Such a designation would recognize the national significance of an individual site and could provide a venue for continued NPS engagement and support of a property owner's long-term stewardship of a site. All of the Mississippi civil rights sites that meet SRS criteria 1 and 2 for national significance and suitability in this study, including sites that do not meet criterion 4 for feasibility, could be considered for affiliated area designation.

A GUIDE TO THIS REPORT

This special resource study is organized into the following chapters. Each chapter is briefly described below.

Chapter 1: Study Purpose and Background provides a brief description of the study area and an overview of the study's purpose, background, and process. This chapter also summarizes the NPS findings on the special resource study.

Chapter 2: Historical Background and Resource Descriptions provides an overview of the history of the civil rights movement in Mississippi and descriptions of the resources (sites) evaluated under SRS criteria.

Chapter 3: Evaluation of Study Areas for Inclusion in the National Park System describes the evaluation criteria and findings of the special resource study. Criteria discussed include national significance, suitability, feasibility, and need for direct NPS management.

Chapter 4: NPS Management Alternatives identifies the most efficient and effective way to protect significant resources and provide opportunities for public enjoyment and interpretation.

Chapter 5: Public Outreach describes public outreach efforts conducted by the National Park Service in connection with the study. This includes a summary of major input that was provided by the public during the initial phases of the study.

The appendixes include the legislation authorizing this special resource study, NPS policy criteria for the inclusion of new parks in the national park system, references cited in the study, and the study team.

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CHAPTER 1: STUDY PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

Chapter 1 describes the purpose and background of the study, including the criteria used by the National Park Service (NPS) to determine whether a resource is eligible for potential designation as a unit of the national park system. The chapter concludes with a brief description of the study methodology and limitations.

PURPOSE OF THE SPECIAL RESOURCE STUDY

New areas are typically added to the national park system by an Act of Congress or presidential proclamation. However, before Congress creates a new national park unit, it frequently requests information about whether the area's resources meet established criteria for designation. The National Park Service is often tasked with evaluating potential new areas for compliance with these criteria and document its findings in a special resource study (SRS).

On May 5, 2017, Congress passed Public Law 115-31, which directed the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a special resource study of nationally significant civil rights sites in the state of Mississippi (see appendix A for a copy of this legislation). The law identified the following five sites to be included in the study:

1. The home of the late civil rights activist Medgar Evers, located at 2332 Margaret Walker Alexander Drive, Jackson, Mississippi
2. The site of Bryant's Store, located at the intersection of County Road 518 and County Road 24, Money, Mississippi
3. The Tallahatchie County Courthouse and Sumner Square, located at 100 North Court Street, Sumner, Mississippi
4. The Old Neshoba County Jail, located at 422 East Myrtle Avenue, Philadelphia, Mississippi
5. The site of the former office of Dr. Gilbert Mason, Sr., located at 670 Division Street, Biloxi, Mississippi

Because the study legislation is not limited to these five study sites, other Mississippi civil rights sites were identified and added to the list of potential sites to be studied and evaluated. Based on this legislated directive, this special resource study investigates the potential of nationally significant civil rights-related historic sites to meet specific criteria for the designation of one or more new national park units in Mississippi.

The legislation requires that the study evaluate the national significance of the study area; determine the suitability and feasibility of designating the study area as a unit of the national park system; and consider other alternatives for preservation, protection, and interpretation of the study area by the federal government, state or local government entities, or private and nonprofit organizations. The study must consult with interested federal agencies, state or local governmental entities, private and nonprofit organizations, or any other interested

individuals, and identify cost estimates for any federal acquisitions, development, interpretation, operation and maintenance association with the alternatives. To meet these requirements, this special resource study evaluates the potential for establishing one or more new park units based on whether congressionally established criteria for national significance, suitability, feasibility, and need for direct NPS management are met. This study also considers other management options for sites identified through the study process. The legislation further required that the study process follow section 8(c) of Public Law 91-383 (the National Park System General Authorities Act [recently codified in 54 USC 100507]), and that the Secretary of the Interior submit the study findings and any recommendations to Congress within three years of the study's funding. The National Park Service initiated the special resource study in late 2017 when funds became available to begin the project in fiscal year 2018.

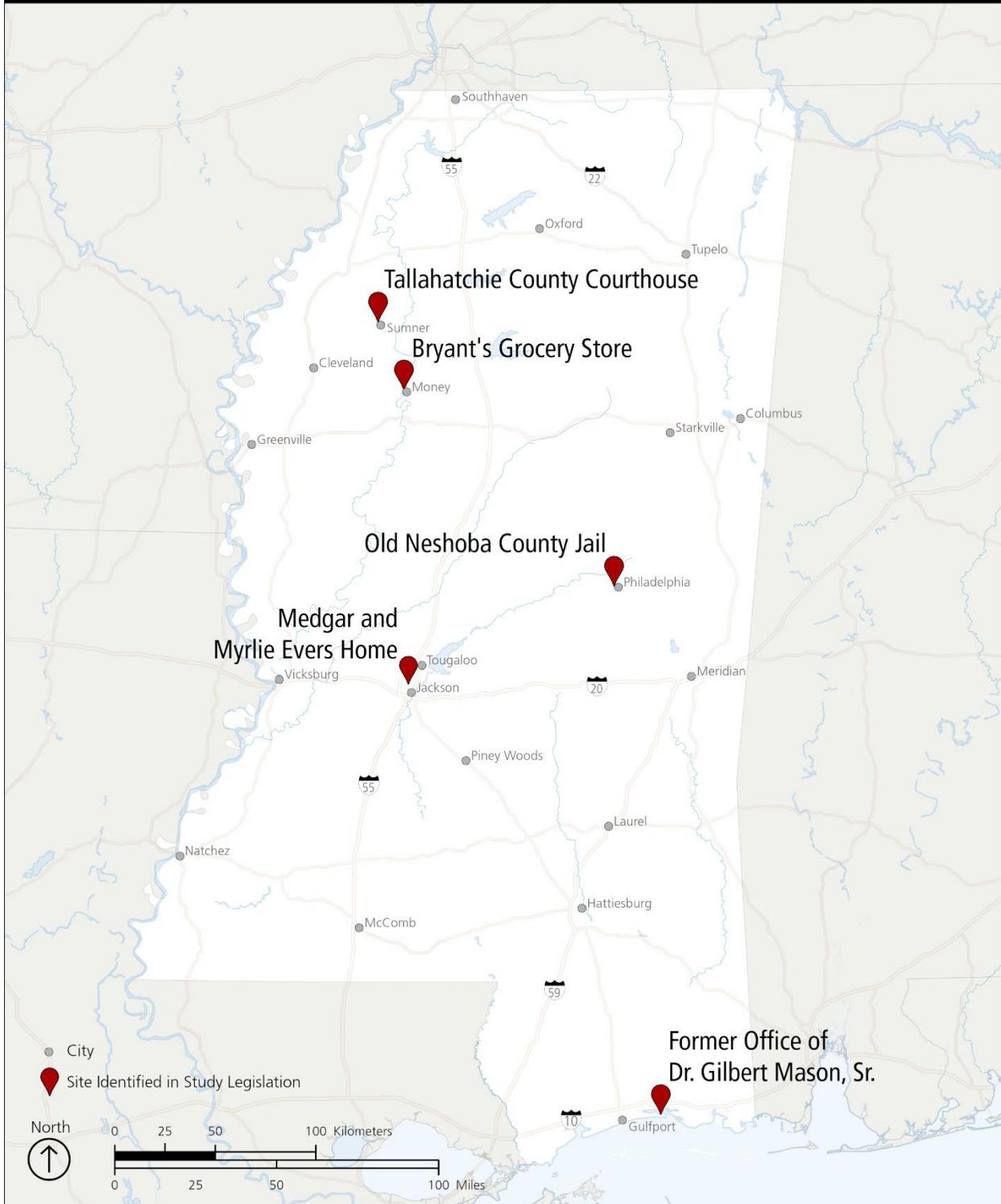
BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY AREA

This special resource study encompasses the geographic area of the entire state of Mississippi. The following map (see map 1) depicts this area and the locations of the five study sites identified in the authorizing legislation, described above.

Mississippi Civil Rights Sites SRS

Site Locations

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



MAP 1. STUDY AREA GEOGRAPHIC CONTEXT

The study process, described below, identified more than 220 additional sites in Mississippi that are potentially associated with the history of civil rights in the state. Chapter 2 provides an overview and historic context of civil rights in Mississippi and describes each of the study sites that were evaluated in detail.

STUDY METHODOLOGY/PROCESS

The special resource study process is designed to provide Congress with critical information about the resource qualities within the study area and potential alternatives for their protection. According to the National Parks Omnibus Management Act of 1998 (54 United States Code [USC] 100507) and section 1.3 (Criteria for Inclusion) of *NPS Management Policies 2006*, a special resource study evaluates potential new units of the national park system by analyzing whether a study area meets all four of the following criteria for evaluation:

1. Possess nationally significant natural or cultural resources,
2. Be a suitable addition to the system,
3. Be a feasible addition to the system, and
4. Require direct NPS management instead of alternative protection by other public agencies or the private sector

The four special resource study criteria are analyzed sequentially for each study site evaluated. There are several pathways for concluding the study process based on individual criteria findings (figure 1). An evaluation may be truncated for any study site if a negative finding is made for any one of these criteria.

This study describes the evaluation findings and will serve as the basis for a formal recommendation from the Secretary of the Interior as to whether or not the study area should be designated as a new unit of the national park system. For more information see “Appendix B: NPS Management Policies – Criteria for Inclusion.”

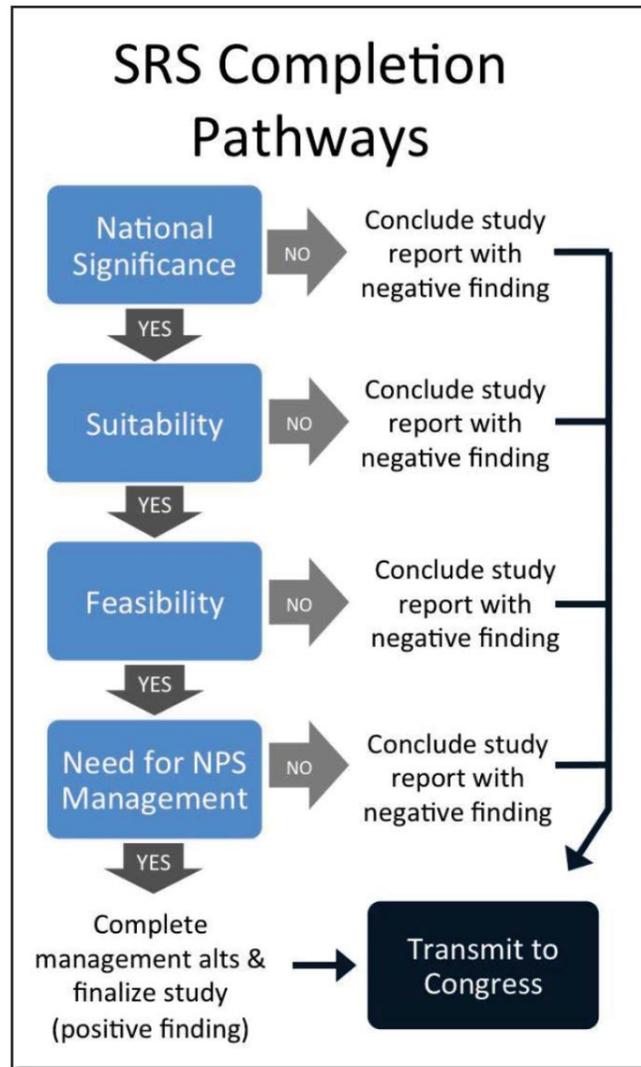


FIGURE 1. SPECIAL RESOURCE STUDY COMPLETION PATHWAYS

Study methods followed a three-step process, which is described as follows.

Step 1: Assess Public Views and Gather Information about Mississippi Civil Rights Sites

Through a process called “scoping,” information about the sites was collected by the study team. NPS staff identified existing information sources and data needs, issues, and potential constraints. Assessments of existing physical conditions and available data, such as National Historic Landmark (NHL) nominations, and NHL theme studies, etc., were a critical element of scoping and a factor in gathering information used in the evaluation of special resource study criteria.

The scoping process involved an information-gathering effort that included historical research, public input, and consultation with individuals and institutions with expertise on

civil rights history, both nationally and within Mississippi. Participating organizations included the following:

- Cities of Biloxi, Cleveland, Glendora, Hattiesburg, Jackson, Mound Bayou, Philadelphia, Tutwiler, and many more
- Delta Center for Culture and Learning, Delta State University
- Emmett Till Historic Intrepid Center
- Emmett Till Memorial Commission and Emmett Till Interpretive Center
- Fannie Lou Hamer Memorial Garden and Museum Foundation
- Margaret Walker Center, Jackson State University
- Mississippi Center for Justice
- Mississippi Civil Rights Museum
- Mississippi Delta National Heritage Area
- Mississippi Department of Archives and History (State of Mississippi)
- Mississippi Gulf Coast National Heritage Area
- Mississippi Heritage Trust
- Most Worshipful Stringer Grand Lodge
- National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
- National Trust for Historic Preservation
- Tougaloo College
- University of Mississippi
- University of Southern Mississippi
- Veterans of the Mississippi Civil Rights Movement, Inc.

Additionally, scholars, subject matter experts, elected officials, and interested citizens assisted the NPS study team in identifying sites that have the potential to meet the national significance criterion. This research and outreach resulted in the identification of over 220 sites to consider in this study. With assistance from experts and scholars well-versed on the topic of civil rights history, the NPS study team investigated each of those 220+ sites for their potential to meet the national significance criterion. The results of this analysis are presented in chapters 2 and 3 of this report.

Public and Stakeholder Involvement. During the early stages of the study, the team met with stakeholders, agencies, and individuals with a direct interest in the study area or with

expertise that could assist the team in its analysis. Stakeholders and the public were invited to help the study team identify nationally significant resources in addition to the five study sites identified in the legislation. The public was also invited to share insights about issues, concerns, ideas, goals, and objectives for the potential study sites.

During the public scoping period, the National Park Service (NPS) solicited feedback from the public through a scoping newsletter, the project website, and six public meetings, which were advertised in local and regional media and on partner websites. Approximately 1,000 copies of the newsletter were distributed to stakeholders, including federal, state, and nongovernmental agencies and organizations, in early April 2018. The newsletter included a brief history of Mississippi civil rights, a description of the study, the criteria used in special resource and boundary studies, and an invitation to submit comments via the project website or mailed correspondence. A letter describing the study process and potential implications for landowners, along with the newsletter, was sent to approximately 42 landowners in the vicinity of the Medgar and Myrlie Evers house in Jackson.

The official public scoping comment period opened on April 16, 2018, and closed on June 8, 2018. Comments were received via the Planning, Environment and Public Comment (PEPC) website (this is considered the project website), comment cards, and flip chart/comment stations set up at the public meetings, and through mailed correspondence. The NPS sponsored six public meetings in Cleveland, Sumner, Jackson, Philadelphia, and Biloxi in May 2018. Refer to Chapter 5 for a summary of public outreach and public comments received.

Scholarly Involvement. In light of the broad nature of the subject matter and physically large geographic area of the study area, the study team invited scholars with expertise in the topic of civil rights in Mississippi to assist in identifying important themes and resources. Engagement with scholars occurred during a series of conference calls and through an in-person meeting held in Jackson, Mississippi, on February 26, 2019. The scholars focused on identifying the nationally important themes and sites. Engagement with the Mississippi scholars was particularly helpful in narrowing down the list of over 220 sites identified through the public scoping process to those study sites with the potential to meet National Historic Landmark criteria. Information gleaned from the public, stakeholders, Mississippi scholars, and research was used to inform Step 2 of the special resource study process.

Step 2: Evaluate National Significance, Suitability, Feasibility, and Need for Direct NPS Management

To be considered for designation, potential study sites must satisfy all four special resource criteria. To fulfill the mandate of a special resource study, the evaluation of criteria is done sequentially, beginning with an evaluation of special resource study criterion 1: national significance. Although a study site may clearly be infeasible or not in need of direct NPS management, the study process must first establish national significance. If a study site is found to be nationally significant, the study process continues on to the evaluation of suitability and an evaluation of feasibility for that individual study site. If the resource is found to be nationally significant, suitable, and feasible, the study process continues on to the evaluation of need for direct NPS management.

The evaluation of the need for direct NPS management is done after an area has been found to meet all of the first three criteria for evaluation. Once the fourth criterion—a demonstrated need for direct NPS management—is met, the study proceeds with developing alternatives. An option for a potential new park unit can be included in the range of alternatives only if the study has determined that direct NPS management is clearly superior to other existing management approaches.

If the study determines that the resource does not meet any one of these criteria, then the study process generally ends and the study outcome is a negative finding. A brief description of preservation and management options (e.g., potential affiliated area designation for sites that meet criteria for national significance and suitability but fail on feasibility) can be included as part of the findings.

Site Visits. The NPS study team conducted four site visit trips in Mississippi to analyze the study sites through research and to gather public and scholarly input. During these site visits, the study team assessed resource conditions, gathered additional information, and conducted additional research to inform an evaluation of the special resource study criteria.

Step 3: Final Study Completion and Transmittal to Congress

Following rigorous agency review of the study findings, the final special resource study report will be transmitted by the NPS Director to the Secretary of the Interior. The report and any recommendations from the Secretary of the Interior are then transmitted to Congress, which may or may not take action on a study's findings. If legislation for the establishment of a new unit or units is drafted, it will usually draw from study findings. The time period in which Congress may take action is unknown. The final special resource study report is made available to the public following receipt by congressional members. This is accomplished by posting the study report to the NPS Planning, Environment, and Public Comment (PEPC) website.

COMPLIANCE WITH THE NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT

The National Parks Omnibus Management Act of 1998 requires each study to be “completed in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969” (42 USC 4321 et seq.) (54 USC 100507). This study complies with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), as amended, which mandates that all federal agencies analyze the impacts of major federal actions that have a significant effect on the environment.

A categorical exclusion was selected as the most appropriate NEPA pathway for this study.

The study is excluded from requiring an environmental assessment or environmental impact statement because there is no potential for impacts on the human environment without further legislative action by the US Congress. The applicable categorical exclusion is in the category of “Adoption or approval of surveys, studies, reports, plans, and similar documents which will result in recommendations or proposed actions which would cause no or only minimal environmental impact” (NPS NEPA Handbook, 3.2 (R)).

STUDY LIMITATIONS

This special resource study incorporates best available information during the study period. A special resource study serves as one of many reference sources for members of Congress, the National Park Service, and other persons interested in the potential designation of an area as a new unit of the national park system. The reader should be aware that the analysis and findings contained in this report do not guarantee the future funding, support, or any subsequent action by Congress, the US Department of the Interior, or the National Park Service. Because a special resource study is not a decision-making document, it does not identify a preferred NPS course of action.

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CHAPTER 2: HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND RESOURCE DESCRIPTIONS

This chapter presents a narrative summary of the historic context for evaluating resources in Mississippi for national significance. The historic context provided below is not meant to be exhaustive and/or definitive but highlights particular events in the struggle for equality in Mississippi. The subsequent resource descriptions add further context and descriptive details, as needed, for the specific civil rights-related sites evaluated in this study. The information in this chapter is presented only as a brief summary for the purpose of contextualizing the national significance evaluations included in chapter 3. For more detailed information, refer to the sources listed in “Appendix C: Selected References.”

HISTORIC CONTEXT

Introduction

A popular quote (often attributed to Mississippi writer William Faulkner) reads, “To understand the world, you have to understand a place like Mississippi.” It could also be said that to understand the African American struggle for civil rights, you have to understand a place like Mississippi. Considered the “Birthplace of the Modern Civil Rights Movement,” the sustained fight for African American freedom and equality in Mississippi has had not only a profound impact on the state, but on the nation.

Mississippi’s civil rights history is linked to multiple historical threads dating back to the 16th century, including the rise of a Black majority. Through much of the state’s history, Black residents outnumbered White residents, and their labor was responsible for much of the state’s economic prosperity. The White power structure perceived this Black majority as a threat to the social, political, and economic orders and responded with extreme racial discrimination and violence. As a result, Mississippi developed one of the most racially oppressive state-sanctioned and supported regimes in the country. Yet, Black Mississippians and their allies organized and fought back. In the 1950s and 1960s, violent and sometimes deadly reprisals against civil rights activists had a profound impact, catapulting the movement into the national consciousness. The 1955 lynching of teenager Emmett Till served as an important catalyst for civil rights activism across the country.

The Black freedom struggle in Mississippi, while a story of extreme violence, is also one of Black empowerment. The movement’s grassroots activism led not only to changes in Mississippi but helped to reshape the nation. The movement also led to developments that were culturally liberating and had a wide and lasting influence. Mississippi’s sociocultural and economic environment gave birth to the Blues, a unique cultural form that gave important voice to the African American experience and served as the basis for subsequent musical styles and genres. The Black freedom struggle also gave rise to Black Power, a slogan that heralded a new direction for the civil rights movement and emphasized cultural pride, self-reliance, and self-defense.

African Americans in Mississippi Before the Civil War (1539–1861)

For hundreds of years, Mississippi was home to nearly two dozen Native American tribes (the Choctaw and Chickasaw being the largest) before a revolving door of European powers (France, Britain, and Spain) entered the picture and competed for power, established settlements, formed alliances with and simultaneously devastated Native nations, and enslaved people of African descent.¹

European Exploration and Colonial Mississippi (1539–1798)

People of African descent came into Mississippi during 16th-century European exploration of North America. The 1539 expedition party of Spanish explorer Hernando de Soto, who is credited as the first European to cross the Mississippi River, included enslaved Africans,² free Blacks, and free mixed-race people (Galloway 2006, 264). However, European colonization in the late 17th century firmly established a permanent Black presence. France was the first European nation to colonize the area, with the establishment of Fort Maurepas along the Gulf of Mexico in 1699. Colonization gave the French what they hoped would be an economic and military stronghold in the region; however, it was short-lived. The French followed by establishing colonial presences in the Gulf Coast and Natchez District. The French introduced slavery in 1719, using enslaved labor in the production of tobacco, indigo, rice, and lumber. While populations were small in the settlements, according to the 1744 census for the French Colony of Louisiana (which included Mississippi), there was already a Black majority in places like Natchez and Pascagoula (Wharton 1947, 9). The French controlled the area until 1763, before control passed to the British and Spanish. Slavery continued to expand under these subsequent colonial regime changes (Mississippi Department of Archives and History 2017, 19). In the Natchez District, which was the major population center, enslaved people made up around 40% of the population (Wharton 1947, 10).

The Territorial Period and Statehood (1798–1860)

In 1798, what would become the state of Mississippi was organized by the United States as part of the Mississippi Territory (which included present day Mississippi and Alabama). A wave of voluntary White migration and largely forced Black migration from southern states followed. Unlike the Northwest Territory, which had been organized about a decade before, slavery was permitted in the Mississippi Territory, and as a result, the majority of people of African descent who came into the territory were enslaved. Slavery and expansion of the territory continued before Mississippi became the 20th state in 1817. At the time of statehood, enslaved people comprised approximately one-third of the population (Mississippi Department of Archives and History 2017, 19). Reflecting the interests of the wealthy planters, largely from the Natchez District, who made up the majority of the

1. "Mississippi" is from a French derivation of an Algonquin (Ojibwa/Chippewa) word "meaning 'great river' or 'gathering-in of all the waters.'" See Keith A. Baca, *Native American Place Names in Mississippi* (University of Mississippi, 2007), 58.

2. Enslaved Africans included those from North Africa.

constitution convention delegates, the 1817 state constitution protected the institution of slavery (Mississippi Department of Archives and History 2017, 29).³

In the 1830s, the institution of slavery continued to intensify against the backdrop of Native American removal and an exploding cotton industry. Cotton production first began in Mississippi in the Spanish-controlled Natchez District in 1795, and it was here that early plantations developed. The cotton gin, patented by Eli Whitney in 1794, increased production levels. Despite this technological innovation, it was only after Mississippi planters began cultivating a higher yield hybrid seed in the 1820s that cotton would become “King”.⁴ Cotton cultivation spread east from the Mississippi River, which ran along the state’s western border, and by the 1830s, Mississippi was the largest cotton producing state in the nation.⁵ This cash crop, referred to as “white gold,” served not only as the main driver of economic development but also of social and political development in the state. The wealth cotton generated drove the demand for more land, resulting in further dispossession of Native American peoples.⁶ Cotton production also paved the way for a slave-based economy, offering Southern planters a justification to maintain and expand the system of bondage. Mississippi’s enslaved population grew to over 65,000 between 1800 and 1830 and surpassed the White population by 1840 (Mississippi Department of Archives and History 2017, 19, 33).

In 1846, the demand for enslaved labor was so great that the state reversed an earlier, largely ineffective statute from the 1832 state constitution that prohibited the importation of slaves into the state (Herron 2015). To meet growing labor demands, Mississippi planters relied on the domestic slave trade (also referred to as the “Second Middle Passage”) to import enslaved people, largely from Virginia, North Carolina, Maryland, and Kentucky. Various slave markets developed in the state, the largest being Forks of the Road in Natchez, which was one of the largest in the nation (Mississippi Department of Archives and History 2017, 105).

While the majority of Mississippi’s Black population was enslaved, there existed a small population of free people of color. The size of the free population increased after statehood, reaching its height in the 1840s, before declining (Wharton 1947, 12). Various constraints were placed on the rights of free Blacks and mixed-race persons, despite the state’s constitution declaration: “That all freemen, when they form a social compact, are equal in rights, and that no man or set of men, are entitled to exclusive, separate, public emoluments or privileges, from the community, but in consideration of public services” (article 1, section 1 of the “Declaration of Rights” 1817 Mississippi Constitution). Free people of color were required to carry written proof of their freedom as “they were considered to be slaves

3. Most of the state constitution convention delegates in Mississippi were from the Natchez District, which was heavily invested in the institution of slavery. While the original US Constitution avoided the use of the word “slave,” the Mississippi constitution did not.

4. “Cotton is King” is a popular term that started to be used in the 1850s to refer to the dependency of national and global economies on southern cotton. It is often applied to Mississippi because the state’s economy reliance on cotton production into the 20th century. Cotton dominated Mississippi’s agricultural landscape and was the basis of wealth of many of those belonging to the White power structure. In 1904, the Mississippi exhibit at the World’s Fair was titled “Cotton is King.”

5. The Delta, which was one of the last regions to be populated by nonnatives, however, would not develop as a major cotton production center until after the Civil War, and it was here that it was most profitable.

6. Despite removal, some Native Americans continued to reside in Mississippi. Provided that they registered, the 1830 Treaty of Dancing Rabbit enabled individual members of tribes like the Choctaw to remain in the state, become citizens, and receive land allotments. However, local administration denied registration to eligible applicants, and violence against Native Americans made it difficult for even those that received allotments to retain them. See Katherine M. B. Osburn, “Mississippi Choctaws and Racial Politics” *Southern Cultures* 14.4 (2008): 32.

unless the contrary could be proved.” Statutes restricted their mobility, voting rights, participation in the judicial process, vagrancy, employment opportunities, and ownership of firearms (Sydnor 1927, 769).

By 1860, there were 775 free people of color in a population of over 700,000. Meanwhile, enslaved people of African descent made up over half of Mississippi’s population. Mississippi was the largest cotton-producing state and had the third largest enslaved population (after Virginia and South Carolina) in the country. Almost half of its households owned enslaved people. Stephen Duncan, a northern-born and educated Natchez planter, enslaved over 800 individuals, making him the state’s largest enslaver and the nation’s second largest enslaver (Brazy 2006, 128).⁷ It is in this context that the sectional crises over slavery played out.

The Civil War in Mississippi (1861–1865)

On January 9, 1861, Mississippi became the second state to secede from the United States. The state’s economic dependence on enslaved labor was its primary reason for doing so, stating in its Declaration of Secession:

Our position is thoroughly identified with the institution of slavery-- the greatest material interest of the world. Its labor supplies the product which constitutes by far the largest and most important portions of commerce of the earth. These products are peculiar to the climate verging on the tropical regions, and by an imperious law of nature, none but the Black race can bear exposure to the tropical sun. These products have become necessities of the world, and a blow at slavery is a blow at commerce and civilization. That blow has been long aimed at the institution, and was at the point of reaching its consummation. There was no choice left us but submission to the mandates of abolition, or a dissolution of the Union, whose principles had been subverted to work out our ruin. (Power 1861)

Support for secession was high in Mississippi. Eighty thousand White Mississippians fought for the Confederacy; as many as one-third of them died (Mississippi Department of Archives and History 2017, 43). The state also supplied the Confederacy its president—planter, enslaver, and former Mississippi congressman and senator Jefferson Davis.

Despite the overwhelming Confederate sympathies of Mississippi’s White population, notable segments remained loyal to the United States. Some 17,000 African Americans from Mississippi fought in the US Army as part of the US Colored Troops (Mississippi Department of Archives and History 2017, 43). The enlistment of African American soldiers not only provided them with the opportunity to participate in the fight for freedom; military service also served as an important proving ground for African American men to demonstrate their manhood and thus their fitness for citizenship.

During the war, the majority of African Americans in Mississippi continued as enslaved laborers. However, some used the chaos created by the sectional conflict to flee bondage. Incidents of escape increased after the preliminary Emancipation Proclamation went into

7. During his lifetime, Duncan enslaved over 2,000 individuals.

effect in September 1862. Many enslaved people escaped and sought refuge behind Union lines. After the fall of Confederate strongholds, enslaved Black people responded by leaving *en masse*, finding their way to contraband camps and “home farms” (Foner 2002, 57). One such camp was established at Corinth, Mississippi. One of the largest in the nation, the camp was home to over 6,000 self-emancipated refugees. A self-contained town, it included houses, farms, businesses, a church, hospital, and a school. The camp proved successful and was even able to turn a profit from the sale of its agricultural products (NPS 2015). It also served as a recruitment center for men to join the military. As a model of Black self-sufficiency, Corinth served as an important demonstration of the possibilities of Black freedom. Despite its success, the camp was relatively short-lived and was disbanded in 1863. Other “home farms” were located at Natchez, Skipwith’s Landing, Vicksburg, and at Davis Bend—Jefferson Davis’s farm (Wharton 1947, 39–41).

The legal end of slavery would not come until the war’s end in 1865. While the Civil War brought an end to the institution of slavery, the racist order that it created persisted and African Americans remained second-class citizens nationwide and in Mississippi.

Reconstruction in Mississippi (1865–1877)

Reconstruction, which followed the end of the Civil War, proceeded in two phases—Presidential Reconstruction (1865–1866) and Congressional (“Radical”) Reconstruction (1867–1877). The former, under the leadership of President Andrew Johnson, a Southerner, had a more lenient attitude towards the former Confederacy, pardoning those willing to take an oath of allegiance and returning to them confiscated property. Southern state legislatures, largely left to their own devices and dominated by former Confederate leaders, feared Black political and economic power and enacted “Black Codes.” These laws replicated many of the conditions and relationships that formerly existed under slavery (NPS 2008a, 7). In 1865, the Mississippi Legislature was one of the earliest states to pass such laws. These laws were reminiscent of those that circumscribed the rights of free people of color before emancipation. These laws were based on the racist premise that African Americans were inferior and unassimilable. The laws limited the physical, political, social, and economic autonomy of African Americans and included a provision prohibiting interracial marriage.

During Congressional Reconstruction, under President Ulysses S. Grant, federal power was mobilized more aggressively in the interest of African Americans and held out some glimmer of hope that civil rights for people of African descent would be advanced (NPS 2017). Between 1866 and 1870, Congress responded by passing the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments (also referred to as the Reconstruction Amendments) to the US Constitution that, respectively, were intended to abolish slavery, guarantee newly freed African Americans equal protection of the laws, and give all male American citizens the right to vote regardless of their “race, color, or previous condition of servitude.” The Civil Rights Acts of 1866 and 1875 were also passed to protect the rights of all Americans (excluding Native Americans) regardless of race. All persons born in the United States were deemed national citizens with rights to “the full and equal enjoyment” of public places, among other rights. The Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands (the Freedmen’s Bureau) was also extended. The bureau had initially been organized as part of the War Department in 1865 to provide various social services for Southerners, including newly freed Blacks and

White refugees. The bureau also played a critical role in “oversee[ing] the South’s transition from slave labor to free labor” (NPS 2017, 13).

However, government intervention to advance rights and opportunities for newly free African Americans proceeded with difficulty in states like Mississippi, where a Black majority encountered outright defiance to what was perceived as federal government overreach (NPS 2017, 17). Legal and extralegal means continued to be used to reinforce the racial hierarchy that slavery’s demise threatened.

Despite obstacles, the period witnessed political, educational, and economic gains for African Americans, including their participation in the state’s 1868 constitution convention. The convention was the state’s first attempt at biracial governance and was disparagingly referred to as the “Black and Tan” convention (Power 1900). Voters initially rejected the constitution, which formally ended slavery in the state and confirmed Black voting rights.⁸ However, the constitution was ultimately accepted, but this was done rather perfunctorily, as a condition of the state’s readmittance into the Union in 1870. The state legislature failed to officially ratify the Thirteenth Amendment abolishing slavery, “declaring that they had already abolished slavery and that they would not consent to the second section, which gave Congress the right to enforce freedom” (DuBois 1969, 435). The amendment was not officially ratified by the state until the 21st century (Peralta 2013).

African Americans, largely members of the Republican Party, served in politics at local, state, and national levels. Some 226 Black Mississippians held public office and the state sent the first two Black senators, both Republicans, to the US Congress—Hiram Revels and Blanche K. Bruce. They served from 1869 to 1871 and from 1875 to 1881, respectively (Oshinky 2018, 39). Civil War veteran, John Roy Lynch, a Republican, served in the Mississippi House of Representatives as its first African American speaker and went on to serve as a US Representative from Mississippi from 1873 to 1883 (NPS 2017, 51).⁹

As a result of the Republican-controlled Mississippi state government, significant civil rights progress was made. In 1873, the state repealed the “Black Codes,” ratified the Fourteenth Amendment, and passed significant civil rights legislation, which outlawed discrimination in public accommodations (Wharton 1947).

The period also included the establishment of African American educational institutions, which were viewed as essential to racial progress. The 1868 constitution required free public schools for all children between the ages of 5 and 21, including Black children, but in segregated schools. Missionary organizations also established schools, including what would become known as Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). These schools, which would undergo various iterations, were responsible for educating many individuals who would play prominent roles in the struggle for civil rights. Shaw University (later Rust College), Mississippi’s oldest HBCU and the second-oldest private college established in the state, was founded in 1866 by the Freedmen’s Aid Society, missionaries of the Methodist Episcopal Church. Tougaloo University (later Tougaloo College), founded in 1869, was

8. The 1868 state constitution also provided protection of women’s property rights.

9. Both Bruce and Lynch had been formerly enslaved.

established on the land of a former plantation by the American Missionary Association of New York. In 1877, Natchez Seminary (later Jackson University) was founded by the American Baptist Home Mission Society “for the moral, religious, and intellectual improvement of Christian leaders of the colored people of Mississippi and the neighboring states.” In 1882, the college moved from Natchez to Jackson. Alcorn University (later Alcorn State University), while not founded through missionary efforts, was also established during Reconstruction. Alcorn is the oldest public historically Black land-grant institution in the United States and was founded in 1871 as an all-male institution. Senator Revels left his seat in Congress to serve as its first president. In 1878, the school became the Alcorn Agricultural and Mechanical College.

The period also saw the growth of African American social institutions, one of the most significant being churches. Mississippi Black churches, some of which date back to the early 19th century, as elsewhere, were important centers of African American community. Performing both spiritual and secular functions, African American churches provided political, economic, and social opportunities. Churches were also important sources of leadership. Politicians Revels and Lynch (mentioned above) had associations with the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church and the Methodist Episcopal Church. They were instrumental in the organization of churches (and schools) before beginning their political careers. Revels also served as pastor of the Zion Chapel AME Church in Natchez (Mississippi Department of Archives and History 2017, 116). Churches also served as an important base of operations for civil rights activism. The Loyal League, a northern-born patriotic organization that was active in Mississippi and instrumental in mobilizing efforts for Black political participation, hosted gatherings in churches (Wharton 1947, 165–166).

As a counter to these efforts of Black self-determination, in 1870, the same year that Mississippi rejoined the Union, the Ku Klux Klan became active in the state. Originally founded in Pulaski, Tennessee, in 1866, the Klan was a violent paramilitary organization that used fear, violence, and intimidation to halt the progress of political and racial equality during Reconstruction. Other White vigilante groups, like the Knights of the White Camellia, would join them in unleashing a reign of terror. Emblems of Black racial progress, like schools and churches, as well as individuals, became the targets of white supremacist ire and were attacked with impunity.

In March 1871, after a series of racially tense incidents, the town of Meridian erupted into violence. Resentments had been brewing among White and Black residents alike. White people begrudged Black political advancement and directed their anger against Black politicians and their White northern allies. Black people, on the other hand, were angry that the murders of several African American politicians had gone unpunished. Tensions were so high that Massachusetts native and White Republican mayor, William Sturgus, attempted to call in protective federal troops, to no avail. Hoping to avert a further crisis, he and Black Republican leaders J. Aaron Moore, William Clopton, and Warren Tyler urged calm. But after a fire broke out and destroyed much of the downtown, rumors spread that African Americans were planning to burn the remainder of the city. Moore, Clopton, and Tyler were arrested and charged with inciting a riot and arson. At their trial, held a couple of days later, over 200 Black and White spectators, including Klansmen, packed the courtroom. An

altercation broke out between Tyler (one of the accused) and a White witness, when Tyler interrupted the court proceedings to contradict the witness's testimony. In response, the witness attempted to physically assault Tyler and a shootout occurred, killing the presiding Republican judge and several others in the courtroom. The three defendants and the mayor attempted to escape. The angry White mob chased and killed Tyler and Clopton, but Moore and the mayor managed to escape. In the riot that ensued, the mob terrorized the city, killing 30 Black people, including "all the leading colored men of the town with one or two exceptions." In the aftermath, many African Americans left Meridian. Despite investigations at both the state and federal levels, no one was ever prosecuted in connection with the violence (Oshinsky 1997, 23; Nuwer 2015, 3).

In 1875, Democrats implemented the "Mississippi Plan" at the state and local levels, which devised to use violence and intimidation to wrest control from the Republican-controlled government. The plan also relied on outright voter fraud. As a result of their efforts, the Democrats won overwhelmingly in the 1875 state elections, and they were able to regain control throughout much of the state. Democratic control of the state legislature led to the ousting of the state's White Republican governor and Black lieutenant governor. Due to political considerations, President Grant not only refused to send additional troops in response to the insurgency, but soon withdrew those that remained (Mississippi Department of Archives and History 2017, 55). The federal government's lack of response and inaction to this flagrant undermining of the democratic process essentially brought an end to Reconstruction in the state and ushered in one of the country's most racially repressive and violent regimes. The plan subsequently served as the model for other southern states looking to regain and retain control and infringe on the constitutionally guaranteed rights of African Americans.

Radical Reconstruction at the national level ended in 1877. Its end is generally attributed to the "Compromise of 1877" in which the contested 1876 US presidential election resulted in the federal government agreeing to move the last federal troops out of the South in exchange for Southern White votes to secure the presidency of Republican Rutherford B. Hayes. With Reconstruction's end also went the possibility of an interracial democracy in Mississippi and across the South.

The Rise of Jim Crow in Mississippi (1880s–1910s)

In August 1890, White Democrats who had regained power through the "Mississippi Plan" met to craft a new state constitution. The effort was led by Solomon Saladin Calhoun, a White county judge, who served as the convention's president. Calhoun did not mince words and made no attempt to conceal the racist aim of the convention, boldly proclaiming, "We came here to exclude the Negro. Nothing short of this will answer" (McMillen 1990, 41). The new constitution, adopted later that year, effectively nullified the Reconstruction amendments. The constitution contained various provisions leveled against African American voting rights, including literacy tests and poll taxes.¹⁰ Subsequent legal challenges at the state and federal levels affirmed its constitutionality, saying that it did not discriminate

10. The new constitution also codified segregated public education and limited gun rights for African Americans.

on the basis of race. As a result, the number of registered African Americans voters dropped dramatically to 8,615, compared to 130,278 in 1880 (Wells-Barnett 1893).

In 1892, the Black freedom struggle was struck a debilitating blow when the US presidency and both Houses of Congress came under Democratic Party control. Once in power, Democrats successfully repealed most of the federal laws that had sought to safeguard African American citizenship rights (Loevy 1990, 4–5). In the absence of any protections, justice and equality became increasingly out of reach for African Americans. Segregation, discrimination, disenfranchisement, and anti-Black violence all proliferated in the Jim Crow era.

The segregation of spaces was perhaps the most visible evidence of Jim Crow's triumph. While the infamous 1896 Supreme Court decision *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) paved the way for an era of legally sanctioned racial segregation in public accommodations, many southern states, including Mississippi, were already operating under the premise “separate but equal.” In 1888, the state passed a law “requiring all railroads carrying passengers in that state . . . to provide equal, but separate, accommodations for white and colored races.” The US Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of the Mississippi law in *Louisville, New Orleans & Texas Ry. Co. v. Mississippi* (1890) (Bay 2021, 331n128). However, separate was rarely equal, and African Americans received disparate treatment. They were often assigned inferior goods and services, despite having to pay the same price, if not more. Jim Crow racism and discrimination also limited education and vocational opportunities for Black people, which constrained upward social and economic mobility.

Black Mississippians, even in the face of these setbacks, did not lose all hope and continued to struggle for equality. In the face of changing social and political realities, some African Americans became less concerned with inclusion and acceptance by dominant society and refocused their attention away from enfranchisement to self-governance and economic self-sufficiency. They turned the racist doctrine of “separate but equal” into a rallying cry for Black independence.

Mound Bayou

Emblematic of this shift was Mound Bayou. In coming decades, the town, located in the Mississippi Delta, would emerge as an epicenter in the struggle for civil rights in Mississippi. Following the Civil War in 1867, Isaiah T. (I.T.) Montgomery and his father Benjamin Montgomery organized and raised money to purchase the Hurricane and Brierfield Plantations, where they had been formerly enslaved. They purchased the plantations from their destitute former enslaver Joseph E. Davis, older brother of President of the Confederacy Jefferson Davis. The Davis Bend Plantation, as it came to be known, was a highly cooperative community run by freedmen, and it was one of the region's top cotton producers for the next 10 years. When racial politics, falling cotton prices, and floods sent the plantation into decline, I.T. Montgomery searched for another location where he could establish an independent Black community. Montgomery and his cousin Benjamin Green purchased 840 acres of land in the Mississippi Delta and, with a small band of men, began clearing and draining the swampy terrain. Mound Bayou, Bolivar County, was founded in 1887 as an all-Black town. This “jewel of the Delta” was envisioned to be a new model for a

democratic society in which the formerly enslaved could live independently and self-govern (Graves 1976).

Montgomery was an adherent of African American leader Booker T. Washington (founder and president of the Tuskegee Institute in Alabama). Indicative of his accommodationist stance, Montgomery, the sole African American delegate at the 1890 State Constitution Convention, supported the proposed disenfranchisement of Black voters. While controversial, accommodationism was one strategy taken by African American leaders, like Montgomery and Washington, that enabled them to pursue race progress without being perceived as a threat to the social order. Largely as a matter of self-preservation in particularly hostile environments, African Americans privileged economic self-sufficiency and self-help over enfranchisement and integration (Meier 1954, 396). This approach enabled Mound Bayou to not only survive but thrive. Its location along the railroad proved advantageous, and the town prospered. The town was also able to attract northern investment from people like businessman and philanthropist Julius Rosenwald (Meier 1954, 398).

Mound Bayou's affluence and population declined in the coming decades, but it continued to serve as an important base of operations for civil rights activism and the pursuit of social and racial justice.

Lynching

African American successes often attracted unwanted negative attention that resulted in horrific physical violence. Because of Mound Bayou's alignment with the White power structure and its accommodationist stance, residents of the town avoided being the target of racially motivated terror. However, they were the exception rather than the rule. One of the major strategies used against African American progress and success in the Jim Crow era was lynching. This was an extralegal way of punishing the perpetrators of perceived crimes or infractions without due process. This form of racialized and sexualized¹¹ mob violence was overwhelmingly weaponized against African Americans who were perceived as threats to the White social, economic, and political order. Lynching was one of various tactics in the arsenal of white supremacy to intimidate and control, and economically successful and politically active African Americans were often targeted. Like segregation, this form of violence was designed not only to harm, but to dehumanize and humiliate. Often retaliatory in nature, historian Terence Finnegan argues that the catalyst for lynchings was the "desire of African Americans to maintain a modicum of dignity and autonomy even as they resisted the daily indignities of white racism" (Finnegan 2013, 203). Lynchings as public trauma served as an effective coercive mechanism for African Americans to "stay in their place." Mississippi, "with its vigilante tradition and vulnerable Black majority," had the worst lynching record in nearly every respect. The state had the "most lynchings, most multiple lynchings, most lynchings of women, most lynchings without an arrest, most lynchings of a victim in police custody, and most public support for the process itself" (Oshinsky 1997, 28).

11. Lynching was sexualized not only because its victims were accused of sexual crimes but the act of lynching itself was sexualized. During lynchings, victims and their families experienced forms of sexual violence, including sexual mutilation and rape. See Niambi M. Carter, "Intimacy without Consent: Lynching as Sexual Violence." *Politics & Gender* 8.3 (2012): 414-421.

One of the nation's most vocal opponents of lynching was Mississippi native Ida B. Wells. Born in Holly Springs, Wells attended Shaw University before going on to become a successful journalist and civil rights activist. She was also involved in the creation of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), formed in 1909.¹² Wells' anti-lynching activism began in 1892 while she was living in Memphis. Wells was motivated by the lynchings of a friend and two others who operated a local grocery store. The men were lynched after attempting to defend themselves and their establishment against repeated attacks from a competing White-owned grocery. Using investigative journalism, Wells exposed the myth of the rapacious Black male. She found, contrary to popular belief, that the majority of lynchings were not the result of sexual assault against White women, and even if interracial sex was involved, it was often consensual (Wells-Barnett [1895] 2014).

As further evidence of lynchings as a miscarriage of justice, Wells drew attention to the fact that lynchings were also carried out despite a court's "not guilty" adjudication. One incident she highlighted took place near Quincy, Mississippi, and involved the lynching of five individuals, including two women, in connection with a suspected well poisoning. The two women, the wife of the initial victim and her mother, were lynched even after they had been declared innocent by the court. In her summation of the incident, Wells wrote:

It may be remarked here in passing that this instance of the moral degradation of the people of Mississippi did not excite any interest in the public at large. American Christianity heard of this awful affair and read of its details and neither press nor pulpit gave the matter more than a passing comment. Had it occurred in the wilds of interior Africa, there would have been an outcry from the humane people of this country against the savagery which would so mercilessly put men and women to death. But it was an evidence of American civilization to be passed by unnoticed, to be denied or condoned as the requirements of any future emergency might determine. (Wells-Barnett [1895] 2014, 70)

Slavery by Other Names

Omnipresent violence was not the only threat that loomed over African Americans struggling in the face of mounting Jim Crow inequities. Various new systems of labor extraction and exploitation kept African Americans in conditions very similar to those they experienced during slavery. Post-war land redistribution and reform efforts were largely unsuccessful, and as a result, land ownership remained elusive for many Black Mississippians. Lack of land ownership along with limited economic development and industrial growth reduced African American economic prospects to agricultural work. Tenant farming and sharecropping allowed Whites to maintain control over Black labor, keeping many African Americans locked in cycles of poverty. White landowners often used violence or the threat of violence, along with other retaliatory measures, to prevent workers from leaving or exposing unfair labor practices. These arrangements kept laborers in debt and in relationships of dependency, effectively limiting their ability to challenge Jim Crow.

12. The NAACP was formed in response to the 1908 Springfield Riot in Illinois.

The criminal justice system, like tenant farming and sharecropping, helped to preserve and reinforce the racial status quo and keep African Americans in a status approximating slavery. If justification was needed, the powers that be had to look no further than the Thirteenth Amendment, which prohibited slavery “except as a punishment for crime.” Facing labor shortages after the end of the Civil War, Mississippi was able to maintain its dependence on unpaid labor by using African Americans who had been convicted of crimes, a practice referred to as “convict leasing.”¹³ The practice exemplified racial bias in the criminal justice system. Convictions were largely enabled by statutes and provisions that specifically targeted African Americans and instituted racial disparities in punishment. Criminal conviction also further worked to disenfranchise African American men. In 1876, an act passed the state legislature permitting Mississippi to lease prisoners, which included those who were unable to pay fines and court costs, to private industries. Men, women, and children were all sent to work in convict camps, often for minor infractions. While the practice was quite lucrative, prisoner mistreatment ultimately led to it becoming obsolete. Violence was endemic to the camps. Abuse in all its forms (physical, sexual, and mental) was rampant, and mortality rates were high (Oshinsky 1997). Ida B. Wells noted, “The Convict Lease System and Lynch Law are twin infamies which flourish hand in hand in many of the United States” (Wells-Barnett 1893, 19).

In 1905, the state Penitentiary, Parchman Farm, was created as a reform to the convict leasing system. If there was any doubt of the criminal justice system’s linkages to slavery, the prison farm was modeled on a plantation. Parchman was the brainchild of career politician and avowed racist James K. Vardaman, who at the time was serving as governor of the state. The imprisoned population, which consisted of males and females and even young children, was overwhelmingly Black. Vardaman saw incarceration, not only as a means to continue the profitable exploitation of Black labor, but as a powerful conditioning mechanism for African Americans that “could teach them proper discipline, strong work habits, and respect for white authority” (Oshinsky 1997, 110).

In addition to the persistence of slavery in these various forms, Black economic independence was increasingly under threat during the rise of Jim Crow. By the 1910s, most of Mississippi’s Black businesses closed. These entities included banks, newspapers, and insurance companies that were established during Reconstruction and were often the targets of white supremacist terrorism (Dittmer 1994).

Blues Music

In this context of “socio-economic disparities” rooted in racial oppression, Blues music was birthed in the Mississippi Delta (MS Delta NHA 2004, 68). While Blues had its roots in earlier musical forms created by people of African descent, it was the embodiment of the lived experience of Jim Crow and its associated struggles. In a society that attempted to lay claim to Black bodies, labor, and space, Blues music was part of a culture of resistance. Not only was the music a way of confronting and protesting a racially repressive society, but the venues in which it was played, common throughout the Mississippi Delta, were important spaces for bodily and cultural autonomy. Juke (Jook) joints, Blues rooms, bars, and social clubs were

13. Convict leasing originated in Mississippi in 1868 but was soon adopted by other southern states.

centers of African American working-class opposition that provided momentary reprieve from the heavily regulated and surveilled public spaces controlled by Whites, furnishing Blacks with important opportunities to assert their humanity in a society built upon its denial (Kelley 1993).

Mississippi, Two World Wars, and a Great Depression (1917–1945)

World War I and II and the intervening Great Depression had profound effects on the state of Mississippi. These events resulted in upheaval that spelled change for the economic, social, and political dynamics of Black-White relations. The period was also the height of the massive African American exodus out of the South, known as the Great Migration. This outmigration impacted not only Mississippi, but the nation—and ultimately, the world.

World War I and the Red Summer of 1919

While World War I began in 1914, it would not be until 1917 that the United States entered into the conflict. Many African Americans answered the call to serve their country, despite the failure to recognize their full citizenship rights. African American enlistment in the military especially alarmed James K. Vardaman, by then a US senator, and as a result, he opposed the war.¹⁴ Vardaman feared that Black veterans having defended their country would return discontented with their second-class citizenship and a segregated social order rooted in the belief of Black inferiority (Davis 2018). When the vote came before the Senate, he voted against US entry into the war. While Vardaman's expressed concerns ignored existing African American dissatisfaction with the status quo, he was absolutely correct. By war's end, 25,048 Black Mississippians had served in segregated units, largely assigned to support roles such as loading and transporting supplies, clearing debris, and burying the dead.

After the war, Black veterans felt emboldened and hoped their service would serve as the basis for racial progress. However, their patriotism was neither celebrated nor rewarded. Many Whites felt threatened by the mere suggestion of Black equality that military service symbolized, and African American veterans became targeted victims of violence. The height of this violence occurred across the country during the Red Summer of 1919, which, contrary to the name, was not contained to one season. The year had been marked by important social, cultural, and economic transformations that were perceived as threats to the White male hegemony. Various groups they perceived as their social inferiors presented challenges to the status quo. In addition to demands from Black soldiers for America to live up to its ideals and promises, women were on the brink of receiving the right to vote, and rising immigration aroused fears that became cloaked in anti-communism sentiment. The country was also still recovering from the 1918 influenza epidemic while facing rising unemployment.

Again, anti-Black violence erupted, and the protection of white womanhood was proffered as an excuse for the bloodshed. Black veteran L. B. Reed, suspected of having a relationship with a White woman, was hanged over the Sunflower River Bridge in Clarksdale, Mississippi (Williams 2019, 234). African American veterans were not the only victims of the Red

14. While the war received overwhelming support, Vardaman was one of six senators to vote against the country entering the war. Also included among his reasons for opposing the war was its impact on the poor, who were the majority of his constituents.

Summer. In Vicksburg, where the state's first branch of the NAACP had just been organized the previous year, 1,000 White men stormed the county jail and dragged Black prisoner Lloyd Clay from his cell. Clay, who was accused of attempted rape of a White woman, was taken by the lynch mob downtown, where he was brutally tortured and murdered. According to a May 24, 1919, *Chicago Defender* article, "Vicksburg, Mississippi, Disgraces Civilization With Lynching," women and children were reported to have actively participated in the gruesome physical assault in which Reed was stripped, burned, and hung. The White woman Clay was accused of raping later confessed that she was not sure that Clay was her actual assailant (McWhirter 2011, 14).

In addition to lynchings, anti-Black riots erupted across the country, including in Macon, Mississippi. In June, a White mob, an expression of anti-Black and anti-communism sentiment, attacked Black workers for attempting to organize for better pay and improved working conditions. They also directed their violence at leaders and prominent members of the African American community and engaged in looting. Among the mob's rioters were a "leading banker, the deputy sheriff, and a city marshal" (McWhirter 2011, 73). The involvement in the attacks of prominent White citizens, including law enforcement and government officials, was characteristic of racist violence in Mississippi.

Civil rights activism continued to expand in Mississippi in the face of rising hostilities. Branches of the NAACP were established in Mound Bayou in 1919 and in Jackson, Meridian, and Natchez in the 1920s. NAACP branches then spread across the state, predominately in more urban and more populated areas. However, because of the dangers that such activism posed in the state, the branches were relatively quiet (Dittmer 1994, 29).

In 1922, the federal government turned its attention to the crime of lynching and attempted to pass legislation in the form of the Dyer Anti-Lynching Bill, named in honor of Representative Leonidas C. Dyer, a Missouri Republican. The bill imposed fines and imprisonment on those convicted of the crime in federal courts and also imposed fines and penalties on states, counties, and municipalities that did not reasonably protect its citizens from mob violence (Hixson 1969; Francis 2014). When the bill was before the House, Mississippi Representative Thomas U. Sisson expressed his opposition:

The white men of the South are ready for the sacrifice of life itself, if need be, to protect their fair women. Our wives, sisters, and daughters shall be protected from the lust and passion of these black brutes. Before God and high heaven this is the sacred truth. I would rather the whole black race of this world were lynched than for one of the fair daughters of the South to be ravished and torn by one of these black brutes. (Francis 2014, 116)

Mississippi's eight representatives voted against the bill. Despite opposition, the bill passed the House but was filibustered in the Senate by Southern Democrats and never came to a vote. Such racial injustice remained common, and African Americans continued to face barriers to due process and equal protection under the law, which had been extended to them in the Fourteenth Amendment.

Mississippi and the Great Migration

By the end of the 1920s, Mississippi, like the rest of the nation, remained mired in economic crises and racial inequality. Between 1910 and 1960, it is estimated that nearly a million African Americans from Mississippi fled the South to seek opportunities in northern and western cities. Enthused with the prospect of finding higher-paying jobs, better schools, and some degree of social equality, many African Americans joined the Great Migration. In what was essentially a political act, African Americans made their way out of the South.

Many set their sights on Chicago, even though it was where one of the worst race riots occurred in 1919. The riot started in response to a July incident in which an African American teenager, Eugene Williams, was killed while swimming at the 29th Street Beach on Lake Michigan. Williams unknowingly crossed the invisible dividing line that separated the Black and White swimming areas and was attacked by a group of White swimmers, resulting in his death by drowning. Williams's death was followed by five days of violence in which the state militia had to be called in. The riot resulted in the deaths of both Blacks and Whites; however, Blacks bore the brunt of attacks (The Chicago Commission on Race Relations 1922).

Two major natural disasters figured prominently into the mass Black exodus out of Mississippi. In 1919, the demand for raw materials during World War I spiked cotton prices to nearly \$1 per pound in 1919, but by 1921, prices plummeted to 9.8 cents per pound. At the same time, the boll weevil, which had migrated from Mexico into Mississippi in 1907, was causing more economic damage than any agricultural pest in American history. The downturn in the Mississippi cotton harvest led to employment shifts, most notably in the lumber industry. This shift had important environmental consequences. By the end of the 1920s, the state's forest reserves were exhausted. This deforestation helped pave the way for one of the most destructive natural disasters of the 20th century—the Great Mississippi River Flood of 1927 (Spencer 1994).

The flood devastated the Yazoo-Mississippi Delta during an already tense situation “of increased economic hardship and growing labor scarcity” (Spencer 1994, 171).¹⁵ African Americans, who were unable to flee, experienced the devastation of the environmental disaster more acutely. They were forced into relief camps, which reproduced and magnified existing social, economic, and racial disparities. While the federal government funded relief efforts, elite White planters administered the programs and gave African Americans short shrift. African American refugees were subject to racist treatment and forced to work against their will in various industries. The region's dependency on their labor in this time of crisis did not result in any better treatment. Refugees who already were receiving inadequate provisions suffered abuse and were undercompensated for their labor. Despite totalitarian attempts at control by camp administrators, African American refugees resisted in a myriad of ways. A refugee in Greenville was able to smuggle a letter out addressed to journalist Ida B. Wells. She subsequently published an article based on the letter exposing the

15. African Americans made up an overwhelming majority in the Delta, comprising 75% of the population.

inhumane conditions in the camps (Spencer 1994, 174–175). The experience prompted many Black Mississippians to abandon the state.

The Great Migration out of Mississippi had lasting economic, social, and cultural impacts, including important demographic shifts. Especially important to this outmigration was the Illinois Central Railroad, which owned the Yazoo and Mississippi Valley Railroad. The railroad not only transported migrants north to Chicago, but the Sleeping Car Porters, who worked the trains, were important conduits of information about life and culture in the North. Blues musicians also left Mississippi for Chicago's vibrant music scene on these trains.

By 1930, despite ongoing racial tensions, Chicago had the largest population of Mississippians outside of the state. Counted among the migrants was Richard Wright, who became an influential African American writer. Born in 1908 on a plantation in Roxie (outside of Natchez), Wright migrated from Memphis to Chicago in 1927, where he worked for the government-funded Federal Writers' Project, part of the Works Progress Administration (WPA), and joined the Communist Party. He went on to live in New York in 1937 and then left the United States in 1947, living the rest of his life in Paris, where he died in 1960. His works, which largely focus on race in the United States, not only chronicle but protest the racist treatment of African Americans in the South and North. His writings include his personal experiences in Mississippi, which he referred to as "the most racist of all the American states" (Wright 1956, 351). Living in Jackson, he recalled, "We lived in the very heart of the local Black Belt. There were black churches and black preachers; there were black schools and black teachers; black groceries and black clerks. In fact, everything was so solidly black that for a long time I did not even think of white folks, save in remote and vague terms. But this could not last forever." When forced to leave this protected enclave in search of work, he received his "Jim Crow Education," the most important lesson of which was to "stay in your place" (Wright 1937). The consequences for those who did not know or learn this lesson could prove deadly as "'keeping the Negro in his place' was the duty of every white citizen" (Dittmer 1994, 20).

Mississippi and the Great Depression (1929–1939)

The Great Depression served another brutal blow to Mississippi, a state already reeling from economic devastation. The Depression exacerbated already impoverished conditions in a state where most people still lived as tenant farmers or sharecroppers, with limited access to education, news, or health care. However, for African Americans, pervasive racism compounded the devastation that the Depression wrought.

President Franklin D. Roosevelt, a Democrat, received overwhelming support from Whites in Mississippi. Mississippians initially welcomed the New Deal relief programs instituted under his administration in 1933, hoping that they would bring much-needed economic relief and recovery to a struggling Mississippi. However, support of these social welfare programs waned when Whites realized that African Americans were also the recipients of the assistance.

In 1932, numerous complaints about the mistreatment of Black laborers working on the War Department's Mississippi River Flood Control Project led the NAACP to send Field

Investigator Helen Boardman to examine conditions on the ground. She found private contractors subjecting Black workers to unequal pay, higher commissary prices, unsanitary camps, overwork, and beatings. Her report was referred to the War Department. When conditions persisted, the NAACP sent Roy Wilkins and George Schuyler to investigate. Disguised as laborers, Wilkins and Schuyler toured contractors' camps for three weeks and confirmed Boardman's report. The NAACP printed 10,000 copies of a leaflet, *Mississippi River Slavery-1932*, to inform the public. In September 1933, the secretary of war announced a pay raise and shortened hours for unskilled Mississippi levee camp laborers (Mizelle 2013).

The 1933 act establishing the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) stated that "no discrimination shall be made on account of race, color and creed." Despite this mandate, pushback and political pressure resulted in CCC Director Robert Fechner issuing an order for the "complete segregation of colored and white enrollees." After Fechner's order in 1935, separate camps and companies were established for Whites, African Americans, and Native Americans. Through its lifespan, the Civilian Conservation Corps enrolled more than 3 million men, but only 250,000 were African American, and 80,000 were Native American. In the 102 CCC camps established in Mississippi, African Americans hired under CCC programs were limited to low-paying, menial jobs and were excluded from the new CCC-built state parks (Mississippi Department of Archives and History 2017, 68).

African Americans fared no better under federal agriculture programs, which impacted the industry in which they predominantly worked. Farmers were paid to reduce acres planted. Although crop prices rose, landowners idled plots worked by sharecroppers and often evicted them.

The Depression also brought little relief to the racist violence that African Americans experienced; violence, in fact, intensified. The 1930s were particularly turbulent in terms of both extralegal and legal racist violence. In 1934, three African Americans, Ed Brown, Henry Shields, and Arthur Ellington, were arrested for the murder of Raymond Stewart (sometimes Stuart), a White planter in Kemper County, Mississippi. The three suspects, subjected to repeated torture during their interrogations, confessed to the murder.¹⁶ While the men were held in custody, mob violence was threatened but was avoided with assurances that the men would be legally punished for their alleged crime. The county, located in the east central portion of the state, had one of the state's worst lynching records. The three men were rushed to trial with no evidence that they had committed the murder beyond their coerced confessions. During a 30-minute deliberation, an all-White jury found the three men guilty and sentenced them to death by hanging (Cortner 1986, 3). The conviction was viewed as a "legal lynching."

All too often, in southern states, legal proceedings were purely procedural, the end result was predetermined, and the courts were another apparatus for furthering Black subjugation (McMillen 1989, 200). They "allowed the forms of law to be observed and permitted officials and the press to congratulate the community for its devotion to due process of law, while the end sought by a lynch mob was also achieved" (Cortner 1986, 4). Therefore, while these cases had the aura of being legally fair and just, they were anything but. The case was appealed on

16. Ellington had endured life-threatening injuries as a result of the torture. See McMillen, *Dark Journey*, 200.

the basis that the convicted men's Fourteenth Amendment's rights regarding equal protection and due process had been violated. In 1936, the case *Brown v. Mississippi* was heard before the Supreme Court. The NAACP, Commission of Interracial Cooperation, and the Association of Southern Women for the Prevention of Lynching provided financial support to pursue the appeal. In an unprecedented and unanimous decision, the court ruled that the men's confessions had been involuntarily and therefore illegally obtained, so they were not admissible. This was the first time the US Supreme Court had overturned a state's ruling in a criminal conviction. The case was not only important in upholding African Americans' constitutionally guaranteed rights, but it was also an important challenge to the police violence that was often a function of racism and discrimination. Despite the favorable ruling, the three men were taken back into custody with plans to retry them. However, in order to avoid another trial, Brown, Shields, and Ellington pled guilty to lesser charges of manslaughter and served time in the state penitentiary (McMillen 1989, 199–200).

When anti-lynching legislation again came before Congress in 1938,¹⁷ senators from the South used the filibuster to defeat the bill. During the filibuster, US Senator Theodore Bilbo of Mississippi, a vocal advocate of white supremacy, expressed similar sentiments to those that had been expressed by his fellow statesman, Representative Thomas U. Sisson, in response to earlier anti-lynching legislation.¹⁸ Referring to the bill as "monstrous," Bilbo declared, "To defeat this measure, so help me God, I would be willing to speak every day of the year 1938." Playing upon fears, he went on to suggest the proposed legislation would not end the violence but induce it. He threatened:

*If you succeed in the passage of this bill, you will open the floodgates of hell in the South. Raping, mobbing, lynching, race riots, and crime will be increased a thousandfold; and upon your garments and the garments of those who are responsible for the passage of the measure will be the blood of the raped and outraged daughters of Dixie, as well as the blood of the perpetrators of these crimes that the red-blooded Anglo-Saxon white Southern men will not tolerate.*¹⁹ (Congressional Record Senate 75 Congress, 3 Session (1938), 783)

Despite the difficulties that African Americans faced during the Great Depression and persisting racial disparities in New Deal programs, the positives seemingly outweighed the negatives. African Americans made important gains under the New Deal. As a result of the progress they experienced, African Americans began to change their political affiliations from the Republican Party to the Democratic Party. This change in the political landscape represented an important step in the evolving struggle for civil rights in Mississippi.

17. The legislation had been introduced in 1937 and was sponsored by Democratic Senators Robert Wagner of New York and Frederick Van Nuys of Indiana.

18. Bilbo, a career politician, served in the US Senate, 1935–1947. He previously served as governor of Mississippi, 1916–1920 and 1928–1932. Before that, he served as lieutenant governor and in the Mississippi State Senate.

19. Later that same year, Bilbo argued before the Senate that a biracial society was not possible or preferable and proposed that African Americans be sent to Africa. See Robert L. Fleegler, "Theodore G. Bilbo and the Decline of Public Racism, 1938–1947," *Journal of Mississippi History* 68. 1 (2007): 1–27.

World War II (1941–1945)

The United States' entrance into World War II in 1941 helped to further the nation's recovery from the Great Depression and presented new opportunities "that forever transformed American life" (NPS 2008a, 14). The war also heralded significant changes for the state of Mississippi, including in the realm of civil rights.

Labor shortages resulted in slightly higher wages and better working conditions for African Americans. But increasing mechanization meant that improvements were short-lived. Mississippi became less rural and agricultural with the decline in the number of farms and the number of farmworkers. While the war brought new employment opportunities with the increased military presence and the growth of the defense industry, racial discrimination in employment meant few opportunities for African Americans to transition to other industries. African Americans migrated to cities and out of the state in search of better opportunities. As a result, the state's racial balance, for the first time in more than a century, tipped in favor of the White population. Despite significant outmigration,²⁰ over a million African Americans remained in Mississippi, still more proportionately (49.2% in 1940) than in any other state (Lowery 1971, 577). Mississippi, however, would never again have a Black majority. Racist violence, including lynchings, persisted in the face of changing demographics. With African Americans still making up roughly half the population and increasing urbanization, Mississippi Whites remained anxious about losing economic and political control (Dittmer 1994, 14–15). However, even in the face of growing resistance, African Americans remained committed to the struggle for racial equality in Mississippi.

An early sign of support for civil rights on the federal level was Executive Order 8802, signed by President Franklin D. Roosevelt in June 1941.²¹ As the nation geared up to enter the war, A. Phillip Randolph of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters put pressure on President Roosevelt to provide employment opportunities for African Americans, many of which were new migrants, in the expanding war industries. Roosevelt, using executive authority, ordered an end to racial discrimination. To aid in the enforcement of the order, the Fair Employment Practices Committee, was established. This action "constituted the federal government's first substantive act in support of the cause of racial equality since Reconstruction" (Rolland-Diamond 2013, 95). However, the Fair Employment Practices Committee was largely ineffective, especially in the South.

As in previous wars, African Americans answered the call to serve their country. More than 85,000 African American men and women from Mississippi served in the US armed services during World War II (Dittmer 1994, 17). Many of the military installations were segregated, and African Americans continued to experience racist treatment. The African American struggle for equality during World War II was embodied in the "Double V" campaign. Launched in 1942 by the *Pittsburgh Courier*, the campaign stood for "Victory over totalitarianism abroad and Victory over racism at home." The campaign demanded that Black soldiers be given full citizenship rights at home, and the national Black press endorsed

20. Mississippi produced more African American migrants than any state in the decade after 1940. See Lowery 1971, 579.

21. The United States would not enter into the war until later that year in response to Japan's bombing of Pearl Harbor.

the campaign. The idea was embraced by soldiers who faced racism in the United States as they prepared for war.

As African American soldiers from across the country trained and were stationed at military installations in the South, they tested and challenged the customs of Jim Crow laws. Camp Shelby in Hattiesburg was strictly segregated. Black soldiers faced mistreatment from their fellow White soldiers. They were also restricted from visiting the town, which left them with limited recreation opportunities (Dittmer 1994, 16). To fill this void, the United Service Organizations (USO) established an all-Black center in 1942.

In 1943, more serious racial violence erupted at Camp Van Dorn in Centreville, Mississippi. Transferred from Arizona, the Black 364th Infantry Division arrived with mounted guns, artillery, Black officers, and a reputation for challenging Jim Crow customs. They ignored racial segregation and immediately desegregated the White post exchange military store and a “Whites-only” USO show. A few days later, some 75 infantry troops visited town and nearly faced off with armed locals. The following night, a county sheriff shot and killed a Black private just off base. The shooting triggered a race riot that resulted in the bloodshed of Blacks and Whites (Dittmer 1994, 16–17).

World War II was the last time that African Americans would fight for the country in a segregated military. The war had provided an important stage for African American patriotism, which stood in stark contrast to their treatment in American society. The wartime sacrifices of African Americans intensified demands for social progress. Future civil rights activist Amzie Moore was drafted during the war. His experience would prove eye-opening. Moore reasoned, “I think what God really did with me, in this particular thing, was put me on a ship and send me around the world. And let me live in different environments and be in contact with different people and to really and truly find out what was behind it.” After receiving his honorable discharge in 1946, he returned to Mississippi, enlightened with new understanding and commitment. African Americans like Moore, having fought to secure democratic freedoms abroad, were determined to fight for freedom at home (Tyson 2017, 82-83).

Post-World War II (1945–1954)

The United States after World War II was a different place. The war had far-reaching social, political, and economic impacts and inspired “a new militancy” in the Black freedom struggle. African Americans became not only increasingly assertive but organized in their demands for racial equality. White Mississippians largely, however, remained committed to a society structured by racial inequality and continued to rely on intimidation and terror to keep African Americans “in their place.” Mississippi political leaders were even more adamant about maintaining the racial status quo, and they were supported by the majority of their White constituents. In his bid for reelection, Mississippi US Senator Bilbo (mentioned earlier), who had made a career fighting against any legislation aimed at racial progress, encouraged acts of violence to thwart African American efforts to vote.²² In spite of this, African Americans, many of whom were veterans, remained steadfast in their individual and

22. Black Mississippians petitioned Congress to investigate Bilbo’s interference with Black voter participation in the primary.

collective resistance to racism. This growing mass movement resulted in important breakthroughs in the struggle for civil rights, prompting the federal government to seriously take up the issue of civil rights for the first time since Reconstruction.

Events that occurred in 1946 marked a turning point in the civil rights struggle. World War II established the United States as a global power. However, pervasive racial violence, heightened in the immediate aftermath of the war, threatened the country's emerging reputation as the leader of the "free world." Beginning in 1946, "worried about the impact of race discrimination on US prestige abroad, civil rights reform came to be seen as crucial to US foreign policy" (Fleegler 2006, 2). Continuing the efforts of President Roosevelt's civil rights agenda, in 1946, President Harry S. Truman issued Executive Order 9908, which commissioned "The President's Committee on Civil Rights." Truman was motivated, in part, to issue the order after learning about the violence to which returning African American veterans were subjected. In Mississippi, they "were being dumped out of army trucks . . . and beaten" (Levantrosser, 1986; 6). In his directive to the committee, Truman said, "I want our Bill of Rights implemented in fact. We have been trying to do this for 150 years. We're making progress, but we're not making progress fast enough" (Rowan 1959, 45).

This lack of progress was evidenced in a 1947 report that looked at conditions in states that had high concentrations of African American veterans. Mississippi had the greatest percentage (38.5%) of Black veterans. "It is in these areas," the report observed, "that the greatest number of lynchings of Negro Veterans have taken place; it is here that the most Negro veterans are unemployed; that the poorest educational facilities exist; and segregation is most drastically enforced. Here also exist the greatest amount of poverty" (Bolté 1947, 6).

Further evidence of the lack of progress was the experience of returning African American veterans attempting to vote in Mississippi's 1946 statewide election. Emboldened by the Supreme Court decision *Smith v. Allwright*, which outlawed the White primaries that were standard throughout the segregated South, they tried but were denied the opportunity to register, let alone to vote. On June 6, 1946, Etoy Fletcher, an African American Army veteran who served 23 months in the South Pacific, tried to register to vote in Brandon, Mississippi, a small town just east of Jackson, but was turned away. He was then kidnapped, beaten, and threatened with death if he tried to register again.²³ That same year, Medgar Evers, his brother Charles, and four other African American friends had successfully registered to vote in Decatur, a town that had no registered Black voters. Both White and Black acquaintances urged the Evers' parents to convince their sons to remove their names from the rolls, but the young men did not acquiesce. On Election Day, the brothers and their friends went to town and attempted to vote, not once but twice. However, both times they were rebuffed at the courthouse by a score of armed White men. Medgar vowed that he would not be intimidated again and started taking steps to put himself in a place to be a change maker, which included attending Alcorn Agricultural and Mechanical College that same year on the GI Bill (Dittmer 1994; Evers 1958).

23. In 1947, Fletcher testified before the US Senate Committee in Jackson. He was one of approximately 200 African Americans, mostly veterans, who shared the difficulties they encountered when registering to vote.

The GI Bill and Opportunities for Upward Social Mobility

African American veterans hoped to benefit from the Servicemen's Readjustment Act (usually referred to as the GI Bill).²⁴ Signed in 1944 by President Franklin Roosevelt, as the war continued to be fought, the bill was considered the first "race-neutral" piece of legislation for veterans in the United States. Its purpose was to ease the transition for all veterans returning home from World War II (Turner and Bound 2003).

The bill, a continuation of the social welfare programs that were created during the Depression, provided education, employment, and healthcare benefits to World War II veterans. The bill also allowed veterans access to low-interest mortgages for homes, farms, and businesses. These benefits were supposed to be available to any veteran who had served at least 90 days and had been honorably discharged (Onkst 1998, 518). Before the war, college attendance and homeownership were, for the most part, unreachable for the average American and even more so for African Americans. The bill is often credited with making the American Dream possible.

Congress did not easily pass the bill, which faced opposition and delays in the House from US Representative John E. Rankin of Mississippi, a staunch segregationist. Rankin, a cosponsor of the legislation and the chair of the House Veterans Committee, sought to limit Black veterans' access to its benefits, believing that theirs should not be equal to their White counterparts. In making his case for the disparity, Rankin did not speak of fear of African American social advancement; instead, he relied on tropes and fears of African American laziness. When the bill ultimately passed, it contained a provision that put its administration in the hands of states as opposed to the federal government, allowing for discriminatory practices to continue.

Limiting African American access to the GI Bill had important consequences for Black socioeconomic advancement in Mississippi. In all areas that the GI Bill sought to improve in the lives of returning soldiers, Mississippi Black veterans experienced discrimination. The bill created two new federal agencies, the Veterans Administration (VA) and the United States Employment Services. But while federally mandated and funded, these agencies were locally administered, leaving Black veterans hoping to access benefits at the mercy of Whites, who almost exclusively staffed the agencies' segregated centers in Mississippi.

United States Employment Services job placement was oriented towards maintaining existing racial inequalities. Agency records show that in 1946, Blacks were overwhelmingly placed in "unskilled employment and service-oriented jobs," while Whites were placed in "professional, skilled, and semiskilled positions" (Onkst 1998, 521).

African American veterans' ability to access the education benefits of the GI Bill was hampered by racism and segregation. Since the bill's education benefits provided for attendance at vocational and trade schools, Black veterans were steered to these institutions, which did little to close existing opportunity gaps. Another factor impacting African American veterans' ability to attain a college education was the segregation of southern

24. The GI Bill was also referred to as the "GI Bill of Rights."

colleges and universities. African Americans could only attend Historically Black Colleges and Universities, which did not have the capacity to accommodate increased enrollment. Those willing to leave the South in order to further their educations discovered that some schools outside the region also limited Black enrollment. Even in cases in which African Americans were accepted into northern collegiate institutions, veteran program personnel used the (threat of and actual) denial of benefits to prevent them from attending these institutions (Herbold 1994, 107). But for those like Medgar Evers, who were able to use the GI Bill to attain an education, it opened new doors.

Access to GI Bill-provided healthcare benefits also proved difficult. Veterans Administration (VA) hospitals were allowed to follow local customs, which meant that medical facilities in Mississippi were segregated and some refused treatment to Black people “except in emergency cases” (Bolté 1947, 22).

Even when it came to obtaining basic necessities like shelter, Black veterans could be left out in the cold. The amount of housing units available to Black veterans fell well below demand. This resulted in rent increases for Blacks that outpaced increases for Whites. The availability of new veteran housing stock for African Americans was also limited. However, Jackson, Mississippi, was the southern city where the availability of new housing was most proportional (Bolté 1947, 18). Even if a veteran was able to find a property, obtaining a VA loan proved difficult. When *Ebony* magazine surveyed 13 Mississippi cities in the summer of 1947, they uncovered that of the 3,229 VA loans administered, only two went to African Americans (Onkst 1998, 522).

Despite these significant obstacles, the GI Bill and postwar economic prosperity expanded the African American middle class and provided important leadership in the ongoing struggle for equality.

Organizing for Civil Rights

In the post-World War II period, the primary focus of civil rights shifted back from self-sufficiency and self-help to enfranchisement and integration. Between 1946 and 1947, the number of Black registered voters in the state doubled, but even with this increase the percentage of registered eligible Black voters remained a negligible 1% (NPS 2009, 25). Organizational activity also increased. The resurgence of the NAACP resulted in the establishment of “[t]en new branches in Mississippi . . . between 1945 and 1947” (Dittmer 1994, 31). In 1944, only 129 members belonged to the NAACP’s six branches in Mississippi. Of those, only the branch office in Jackson had regular operations. Being a member of the NAACP was dangerous; many White Mississippians firmly believed, falsely, that it was a communist organization and belonging to it amounted to treason (Dittmer 1994, 29–30). Included among its membership were veterans like Medgar Evers. After graduating from college, Evers and his wife, Myrlie, moved to Mound Bayou, where he worked as an insurance agent for the Magnolia Mutual Insurance Company selling policies to African Americans in the Mississippi Delta. The insurance company was owned by Dr. Theodore Roosevelt Mason (T.R.M.) Howard, a Black physician in Mound Bayou and a political activist. From 1952 to 1954, Evers traveled the Delta selling insurance and organizing new NAACP chapters. Evers would go on to serve as the state’s first NAACP field secretary.

The formation of other civil rights organizations soon followed. In 1947, the Mississippi Progressive Voters' League was established. Headquartered in Jackson with branches in Hattiesburg and Cleveland, the purpose of the nonpartisan league was to encourage civic participation among Black voters. The organization, popular because of its moderate stance, attracted 5,000 members in its initial year (Dittmer 1994, 25–26).

The Regional Council of Negro Leadership (RCNL) was founded in 1951 in Mississippi by Dr. Howard (Mound Bayou), Aaron Henry (Clarksdale), and Amzie Moore (Cleveland). The regional council encouraged a variety of Black economic interests to come together and have one voice in public policy. The regional council was modeled after the Delta Council, a White-led organization that promoted business ownership and civic engagement. While RCNL founding leaders did not envision the organization as a civil rights group, it quickly emerged as such because most of its leadership were also members of the NAACP. Although the NAACP discouraged its leaders from participating in competing groups, many were attracted to the Regional Council of Negro Leadership because of the group's focus on the importance of economic issues, something the NAACP was lacking. Additionally, many RCNL leaders thought that a local organization could be more effective and have a more immediate impact in Mississippi than a group that emphasized effecting change through the somewhat lengthy process of litigation. The regional council began holding meetings that highlighted the roadblocks to voter registration and eventually evolved into conducting voter registration classes. With Medgar Evers as program director, the stated goal of the group was “ . . . to guide our people in their civic responsibilities regarding education, registration and voting, law enforcement, tax paying, the preservation of property, the value of saving and in all things which will make us stable, qualified conscientious citizens” (Beito and Beito 2009, 74). The regional council was widely successful in registering voters (Payne 1995). The regional council also held rallies that drew thousands on Dr. Howard's plantation. National figures like lawyer Thurgood Marshall and music artist Mahalia Jackson attended.

These civil rights organizations had a decidedly middle-class orientation. This was not necessarily due to elitism or discrimination, but because those belonging to the middle class possessed a degree of economic autonomy that reduced their dependence on the White power structure for their livelihoods. Racial segregation, despite its various negative impacts, created important economic opportunities for African American professionals and entrepreneurs. Not only did African American professionals and entrepreneurs provide important services for the Black community, they also were a source of leadership and activism. For instance, Dr. Howard had come to Mound Bayou in the 1940s to serve as chief surgeon at the Knights and Daughters of Tabor Hospital (Taborian Hospital), a medical facility established by an African American fraternal organization. Howard's subsequent influence on economic development and civil rights was far reaching. Reflecting on Howard, Myrlie Evers said, “One look told you he was a leader: kind, affluent, intelligent, that rare Negro in Mississippi who had somehow beaten the system” (Dittmer 1994, 32).

The Legal Lynching of Willie McGee

In 1945, World War II veteran Willie McGee was charged with the rape of Wiletta Hawkins, a White housewife in Laurel, Jones County, Mississippi. As described in Heard (2011), McGee had allegedly broken into the woman's home and raped her while her husband and children

were asleep. McGee was tried three times over the next five years. In the first trial, prosecuted by future US Senator John Stennis, the jury, after just minutes of deliberation, found McGee guilty and sentenced him to death by electric chair. However, the conviction was overturned by the Mississippi Supreme Court on the grounds that the trial should have been granted a change of venue because of the threat of mob violence. The second trial again resulted in a guilty verdict, but the state supreme court overturned it on grounds that African Americans had been excluded from the jury and therefore violated McGee's Fourteenth Amendment rights. In the third trial, McGee was represented by the Civil Rights Congress, a legal defense organization that had communist links, with Bella Abzug, a woman, serving as lead counsel. McGee took the stand for the first time in his own defense and argued that his signed confession had been coerced using torture and threats. Despite this evidence, McGee was again found guilty, but unlike in the last two trials, the state supreme court upheld the verdict. Over the next few years, the Civil Rights Congress continued to mount a defense on McGee's behalf. In their appeals, they argued that since the crime of rape was a capital offense only if committed by a Black man, the death sentence was unfair. After evidence surfaced of McGee and Hawkins' alleged prior consensual sexual relationship, the Civil Rights Congress sought to have his conviction vacated on these grounds, but they were ultimately unsuccessful in the appeals. They then brought the case to the US Supreme Court, but the appeals were denied (Heard 2011).

In addition to mounting a vigorous defense in the courts, the Civil Rights Congress mounted a large publicity campaign that helped to garner far-reaching support for McGee. The case, now a cause célèbre, sparked outrage, as it revealed the stark racial disparities in the US criminal justice system. The case received considerable attention from notable people, including Mississippi's own—William Faulkner and Richard Wright. African American entertainers and international sensations, Josephine Baker and Paul Robeson, expressed their condemnation. Albert Einstein weighed in on the case, writing in a letter that was reprinted in the *Arkansas State Press* on April 27, 1951, "... the punishment must appear unnatural harsh to anyone with any sense of justice." In protest, work stoppages and demonstrations were also staged not only in the United States but in other countries. Letters supporting McGee's innocence came from as far away as China. Appeals were made to President Truman to get clemency for McGee, but he declined to intervene (Heard 2011).

Despite widespread protests and pleas, the State of Mississippi executed McGee by electric chair in May 1951. A crowd of hundreds looked on. Press coverage referred to his execution as a "legal lynching." The case revealed, as had been feared, that America's racism could negatively impact foreign diplomacy and cause damage to its reputation as the standard bearer of democracy, particularly in the context of the emerging Cold War. Among those to express their discontent with the McGee case was a group of leading Soviet figures who issued a statement which read in part, "... we protest against this new crime which is a revival of the terror of the Middle Ages, and which constitutes a direct challenge to all of world humanity" ("Soviet Leaders Protest Death Sentence of McGee," *The Plain Dealer*, May 4, 1951).

The Federal Government Acts

While the federal government failed to intervene in the case of Willie McGee, there was additional federal action in the interest of civil rights in the postwar period. In response to Executive Order 9908, the civil rights committee released the report, "To Secure These Rights." The report documented widespread discrimination across the nation in areas of education, employment, voting, and military service. In response, President Truman attempted to get Congress to enact civil rights legislation.²⁵ When Congress failed to act, Truman issued two executive orders in 1948. Executive Order 9980 instituted fair employment practices in the civilian agencies of the federal government, and Executive Order 9981 abolished racial discrimination in the armed forces by directing "equality of treatment and opportunity for all personnel without regard to race, color, religion, or national origin" (NPS 2008a, 15). The two orders ended discrimination in the federal workforce and desegregated the military, respectively.²⁶

Organizing efforts had resulted in limited but important local gains for the civil rights struggle. During the early 1950s, African Americans were voting, serving on juries, and serving as members of law enforcement in some Mississippi cities and towns (Dittmer 1994, 34). Perhaps the most significant advance for civil rights during the 1950s, however, was the 1954 US Supreme Court's unanimous ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*. The decision declared that segregation in schools was unconstitutional, a violation of the Fourteenth Amendment's equal protection clause. The case, led by the NAACP's Legal Defense Fund, overturned the "separate but equal" doctrine that had been enshrined in *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896).

25. The legislation was to include the establishment of a permanent civil rights commission and a fair employment commission, strengthening of existing civil rights laws, federal protections against lynching, voting rights protection, and prohibition of discrimination on interstate travel.

26. These executive actions also resulted in backlash in southern states, including Mississippi, that held firm in their segregationist positions. In 1948, Mississippi Governor Fielding Wright attacked the president's civil rights bills and orders and began the so-called "Dixiecrat" movement. At the Democratic Party convention in Philadelphia, Wright, along with nine other politicians from southern states, formed a firmer states' rights position on segregation. The Democratic Party split into two, forming the States' Rights Democratic Party (Dixiecrats). During a separate convention in Birmingham, Alabama, the Dixiecrats (with Senator James O. Eastland in attendance) nominated South Carolina Governor Strom Thurmond for president and Fielding Wright for vice president. Meanwhile, African American Mississippians largely supported Truman, though most of them could not vote (Dittmer 1994, 29). The Dixiecrat ticket carried four southern states, including Mississippi, where they received the highest number of votes. Despite this, President Truman won the election.

The decision, which was actually the culmination of five legal cases, was immediately recognized as a major and historic victory in the struggle for civil rights and was instantaneously met with resistance in southern states, most notably Mississippi. According to historian Neil McMillen, “In terms of preparedness for organized resistance to the Supreme Court's mandate of May 17, 1954, White Mississippians were, indeed, in a class by themselves” (McMillen 1994, 41). Days before the decision was rendered, Sunflower County plantation owner and Mississippi Democratic US Congressman James O. Eastland, testified before Congress:

The Southern institution of racial segregation or racial separation was the correct, self-evident truth which arose from the chaos and confusion of the Reconstruction period. Separation promotes racial harmony. It permits each race to follow its own pursuits, and its own civilization. Segregation is not discrimination ... Mr. President, it is the law of nature, it is the law of God, that every race has both the right and the duty to perpetuate itself. All free men have the right to associate exclusively with members of their own race, free from governmental interference, if they so desire. (Towns 2002, 241)

While African Americans saw the Brown decision as an important victory in the struggle for racial equality, African American's views on school desegregation in Mississippi were complicated, and the decision received uneven support. While integration suggested the possibility of educational opportunity that was never realized under “separate but equal,” it threatened the closure of schools in African American communities and the loss of employment for African American teachers and administrators (Dittmer 1994, 37–38; Moye 2006, 87–89).

Despite Black ambivalence, a siege mentality gripped the state, “plunging Mississippi into a period of violent interracial conflict” (Dittmer 1994, 34). White-owned newspapers and television stations portrayed Mississippi as under attack by a Supreme Court that trampled on the Constitution and states' rights—arguments that were eerily familiar. White Mississippians who opposed integration cast themselves as defenders of democracy. The immediate backlash to the Supreme Court decision derailed much of the civil rights progress that had been made after World War II. Black Mississippians, however, were not deterred in their struggle and continued their demands for equality.

The Modern Civil Rights Movement Emerges (1955–1959)

While Mississippi was still coming to terms with the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision, the brutal 1955 torture and murder of a teenage boy in Mississippi catapulted the civil rights movement into the national consciousness, exposing the horrors of the state's unchecked and unrestrained violence. Because of the state's racist and violent reputation, Mississippi came to represent the entire segregated South, fueling the ever-evolving civil rights movement.

Massive Resistance

The *Brown v. Board of Education I* decision resulted in mass resistance, a countermovement that was condoned, supported, and encouraged by state and local governments (NPS

2018, 17). One outgrowth of this opposition was Citizens' Councils, first created in 1954, when 75 White supremacists met in Indianola, Mississippi. Soon Citizens' Council groups formed across Mississippi, especially in Black-majority counties. Similar groups spread throughout the South. These councils were considered more "respectable" than the Ku Klux Klan and pursued the Klan's agenda, supposedly without violence. The councils' memberships included law enforcement, business and civic leaders, and politicians, including Senator James O. Eastland. After the *Brown II* decision in 1955, which ambiguously called for the implementation of school desegregation with "all deliberate speed," Eastland called for rebelliousness against the new law declaring, "You are not required to obey any court which passed out such a ruling. In fact, you are obligated to defy it" (Jonas 2005, 68).

The group grew rapidly, from 25,000 members in 1954 to about 80,000 members spread across 65 counties in the state. The group also claimed chapters in nine states, with 250,000 members nationwide just two years later. The main focus of the Citizens' Councils was the wide-ranging defense of white supremacy. The group was formidable in their intimidation campaigns against Black residents and White moderates who supported integration. Citizens' Council members influenced elections, pressured dissenters, and promoted segregation through publications, radio, films, a speaker's bureau, and newspapers. Their tactics were successful. In the face of voter suppression efforts, economic pressure, and racist violence, Black voter rolls began to shrink. In the early 1950s, estimates place Black registered voters at approximately 20,000. The Citizens' Council actions contributed to the reduction of Black registrants to about 8,000 by 1956 (Dittmer 1994; Payne 1995; Moye 2006, 81–82).

The Citizens' Council was not the only symbol of mass resistance to Black equality in the state in the wake of the *Brown v. Board of Education* decisions. On March 29, 1956, the Mississippi legislature created a new state agency, the Mississippi State Sovereignty Commission, to "protect the sovereignty of the state of Mississippi, and her sister states" from "encroachment thereon by the Federal Government or any branch, department or agency thereof" (Williams 2013, 138). The commission, supported by state funds and comprising government officials and citizens appointed by the state, remained in place until 1973. The commission was always "shrouded in secrecy" and given a wide latitude of powers to maintain racial segregation (Dittmer 1994, 80). Seemingly taking a page from McCarthyism's playbook of the early 1950s, the commission's practices included investigating, surveilling, and spying on desegregation supporters.

Persisting Racist Violence and the Murder of Emmett Till

While the number of lynchings reportedly decreased after World War II, pervasive racist violence against African Americans persisted between 1955 to 1960. In 1955, three separate murders of African Americans in Mississippi went unpunished.

Reverend George W. Lee, a Black leader in Belzoni, Humphreys County, pastored four Black churches and, with his wife Rosebud, operated a grocery and print shop. An active NAACP member, Rev. Lee promoted Black voting rights by encouraging African Americans to pay poll taxes and challenge other barriers to voting that the state legislature had created, including reading and interpreting portions of the state constitution. By 1955, Rev. Lee, one of the first African Americans to register to vote in Humphreys County, served as a vice

president of the Regional Council of Negro Leadership. Members of Belzoni's Citizens' Council demanded that Rev. Lee remove his name from voter registration rolls. He preached "liberation theology" in his sermons as a circuit rider minister to Black Baptist congregations in Jackson, Lexington, and Tchula. Rev. Lee's economic independence insulated him from White pressure, but his activism drew death threats. On May 7, 1955, while driving home, several White men shot Rev. Lee in his car. He died before reaching the hospital. NAACP Executive Secretary Roy Wilkins traveled from New York to the Delta to eulogize Rev. Lee at his funeral and to denounce the Citizens' Councils. While Wilkins' presence attracted the attention of the national press, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) got involved only after a call from Rev. Lee's widow to Dr. T.R.M. Howard, to get the FBI involved. The FBI, however, did little to pursue the case. Medgar Evers and Ruby Hurley of the NAACP investigated the murder and found a witness, Alex Hudson, who gave testimony to the FBI, but no one was charged with the murder (Dittmer 1994, 53–54; Moye 2006, 92–95). In the end, the FBI signaled that they did not take threats to Delta activists seriously. Rev. Lee is often considered one of the early martyrs of the modern civil rights movement.

Within months, Rev. Lee's close friend, Belzoni grocer Gus Courts, was also the victim of the Citizens' Council's economic threats and physical violence. Economic threats to Courts' businesses compelled him to relinquish the presidency of the local NAACP chapter in late 1954, and the council stepped up threats during the following year by preventing Courts' wholesaler to sell goods to him. Following the November election, an unidentified White man opened fire through Courts' store window. Though Courts survived the shooting and the NAACP safely resettled him in Chicago, the extent of the councils' coercive power was evident when Black voter participation in Humphreys County plummeted from 400 to no more than 10 in the 1955 election (Moye 2006, 82).

The shooting of Courts came on the heels of another racially motivated murder. On August 13, 1955, political activist Lamar Smith was killed in broad daylight outside the courthouse in Brookhaven. Smith, a World War I veteran and a locally known voting rights advocate affiliated with the Regional Council of Negro Leadership, had been threatened and warned to stop trying to register and organize African American voters in the community. These threats were realized when Smith was murdered on the courthouse lawn in front of dozens of witnesses, including Sheriff Robert E. Case, who permitted one of the alleged assailants to leave the crime scene covered in blood. No one was ever charged with the murder (Dittmer 1994, 54).

That same summer, Emmett Till, a 14-year-old from Chicago, came to the Mississippi Delta to visit relatives. His mother, Mamie (née Carthan) Till-Mobley,²⁷ had migrated from Mississippi to Chicago where Emmett was born. While leaving a store in Money, Mississippi, Till purportedly whistled at Carolyn Bryant, a White woman, but even to this day there are conflicting accounts of the nature of the perceived offense.²⁸ On August 28, 1955, Till was abducted from his great-uncle Moses (Mose) Wright's home in the middle of the night, tortured, and murdered by Bryant's husband, Roy Bryant, and his half-brother, J.W. Milam,

27. Till's mother was also known as Mamie Till-Bradley.

28. Alternate histories and memories of the incident exist, some of which are the product of concerted efforts to conceal and distort the tragedy.

in a seed barn. After Till's disappearance, Wright contacted the authorities, and Bryant and Milam were arrested and charged with kidnapping (Anderson 2015, 44).

On August 31, Till's badly mutilated and decomposing body was recovered from the Tallahatchie River. After being identified by Wright, the body, at the request of Emmett's mother Till-Mobley, was transported back to Chicago by train for burial.²⁹ She insisted on an open casket at his funeral, adamant that people see what had been done to her son. Thousands of people attended the funeral at the Roberts Temple Church of God in Christ, and some sources indicate upwards of 50,000. Photos of Till's mutilated body, taken shortly before his funeral, appeared in *Jet Magazine*, an African American weekly, as well as other African American publications. Publication of these photos allowed an even wider audience to see the tragic and irreversible consequences of unchecked racism and violence (Tyson 2017, 70–75; Tell 2019, 130–131). Though a grieving mother, Till-Mobley was attuned to the moment and the galvanizing effect that displaying her son's body could have on the freedom struggle. Years later, Till-Mobley described her actions, stating, "I took the privacy of my own grief and turned it into a public issue, a political issue, one which set in motion the dynamic force that ultimately led to a generation of social and legal progress for this country" (Tyson 2017, 96).³⁰

Bryant and Milam were indicted for Till's kidnapping and murder and put on trial at the Tallahatchie County Courthouse in Sumner, Mississippi, in September 1955. An all-White jury had been empaneled to hear the case, *State of Mississippi v. W. Milam and Roy Bryant*. The jury's racial composition spoke to African American disenfranchisement in the county. Black residents made up 63% of the county's population, but not a single one was registered to vote, so they were ineligible to serve as jurors. However, there was widespread outrage over the brutal murder, even from within the state. Ben Roy who operated a service station in Money, Mississippi, told reporters, "Nobody here, Negro or White, approves of things like that. It's too bad this had to come at a time when there was so much talk about racial tension" (Mace 2014, 43). Mississippi Governor Hugh L. White condemned the murder, ordering that the case be "fully prosecuted" and expressing confidence that justice would prevail (Mace 2014, 37).

Scores of local and national newspaper and television reporters arrived in Sumner to cover the trial. They responded to the actions of civil rights activists, who drew national attention to Till's murder when they referred to it as lynching (Dittmer 1994, 56).

During the trial, Dr. Howard's home in Mound Bayou, which had to be tightly guarded, served as the "Black command center" and a safe haven for Till-Mobley and witnesses. The home also was the base of operations for a parallel investigation being conducted by the

29. Till's body was moments away from being buried in Mississippi before Till-Mobley intervened.

30. Emmett Till's was not the first or the last Black body to be removed from a Mississippi waterway as a victim of white supremacist violence. More than a decade before Till's death, another mother had sought justice in the lynching of her son. In 1941, Jane Heggard wrote to then-President Franklin D. Roosevelt. Two years prior in 1939, her 21 year-old son Willie Jack Heggard had been murdered and his body dumped in a river in Holmes County, Mississippi. His neck had been broken by an iron weight that had been used to submerge the body. She wrote, "I am sending a contract in regards to the lynching of my son Willie Jack Heggard ... I have tried every way to have a trial, but no lawyer will accept the case, because a White man killed an innocent man." Her search for justice, however, would fail to receive federal assistance. The US Attorney General's Office did not investigate and instead referred the case back to local authorities, who failed to pursue the case. See Hustwit, *Integration Now*, 11.

Mississippi NAACP of Till's homicide. Investigators included NAACP Southeast Regional Director Ruby Hurley, Field Secretary Medgar Evers, and President of the Bolivar County Branch Amzie Moore (Beito and Beito 2009, 120).

Mose Wright, who was called as the prosecution's first witness, testified to the details of Till's abduction from his home, bravely rising from the witness stand to identify Bryant and Milam as the assailants. He also testified that the body that had been removed from the river was indeed that of Till because on one of the body's fingers was a silver ring, which was introduced as evidence, bearing the initials of Till's deceased father, "LT" (Anderson 2015, 45–46). Wright's testimony was considered groundbreaking, as he testified against not one but two White men (Tyson 2017, 146–147; Anderson 2015). Throughout much of the nation's history, people of African American descent had not been permitted to testify in courts against Whites. In the segregated South, testifying remained dangerous, so much so that before testifying, Wright had sent his family away to Chicago and immediately joined them after appearing in court.

Wright was not the only African American to testify during Till's murder trial. Mamie Till Mobley took the stand and identified that the body retrieved from the river had indeed been that of her son. Willie Reed, an 18-year-old whose family were sharecroppers, served as the prosecution's last witness. He testified to seeing Till in the company of Bryant and Milam at Leslie Milam's barn in Drew, Mississippi (Tyson 2017, 175). Reed, like Wright, left the state to resettle with his family in Chicago.

Despite what appeared to be overwhelming evidence of the defendants' guilt, including a confession from Bryant, the defense based its case on a theory that the NAACP had staged the murder. In his summation to the jury, John Whitten, chief counsel for Bryant and Milam, predicted that "every last Anglo-Saxon one of you has the courage to do it [acquit]" (Moye 2006, 97-98).

On September 23, 1955, after a deliberation lasting approximately one hour, the all-White jury acquitted Bryant and Milam on all charges. The verdict aroused international outrage and helped to solidify Mississippi's reputation as the "worst of the worst states." Afterwards, Bryant and Milam gave their stories to *Look* magazine and even confessed to committing the murder. Double jeopardy, however, precluded a second trial and they were never brought to justice (Huie 1956).

NAACP Executive Secretary Roy Wilkins laid blame for Till's death both on the State of Mississippi and on the Citizens' Councils. He charged that the murder was the "logical and inevitable culmination of a reign of terror" in which people refused to prevent or prosecute racialized violence (Moye 2006, 97–98). Mississippian William Faulkner again offered important commentary on his state's racism: ". . . if we in America have reached that point in our desperate culture where we must murder children, no matter for what reason or what color, we don't deserve to survive, and probably won't" (Dittmer 1994, 57).

However, from tragic loss came resistance, turning pain into power. Many activists, including Rosa Parks, Martin Luther King, Jr., and future US Congressman John Lewis, would later identify the Emmett Till injustice as a propelling event in their involvement in the civil rights movement.

The Federal Government Continues to Act

After World War II, efforts to advance civil rights at the federal level had largely been contained to the executive and judicial branches, but in 1957 Congress successfully passed a Civil Rights Act. Its passage came out of growing public demand for federal protection of civil rights in the aftermath of the lynching of Emmett Till. The act was the first federal civil rights legislation since Reconstruction. Passed during President Dwight D. Eisenhower's administration, the act created the Civil Rights Commission as part of the Department of Justice. The act provided for "each state to have its own advisory committee to 'hear complaints, make studies, and report its findings to the federal commission in Washington'" (Dittmer 1994, 194–195). Mississippi took over two years to establish its advisory committee and, not surprisingly, it was met with immediate resistance. The committee comprised six members, including two Blacks and four Whites, one of which was Jane Schutt, a White woman who would eventually serve as the committee's chair. The White members of the committee were charged with being race traitors and all of the members faced unrelenting harassment and were subjected to violence (Dittmer 1994, 195). In 1960, the federal government passed another civil rights act, strengthening the 1957 legislation and giving more protections to voting rights and the enforcement of earlier civil rights laws.

Nonviolent Direct Action

Racial terrorism, marked by violence and economic intimidation, left the Mississippi civil rights movement faltering in the late 1950s. African American voter registration and NAACP membership dropped sharply. In Cleveland, membership dropped from 439 in 1956 to just 67 a year later; in Jackson, from 481 to 259 and in Yazoo City, from 44 to just 3, while nationally, the NAACP had 52,364 members and was growing by leaps and bounds (Dittmer 1994).

Despite violence and intimidation by white supremacist organizations, state and local authorities and law enforcement (which were not mutually exclusive groups), African Americans, and their allies (which were few in the state) continued to push for civil rights. In April 1959, Dr. Gilbert Mason, Sr., a founding member of the Biloxi NAACP, led a group of nine Black citizens in the Gulf Coast wade-in to desegregate a public beach. Despite public funding for maintenance, no part of the beach was open to Black residents. The police promptly ordered the group off the beach. They left without injury, but the event marked the beginning of an eight-year battle. Mason would return to the beach with larger and larger numbers over the next several years. The wade-ins, organized with close assistance from Medgar Evers, used both legal challenge and nonviolent direct action. The latter, which had earlier roots in the 1940s, became increasingly popular in 1960s civil rights protests. Boycotts, sit-ins, walkouts, and marches would energize and expand the movement.

Freedom Reigns (1961–1965)

By the 1960s, Mississippi's Black population had decreased to 42.3%. As a result, "about four of every nine living Negroes born in Mississippi lived outside the state in 1960." This was part of a larger trend that resulted in a decline in the state's overall population (Lowery 1971, 557, 559). Despite increasing outmigration, civil rights activism remained strong and drew those from outside the state in ways that significantly impacted the struggle for freedom.

Civil Rights activism of the 1960s was increasingly an outgrowth of direct nonviolence and intense grassroots organizing, which notably included the Freedom Rides (1961) and Freedom Summer (1964). During this period, the struggle became more diverse in terms of class, age, race, geographical origins, and organizations involved. The diversification of the movement helped to invigorate and simultaneously localize and nationalize the protests, resulting in important progress for the struggle. However, like much of the history of the civil rights movement, this period was marked by highs and lows. Despite the nonviolence of the movement, it continued to be met with extreme and unrelenting intimidation and violence. Institutional power structured by white supremacy was increasingly weaponized against activists. Black sharecroppers, particularly vulnerable, were deprived of basic human needs, including food and shelter as punishment for their participation in civil rights activities. However, as in the Emmett Till murder, it was the shocking brutality of the incidents that caused the nation, including the federal government, to take action.

Organizing Mississippi

By the early 1960s, there were a number of organizations dedicated to the civil rights struggle. The Council of Federated Organizations (COFO), a coalition of the NAACP, Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), Southern Conference Leadership Council (SCLC), Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), and other civil rights organizations, emerged in 1961. COFO coordinated community organizing and other civil rights activities and oversaw the distribution of Voter Education Project funding amidst organizational rivalries over strategies and tactics. The NAACP's Aaron Henry and Medgar Evers had become convinced of the need for unity and coordination, and they soon gained support from CORE and SNCC. With the addition of SCLC, COFO membership included all four major national civil rights organizations, as well as state and local organizations, such as the RCNL and the Jackson-based Nonviolent Action Group at Tougaloo College. COFO members retained their organizational affiliations in coordinated initiatives that brought together younger student activists with more established and experienced movement leaders.

Freedom Rides

CORE's initial efforts in the state centered on Freedom Rides, which involved sending integrated teams of college students into Mississippi (and other Deep South states) on Trailways and Greyhound buses to test the US Supreme Court decision banning segregation in public interstate transportation. After encountering violence at the hands of a White mob in Anniston, Alabama,³¹ the first effort to send Freedom Riders to Mississippi ended abruptly. A second group of riders, consisting of 11 Black people and 1 White person, made its way to Jackson on May 25, 1961. The group arrived in the early morning hours at the local Trailways bus terminal. Another team of integrated riders arrived later that day at the Greyhound terminal. Local authorities arrested both groups for attempting to use the segregated facilities at the terminals. Throughout the late spring and summer of 1961, teams of Freedom Riders continued to pour into Jackson and were arrested and jailed. Local students, many from Jackson's three all-Black high schools—Lanier, Brinkley, and Jim Hill, immediately embraced the Freedom Riders and became participants in the escalating protest.

31. Currently, this site is a unit of the national park system—Freedom Riders National Monument.

These protesting students, like many of the Freedom Riders, were arrested and jailed. Arrested Freedom Riders often ended up serving time at the notorious Parchman Farm, where they suffered various abuses (Dittmer 1994, 90–96).

The Assassination of Medgar Evers

In May 1963, Jackson Mayor Allen C. Thompson took to the television airwaves criticizing the NAACP as “outside agitators.” In response, Evers called the US Justice Department and demanded equal time under the Federal Communications Commission’s (FCC) Fairness Doctrine guidelines. Although Evers had made the same request several times and been denied, this time the station felt federal pressure to comply or lose its FCC license. Evers’s 17-minute televised speech on May 20, 1963—just days before he was assassinated—emphasized that most NAACP members in Mississippi were native to the state, wanted to make their city, state, and nation better, and appealed “to the consciences of many silent, responsible citizens of the White community who know that a victory for democracy in Jackson will be a victory for democracy everywhere.” Evers’s televised appeal set a precedent for equal access to television news coverage. While such media attention was important to the movement, the broadcast introduced Evers into the homes of White Mississippians for the first time, and possibly led to his being targeted for assassination (Williams 2013, 229, 239).

On June 12, 1963, Evers was shot and killed by an assassin in the carport of his Jackson home, just after President Kennedy announced on national television his intention to send landmark civil rights legislation to Congress. His assassination was the first murder of a nationally significant civil rights leader. The assassin, Byron de la Beckwith, belonged to the Citizens’ Council chapter in Greenwood, Mississippi. De La Beckwith was arrested weeks after Evers’s assassination based on a fingerprint found on the rifle left behind at the scene. He was brought to trial in Jackson’s Hinds County Courthouse in January 1964 and again in April 1964; the Citizens’ Council paid for de la Beckwith’s court defense (Baughn 2016). Stringer Grand Lodge in Jackson, where Medgar Evers worked as the NAACP field secretary, brought national leaders to Jackson and drew national attention to the brutality of the civil rights struggle in Mississippi. A *New York Times* editorial titled “Racial Assassination” observed the political significance of the Evers murder:

It is already plain that Mr. Evers’s martyrdom has advanced the prospects for strong civil rights legislation. Congressmen who only a few days ago were pussyfooting on the need for new laws were loud in their pledges of swift action yesterday. The filibusterers were discreetly silent, but their hopes of obstruction have been as much a victim of the assassin’s bullet as was the advocate of non-violence it slew. Out of the revulsion universally felt for this recourse to bestiality must come a firmer legal foundation for the human rights Mr. Evers dedicated his life to make secure. (June 13, 1963)

John Lewis, chairman of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee at the time, believed the Evers assassination moved President John F. Kennedy to make a commitment to the civil rights movement, an issue he had straddled previously. In 2004, Myrlie Evers reflected on the significance of her husband’s assassination. “Someone said,” she observed, “. . . that Medgar did more in death than he accomplished in life. Now, I don’t know whether

that's so. But his death did accomplish a lot." When she and her children met President Kennedy after her husband's burial at Arlington National Cemetery, "the president signed a draft copy of the civil-rights bill . . . he said to me, 'Your husband's death will make this possible'" (Baughn 2016; Evers-Williams and Marable 2005).

Mississippi Freedom Vote, 1963

By 1963, voter registration drives in Mississippi were stymied by increasingly violent White opposition, symbolized most dramatically by Evers' assassination that June. The US Civil Rights Commission had "issued a hard-hitting condemnation of civil rights violations in Mississippi and the total failure of the law enforcement agencies state and local to protect the constitution rights of American citizens in the state" (Jonas 2005,185). The report concluded that federal intervention was needed, but immediate assistance was not forthcoming.

The limited success of voter registration campaigns in Mississippi had two consequences. The Southern Regional Council withdrew Voter Education Project funding from the state. At the same time, civil rights activists, led by the Council of Federated Organizations, created innovative and bold ways for African Americans to experience and demonstrate their potential power with political enfranchisement.

Robert Parris Moses, a SNCC field secretary, was serving as director of the Council of Federated Organizations. Moses had arrived in Mississippi during the Freedom Rides, had developed the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee's strategy of "involving local people in all phases of the movement and depending on them for support, and, when needed, protection" (Dittmer 1994, 104). However, in a departure from the committee's commitment to local community organizing, the Council of Federated Organizations tapped Allen Lowenstein to recruit White students from Yale and Stanford Universities to canvass Black voters in this ad hoc campaign. As civil rights activism and white supremacist counter-resistance escalated that summer, COFO workers organized the Mississippi Freedom Ballot (also called the Freedom Vote initiative) in 1963 to coincide with the state's gubernatorial election and demonstrate African American's desire for the measure to state and federal officials. Lowenstein, a liberal New York Democratic Party operative, conceived the idea of giving African Americans the opportunity to cast a ballot for the first time after observing a South African mock election and gained COFO support late that summer.

While the vote fell short of the COFO goal of 200,000 ballots (40% of Mississippi's African American population of voting age), the 83,000 ballots cast presented the organization with renewed optimism and a graphic demonstration that African Americans would vote "for candidates who stand for freedom" if they could register. The Freedom Vote convinced SNCC leadership and fieldworkers not only of the continued need to encourage political institutions that responded to locally identified needs, but also of the efficacy of White volunteers in attracting national attention and federal protection for civil rights workers (Dittmer 201–206; Moye 2006, 127–129).

The Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party

Early in 1964, the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (MFDP), affiliated with the Council of Federated Organizations, was established as an alternative to the state's Democratic Party, which refused integration.

One of the party's cofounders was Fannie Lou Hamer, a sharecropper from Sunflower County. Hamer became involved in the civil rights struggle in 1962 at the age of 44, when she met young SNCC volunteers on a registration drive in her small Delta town of Ruleville. From that point on, Hamer adopted a personal mission to dedicate herself to the movement to fight for rights for herself and others. When the owner of the farm where she and her husband were sharecroppers learned that she had attempted to register to vote, he evicted the couple after 18 years of employment. Later that year she successfully registered to vote and went on to join the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee.

In 1964, the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party fought to be seated at the Democratic Party's National Convention, held that year in Atlantic City, New Jersey. The party received two at-large seats, which they refused. However, Hamer's appearance at the convention garnered national attention. Before a national television audience, Hamer gave impassioned testimony. She described how police in Winona, Mississippi, arrested her after seeking service in a segregated café and brutally assaulted her in her jail cell. The beating left her with permanent injuries. She ended her testimony with a stinging rebuke: "All of this is on account we want to register, to become first-class citizens, and if the freedom Democratic Party is not seated now, I question America, is this America, the land of the free and the home of the brave where we have to sleep with our telephones off of the hooks because our lives be threatened daily because we want to live as decent human beings, in America?" (Mills 2007).³²

Mississippi Freedom Summer

In 1964, the Freedom Summer Project, building on the lessons of the Freedom Vote, was born. Led by the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee under the auspices of the Southern Conference Leadership Council, the project used door-to-door voter education to combat voter suppression and voter registration requirements that limited Black participation in the political process. Mississippi Freedom Summer was perhaps "the most ambitious extended campaign of the entire Civil Rights Movement" (Sturkley 2016).

That summer, student volunteers, numbering almost a thousand, arrived in the state to teach in the Freedom Schools that were established to provide quality education opportunities in impoverished and underserved areas, to work in community centers, and to help register Black voters. The majority of the volunteers were White, and of those "between one-third and one-half" were Jewish (Porter and Dreier 1973, xxi-xxii). Throughout the late winter and early spring, the Council of Federated Organizations had recruited college students at campuses across the country and attracted volunteers primarily from northeastern and Californian schools. The volunteers had been trained on the campus of Western College of

32. President Johnson preempted Hamer's testimony by scheduling an impromptu, competing press conference. However, Hamer's speech was rebroadcasted later that evening on all the major networks.

Women in Oxford, Ohio. Seasoned activists from Mississippi, including Fannie Lou Hamer and three activists who had been beaten by Mississippi state patrol officers for possession of campaign materials, taught volunteers organizing skills and “racial etiquette” for navigating the shoals of white supremacy in much of Mississippi. Volunteers learned how to protect themselves from police batons and dog bites, though few could imagine that they had not prepared for the worst in the initial days of Mississippi’s Freedom Summer (Moye 2006, 131).

Hattiesburg was the largest Freedom Summer site in Mississippi. Over 90 volunteers came to the town from out of state to supplement 3,000 local participants, organized by the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee. Hattiesburg African American farmer and businessman Vernon Dahmer was at the heart of the Freedom Summer movement. As NAACP president, Dahmer gave his full support to many civil rights activities. He is best remembered for his voting rights campaign banner, “If you don't vote, you don't count.”

Improved education was also on the Council of Federated Organizations’ agenda. In response to the low quality of public education available to Black students at woefully underfunded, segregated schools, the council organized a massive campaign to create Freedom Schools. Freedom Schools were at the very center of the summer campaign. They were designed to create an alternative educational system, dismantle the white supremacist system, and bolster a movement culture through a curriculum emphasizing the dignity and value of African American history and experiences. The curriculum, directed largely at children but followed by some adult students, taught literacy and numeracy skills, as well as lessons on Black history, civics, and the civil rights movement. Classrooms were set up in Black churches, businesses, or in new community centers built from donated supplies and labor. Although COFO organizers planned for 1,000 students statewide during the 10-week session, by the end of summer, they estimated that in some 41 schools across the state, 2,500 to 3,000 students attended, from preschool to high school and older, in some 41 schools across the state (Sturkley 2016; Moye 2006, 136-138).

Meridian had the largest single Freedom School, with more than 200 regular students. Hattiesburg had six Freedom Schools, serving 650–675 students. During August 7–9, 1964, a two-day Freedom School Convention was held in the Meridian Baptist Seminary to gather 100 student delegates from across the state. There, student participants, discussed and identified solutions to their most pressing issues, such as access to voter registration, medical care, employment, and housing. For many students, the Freedom School experience was transformative and liberating, and many became active participants and leaders in the civil rights movement after the summer program ended (Sturkley 2016).

Freedom Summer Violence and Murders

The Freedom Project’s successes came with chilling costs. The summer of 1964 was particularly violent. According to journalist Bruce Watson, “[W]hile [Freedom Summer] brought out the best in America, [it] brought out the worst in Mississippi. When word of the summer project leaked it sparked rage and resentment not seen in America since reconstruction. . .” (Watson 2010, 56). White supremacist violence reached its peak, and the summer was marked by cross burnings, arson, bombings, and murders. On April 24, 1964, the Ku Klux Klan staked its claim to white power by burning 61 crosses across Mississippi. In

Canton, white supremacists bombed the Freedom House, the local CORE headquarters, but no one was injured. The destruction of 16 Black homes, churches, and businesses earned McComb the dubious distinction of being “the bombing capital of the world.” Despite the sit-in protests, organized by Bob Moses and others, McComb adhered steadfastly to Jim Crow, proving to be one of the most difficult and slowest places for racial progress to occur. Over the course of the summer, white supremacists burned 20 churches across the state. However, it was the brutal deaths of three civil rights activists that catapulted Freedom Summer’s racist violence to the attention of not only the nation but the world and made the state “synonymous with murder” (Watson 2010, 57).

On June 21, 1964, James Chaney and Michael Schwerner of CORE and Andrew Goodman, a Freedom Summer volunteer, drove from their Meridian COFO office to Neshoba County. Chaney was a 21-year-old African American from Meridian, and Schwerner and Goodman were Jewish New Yorkers. Schwerner, an Ivy League-educated 24-year-old, had come to Mississippi with his wife Rita to operate a community center. Goodman was a 21-year-old college student who had been recruited by Schwerner to volunteer during Freedom Summer (Dittmer 1994, 246–247).

The three were traveling to investigate a June 16 incident outside of Philadelphia, Neshoba County, where the White Knights of the Ku Klux Klan (Klan) members had beaten several church members attending a Freedom Summer meeting at Mt. Zion Church. The church is believed to have been targeted because Schwerner had worked there; however, he had not been there that day. Instead, he had been in Ohio, training other volunteers. As investigations later revealed, Schwerner was a particular enemy of the Klan. Klan members in Meridian and Philadelphia routinely discussed his death during meetings, and his murder was subsequently authorized by the state leader of the Klan, Sam Bowers (Houck 2022; FBI 1964).

During the three young men’s drive back to Meridian, local police stopped them on charges of speeding and arrested them, holding them in the county jail in Philadelphia for several hours. After their release that evening, the three activists were stopped on Highway 19 by Cecil Price, a Neshoba County deputy sheriff and Klan member who was involved in the original arrest. Price then turned the three over to other Klansmen. Chaney, Schwerner, and Goodman were subsequently murdered and then buried in an earthen dam. However, the fate of the three men was not immediately known (Dittmer 1994, 247).

The disappearance of Chaney, Schwerner, and Goodman attracted national media attention and an FBI investigation. In 1964, Mississippi was the only state without a central FBI office, but on June 22, FBI agents arrived to start investigating the kidnapping. Ultimately, 200 FBI agents joined the investigation. They combed through the surrounding woods, fields, and bayous in search of the bodies. They found the recently buried bodies of eight African American men, one of which was the body of 14-year-old Herbert Oarsby, whose body was pulled from the Big Black River near Canton, Mississippi, dressed in a CORE t-shirt. On the day of his disappearance, witnesses claimed to have seen an African American youth forced into a truck at gunpoint by a White man. Following a tip from an anonymous paid informant, FBI agents discovered the bodies of Chaney, Schwerner, and Goodman on August 4, 1964.

Learning of the deaths, African American author James Baldwin wrote:

Alas: The frightful news we feared - but still hoped against - has come. The murdered bodies of Michael Schwerner, James Chaney and Andrew Goodman have been found side by side - black and white - in Mississippi. May their brave young souls rest in peace. We who survive can only dedicate ourselves anew to the cause of freedom for which they offered their lives. Let us go on together in brotherhood. (Kratz 2021)

Meridian's African American community walked silently—under the glare of television cameras and photographers—to gather for James Chaney's funeral service in the First Union Baptist Church. Goodman and Michael Schwerner were buried in their home state of New York. Although the Schwerner family had wanted to bury Michael in Mississippi next to Chaney, the segregated cemetery precluded their wish. One week after the funeral, an integrated COFO office opened in Philadelphia to prepare for the start of classes at Neshoba County's first Freedom School in early July (Dittmer 1994: 283–285).

While violence against civil rights activists in Mississippi persisted, the investigations and prosecution of the Philadelphia murders set an important precedent. In the months following the discovery of the murdered activists' corpses, state and local law enforcement predictably claimed there was insufficient evidence and did not pursue the case, while the FBI could not pursue a criminal case because the murders fell under state jurisdiction. But on December 4, 1964, the US Justice Department charged 21 men with conspiring to violate the civil rights of the three murdered men and prosecuted the case under the anti-Klan Enforcement Act of 1870. Under presiding federal Judge William Harold Cox, a known segregationist, a federal grand jury dismissed 18 men who were indicted on those charges on the grounds that the law applied only to law enforcement officials, not private citizens. As a result, the charges against Price remained. The case was appealed on the grounds that the 1870 law applied to both government officials and private citizens. In 1966, the US Supreme Court overturned the finding in *US v. Price et al.*, allowing the US government to retry Klansmen in February 1967. Judge Cox again presided over the trial in Meridian's post office and courthouse. As was commonplace, an all-White jury was empaneled. This time, justice trumped race and seven White men were convicted, making the convictions the first time a White person in Mississippi was convicted under civil rights charges. Each of the convicted men served between three and six years in prison. In 1999, the State of Mississippi reopened the case against Edgar Ray Killen, an unrepentant Klansman. After being acquitted in the first trial, Killen confessed in a taped interview to planning and directing the murders of Chaney, Schwerner, and Goodman (Watson 2010). Killen was convicted and sentenced to 60 years in the Mississippi State Penitentiary at Parchman, where Freedom Riders had been incarcerated, and died in prison in January 2018.

The murders in Philadelphia highlighted the potentially deadly consequences of nonviolent civil rights activism. The murders also exposed the corruption of local law enforcement agencies. As supporters and members of racist terror organizations, many law enforcement officials condoned and/or perpetrated racially motivated harassment and violence.

Eventually, national public exposure brought about substantive change. Once the television cameras began to capture incidents of horrific violence and death, progress in the movement became a reality. President John F. Kennedy, and later President Lyndon B. Johnson, moved to halt some of the violence by supporting federal civil rights legislation.

Nationalizing the Movement – New Civil Rights Legislation and the War on Poverty

With no support from Mississippi senators and representatives, Congress passed several pieces of civil rights legislation in the 1960s. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibited discrimination in employment and public accommodations. The Voting Rights Act of 1965 bolstered protections for Black suffrage. The Civil Rights Act of 1968, also referred to as the Fair Housing Act, prohibited discrimination in the sale or rental of housing.

Besides drawing national attention to the movement and helping to enact landmark civil rights legislation, Freedom Summer in Mississippi was also the genesis of important social welfare programs. Head Start and community health centers were the most notable. These programs were some of the first programs funded by the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, commonly referred to as the “War on Poverty.” The antipoverty legislation, which traced back to the New Deal, sought to address the country’s persistent economic disparities by recommitting the federal government to work in the interest of social welfare. The legislation also offered the possibility of addressing structural inequalities. African Americans had long argued that the apparent lack of Black progress after the Civil War, commonly held up as evidence of Black inferiority, was the result of systemic barriers not innate racial inferiority.

In the summer of 1965, the federal government established hundreds of Head Start centers in the state, and they served 21,000 children (Hale 2012, 506). The centers were administered by the Child Development Group of Mississippi (CDGM). Patterned after Freedom Schools, the program was designed to prepare children and their families for school. In addition to providing early learning opportunities for children, the program also addressed issues of food insecurity and medical care. As with Freedom Schools, the Head Start program was an important source of employment for activists, partly insulating them from the power of White employers.

Community health centers (originally referred to as neighborhood health centers) were the brainchild of doctors with the Medical Committee for Human Rights, who came to Mississippi during Freedom Summer to provide activists with medical services, as it was not unusual for activists to sustain injuries in confrontations with local white supremacists. Despite the fact that many of the activists were White, because they were seen as “outside agitators” who had designs on dismantling society, they could be refused treatment by Mississippi’s White medical personnel and facilities, and it was difficult for them to access health care. While working in the area, doctors observed the lack of quality health care available to Mississippi’s impoverished Black residents (Ward 2017).

In 1965, funding from the Office of Economic Opportunity, which was established as part of the legislation, enabled the establishment of two centers. One was the Delta Health Center (still in operation today) in Mound Bayou. The centers operated under the bold premise that they “could serve as an instrument of social change, intervening not only in the social determinants of its population’s health but also launching a process of structural change that

starts to liberate that population, through community empowerment, from repetitive cycles of poverty and political exclusion” (Ward 2017, xii). The centers addressed individual health care needs along with issues of public health and provided educational, environmental, and nutritional services (Ward 2017).

Mississippi was one of the poorest states in the nation and the legislation held out the promise of improving conditions in the state. While the language of the “War on Poverty” legislation was intended to be race neutral, it met extreme opposition in the state. The racialization of class meant that White Mississippians were ready to reject any social welfare program that could potentially provide African Americans with opportunities for social advancement and responded with mass resistance. People involved in Office of Economic Opportunity-funded grassroots programs were the victims of various economic and physical reprisals (Ward 2017).

Some Black activists also distrusted the new legislation, feeling that the federal government was using the services the legislation supported to coopt the movement. However, these suspicions were put aside, as the War on Poverty was ultimately viewed as complementary to the struggle for equality. Political progress would mean little without economic progress.

While the period culminated in important social change, Mississippi still had a long way to go. Legislation was one thing, implementation another. Legislation did little to erase the underlying racism that underpinned society, and as a result, racial equality remained largely unrealized.

Black Power and the Civil Rights Movement (1966–1970)

After passage of the 1965 Voting Rights Act, Black voter registration in Mississippi increased dramatically from 6.7% to 59.4% (Colby 1986, 129–130). However, the Black freedom struggle remained unfinished. Despite significant progress and the passage of landmark civil rights legislation, the White power structure found ways to maintain racial inequalities through continuing segregation and suppressing of the Black vote. The civil rights movement would suffer perhaps its most devastating blow with the 1968 assassination of civil rights leader Martin Luther King, Jr., whose death marked the end of a critical phase in the struggle for equality.

The March Against Fear

In early June 1966, James Meredith, who had desegregated the University of Mississippi in 1962, began a 220-mile march from Memphis to Jackson to bring attention to the ongoing disfranchisement of African Americans and to overcome the fear of living and traveling in Mississippi. On the second day, just 14 miles into the march, Meredith was shot by Aubrey Norvell, a 40-year-old White man, and transported back to Memphis for medical attention. The attack on Meredith garnered national attention. Many notables in the civil rights movement, including Martin Luther King, Jr. and Stokely Carmichael (later known as Kwame Touré), the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee’s new chairman, stepped in and continued the march. Along the route through Mississippi, many students participated in places such as Grenada, Greenwood, Philadelphia, and Canton (Dittmer 1994, 392–402).

The threat of continued violence during the march brought out the Deacons of Defense and Justice, an African American armed self-defense organization. Formed in 1964 in Jonesboro, Louisiana, the organization provided protection to Black civil rights activists and communities targeted by White racist violence. The presence of the organization during the march signaled a shift in the movement from nonviolence to self-protection (Hill 2004, 245–246).

The leaders of SNCC had urged demonstrators to defend themselves if they encountered resistance and argued for concrete results, including voter registration, in addition to symbolic actions. Carmichael called for “Black Power” during the march’s gathering in Greenwood, garnering national attention. The phrase was intended to uplift and empower Black residents in areas where they formed the racial majority. The slogan seemed to stand in direct contrast to the Southern Conference Leadership Council’s and King’s calls for “Freedom Now” (Dittmer 1994, 402).

On June 26, 1966, the march concluded at the Mississippi State Capitol in Jackson before an integrated crowd of 15,000. The crowd, which included many young marchers, heard from King, who declared that the march “will go down in history as the greatest demonstration for freedom ever held in the state of Mississippi” (Dittmer 1994, 402). King was joined by a host of other luminaries—even the injured James Meredith had marched the final 20 miles. The march resulted in the registration of 4,000 Black voters, and local participation numbered at around 10,000. However, the success of the march was overshadowed by the growing tensions it had exposed between the civil rights movement’s leading organizations over the preferred tactics and goals of the movement (Dittmer 1994, 402).

Back in Office

Although the 1965 Voting Rights Act helped register more Black voters than during Reconstruction, rule changes, such as “gerrymandered” voting districts, more restrictive requirements for candidates, and redefined elected positions as appointed seats, continued to block Black voting. Intimidation tactics continued. Despite these obstacles, in 1967, 22 Black candidates won local elections, including the first Black person elected to the state legislature since Reconstruction, Robert Clark, who represented the 47th District in the Mississippi House of Representatives until 2004 (Dittmer 1994, 416).

The Poor People’s Campaign and the Assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr.

On April 4, 1968, Martin Luther King, Jr. was fatally shot by James Earl Ray on the balcony of the Lorraine Motel in Memphis, Tennessee. King’s assassination sparked massive protest across the country, including in Mississippi. After the March Against Fear, King continued to have a presence in the state. Shortly before his death, King visited the state as part of his organizing efforts for the Poor People’s Campaign (also known as the Poor People’s March and the Mule Train to Washington). The campaign represented a transformation in the understanding of inequality and sought to expand the civil rights movement beyond racial justice to economic justice. The campaign heralded the “beginning of a new co-operation, understanding, and a determination by poor people of all colors and backgrounds to assert and win their right to a decent life and respect for their culture and dignity” (King in Laurent 2018, 163). King chose Marks, Quitman County, Mississippi, as the multiracial campaign’s

starting point. The Delta sharecropping community was “one of the poorest towns in one of the poorest counties and the poorest state in the nation” (Lackey 2014, 21). The impoverished conditions King witnessed there purportedly moved him to tears. King, however, did not live to see the campaign become a reality.

Historian John Dittmer writes, “Kings tragic death . . . shocked all black Mississippians, and their outpouring of grief in memorial services in communities across the state reinforced their solidarity” (420). Once again, Black Mississippians turned their sorrow into action, mounting marches, boycotts, and work stoppages. In Hattiesburg, 1,500 marched in memoriam. That May, a caravan for the Poor People’s Campaign embarked from Marks to Washington DC.

White Mass Resistance Continues

White racist violence remained a continual problem throughout the late 1960s. Numerous racially motivated shootings at the Jackson State University campus on Lynch Street reflected heightened tensions in Jackson throughout the mid- to late 1960s. On May 11, 1967, National Guardsmen fired on a Black student protest at Jackson State University, killing civil rights worker Benjamin Brown (Dittmer 1994, 412). Church bombings and burnings occurred in Meridian in January and February 1969.

Saleam Triggs, an African American woman and resident of Hattiesburg, was found fatally burned on January 23, 1965. The motive for her death was described as “mysterious,” but Trigg is listed on the Southern Poverty Law Center’s list of 75 “Forgotten” men and women murdered between 1952 and 1968 “under circumstances suggesting they were the victims of racially motivated violence” (SPLC 2015). An elderly sharecropper named Ben Chester White was killed in Natchez by Klansman in 1966, and in 1967, NAACP activist Wharlest Jackson was killed by a bomb after getting a promotion to a “white” job at a manufacturing plant (Newton 2009, 171; Dittmer 1994, 417).

The deadliest conflict happened at Jackson State College (now Jackson State University) in May 1970. During a protest, Jackson police and Mississippi highway patrolmen fired on a group of youths, killing two and injuring several others. In response to this event and similar unrest on other college campuses, President Richard Nixon appointed a racially and politically diverse group to the President’s Commission on Campus Unrest. Investigations concluded that a “police riot” occurred, but federal and Hinds County grand juries declined to indict the officers (Bristow 2020).

White Mississippians in favor of the existing racial status quo also expressed their resistance to any steps towards an inclusive democracy in other ways. One included switching their party affiliation from the Democratic Party to the Republican Party. President Johnson, a Democrat, supported landmark civil rights legislation and the “War on Poverty,” suggesting a liberal view on race relations. White Southern Democrats rejected Johnson’s views and saw them as an attack on their way of life. In what became known as the “Southern Strategy,” the Republican Party seized on the opportunity to court the votes of White Southerners. This partisan transformation represented a monumental shift in the political landscape. The Republican Party, albeit philosophically different, began to establish a stronghold that they hadn’t had in the state since Reconstruction. Despite the shift, Democratic US senators like

James O. Eastland and John C. Stennis, cotton planters, and staunch segregationists who opposed African American civil rights, remained in office and wielded considerable control through their positions on Senate subcommittees. In 1966, Stennis for example, leveraged his power threatening to derail Housing, Education, and Welfare legislation if President Johnson did not evict civil rights demonstrators from a sit-in staged at an abandoned US Air Force base in Greenville, Mississippi (Carter 2009, 42).

In their continued resistance to school desegregation, state and local governments avoided compliance with *Brown v. Board of Education*, employing a variety of methods to circumvent integration. Methods included establishing “dual residence” policies, which permitted students to attend schools outside of their normal residence area if they were able to establish a weekly residence in the area where their desired school was located. New schools were also built in locations designed to keep Black students segregated in all-Black schools. (Domonoske 2016)

After the 1964 Civil Rights Act encouraged school integration by denying federal funding to schools that refused to desegregate, the state devised the “freedom of choice” plan to give the appearance that they were complying with the law. In theory, the plan allowed students to choose any school in the district. The reality was altogether different. Some White schools prevented Black students from attending by charging tuition. Employers used economic intimidation, threatening to fire Black parents who made the “wrong” choice. Other forms of intimidation including cross burnings (Harris 2010).

The ineffectiveness of the “freedom of choice” plan kept schools segregated. In 1967, one-third of the school districts in the state remained segregated, and less than 3% of Black children attended integrated classes with White students. White parents employed the direct-action techniques of the civil rights movement to fight against its gains. They actively protested the mandate for integration with their own protest marches, rallies, and student boycotts. Many chose to leave the public school system altogether by forming their own all-White private schools, and the number of students attending private schools nearly tripled between 1966 and 1970. Even as Black residents gained leverage in the civic sphere in the late 1960s, they remained blocked from joining school boards, which often included White board members who no longer sent their own children to public schools (Bolton 2007).

In 1969, the US Supreme Court’s landmark decision in *Alexander v. Holmes* determined that the “freedom of choice” approach was not an acceptable approach to desegregation and directed 30 Mississippi school districts to immediately desegregate. State officials decried the decision and claimed that the federal court had gone too far and found ways to dodge the mandate. In some cases, students attended “desegregated schools,” where students were kept apart in all-White and all-Black classes within them (Bolton 2007). In 1970, Fannie Lou Hamer filed a lawsuit against Sunflower County for not properly desegregating its schools (Mills 2007, 319).

Like public schools in the northern United States, public schools in the South went from being *de jure* to *de facto* segregated. Public schools became increasingly underfunded and primarily a place for Black students and poor White students in some parts of the state.

Despite the court rulings, desegregated schools and education equity remained a dream deferred.

Civil Rights in the Post-Civil Rights Era (1971–1977)

Historians sometimes refer to the 1970s as the post-civil rights era; however, the struggle for civil rights continued. By the 1970s, Mississippi's Black majority had long waned and continued to decline. African Americans comprised approximately 37% of the state's population, but Mississippi remained the state with the highest Black population and the highest poverty rates. While civil rights activists expressed growing frustration and disillusionment with the slow pace of integration, there was also renewed hope.

Throughout the 1970s, African American economic opportunities became increasingly disconnected from the land that had structured so much of their existence in the state. Inspired by the growing Black Power Movement, there was an increased focus on Black self-sufficiency. In Mississippi, beginning in the mid-1960s, several farming cooperatives had been established, including Fannie Lou Hamer's Freedom Farm in 1969. However, the cooperatives were already in decline by the early 1970s. Agricultural mechanization had left "thousands of Delta blacks who had for generations worked in the fields," largely unemployed (Dittmer 1994, 365). While poverty rates in the state remained high, the struggle for civil rights had resulted in some important economic gains, particularly opportunities for middle-class employment (Dittmer 1994, 426).

Racism, while still a factor, had diminished. Integration in public facilities and workplaces were more common, particularly in the state's larger cities. Racist violence, once unrelenting, occurred less often. Even state-sanctioned white supremacy was on the wane. In 1973, Governor Bill Waller defunded the Mississippi State Sovereignty Commission, and the state legislature followed by disbanding the agency. Mississippi's rules specifically targeting African American voter registration were finally dismantled through a series of US Supreme Court decisions between 1971 and 1977. By the end of the decade, there was a new cadre of African American political leaders (Dittmer 1994, 425–426).

Fannie Lou Hamer continued to play an important role in political action. In 1971, Hamer cofounded the National Women's Political Caucus to increase women's voting representation. That same year, she ran as a candidate for the Mississippi State Senate against the incumbent but lost the election (Mills 2007). Her death in 1977 was an important loss to civil rights activism in the state, as she "had come to symbolize the black struggle in Mississippi" (Dittmer 1994, 433).

Conclusion

Mississippi's culture of racial segregation was designed to protect white supremacy and inhibit African American progress at all costs. In the end, segregation and the associated violence would exact a heavy toll on the state, one from which it continues to recover. However, the fight for racial equality retains a powerful legacy. The African American struggle for civil rights in Mississippi, "the most southern place on earth," reached far beyond the state. Not only did the events that happened in the state heighten the visibility of the movement, but they also helped foster important social and political changes that moved the

country a little further towards fulfilling its unfinished promises. Mississippi's triumphs and tragedies helped shape a more democratic and just America, not only for the benefit of African Americans but for all its citizens. The push for equity in Mississippi helped transition the struggle for civil rights into one for human rights and continues to serve as an important source of inspiration for ongoing freedom struggles around the world.

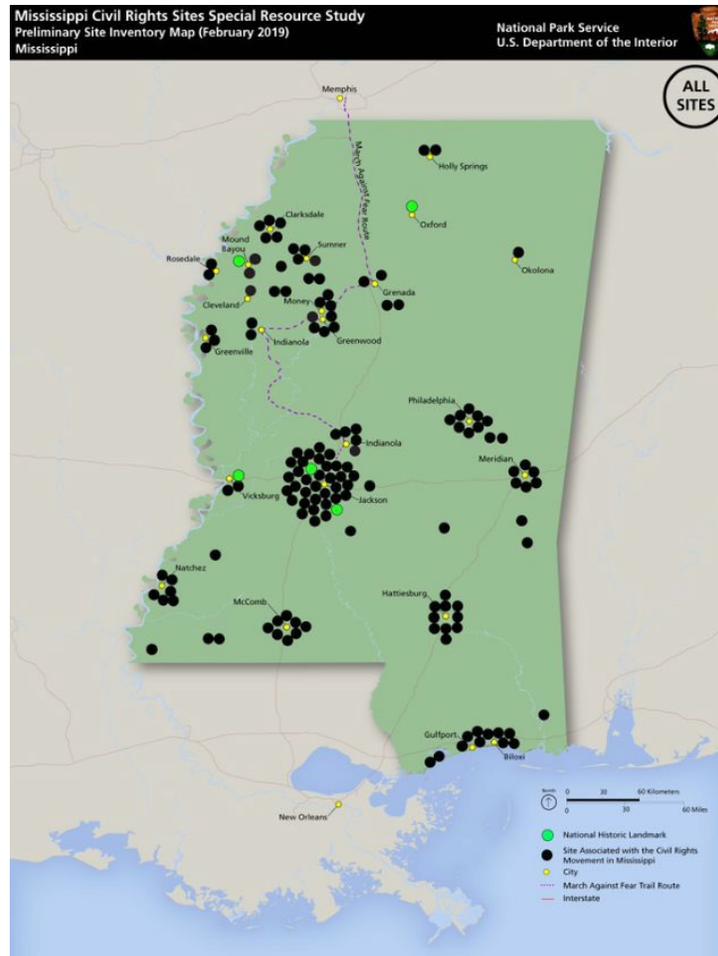
RESOURCE DESCRIPTIONS

This section describes each of the resources (also referred to as “study sites”) evaluated by the study team for national significance. In this section and elsewhere, the term “site” is used in the generic sense of a place, scene, or point of an event, or the location of a structure or set of structures. This could potentially cause confusion because terms like “site” and “structure” also have specific, technical meanings in the field of historic preservation as, for example, defined in National Register Bulletin 16a. However, this study uses a broader definition of “site” in order to match the terminology in the legislation that authorized the study.

Resource descriptions could include a discussion of associated museum collections, depending on the nature of the site. However, museum objects associated with the sites described below, including historic furniture and archives, were not inventoried during this study due to the number and variety of sites under consideration. It is possible that associated objects and archives exist for many of the sites. Museum collections are intrinsically important cultural resources. They are also valuable for the information they provide about historical processes and events, and they help visitors better understand the events, activities, and people commemorated by parks. Should any of the sites in this study meet all of the SRS criteria and be designated as part of a national park unit, research would be required to establish the number, nature, and location of any associated museum collection objects.

Methodology for Resource Identification

Many sites were identified through the study team's historical research and public input through written comments submitted to the study's public website, letters, and through in-person feedback shared and recorded during six public open house meetings. This initial outreach phase resulted in an inventory of over 220 sites that had the potential to be nationally significant civil rights sites in Mississippi (see map 2). Refer to appendix D for the preliminary inventory of sites considered in the special resource study. The team studied these sites using primary and secondary sources, including published civil rights histories, the National Register of Historic Places (NHL) and NHL nominations, NPS NHL theme studies, inventory information from the Mississippi Department of Archives and History, and other sources of scholarship. Additionally, the NPS study team consulted two scholars' groups to assist in the identification of sites most likely to meet the NHL criteria that special resource studies are required to apply to determine national significance.



MAP 2. LOCATIONS OF SITES IDENTIFIED IN THE STUDY'S INITIAL OUTREACH PHASE

One scholars group involved Mississippi-based subject matter experts consisting of historians, professors, museum directors and interpreters, and activists. They included the following individuals: Jennifer Baughn, chief architectural historian from the Mississippi Department of Archives and History; Pamela Junior, director of the Mississippi Civil Rights Museum and Two Museums; Leslie McLemore, professor of political science at Jackson State University and director of the Fannie Lou Hamer National Institute on Citizenship and Democracy; James (Pat) Smith, professor emeritus at the University of Southern Mississippi; Robert Luckett, associate professor of history at Jackson State University and director of the Margaret Walker Center; and Hollis Watkins, founder of Southern Echo and member of the Mississippi Veterans of the Civil Rights Movement. A second group of scholars involved NPS historians and subject matter experts, including NHL historians, who regularly met with the study team to provide guidance and feedback for the national significance evaluations. In February 2019, these Mississippi-based scholars and NPS scholars participated in a scholars' roundtable in Jackson, Mississippi, to consider which of the more than 220 sites on the preliminary inventory could potentially meet NHL criteria for national significance (see list of contributors at the end of this document). The round table meeting discussions resulted in the following list of 15 sites or groups of sites that the scholars recommended the NPS study team intensively study and evaluate using the NHL criteria.

- Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home, Jackson, Mississippi (*site identified in the study legislation*)
- Emmett Till sites, multiple sites, Mississippi (*including the Tallahatchie County Courthouse and Bryant's Grocery Store sites identified in the study legislation*)
- 1964 Freedom Summer sites, multiple sites, Mississippi (*including the Old Neshoba County Jail identified in the study legislation*)
- Lynch Street corridor, Jackson, Mississippi
- M.W. Stringer Grand Lodge, Jackson, Mississippi
- Council of Federated Organizations (COFO) Center, Jackson, Mississippi
- Farish Street neighborhood, Jackson, Mississippi
- Town of Mound Bayou, Mississippi
- Taborian Hospital, Mound Bayou, Mississippi
- Isaiah T. Montgomery House National Historic Landmark, Mound Bayou, Mississippi
- Lyceum – The Circle Historic District, Oxford, Mississippi
- Former Medical Office of Dr. Gilbert Mason, Sr., Biloxi, Mississippi (*site identified in the study legislation*)
- Tougaloo College, Tougaloo, Mississippi
- Lanier High School, Jackson, Mississippi
- March Against Fear, statewide, Mississippi

The NPS team's subsequent in-depth evaluation of these sites/groups of sites against NHL criteria ultimately resulted in the sites and findings described in detail in this study. While the study team found that all of these sites recommended for close examination by the scholars' group are important in the history of civil rights in Mississippi in different ways, many of the sites ultimately were found to be significant at the local or state levels but did not demonstrate national significance, as it is defined by the NHL criteria. As new scholarship and research comes to light over time, it is possible that new understandings of these sites could identify ways in which they made a national impact. Reexamination of the sites not further evaluated in this study is recommended when more information about them is revealed and understood in the future.

The following are sites, or groups of sites, that were recommended by the Mississippi scholars for more thorough consideration under the SRS national significance criterion. Each site description consists of a brief historical description to supplement the information

presented in the “Historic Context” section and a physical description of the site. Multiple resources associated with one event or person are presented together as a group.

Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home, Jackson, Mississippi

The home of the late civil rights activist Medgar Evers is located at 2332 Margaret Walker Alexander Drive, in Jackson, Mississippi (see figure 2). Although this site was specifically identified in the Congressional legislation for this special resource study, it was not fully evaluated in this study because in November 2020, the property became established and included within the national park system as the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument via section 2301 of the John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act of 2019. The new national monument honors the life and work of two important civil rights figures, Medgar and Myrlie Evers, and links the couple’s work to the home, a tangible place where visitors may engage with their story and learn about the ongoing struggle for social justice in the United States. When the property became part of the national park system, it was not analyzed further as part of the special resource study.



FIGURE 2. MEDGAR AND MYRLIE EVERS HOME (WWW.NPS.GOV/MEMY)

Emmett Till Sites

Historical Description

The history of Emmett Till’s lynching is discussed in the “Historic Context” section (see “Persisting Racist Violence and the Murder of Emmett Till”). However, supplementary details are provided here to explain the relationship of the many associated sites with the overall event.

Emmett Till visited his great uncle, Moses Wright, and his family at their home a couple miles from the small town of Money, Mississippi. On August 24, 1955, a few days after his arrival, Till and his cousins drove into town to buy snacks at Bryant’s Grocery Store, owned and

operated by a young white couple, Roy and Carolyn Bryant. Roy was out of town and Carolyn tended shop. Shortly after the boys left the grocery store, Carolyn Bryant exited and, allegedly, Till whistled at her (Anderson 2015).

A few days later, on Sunday, August 28, Roy Bryant, J.W. Milam, and an unidentified African American man went to the Wright home and kidnapped Till at gunpoint. Hours later, near the city of Drew, eyewitnesses Willie Reed, Mary Amanda (Mandy) Bradley, and Frank Young reported seeing a green and white 1955 Chevrolet truck with “four white men in the cab and three negro men in the back” drive up to the Sturdivant Plantation, where Milam’s brother Leslie worked as a farm manager. The witnesses would identify Emmett Till, J.W. Milam, and Roy Bryant among the group (Metress 2002; Tell 2019). The men walked into a barn, also referred to as the “red barn” or “seed barn,” and Reed later testified to hearing the sounds of torturous beating and wailing coming from it while he walked along an adjacent county road. He and other witnesses later saw the truck enter the barn and then emerge with the same four white men in the cab, but only two Black men in the bed. There is consensus that Till was not among the men and that a tarpaulin was covering something in the back of the truck, presumably his body (Metress 2002, 8, 59, 89; Tell 2019, 43–45; Whitfield 1988, 40).

That same Sunday, word of Till’s kidnapping spread throughout Money and Till’s mother was notified in Chicago. LeFlore County Sheriff George Smith questioned Bryant, who admitted that he and Milam abducted Till but claimed they released him at the grocery store. Bryant and Milam were arrested for kidnapping (Anderson 2015, 44). Three days later, on August 31, a mangled and bloated corpse was spotted in the Tallahatchie River, weighted down with a 75-pound cotton gin fan. Many believe that the fan came from a cotton gin located adjacent to J.W. Milam’s home in Glendora. This has not been proven by the FBI or Mississippi Department of Archives and History (MDAH) researchers, but circumstantial evidence, including the cotton gin’s location relative to Milam’s house and Milam’s friendship with the gin’s owner, increases the possibility that it did (MDAH 2019; Killinger, pers. comm., 2019).

Moses Wright positively identified the body as his nephew, partly from a ring that Till wore that had his late father’s initials engraved on it (Anderson 2015, 45–46). Sheriff Smith was notified but because the body was found in Tallahatchie County, its County Sheriff H. Clarence Strider, a staunch segregationist, claimed jurisdiction over the case. Sheriff Strider released the remains to Moses Wright, with strict instructions for an immediate burial, which got under way at a cemetery beside the East Money Church of God in Christ. Meanwhile, upon learning that her son had been found, Mamie Till-Mobley had immediately requested that the body be returned to Chicago. She finally got in contact with Moses Wright just in time to halt the burial. Had Till’s body been buried there, the world would never have seen the graphic images of his remains, and the story of his lynching may have been ignored (Anderson 2015). Woodrow Jackson, a Black embalmer at the Tutwiler funeral home, prepared the remains for transport. Importantly, for the later trial, the funeral home’s lead embalmer, Harry D. Malone, who was White, did not perform the procedure. Because Till’s body was so badly decomposed, Jackson worked all night on the embalming process (Anderson 2015).

As discussed in the “Historic Context” section, accounts of Emmett Till’s murder exploded into a national story and Mamie Till-Mobley made the difficult and powerful decision to have her son’s remains photographed and revealed to the public at the Roberts Temple Church of God in Christ in Chicago. While the images sparked sympathy, horror, and outrage nationwide, the federal government was unmoved and did not intervene (Anderson 2015, 49–54). The trial of J.W. Milam and Roy Bryant for the murder of Emmett Till took place in September 1955. More than 70 journalists and 30 photographers representing the most important and widely read national and international newspapers, as well as staff from two of the nation’s major television networks, descended on Sumner Square in front of the Tallahatchie County Courthouse in Sumner, where the trial took place. The trial and its aftermath were defined by intimidation and misinformation to protect the defendants, but also by a complacent confidence by those in positions of power that the social norms of white supremacy would be upheld. Before and during the trial, law enforcement officials and other White citizens continued to suggest that the body found in the river was not Emmett Till. The lead embalmer of the Tutwiler Funeral Home, Harry D. Malone, testified that the body was in such poor condition that it had to have been submerged in the river for as many as 10 days, not the 3 days between Till’s abduction and the date the body was recovered. It was later discovered that his assistant, not he, embalmed the body, compromising the authority of his claims about its condition. But at trial, Malone’s testimony introduced an element of uncertainty that the all-White jury seized upon, whether or not they truly believed it.

Furthermore, two potential key witnesses were not in the courtroom, although it is uncertain that they would have testified even if they were. These witnesses were Henry Lee Loggins and Levi “Too Tight” Collins, both of whom worked for Milam. Their likely role in the lynching was discovered by James Hicks, a reporter for the *Afro-American* magazine. Hicks had gone to the King’s Place Juke Joint, near Milam’s home in Glendora, on a tip. His informant, who lived with the men, told Hicks that Milam came for them on the night of the murder and directed them to help with Till’s abduction. Many, therefore, believe that Loggins and Collins were the “two Black men” identified by eyewitnesses accompanying Milam in the truck. The informant claimed that the two men were being held in the Tallahatchie County Jail in Charleston so that they would not be accessible during the trial. The trial’s prosecutors claimed to have searched the jail without finding the men, but the local police could be considered an unreliable source. Whether or not Collins or Loggins were in fact held at this jail at that time may not ever be confirmed.

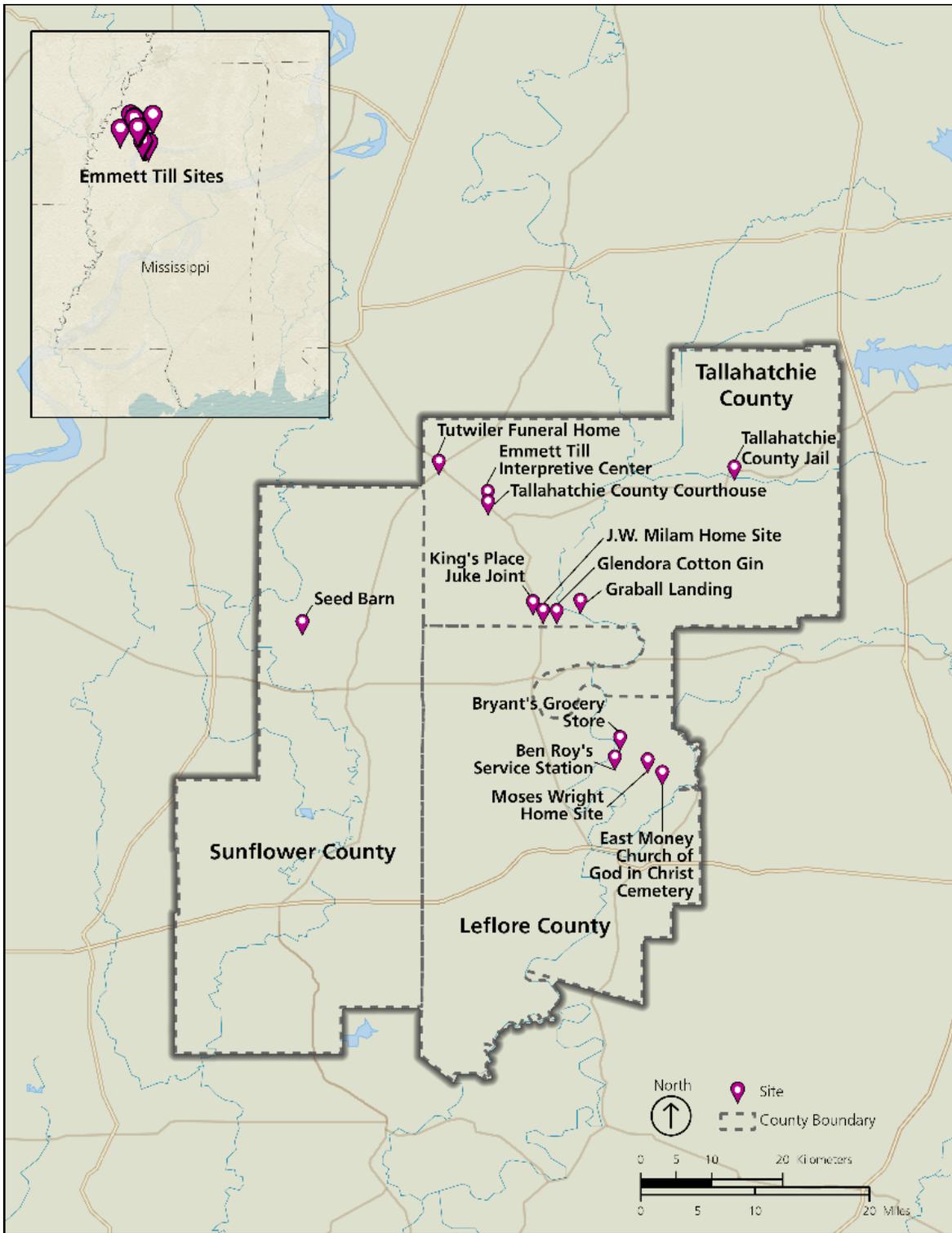
Even after the trial, the specific details of what happened remained a mystery. Despite what seemed to be overwhelming evidence of their guilt, including their own admission of kidnapping Till, Milam and Bryant were acquitted at trial. Afterwards, the two men publicly confessed to the murder in a paid interview that appeared in *Look* magazine. In the interview, Milam and Bryant detailed that they killed Till in a shed behind Milam’s home in Glendora; however, witnesses testified under oath during the trial that the murder occurred at the seed barn in Sunflower County. In subsequent histories, the accounts of these witnesses, who were African American, were largely ignored. Instead, the *Look* article dominated the memory and history of the lynching of Emmett Till for decades and continued to cause uncertainty surrounding the facts of the murder, which persists today (Anderson 2015, 226–239). Finally, the environment of the study area is relevant to the events of the lynching of Emmett Till.

This rural, agricultural landscape is emblematic of the “Cotton is King” culture that dominated the South. As discussed in the “Historic Context” section, Black residents outnumbered White residents through much of Mississippi’s history, and their labors were responsible for much of the state’s economic prosperity. The White power structure perceived this as a potential threat to the status quo and responded with extreme racial discrimination and violence, so that Mississippi developed as one of the most racially oppressive regimes in the country. Although this cultural-environmental context is relevant for the entire study area, the landscape around Glendora—encompassing J.W. Milam’s home, the Glendora Cotton Gin, King’s Place Juke Joint, and the Graball Landing River site—is particularly representative of the oppressive power of the White establishment over Black farm workers.

An important question for the purposes of this study is whether the current landscape can convey a sense of this historic agricultural character from the 1955 period of significance. Rural Mississippi, like much of the rural South, has changed significantly since the 1950s due to, among other causes, the mechanization of agriculture. Historically, there would have been more farm workers, more houses for the workers, and more barns to shelter draft animals, tractors, cotton pickers, and supplies. In many parts of the rural South today, the landscape is much emptier than it was 70 years ago. In other parts, the landscape is more developed, as suburbs replaced farms. This is not true everywhere, however. A comparison of aerial imagery of the landscape around Glendora from 1957 and 2018 shows little substantial change. The town and its immediate environs are slightly less developed. For example, to the west of the village center, a set of structures has been converted to new farmland, while the forested area in between has actually expanded and overtaken old farmland. To the east of J.W. Milam’s home and the Glendora Cotton Gin were, historically, a few large fields subdivided by two dirt roads and a small cluster of field structures. Today, there is one larger field and one dirt road, and the structures are gone. But, despite these changes, the relative balance of built area and farmed land is about the same—and the land is overwhelmingly farmed. In some cases, individual farm plots from the 1950s are combined today, but even in 1957 the plots were large. The landscape surrounding Glendora remains today, as it was in the 1950s, dominated by large agricultural fields and relatively few structures (NETR n.d.).

Property Descriptions of the Emmett Till Sites

Of the many individuals and places that can be linked with the history of Emmett Till’s lynching in the Mississippi Delta, the study identified 11 sites that, collectively, meet the study’s national significance criteria (see chapter 3 for the national significance evaluation). These 11 sites, scattered throughout Leflore, Sunflower, and Tallahatchie Counties, are described here and on map 3 below.



MAP 3. LOCATIONS OF THE EMMETT TILL SITES

Additionally, there are several sites closely associated with pivotal events associated with Emmett Till's lynching in Chicago, Illinois. These sites include the Roberts Temple Church of God in Christ, where Emmett Till's open-casket funeral was held, the Chicago home of Mamie Till-Mobley and Emmett Till, and Till's burial site in the Burr Oak Cemetery in Alsip, Illinois. Those sites are not described or evaluated in this study due to the scope of this study's legislation, which directs the study to focus on sites in Mississippi.

The **Bryant's Grocery Store** site was the scene of the alleged interaction between Carolyn Bryant and Emmett Till that set in motion the events of Till's tragic lynching in 1955 (see figures 3, 4, and 5). This site was specifically identified in the Congressional legislation for this special resource study. The site is located on a corner lot on Money Road in Money, Leflore County. Built around 1910, the original two-story commercial storefront is now a ruin, and all that remains is a portion of its brick masonry exterior shell standing at the edge of its rectangular footprint (MDAH 2017). The roof, second floor, interior walls and finishes, and front façade are largely caved in, collapsed, or missing. The standing walls are covered in thick vegetation and heavy vines that virtually obscure the structure from view when they are foliated outside of the winter months. The building is not recognizable as a grocery store. Its surrounding environment is typical of Money's rural, undeveloped, agricultural character.



**FIGURE 3. HISTORICAL PHOTOGRAPH OF THE BRYANT'S GROCERY STORE, ABOUT 1955
(PHOTO CREDIT: SPECIAL COLLECTIONS & ARCHIVES, FLORIDA STATE
UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES. DATED AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 1955)**



FIGURE 4. BRYANT'S GROCERY STORE (FEBRUARY 2022)



FIGURE 5. BRYANT'S GROCERY STORE (FEBRUARY 2022)

To the west of the Bryant's Grocery Store site is Ben Roy's Service Station, a 1930s filling station (see figures 6 and 7). Although Ben Roy's Service Station is not analyzed in this section as a site associated with Emmett Till, it is analyzed in the "Evaluation of Feasibility" section below as a potential facility for supporting park operations and visitor services, given its convenient location. The Ben Roy's Service Station is a Craftsman-style, one-story frame building clad in horizontal lapped siding and covered by a hipped roof. The building features a hipped canopy that extends from the main roof toward the roadway to shelter vehicles at its gas pumps. Two old gas pumps stand between the canopy posts. At the side of the building

are two open vehicular service bays. The building's interior has a large front room that functioned as a public store, with counters and shelves lining its walls and large plate-glass windows at the front. The rear of the building houses a one-bedroom dwelling with a living room, kitchen, and bathroom. In 2011, the entire building, including the interior, was restored to its 1930 appearance with the assistance of a preservation grant from the Mississippi Department of Archives and History. Historical documents do not indicate that the Ben Roy's Service Station played a role in the activities of Emmett Till's alleged interactions at the Bryant's Grocery Store next door in August 1955, but the building was standing at that time and thus contributed to the setting of Money at that time.



FIGURE 6. BEN ROY'S SERVICE STATION (FEBRUARY 2018)



FIGURE 7. BEN ROY'S SERVICE STATION (FEBRUARY 2022)

The **Moses Wright Home** site is located in a small Mississippi Delta community where Emmett Till's uncle, Moses Wright, lived with his family. Emmett Till was abducted at gunpoint from this site. The Wright home is no longer extant. The property and its environment are rural and undeveloped, set among farm fields (see figure 8).



FIGURE 8. MOSES WRIGHT HOME SITE, CURRENT (1955 WRIGHT HOME NO LONGER EXTANT) (FEBRUARY 2022)

The East Money Church of God in Christ Cemetery site is where the local deputy sheriff attempted to bury the body of Emmett Till only several hours after it was removed from the Tallahatchie River. The cemetery is adjacent to the East Money Church of God where Emmett Till's uncle, Moses (also known as Mose) Wright, served as its pastor until 1949 and was a church member in 1955. The church is currently in ruins and thus is no longer active. The cemetery itself appears to be active: vegetation has been cleared so that grave markers are visible (see figure 9). The environment in which it is situated is characterized as remote, rural farmland that is otherwise undeveloped.



FIGURE 9. EAST MONEY CHURCH OF GOD IN CHRIST CEMETERY SITE (FEBRUARY 2022)

Although not corroborated by official histories or government investigations, many believe the Glendora Cotton Gin is the site where the gin fan used to weigh down Till’s body in the river came from. The building is a large, rectangular structure with a corrugated metal exterior that was used for processing the cotton grown in the local fields in surrounding LeFlore County (see figures 10 and 11). The cotton gin is adjacent to the J.W. Milam Home site in Glendora and sits within an agricultural landscape that is emblematic of the “Cotton is King” culture of the South. Currently, the cotton gin houses the Emmett Till Historic Intrepid Center, a museum focused on the interpretation of Emmett Till’s lynching.



FIGURE 10. GLENDORA COTTON GIN (FEBRUARY 2022)



FIGURE 11. GLENDORA COTTON GIN AND COMMUNITY CENTER (FEBRUARY 2022)

A Quonset hut structure (also referred to as the community center in this study) adjacent to the cotton gin is used to support museum operations and other community functions (see figure 12). The building is a simple corrugated metal structure with a porch constructed at the main entrance. The structure does not appear in aerial imagery from 1957 and so did not exist during the events of the Till murder and trial (NETR n.d.). The community center is not analyzed in this section as a site associated with Emmett Till; however, it is analyzed in the feasibility section below as a potential facility for park operations and visitation support in Glendora.



FIGURE 12. COMMUNITY CENTER (FEBRUARY 2022)

The **J.W. Milam Home** site is a landscape in Glendora where the home of the lead murderer, J.W. Milam, once stood (see figure 13). Milam’s home played a role in the events of Till’s murder and sits within an agricultural landscape that is emblematic of the “Cotton is King” culture of the South. Milam’s former home is not extant: the J.W. Milam Home site is currently an open field.



FIGURE 13. J.W. MILAM HOME SITE (FEBRUARY 2022)

The King's Place Juke Joint site is where reporter James Hicks learned about the possible (but unconfirmed) roles of Henry Lee Loggins and Levi "Too Tight" Collins in Till's murder. The site is near the J.W. Milam Home site in Glendora and sits within an agricultural landscape that is emblematic of the "Cotton is King" culture of the South. The building is not extant: King's Place Juke Joint site is currently an open field (see figure 14).



FIGURE 14. KING'S PLACE JUKE JOINT SITE (FEBRUARY 2022)

The **Graball Landing River** site is a proxy for the general location along the Tallahatchie River where Emmett Till's body was found. The exact location where local police removed Till's body is disputed today, and it may never be precisely known because of changes in river flows and bank erosion since 1955. The Graball Landing River site is a 50-acre riparian area in the midst of rural farmland (see figures 15 and 16).



FIGURE 15. GRABALL LANDING RIVER SITE (FEBRUARY 2022)



FIGURE 16. GRABALL LANDING RIVER SITE (FEBRUARY 2022)

The **Seed Barn** at the former Sturdivant Plantation near the city of Drew, Sunflower County, was the site of Emmett Till’s lynching. The structure is a rectangular, frame building with vehicular bays along its longer side (see figure 17). Alterations to the building include replacement of the exterior siding (vertical board, in-kind) and a new roof that covers the original roof, which remains in place. Two of the three large vehicular bays that face the driveway have been enclosed. The bay at the far right side of the façade, which witnesses believed to have been the location of Till’s torture and murder, had a one-person door that was replaced with a large rolling door, but otherwise, the interior of the seed room where the event took place appears unchanged. The barn’s overall design, including its form as a gable-roof, one-story, rectangular plan, and its interior configuration, appears to be intact. The property has had some landscape changes, including the removal of a well, gasoline pumps, an adjacent farm structure (to the north), and the conversion of a county road to a private driveway that now ends at the barn, and a new farmhouse-style home on the property (see figure 18). The property is no longer a working farm but the patterns of spatial organization and circulation networks, including the county road, related to its historic usage largely remain intact. The farm sits within a rural setting with little surrounding development. Although the property is not a working farm, this structure’s general use as an ancillary outbuilding/barn continues. This accretion of changes to the building’s materials, bay openings, and the larger landscape appears to be reversible.



FIGURE 17. SEED BARN (FEBRUARY 2022)



FIGURE 18. SEED BARN (FEBRUARY 2022)

The **Tutwiler Funeral Home** site is where Emmett Till's body was brought for embalming in preparation for transport to Chicago. The site is located along Hancock Avenue near the center of the town of Tutwiler. The funeral home building is not extant: Tutwiler Funeral Home site is currently an open lot (see figure 19).



FIGURE 19. TUTWILER FUNERAL HOME SITE (FEBRUARY 2022)

The **Tallahatchie County Jail** in Charleston is where, allegedly, Henry Lee Loggins and Levi “Too Tight” Collins were confined during the Till trial to prevent access to the two men. The building is a detached, rectangular, brick building with a flat roof. The jail features a portico with seven square, brick columns that extends out from the building over the entrance at its northwest corner.

The **Tallahatchie County Courthouse and Sumner Square** (also known as the Tallahatchie County Second District Courthouse) is where the trial of J.W. Milam and Roy Bryant took place, and the adjacent square was the gathering place for journalists and onlookers. The courthouse building was specifically identified in the congressional legislation for this study. This two-story rectangular brick structure was built in 1910 in the Richardsonian Romanesque style (see figure 20). The building's core has a hipped roof, and it features a four-story tower on its northwest corner and two-story towers on its remaining three corners, all capped by pyramidal roofs. The structure has rounded, arched windows on the second floor and trabeated windows on the first floor on all facades, as well as decorative brick and concrete work in the form of corbelled arches, window surrounds, arched openings, and band courses (Gatlin 2007).

The courthouse building was restored and rehabilitated between 2010 and 2021. The project, including a full restoration of the second-floor courtroom where the Till trial was held, used historical courtroom photographs taken during the trial to ensure the restored spaces accurately reflect the period of significance (see figure 21). The courtroom's 1955 materials and character-defining features include the wood floors, painted wainscoting, and a prominent balustrade at the front of the courtroom. Recreated features using historical documentation include the windows (glazing and muntins), fixed seating, the judge's bench and side tables, and pendant light fixtures. Outside of the courtroom, the jury room and the building's original open-air wood stairway that leads to the second-floor courtroom remain unchanged. The building's first-floor lobby was used by reporters, who set up telegraph wires and phone lines to communicate with their bureaus. Nonhistoric additions necessary for the room's modern function include the installation of an acoustic plaster ceiling, which is not visually obtrusive. The courtroom continues to be used as a county courtroom.

Outside the courthouse is Sumner Square, an associated landscape bound by North Court Street, East Court Street, South Court Street, and W. Court Street. This landscape consists of a narrow grassy area, sidewalks, and a 1913 (approximate) memorial statue of a Confederate soldier standing on a tall, square column adjacent to the courthouse building. The Confederate monument was present during the 1955 trial. A variety of commercial buildings line the streets on all four sides and face Sumner Square.



FIGURE 20. TALLAHATCHIE COUNTY COURTHOUSE AND SUMNER SQUARE (FEBRUARY 2018)



FIGURE 21. TALLAHATCHIE COUNTY COURTHOUSE, RESTORED COURTROOM (FEBRUARY 2018)

The Emmett Till Interpretive Center, located across the street from the courthouse, is not analyzed in this section as a site historically associated with Emmett Till; however, it is analyzed in the feasibility section below as a potential facility for supporting park operations and visitor services, given its convenient location. The interpretive center is housed in a 4,300-square-foot former commercial building that fronts Sumner Square and was present during the 1955 trial. While the building's façade conveys its original form, the one-story building has been adapted to house the center for public use, meeting spaces, and offices (see figures 22 and 23). Within the building's rectangular footprint, the front of the building is an open lobby that fronts the square. Along a long corridor within is a gallery space with poster-style exhibits interpreting the Emmett Till courtroom trial. A second open space is used as a meeting area and library and includes several enclosed offices along one side. The rear of the building includes a second meeting space and a back door egress to a parking lot not

associated with the center. The building includes public restrooms. The center currently functions as a reception and meeting space for the center, where it welcomes individual visitors and groups, including school groups, and other members of the public. The building also houses offices for center staff. From the center, staff gathers groups before taking them on a staff-led tour of the Tallahatchie County Courthouse courtroom across the street. In the building's gathering spaces, staff holds meetings and discussions related to the history of the trial and Emmett Till.



FIGURE 22. EMMETT TILL INTERPRETIVE CENTER (FEBRUARY 2022)



FIGURE 23. EMMETT TILL INTERPRETIVE CENTER, INTERIOR (FEBRUARY 2022)

Sites with Existing Designations

The Tallahatchie County Courthouse and Sumner Square was listed in the National Register of Historic Places (reference #07000149, as the “Tallahatchie County Second District Courthouse”) on March 6, 2007, at the national level of significance under criterion A for its association with the trial of Emmett Till’s murderers in 1955. The site is also locally significant under criteria A and C as a longtime site of government offices and courts and an example of Richardsonian Romanesque architecture.

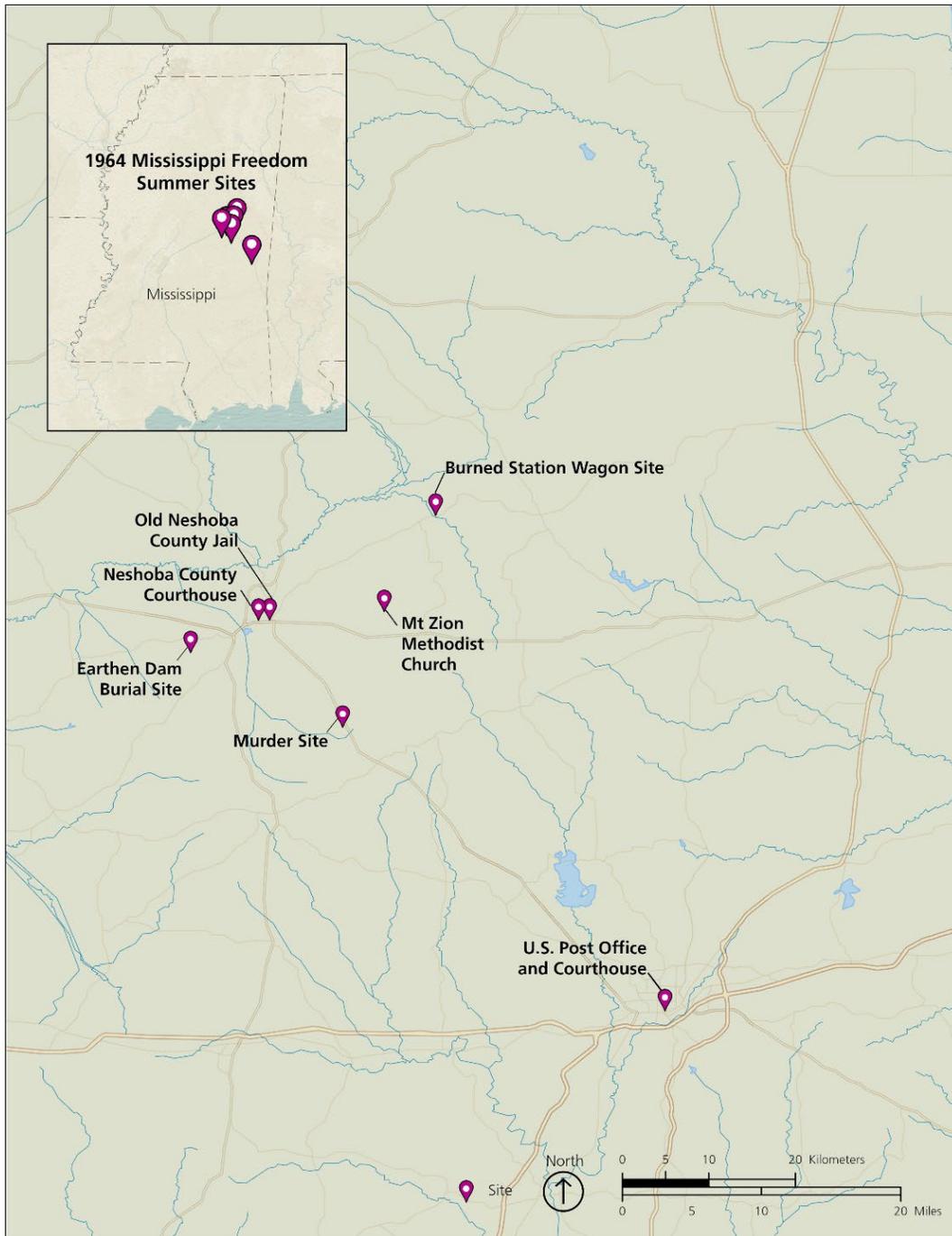
1964 Freedom Summer Sites

Historical Description

The history of the Freedom Summer murders and related events are discussed in the “Historic Context” section (see “Mississippi Freedom Vote, 1963,” “Mississippi Freedom Summer,” and “Freedom Summer Violence and Murders”).

Property Descriptions of the 1964 Freedom Summer Sites

Of the many individuals and places that can be linked with the history of the Freedom Summer murders, the study identified seven sites that, collectively, meet the study’s national significance criteria (see chapter 3 for the national significance evaluation). These seven sites, scattered throughout Neshoba and Lauderdale Counties, are described here and shown on map 4, below.



MAP 4. LOCATIONS OF THE 1964 FREEDOM SUMMER SITES

The **Mount (Mt.) Zion Methodist Church** is located at 11191 Road 747 in Philadelphia, Mississippi, in rural Neshoba County (see figures 24 and 25). The church is one of the most important sites associated with the Freedom Summer of 1964. In June of that year, members of the local Ku Klux Klan (KKK) burned down the original church, which caused Freedom Summer volunteers James Chaney, Michael Schwerner, and Andrew Goodman to travel there to investigate. Their arrival set into motion the events of their murder. The Mount Zion congregation rebuilt their church on the same site in 1966 (with repairs in 1971 after a non-

arson fire). The new church and its landscape stand as a symbol of the African American congregation's resilience and determination in response to violence. Key landscape features associated with the church include the cemetery, the old Mount Zion church bell and stand, and the gravel driveway that church members use to enter the property and park. Features that are not relevant to this study include the 2001 Fellowship Hall, the Prince Hall Masonic Lodge (due to alterations), and commemorative markers, which were placed on the landscape starting in 1989 (Krawitz 2018). The condition of these structures and landscape features appears to be good. The Mount Zion Methodist Church property remains in use for regular religious services, as well as for annual commemorative events for the 1964 Freedom Summer murders. The Mount Zion cemetery is active and continues to receive burials.



FIGURE 24. MT. ZION METHODIST CHURCH (FEBRUARY 2022)



FIGURE 25. MT. ZION METHODIST CHURCH CEMETERY (FEBRUARY 2022)

The **Old Neshoba County Jail** is a detached, one-story structure located at 422 East Myrtle Avenue in downtown Philadelphia, Mississippi (see figure 26). This site is where Freedom Summer volunteers Chaney, Goodman, and Schwerner were held by local police for several hours while the local KKK lynch mob, including the same police officers, prepared to ambush and murder them upon their release. Some of the original windows have been replaced since the 1960s, although the building's primary interior concrete-block structural walls and major partition walls are intact and evident. After the jail building passed into private ownership, the interior was altered and divided into two apartments, each with a kitchen, a living room, and two bedrooms. The columns to which the jail bars were attached remain in place. In 2022, the building was purchased for use as an auxiliary building for an events venue. Images in a local news source show renovations to the exterior, including wood framing that would substantially alter the roof line (Swogetinsky 2022).



FIGURE 26. OLD NESHOPA COUNTY JAIL (FEBRUARY 2018)

The **Murder** site is where Chaney, Goodman, and Schwerner, were executed by the KKK lynch mob. The site is along County Road 515, formerly called “Rock Cut Road,” near its intersection with County Road 284 (see figure 27). The site is an isolated road about 14 miles southeast of the city of Philadelphia in rural Neshoba County, and it appears to be surfaced with compacted gravel.



FIGURE 27. MURDER SITE (FEBRUARY 2022)

The **Burned Station Wagon** site is adjacent to the Bogue Chitto Swamp, about 13 miles northeast of Philadelphia in Neshoba County. This site is where FBI investigators found Mickey Schwerner’s abandoned station wagon off an old logging track, about 80 feet north of Mississippi Highway 21 (US Department of Justice 2015). After the Klan members dumped the bodies of the three men at the earthen dam site, they drove Schwerner’s station wagon to this remote site, where they abandoned and burned it. Images of the burned vehicle distributed through the press became a powerful and enduring visual symbol of racial violence in Mississippi (see figures 28 and 29).



FIGURE 28. HISTORICAL PHOTO OF THE BURNED STATION WAGON SITE, TAKEN IN JUNE 1964 BY THE FBI (PHOTO CREDIT: FBI RECORDS)



FIGURE 29. BURNED STATION WAGON SITE (FEBRUARY 2022)

The **Earthen Dam Burial** site near Mississippi Highway 21, in Neshoba County, is where the executed bodies of Chaney, Goodman, and Schwerner were buried by the Klan at the base of the dam and covered in mounds of clay (see figure 30). In 1964, the dam was located within a 253-acre farm called the Old Jolly Farm, 7 miles southwest of Philadelphia and owned by KKK member Olen Lovell Burrage. During the summer of 1964, Burrage had been using bulldozers to build the earthen dam to create a pond on his property. The dam was to be about 250 feet long and 25 feet high, but the pond had not been filled with water when the bodies were discovered (Martin 2013). The earthen dam burial site continues to be situated on private land. The site is not available for public viewing, and “no trespassing” signs are

posted at the property's edge near Highway 21. Recent aerial photography indicates that the landscape is undeveloped, rural, and tree-covered, with the earthen dam still apparent.



FIGURE 30. EARTHEN DAM BURIAL SITE IN 1964
(PHOTO CREDIT: FBI HISTORY [WWW.FBI.GOV/HISTORY/FAMOUS-CASES/MISSISSIPPI-BURNING])

The **Neshoba County Courthouse Square**, as defined for this study, encompasses one entire block at the center of the city of Philadelphia, Mississippi, bound by Beacon Street to the north, Byrd Avenue to its west, Center Avenue to its east, and Main Street to its south. These streets are lined by commercial storefronts that face the county courthouse at the center of the square. The courthouse building is surrounded on all sides by a grassy, treed lawn that gives way to shrubbery at its periphery (see figure 31). An oval walkway surrounds the courthouse, and direct walkways to the streets run north and south from the building. Around the property boundary, at the edge of the shrubbery, runs a low brick wall with decorative square piers, beyond which are sidewalks along the streets. On-street, parallel parking surrounds the building. During the days and weeks that followed the civil rights volunteers' disappearance, this landscape served as the central gathering point in Philadelphia for the many civil rights activists, journalists, police, and FBI agents who came to the city to protest, report on, or investigate the case. During that time, the square and surrounding business were frequented by KKK members in order to create an atmosphere of intimidation and to maintain control over the secrecy of their involvement in the murders. Relevant elements of the Neshoba County Courthouse Square for purposes of this study include the exterior of the 1928 (approximate) Neshoba County Courthouse building (but not the interior) and its surrounding landscape. Some alterations occurred at the site since its period of significance. The windows on the courthouse's primary façade have been replaced, the parking scheme around the square has been changed from diagonal to parallel parking, and the shrubbery and brick wall at the lawn's periphery were added some time in the late 1980s. Overall, the site is in good condition.



FIGURE 31. NESHOPA COUNTY COURTHOUSE SQUARE (FEBRUARY 2022)

The US Post Office and Courthouse at 500 21st Avenue in Meridian is the federal courthouse where 18 members of the KKK were re-tried in 1967 in *US vs Price et al.* Seven of the eighteen defendants were found guilty, the first time an all-white jury in Mississippi convicted a white person on civil rights charges. This imposing, two-story edifice was constructed in 1931 in the Art Deco architectural style, and an addition to the basement and first floor was built in 1963 (Odom 1984). The building's interior and exterior features are remarkably intact from the time of the 1967 trial, and the building is in good condition (see figure 32).



FIGURE 32. US POST OFFICE AND COURTHOUSE (FEBRUARY 2018)

Sites with Existing Designations

The Old Neshoba County Jail and the Neshoba County Courthouse (including the Neshoba County Courthouse Square) were listed in the National Register of Historic Places on April 14, 2005, as contributing properties to the Downtown Philadelphia Historic District (reference #05000280). This district is nationally significant under criterion A for its association with the events of the 1964 Freedom Summer murders (Baughn 2005). The district is also locally significant under criteria A and C, and its overall period of significance is from 1905 to 1966.

The Mt. Zion Methodist Church was listed in the National Register of Historic Places (reference #100002659) on July 13, 2018, at the national level of significance under criterion A for its significant role in the events surrounding the murders of Goodman, Cheney, and Schwerner (Krawitz 2018).

The federal post office and courthouse was listed in the National Register of Historic Places (reference #84002236, as the “US Post Office and Courthouse”) on May 17, 1984, at the local level of significance under criterion C as an example of Art Deco architecture (Odom 1984).

Lynch Street Corridor, Jackson, Mississippi

Historical Description

In the 1950s and 1960s, John R. Lynch Street in Jackson, Mississippi, and its surrounding neighborhood, became a corridor of African American businesses and civil rights activism. Located on the eastern edge of Jackson State University, the area was a gathering place for African American Mississippians before, during, and after the modern civil rights movement of this period. Lynch Street and the surrounding neighborhood included many businesses that were owned by and catered to African American residents of Jackson. These businesses included barbershops, shoe stores, restaurants, dry cleaners, a theater, WOKJ Ebony Radio, and a drugstore. An extant example is the Chambliss Shoe Hospital, one of the first African American-owned commercial buildings on Lynch Street. African American churches, such as Pratt Memorial United Methodist and Zion Traveler Baptist Church, served as meeting places for civil rights activities (Spofford 1988). Located just north of Mt. Olive Cemetery and northeast of the M.W. Stringer Grand Lodge, Pratt Memorial United Methodist Church was one of 20 churches in Jackson where nightly meetings convened to plan and organize civil rights activities, including boycotts of downtown businesses that participated in segregation (Harrison 2014).

The Lynch Street neighborhood provided its African American residents a final resting place: the Mount Olive Cemetery. Established in 1892 and situated in the center of the Lynch Street neighborhood, the cemetery was one of a few private cemeteries in Mississippi for African Americans that dates to the period immediately following the Reconstruction era. During this time, it was more common for African Americans to be buried on plantations, in church yards, or public cemeteries (Wilcox 2016). Locally prominent African Americans are buried at Mount Olive, including Jesse Chambliss, owner of the Chambliss Shoe Hospital located across Lynch Street; Dr. R.L. Johnson, a leading medical doctor during the late 19th century; Ida Revels Redmond, the daughter of the first African American US senator, Hiram Revels;

James Hill, son of a slave, who later became the first African American elected to the Mississippi House of Representatives; members of the M.W. Stringer Grand Lodge; and veterans of World War I, among others (Wilcox 2016).

During a time when Black Mississippians were often excluded from traditional services and stores in Jackson, the Lynch Street area was among the few places in the city where African American citizens could purchase goods and services. For this reason, the area also attracted civil rights leaders as they organized meetings and activities to attract community and student involvement in the movement. The area thus became known as the cradle of civil rights action in Jackson. The area attracted the establishment of the M.W. Stringer Grand Lodge (described below) and the Council of Federated Organizations (COFO) offices (also described below) on Lynch Street (Spofford 1988). When the COFO headquarters began to attract mostly White college students from northern states to join the Freedom Summer project, residents adjacent to Lynch Street began to open their homes to the visiting volunteers. These dwellings became known as “Freedom Houses.” Extant examples of freedom houses near Lynch Street include the houses at 727 Rose Street and 1714 Rose Street.

This area’s proximity to Jackson State University also gave rise to student involvement in the movement and the development of future civil rights leaders. Later, in 1970, Alexander Hall, a women’s dormitory at Jackson State University, became embroiled in tensions between students and local police at a time of national social upheaval, with hundreds of thousands of students across the country protesting the US government’s involvement in the Vietnam War. On May 13, 1970, a false rumor that Charles Evers, brother of the slain Medgar Evers, had been shot and killed led to confusion and then bottle throwing and shouting, in a crowd outside of Alexander Hall. When police arrived, the sounds of breaking bottles sounded like gunfire, which was mistaken for a sniper firing a gun from the dormitory. Police began firing at the crowd and the building. Bullets reverberated off the building, showering those nearby with spalling brick and concrete, shattered glass, and sparking power lines. In the aftermath, a Jackson State University student, Phillip Gibbs, and a high school student, James Earl Green, were killed, and 11 other civilians were seriously wounded. The bullet holes from the 1970 police shooting are still visible on the building today. After this tragic event, the portion of Lynch Street that ran through the university’s campus was closed to vehicular traffic. After that closure, the dramatic reduction of the car traffic led to the decline and eventual loss of many businesses along the former Lynch Street thoroughfare since the 1970s.

Property Description

John R. Lynch Street and its surrounding corridor is located on the eastern edge of Jackson State University in Jackson, Mississippi. Lynch Street forms an east-west commercial corridor, and Rose and Short Streets are on a north-south axis from Lynch Street. This study focused on three blocks of Lynch Street from Alexander Hall, a dormitory on the Jackson State University campus, eastward to the Chambliss Shoe Hospital (see figure 33). The area studied extends north at the intersection of Rose Street to include residences and the Zion Baptist Church. Also included is a northern section of Short Street, where the Pratt Memorial United Methodist Church is located. This area contains a total of 28 buildings and structures

and a cemetery. The properties include a mix of residential, commercial, religious, and government buildings.



FIGURE 33. LYNCH STREET CORRIDOR (JUNE 2019)

M.W. Stringer Grand Lodge

Historical Description

The following narrative supplements the discussion of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party and Fannie Lou Hamer found in the “Historic Context” section (see “Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party” and following sections).

Built in 1955, the M.W. Stringer Grand Lodge is located in the Lynch Street neighborhood of Jackson, Mississippi, a neighborhood that was historically an important gathering place for African Americans. During the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s, it became the cultural, social, political, and community meeting place for every statewide African American political group in Mississippi, many of which were also national or nationally connected. The lodge’s auditorium, with a capacity of 1,300, provided one of the few large spaces available in the state for African Americans to congregate under some relative protection from white supremacists. Much of the organizational efforts for the Freedom Vote campaign of 1963 and the Freedom Summer activities of 1964, described in the “Historic Context” section, took place in the lodge. The funeral of Medgar Evers, who as Mississippi field secretary for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) had his office in the building, was held in its auditorium.

The lodge hosted the statewide conventions of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party in 1964, which included national civil rights leaders. The official, all-White Mississippi state

delegation to the 1964 Democratic National Convention in Atlantic City, New Jersey, had passed resolutions denouncing the Civil Rights Act passed that summer, supported racial segregation “in all phases of society,” and placed their support behind Republican presidential nominee Senator Barry Goldwater rather than their own party’s Democratic candidate, Lyndon B. Johnson. The Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party was organized to challenge and unseat these official delegates. The organization’s strategy was to bring an opposition platform to the national convention by electing and sending Black delegates equal in number to the official delegates. Their opposition platform was developed at the M.W. Stringer Grand Lodge and endorsed school desegregation, racial justice, and expansion of the right to vote. Despite violence and harassment from segregationists, nearly 80,000 African Americans cast ballots to elect opposition delegates.

Among the leaders of the party was Fannie Lou Hamer. Hamer had grown up impoverished in the Mississippi Delta and had worked as a sharecropper. The intimidation and violence she met as she and others tried to register to vote left her with a deep conviction that she had to protect the rights of her state’s African American community. As one of the opposition delegates at the Democratic National Convention, Hamer delivered impassioned testimony on the state of race relations in Mississippi before a national television audience. She graphically described her background, how she was evicted from her long-time home after registering to vote, and how she endured brutal beatings for attempting to order at a segregated café. Hamer put a human face to a horror that was otherwise difficult for many Americans to imagine. President Lyndon Johnson feared that the power of her testimony would erode his support among Black voters and cause a White backlash during his bid for reelection. He reacted by calling for an impromptu presidential conference to force television news stations to switch their live newscast to his remarks at the exact time when Hamer gave her testimony (SNCC n.d.). Ultimately, the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party’s challenge to the convention’s credentials committee failed, and the official, all-White Mississippi delegation was not unseated. Yet the party’s efforts marked a turning point. Nationally, the publicity from the convention and widespread disapproval of the result slowly began to erode the entrenched all-White politics in Mississippi and struck the first blow against the long-established political convention system (Baughn 2016).

Property Description

The M.W. Stringer Grand Lodge is located at 1072 John R. Lynch Street in the heart of the community that surrounds Jackson State University in Jackson, Mississippi (see figure 34). Constructed in 1955, the building houses a masonic temple lodge, an auditorium that functions as a meeting hall, and offices for a variety of organizations. The building was designed by N.W. Overstreet, Mississippi’s most prolific architect at the time. The Masonic Temple is a two-story, L-shaped, red and blonde brick building with a flat roof, metal coping, and a concrete foundation. This 37,000-square-foot building features a first-floor auditorium that contains a balcony and seats 1,300 (see figure 35). The second floor houses offices and a lodge room that accommodates 250 people (Goodwin and McClendon 2005). Some modifications to the exterior appearance have occurred since the building was constructed. The exterior façade of the building was originally covered with Bedford stone but is now covered with red brick. The original windows were replaced with Anodized metal frame

windows. The date the exterior façade was modified is unknown. In 1971, a one-story, flat-roofed addition was constructed on the west elevation of the building. The exterior façade of the addition is covered with the original blonde brick. The interior of the building remains largely unchanged from its original design and layout, with only decorative changes made. The large auditorium remains unchanged from its 1955 appearance. The building still contains the original stage and balcony, wooden floors, and large windows, about 3 feet off the floor to nearly ceiling height (Goodwin and McClendon 2005).

The M.W. Stringer Grand Lodge is not currently listed in the National Register of Historic Places or designated as a National Historic Landmark but features a historical marker erected in 2007 by the Mississippi Department of Archives and History. The building is under private ownership and is still in use as office space, including by the Mississippi State Conference of the NAACP.



FIGURE 34. M.W. STRINGER GRAND LODGE (FEBRUARY 2022)



FIGURE 35. M.W. STRINGER GRAND LODGE AUDITORIUM (JUNE 2019)

COFO Center, Jackson, Mississippi

Historical Description

The following narrative supplements the discussion of the Council of Federated Organizations (COFO) found throughout the “Historic Context” section (see especially

“Organizing Mississippi,” “Mississippi Freedom Vote, 1963,” “The Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party,” and “Mississippi Freedom Summer”).

Due to the particularly fierce resistance by the White establishment in Mississippi, in 1961, civil rights groups working in the state united under the banner of the Council of Federated Organizations (NPS 2009, 52). In 1963, COFO established its state headquarters on the edge of the Jackson State University campus on Lynch Street in Jackson. The choice of this location was not happenstance. The traditionally Black Lynch Street neighborhood had long been an important gathering place for African Americans (see the Lynch Street Corridor resource description above). Across the street from the COFO Center was the M.W. Stringer Grand Lodge, which provided offices and meeting space for the NAACP, Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), Southern Conference Leadership Council (SCLC), and other organizations. One of COFOs most significant campaigns, the Mississippi Freedom Summer, was organized out of its Lynch Street office.

Property Description

The Council of Federated Organizations Center is located at 1017 John R. Lynch Street in Jackson, Mississippi (see figure 36). The COFO Center is situated in a one-story concrete block building that was originally divided into three commercial units separated by interior party walls. Each original unit had a separate front, side, or back entrance. The interior was subsequently altered. The party walls have been partially removed so that rather than a subdivided interior, the building today features a single open space that is drastically different in appearance. In 2009, the building was repaired and rehabilitated. The interior space that housed the COFO offices were painted the same color scheme as in 1964, and the exterior stucco walls of the western end of the building were painted white, as it was when COFO occupied the building. Approximately one-half of the building has served as the COFO Civil Rights Museum and Education Center since the 2009 rehabilitation. Plans are underway to add a bookstore and gift shop in the east one-third of the building.



FIGURE 36. COFO CENTER (JUNE 2019)

Farish Street Neighborhood, Jackson, Mississippi

Historical Description

After the Civil War, most of the Black population in Mississippi remained in rural areas and occupations, although there was some migration to the larger towns. The urban Black population, however, was nevertheless important and impactful. The land that is now the Farish Street neighborhood was surveyed and subdivided in the 1870s and became a segregated area for African Americans by the 1890s. The Daily Clarion-Ledger, a local newspaper, reported in 1904 that the community was thriving: Black citizens were establishing businesses and banking institutions, buying their own homes, and generally establishing an independent footing. A contemporary study published by the Committee of Twelve for the Advancement of the Interests of the Negro Race noted that by 1908, one-third of the area of Jackson was owned by African Americans, one-half of the Black families owned their own homes, and over one-third of the homes in which African Americans lived were owned by African Americans (Cramer 1980a and 1980b). The neighborhood featured a locally unique combination of residential and commercial buildings. It was home to wealthy and politically connected Black citizens, as well as to craftsmen, including carpenters, brick masons, and plasterers. Farish Street itself was lined with a variety of successful businesses, described by a local newspaper in 1915 as “one of the most progressive, growing business streets in the capitol city” (Cramer 1980a and 1980b).

Property Description.

The Farish Street Neighborhood Historic District incorporates approximately 825 buildings located in a 138-acre area in downtown Jackson (see figure 37). The district is arranged on a grid pattern with narrow streets bounded on all sides by wider streets. The following description, lightly edited, is taken directly from the district’s 1980 national register documentation. Parish and Mill streets, the two main north-south arteries, are predominantly commercial in character but become more residential north of Monument Street. Other streets are primarily residential, with small grocery stores dotting the neighborhood. Industrial features include a soybean processing plant, an ice cream plant, and a food storage warehouse. The district also includes several churches. Building heights are low, with only a couple over two stories. Most commercial buildings are constructed of brick and most residences are frame. While the majority of residences date from the early 20th century, a variety of vernacular building types and periods is represented. Two houses may possibly predate the Civil War. One is a Creole-cottage type with undercut gallery and paneled posts (154 Monument Street) and the other is a five-bay cottage with central entrance (208 E. Cohea Street). Creole cottages, from about 1880, remain on Blair and Cohea Streets, and a cluster of Queen Anne-style L-plan cottages with polygonal bays is located on West Church Street (Cramer 1980a, 1980b).

The most significant changes to the Farish Street neighborhood since the district’s period of significance (1860–1940) include a four-lane road constructed in 1957, which carved an S-shape through the district, interrupted the grid pattern, and separated parts of the community. Demolition in parts of the district have created open spaces. Newer structures have replaced many of the older buildings, and almost all of the earlier churches have been

replaced by new buildings. Two common but reversible alterations are the cladding of frame houses with asbestos and the replacement of original porch posts with metal piping. Despite these alterations, the percentage of intrusions is low and the district maintains a cohesive quality reflective of its early 20th-century growth and development (Cramer 1980a and 1980b).

The Farish Street Neighborhood Historic District was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on September 11, 2013 (reference #100007462 and #80004542), at the state level of significance under criterion A for its association with a historically significant and economically independent community of Black professionals and for a variety of architectural styles (Cramer 1980a and 1980b).



FIGURE 37. FARISH STREET (JUNE 2019)

Town of Mound Bayou, Mississippi

Historical Description

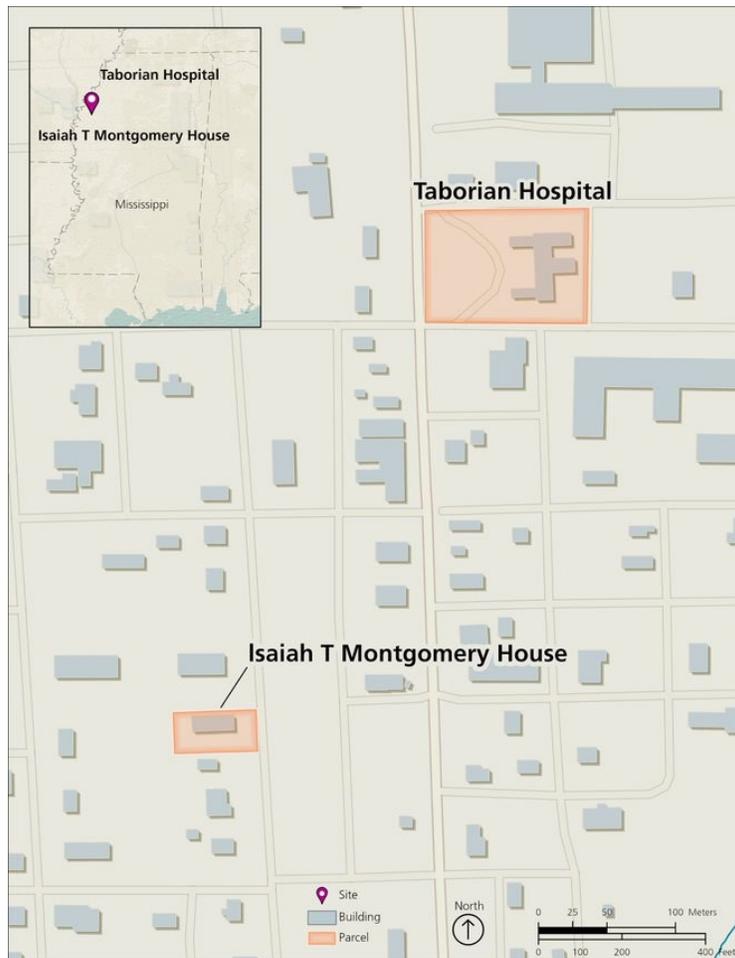
The history of Mound Bayou is discussed in the “Historic Context” section (see the “Mound Bayou” subsection), as well as in the historical description narrative under the Isaiah T. Montgomery House below.

Property Description

Mound Bayou is located in Bolivar County in the Delta region of Mississippi, about 9 miles north of Cleveland, the county’s largest city (see map 5). The town’s geographic core, as identified in its National Register of Historic Places nomination, has a total of 51 buildings and structures that are a mix of residential, commercial, religious, medical, and government buildings. As discussed under the Isaiah T. Montgomery House description, only 34 of these

are contributing to the historic district's period of significance, and of those, only 12 date to the town's early period of prosperity before 1926.

The Mound Bayou Historic District was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on September 11, 2013 (reference #13000735), at the state level of significance under criterion A for associations with African American community development and planning, and under criterion B for association with Isaiah T. Montgomery. The district's period of significance is from 1898 to 1963.



MAP 5. OVERVIEW OF THE TOWN OF MOUND BAYOU, INCLUDING THE LOCATIONS OF THE TABORIAN HOSPITAL AND THE ISAIAH T. MONTGOMERY HOUSE

Taborian Hospital

Historical Description

The Knights and Daughters of Tabor Hospital, also known as the Taborian Hospital, is a building in Mound Bayou, Mississippi, that is associated with Dr. T.R.M. Howard. Dr. Howard was a civil rights activist who rose to national prominence in 1955 for organizing an independent murder investigation into the lynching of Emmett Till and for acting as spokesman for the Till family.

The following narrative expands upon information about Dr. Howard in the “Historic Context” section (see “Organizing for Civil Rights”).

Mound Bayou was an all-Black town founded in 1887 by and for African Americans seeking respite from the oppressive, White-dominated societies of the Reconstruction-era South. Dr. Howard moved there in 1941 to become the chief surgeon at the newly established Taborian Hospital. Considering the oppressive conditions for African Americans in the 1940s, its establishment was revolutionary, since it was one of only a few full-service, state-of-the-art hospitals that served African Americans in Mississippi (Beito and Beito 2009, 47). Dr. Howard had had a prosperous medical practice in Nashville but chose to move to the impoverished, rural Mississippi Delta for the opportunity to combine his medical expertise with faith-based work. He quickly became an influential community leader in and beyond Mississippi. He sponsored appearances by national civil rights leaders and entertainers and drew thousands of attendees to civil rights rallies at his plantation. He raised money for a community recreation center and an eight-unit block of single-family houses with indoor plumbing and electricity, a rarity for Delta residents. His efforts breathed new life into Mound Bayou in the 1940s.

In 1951, Dr. Howard founded the Regional Council of Negro Leadership (RCNL) to encourage voter registration and support for African American business and entrepreneurship in the Delta cities. His measured approach to advocacy was calculated to assuage fears about social and economic change among the White establishment in the Mississippi Delta. A gifted and inspiring leader, Dr. Howard became popular among African Americans at all levels of society and also had the ability to build relationships with influential Whites, including the state’s White establishment. He opened doors for other Black Mississippians interested in the struggle for civil rights, and most significantly, he hired Medgar Evers out of college as a traveling salesman and later appointed him as RCNL program director. From 1952 to 1955, Dr. Howard and the RCNL led the first nonviolent civil rights movement in Mississippi by organizing mass rallies that were attended by tens of thousands of people. The first protest, overseen by Evers, was a boycott campaign of White-owned gas stations that refused to allow Black customers to use its White-only restroom facilities. In 1952, the RCNL convened its first convention, which was held in Mound Bayou and was attended by several thousand African Americans, including US Congressman William Dawson. NAACP attorney Thurgood Marshall spoke at the next convention in 1954. As the RCNL’s leader, Dr. Howard became involved in policy and communications with the Mississippi governor. In 1953, Dr. Howard vocally rejected the state’s efforts to create separate but equal schools through its equalization program, a year before the US Supreme Court’s *Brown v. Board of Education* decision.

Dr. Howard’s advocacy for social justice entered the national stage in 1955 during the trial for the murder of 14-year-old Emmett Till. Through his connection with the NAACP, he became Mamie Till-Mobley’s local contact in the Delta and a central figure in the national media during the trial, appearing frequently in *Jet*, the *Chicago Defender*, the *Pittsburgh Courier*, the *Afro-American*, and the *California Eagle*. During the trial, Black visitors chose to lodge in Mound Bayou, including in Dr. Howard’s own home, because it was safe and close to Sumner, where the trial was held. Dr. Howard provided tight security, with a checkpoint and

round-the-clock armed guards to ensure that no one staying there would be threatened or intimidated. Among those who stayed with him were African American Congressional Representative Charles Diggs, as well as Mamie Till-Mobley herself, whom Dr. Howard personally escorted to and from Sumner via armed caravan.

Based out of Mound Bayou, Dr. Howard, NAACP members, and Black journalists conducted an independent investigation of Emmett Till's murder. Dr. Howard encouraged witnesses to testify by promising to relocate them to Chicago after the trial, and he followed through as promised. After the acquittal of the murderers, Dr. Howard used all of his influence to push hard for the federal government to prosecute them with additional charges, to no avail. But his advocacy continued as he leveraged his new national reputation to reach audiences of thousands in major cities across the country, where he publicly criticized the FBI for failing to address the violence and lynchings in Mississippi. Among the attendees of a speech he gave in Montgomery, Alabama, was Rosa Parks, who four days later refused to give up her seat on a segregated city bus. She pointed to Dr. Howard's description of Emmett Till's lynching as one of her motivations (Beito and Beito 2009, 139).

Property Description

The Taborian Hospital is located at Fisher Avenue and Martin Luther King Drive in Mound Bayou. The brick building is one story with an irregular footprint (see figure 38). The hospital was designed and built by McKissak & McKissak of Nashville, the first African American-owned architectural and engineering firm in the United States. The building stands out in the Mississippi Delta due to its Art Deco architectural style, characterized by its stepped cornice and a semicircular portico overhanging a central entrance at its south elevation. The building was a state-of-the-art facility when it opened to the public on February 12, 1942, with 52 beds and two or three doctors on duty at any given time (Weaver 1996). State-of-the-art features included an x-ray room; sterilizer; incubators; two major operating rooms; and an electrocardiograph, blood bank, and a laboratory (Beito and Beito 2009, 47). The building underwent a significant rehabilitation project starting in 2012. However, in 2021, the building had substantial water damage. In February 2022, the building's interior was observed to be in poor condition due to substantial water damage and mold on all the interior finishes in the north half of the building's interior, which is the portion that was rehabilitated in 2012. The south half of the building's interior is unfinished and remains stripped back to brick walls and steel framing.

The Taborian Hospital was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on August 1, 1996 (reference #96000827), at the local level of significance under criterion A, for its role in health and medicine in the African American community of Mound Bayou. The building is currently in private ownership and is under lease to the City of Mound Bayou.



FIGURE 38. TABORIAN HOSPITAL (JUNE 2019)

Isaiah T. Montgomery House

Historical Description

This Isaiah T. Montgomery House is a single-family dwelling in Mound Bayou, Mississippi. Montgomery founded Mound Bayou in 1887 and was a premier African American civic leader in Mississippi in the 1890s.

The following narrative supplements the discussion of Mound Bayou in the “Historic Context” section (see the “Mound Bayou” subsection).

After cofounding Mound Bayou, Isaiah T. Montgomery served as its first mayor, and in the 1900s, the town thrived under his leadership. The town became economically prosperous and an oasis during the turbulent and oppressive Jim Crow era. By the turn of the 20th century, the biracial activism and reform movements of the Progressive era gave hope to disenfranchised minority groups, though these efforts would ultimately not bear fruit (NPS 2008a). Although Mississippi remained racially segregated and mired in institutional Jim Crow laws and codes, Mound Bayou’s residents prospered. They registered to vote, opened businesses, enjoyed free access to educational and government services, and contributed to what became a thriving small city. In 1903, Charles Banks moved there and opened the Bank of Mound Bayou, which is recognized as the first African American-owned bank in Mississippi (Judd 2013). Booker T. Washington, who frequently visited the town, called Mound Bayou a model of “Negro independence” in the South. Washington once wrote, “Outside of Tuskegee, I think that I can safely say there is no community in the world that I am so deeply interested in as I am in Mound Bayou” (Delta Center for Culture and Learning n.d.). In 1907, at the request of Washington and Isaiah T. Montgomery, President Theodore Roosevelt stopped in Mound Bayou and spoke to the town residents from the train station in an address that was telegraphed nationwide (Hermann 1999, 245). Montgomery and Washington were considered accommodationists, like-minded in their philosophy of finding practical ways to improve conditions for Black Americans, such as through entrepreneurship and education. As the oppression of Jim Crow deepened in Mississippi, Mound Bayou in the 1940s was still one of only a handful of towns in the entire southern United States where Black citizens had equal voting rights and could hold elected office. The town’s significant role as a safe haven for African Americans who came to Mississippi to take

part in the Emmett Till trial will be discussed under the Taborian Hospital resource description below.

Mound Bayou's fortunes waxed and waned over time. The 1920s marked a turning point: cotton prices fell steeply between 1919 and 1922 and this, combined with a major fire in 1926, contributed to a decline in prosperity and population as residents moved north to seek better opportunities during the Great Migration. Furthermore, Isaiah T. Montgomery died in 1924. Only 12 structures from the early period of prosperity, before 1926, survive to this day, one of which is the Isaiah T. Montgomery House. The town experienced another devastating fire in 1941 but nevertheless experienced a period of rejuvenation in the 1940s, helped along by the work of Dr. T.R.M. Howard (see Taborian Hospital, above). At its peak, Mound Bayou had 3 schools, 40 businesses, 6 churches, a train depot, 3 cotton gins, a cottonseed oil mill, a Carnegie library, a Farmers Cooperative and Mercantile company, and a hospital. Most of these structures and businesses are no longer extant (Judd 2013).

Beyond his founding of Mound Bayou, Montgomery's pragmatism and accommodationist philosophy has left a complicated legacy. In 1890, he served as the only African American delegate in the state's constitutional convention, during which he supported the exclusion of illiterate voters, which included nearly two-thirds of Black voters at that time. He subsequently worked to maintain a good relationship with White Mississippians for the purpose of protecting Mound Bayou as racial tensions increased. Montgomery feared that moves to achieve racial equality too quickly could jeopardize the success of the town. For these strategies he received a mixture of approval and criticism in his own day, and he remains controversial now. Neil R. McMillen, history professor emeritus at University of Southern Mississippi, has argued that Montgomery's legacy must be considered in the context of its own time. African American voters were already disenfranchised in practice through electoral fraud, economic coercion, and physical violence and intimidation, and the situation seemed unlikely to improve in the foreseeable future. By surrendering the essentially symbolic right to vote on behalf of his fellow African Americans, Montgomery hoped to gain the peace, security, and economic freedom in Mound Bayou that would be necessary for them to advance themselves in preparation for rejoining the body politic when the time was right. Montgomery's faith in the good intentions of the White citizens of Mississippi may have proved misguided, McMillen argues, but to suggest that Montgomery was wrong to support trading the rights of citizenship for physical and economic security is to suggest that he had other realistic options (McMillen 2007). Despite Montgomery's complicated legacy, Mound Bayou survives to this day as a testament to Black agency and ingenuity in creating their own space for political, social, and economic freedom in the oppressive context of the Jim Crow South.

Property Description

The Isaiah T. Montgomery House is located at 302 South West Main Street in Mound Bayou, Mississippi. Built in 1919, this red brick structure is irregular in plan and consists of two stories over a full above-grade basement (see figure 39). The building features a hipped roof and gables over projections. The cornice is of simple treatment, consisting of frieze board and extended eaves board. The front of the building features a spacious porch with square Doric columns resting on brick piers extending to grade, which is reached by a wide flight of

masonry steps. The building's windows are single light, double-hung wooden sash, and its double front doors have a transom that spans the full width of the opening (Graves 1976). The residence stands apart from the other structures on West Main Street facing the former train line. The building is currently in poor condition because of the deterioration of exterior and interior materials and finishes due to vacancy and neglect.

The Isaiah T. Montgomery House was designated a National Historic Landmark and listed in the National Register of Historic Places (reference #76001092) on May 11, 1976, for its association with African American civic leader Isaiah T. Montgomery and for its association with post-Reconstruction African American community planning and settlement (Graves 1976). The building is currently in private ownership by a nonprofit organization.



FIGURE 39. ISAIAH T. MONTGOMERY HOUSE (FEBRUARY 2022)

Lyceum – The Circle Historic District, University of Mississippi, Oxford, Mississippi

Historical Description

The 1954 and 1955 *Brown v. Board of Education* decisions of the US Supreme Court did little to change the entrenched segregation of public schools in Mississippi. State officials employed procedural technicalities, delay tactics, and encouraged violence to discourage Black students from attempting to enroll in “White” universities. In the 1950s, a small number of African American students, including Medgar Evers, had applied for admittance to the University of Mississippi, but to no avail. In 1960, James Meredith, a US Air Force veteran, became determined to enroll at the University of Mississippi with legal support from the NAACP. The university delayed his application, and Meredith turned to the courts. The US District Court, under Judge Sidney Mize, a segregationist, blocked him. Meredith appealed to the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals, and in a shocking judicial grudge match, different circuit court judges repeatedly vacated each other's court orders until US Supreme Court Justice Hugo Black weighed in and found in Meredith's favor (Ford 2007).

Outside of the courts, a massive campaign of White resistance to Meredith's efforts had been building, led by Mississippi Governor Ross Barnett and all three branches of state government. Meredith was arrested for dubious causes on the day of his enrollment, while the state legislature passed a bill aimed at disqualifying his admission. At this point, US Attorney General Robert Kennedy became directly involved, assigning federal marshals to guard Meredith and urging Governor Barnett to comply with the court order. Barnett responded by personally barring Meredith's attempts to enter the registrar building between September 20 and 27, 1962. On September 30, shortly after midnight, President Kennedy directed Mississippi state officials to comply with the court orders, and he authorized the Department of Defense to mobilize US Army and National Guard units to enforce those orders. A task force of active-duty US Army units quickly established a staging area in a national forest not far from Oxford (Ford 2007, Scheips 2005).

On September 30, James Meredith arrived on campus under escort to be enrolled the following morning. Governor Barnett resumed his inflammatory campaign and urged White citizens to resist the "oppressive power of the United States." By early evening, a mob of protestors had gathered in the quad, known as The Circle, adjacent to the Lyceum building. The crowd soon grew to 2,000 people and became increasingly aggressive. Some set fire to federal trucks while others assaulted news reporters. As night fell the mob began attacking with metal pipes, rocks, bricks, and bottles, some filled with gasoline. Federal marshals fired tear gas into the crowd, which withdrew but soon returned armed with guns, knives, and clubs, while some waved Confederate flags. Casualties mounted, a journalist and a bystander were killed, and the Lyceum was converted into a makeshift field hospital for hundreds of injured people. The Justice Department finally requested military support, and the Mississippi National Guard arrived a few hours later to what a unit commander described as a hellish scene of burning vehicles, unmoving people, and debris. Insurgent gunmen took rooftop positions and shot into the crowd, killing an onlooker. United States Army and National Guard units finally arrived in force, and although the fighting continued for another 10 hours and pockets of resistance remained, by 6:15 a.m., the US Army officer in charge declared the campus secured.

Less than two hours later, James Meredith, who had been unaware of the violence until he was escorted to the Lyceum that morning, signed the documents that officially made him a member of the student body. The scenes of carnage during the riot were documented and photographed by *Life* magazine, *The New York Times*, *Newsweek*, and other national publications (Ford 2007). The "Battle of Oxford" was declared the most violent and bloodiest event involving school desegregation in the history of the United States. According to the Office of the Chief of Military History, the official count of US Army and National Guard soldiers alerted, deployed, and committed was 30,656—at that time, possibly the largest military buildup for a single disturbance to date (Scheips 2005).

Property Description

Lyceum – The Circle Historic District is located approximately at the center of the University of Mississippi ("Ole Miss") campus in Oxford, Mississippi. The Circle is an oval-shaped, designed landscape covering 3.5 acres (see figure 40). The campus has mature oaks, several magnolias, flower beds, and an expansive grassy lawn. A network of footpaths radiates

outward from a flagpole at its center. At its outer edge is a one-way, single-lane vehicular roadway named University Circle. At the east side of The Circle stands a 1906 (approximate) memorial, a 35-foot-high square column topped with a statue of a Confederate soldier standing with a rifle at his side. Around the perimeter of The Circle are eight academic buildings: the Lyceum (1848), the Croft Institute for International Studies (also known as the “Y” Building, 1953), the Old Chemistry Building (1923), Carrier Hall (1954), Shoemaker Hall (1962), Ventress Hall (1889), Bryant Hall (1911), and Peabody Hall (1913). The Lyceum holds a prominent position on campus as one of its oldest buildings and for its Greek revival architectural style, including an Ionic columned portico that faces The Circle. All of these buildings and landscape features have been identified as contributing resources of Lyceum – The Circle Historic District. The district is in good condition and is currently owned by the University of Mississippi. The district continues to serve as a visual and physical gathering point for the university’s students and faculty.

Lyceum – The Circle Historic District was designated a National Historic Landmark on October 6, 2008, and was listed in the National Register of Historic Places (reference #08001092) on the same day for its association with racial desegregation of public education, in particular as representative of a decisive turning point in the federal government’s enforcement of the US Supreme Court’s 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* decision and the decline of violent, massive Southern resistance to school desegregation.



FIGURE 40. LYCEUM – THE CIRCLE HISTORIC DISTRICT (JUNE 2019)

Former Medical Office of Dr. Gilbert Mason, Sr., Biloxi, Mississippi

Historical Description

The following narrative supplements the discussion of wade-ins in the “Historic Context” section (see “Nonviolent Direct Action”).

Dr. Gilbert Mason, Sr., was an organizer and leader of wade-in protests at beaches across Biloxi, as part of a broader effort to desegregate beaches and other recreational spaces in coastal states across the United States. Born in Mississippi, Dr. Mason was educated in the

North, where he grew accustomed to integrated public spaces (Mason and Smith 2000, 33; Pitt 2010). Dr. Mason returned to Mississippi in 1955 with a medical degree and the conviction that “physicians were not just healers but teachers who should become part of their community” and serve as a source of social uplift (Mason and Smith 2000, 33). Dr. Mason joined various professional and civic organizations in support of the African American community and documented the separate and unequal accommodations that pervaded medical facilities. “With Jim Crow medicine or Jim Crow anything,” he wrote, “you made your way daily through a maze of indignities, small and large” (Mason and Smith 2000, 37, 38, 42).

Biloxi’s beaches comprise a sandy, 26-mile stretch along the coast. They were created by the state in the late 1940s to shore up seawall erosion using public taxes and federal funding. Local officials and private citizens confined Black citizen’s beach use to a couple of small, designated areas so that the beaches were effectively “whites-only,” an arrangement enforced through intimidation in which local law enforcement was complicit. On May 14, 1959, Dr. Mason and eight other African Americans, including five children, organized a walk onto the beach along US 90 in the vicinity of Gill Avenue. This was the first of what came to be called a “wade-in” demonstration. Police escorted the demonstrators off the beach, but no arrests were made because legally the beach was not White-only. The next day, Dr. Mason and colleagues Dr. Felix Dunn and Knox Walker formed the Harrison County Civic Action Committee to develop a legal case for unrestricted access to public beaches. Biloxi’s *The Daily Herald* ran a front-page article about the effort, after which Dr. Mason and Dr. Dunn began receiving death threats (Mason and Smith 2000, 59). When Harrison County took no action on their petition, Dr. Mason and his colleagues adjusted their strategy: they would stage protests that would result in arrests that would inevitably be upheld in local courts but that could then be appealed up the chain to the US Supreme Court (Mason and Smith 2000, 66–67).

Dr. Mason planned a second wade-in near the Biloxi lighthouse but on April 17, 1960, found himself the only participant. He was arrested and tried in municipal court the next day. The Black community rallied behind his cause, and Dr. Mason organized another wade-in the following Sunday, April 24, which was attended by 125 protestors who had been trained in nonviolent, passive resistance. An armed mob of White counter-protesters arrived and attacked while local police stood by before eventually arresting the demonstrators. The violence spread from the beaches into the Black community on Main and Division Streets and continued into the next day. Eight African Americans and two white people were shot, and Dr. Mason’s office was firebombed.

The state courts and the federal district judge in Biloxi, Sydney C. Mize, a staunch segregationist, delayed action on behalf of the demonstrators (Mason and Smith 2000, 84–86). Three years passed before another landmark wade-in occurred on June 24, 1963. Seventy-five people walked onto the beach near the Biloxi lighthouse. The mayor and two commissioners attended, and police protected the demonstrators and patrolled the Black neighborhoods to prevent rioting. The Federal Bureau of Investigation deployed agents only to observe and document the event. The demonstrators were verbally abused and threatened, but there was no rioting. Eventually, 43 demonstrators were arrested and found guilty of

trespassing. The arrests allowed the NAACP legal team to file appeals up through the court system until finally, in August 1968, the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals reversed the lower court's ruling and opened the beaches of Biloxi to all members of the public, including African Americans (Mason and Smith 2000, 131–139).

Property Description

The home and medical office where Dr. Gilbert Mason, Sr. organized the Biloxi wade-in demonstrations are no longer extant. The former medical office of Dr. Gilbert Mason, Sr., built three years after the final wade-in, was identified in the study legislation to represent Dr. Mason's civil rights activism.

The Dr. Gilbert R. Mason, Sr. medical office is located at 670 Division Street in Biloxi, Mississippi and is a one-story, brick-veneer, commercial office building (see figure 41). This building was specifically identified in the congressional legislation for this special resource study. Dr. Mason had it built in 1966 as a new, state-of-the-art facility to replace his previous office next door. The building's design features International-style architectural influences, which are evident in the strong, unembellished horizontal lines in form of its flat roof and wide fascia and its four-part metal ribbon window that spans most of the façade (Blokker 2017). The building's narrow lot is bound by a chain-link fence, and a driveway leading to a small parking area in the rear runs along its left side. The building is on the north side of Division Street, a wide thoroughfare bordered by sidewalks and lined with a mix of commercial, religious, and residential structures. Dr. Mason's office is set back from the street, approximately 30 feet, and vacant lots sit on either side. Across the street is John Henry Beck Park. The building was rehabilitated in 2018 and its exterior and interior appear much as they did in 1966, as does its setting along Division Street, although several buildings in the vicinity have been removed (Blokker 2017). At the time of the 2018 site visit, the building was in private ownership.

The Dr. Gilbert R. Mason, Sr. medical office was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on September 28, 2017 (reference #100001679), at the state level of significance under criterion B for its association with physician and civil rights leader, Dr. Gilbert R. Mason, Sr. and under criterion A for its association with medicine and with civil rights history in Mississippi. A historical marker has been established in front of the building.



FIGURE 41. FORMER OFFICE OF DR. GILBERT MASON, SR. (FEBRUARY 2018)

Tougaloo College, Jackson, Mississippi

Historical Description

The following narrative expands upon the brief discussion of Tougaloo College in the “Historic Context” section (see “Reconstruction in Mississippi”).

Tougaloo College is a private, historically Black liberal arts school founded in 1869. At first, its mission was to provide basic primary and secondary education to recently freed African American students born into slavery and to train them as teachers. By the 1930s, it was an accredited four-year liberal arts college and the first African American college in Mississippi, and in the 1950s, it phased out its primary and secondary schools to focus solely on a college-level curriculum. By the start of the modern civil rights movement, Tougaloo College had gained a national reputation.

Tougaloo College immediately asserted a progressive approach to concepts of social justice. The college’s first five presidents were abolitionists. In 1913, the college published an anti-lynching pamphlet (Bounds 2019). In the 1930s, faculty at Tougaloo College and Millsaps College organized the Intercollegiate Council in an effort to exchange ideas, develop common understanding, and establish a formal relationship between White and Black students. The Social Science Forums hosted by the college starting in 1952 continued to foster interracial relationships. The forums brought Black and White intellectuals and progressive Jacksonians together to freely discuss political issues, strategize challenges to the segregationist system in Mississippi, and facilitate and mobilize the state’s civil rights movement. The forums continued until 1964. Tougaloo’s academic independence and growing influence infuriated white segregationists, especially after the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling (Williamson 2004). Part of the college’s independence stemmed from the fact that it had long been deprived of state funding, supporting itself through church donations, philanthropic foundations, and tuition. The State of Mississippi could not expel students or fire faculty, so the college freely and frequently organized and participated in

protests and other forms of civil rights activism. Among other actions, the campus played an important role in the 1967 “March Against Fear.” That same year, the college president, Dr. Adam Beittel, was forced out through the actions of the Mississippi State Sovereignty Commission, a white supremacist organization created in reaction to the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling. Dr. Beittel’s leadership, connections, and skill in administration had done much to foster and protect the atmosphere of activism on the campus, and with his departure, the college’s engagement in civil rights activism declined.

Property Description

Tougaloo College is in the historic Tougaloo community, located within the city limits of Jackson but 10 miles north of the city’s downtown. The Tougaloo College National Register Historic District consists of 11 buildings located at the heart of the campus, generally arranged around a central lawn (see figure 42). Ten buildings survive from the college’s civil rights period between 1952 and 1966, 9 of which are contributing to the National Register Historic District (Wise 1998). One building, Beard Hall (built 1898), is listed as contributing to the historic district but was demolished in 1999 and replaced with the Bennie G. Thompson Academic and Civil Rights Research Center in 2011.

Tougaloo College was listed in the National Register of Historic Places (reference #98001109) on August 31, 1998, at the state level of significance under criterion A for its role in the civil rights movement and criterion C for the architectural character of several of its buildings, including fine examples of Italianate, Neoclassical, and Queen Anne-style architecture. Its period of significance is approximately 1848 to 1967 (Wise 1998).



FIGURE 42. TOUGALOO COLLEGE (JUNE 2019)

Lanier High School, Jackson, Mississippi

Historical Description

The following narrative expands upon the brief discussion of Lanier High School in the “Historic Context” section (see “Freedom Rides”).

Lanier High School was Jackson’s first and oldest high school specifically for African American students. Originally built in 1925, a new Lanier High School was constructed in 1954 in a predominantly Black residential area. The curriculum of the high school was closely aligned with Tougaloo College in Jackson, which helped to ensure success for Lanier students enrolled in college preparation courses, and the high school earned a distinguished national reputation (Bolton 2000). As the modern civil rights movement in Mississippi gained momentum, Lanier students joined local demonstrations. On May 27, 1963, three students from Tougaloo College took part in a sit-in at a segregated lunch counter at a Woolworth store in downtown Jackson. They were attacked and beaten by White onlookers and police officers, an event captured by local media, which sparked massive protests. The protests were joined by African American high school students. As many as 500 Lanier students assembled outside their school, singing freedom songs while they marched around the building. School officials called the police who, upon arriving, released dogs onto the crowd and beat the students and some parents. Protests escalated the next day when hundreds of students, including some from Lanier High School, marched on Capitol Street. Again, the police responded by beating the protestors. Approximately 450 students were arrested and transported to the state fairground in Jackson via garbage trucks, where a temporary prison was established. Medgar Evers, Mississippi NAACP field secretary, contacted the Department of Justice to report the beatings and arrests, but it declined to take the case. As a result of the student walkouts at Lanier and other schools, as well as a violent clash with police after the murder of Medgar Evers shortly thereafter, the NAACP shifted its focus in Jackson from mass protests and direct action to legal challenges and voter registration efforts (Palmer, Baughn, Gatlin 2014).

Property Description

The school campus consists of two large, two-story buildings separated by a parking lot and heating and cooling plant (see figure 43). The Modernist design emphasizes horizontality and incorporates specialized spaces, such as laboratories and libraries. Applied decorative treatments are mostly absent, since the materials and construction techniques are meant to be the ornament. The primary façade extends along an east-west axis, forming the base of a rough U-shaped plan. In 1957, an addition was made to the cafeteria, and in 1965, a new gymnasium with state-of-the-art athletic quarters and concession stand was added to the campus and connected to the main building with an enclosed hallway. The gymnasium has since been converted into classrooms. In 1971, a Reserve Officer Training Corps building and body shop were constructed behind the administration building. The school’s windows were replaced in 2014 with thicker panes, which has caused sagging of the steel framing around the windows (Palmer, Baughn, Gatlin 2014).

Lanier High School was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on September 10, 2014 (reference #14000567), at the local level of significance under criterion A for

associations with education for African Americans, as a representation of “separate but equal” during the equalization era, and as the site of a significant civil rights march in 1963 and under criterion C as a strong local example of Modernist design (Palmer, Baughn, Gatlin 2014).



FIGURE 43. LANIER HIGH SCHOOL (JUNE 2019)

March Against Fear, Statewide, Mississippi

Historical Description

The history of this event is discussed in the “Historic Context” section (see “The March Against Fear”).

Property Description

The March Against Fear is a linear resource that follows the 220-mile route taken by the marchers from June 4 to June 26, 1966. Most of the route is within a public road right-of-way. At times, the march branched and so occurred in multiple locations. Associated sites off the roadway that are important to the March Against Fear route include, but are not limited to, the following:

- **Hernando site, Mississippi:** The location where James Meredith was shot and injured (see figure 44).
- **Grenada, Mississippi, Courthouse Square:** The location where the marchers gathered for a voter registration rally and placed an American flag on a Confederacy Memorial statue.
- **Philadelphia, Mississippi:** As an associated event, this site is where Martin Luther King, Jr., Reverend Robert Abernathy of the Southern Christian Leadership

Conference, and a small group of marchers went east to Philadelphia, Mississippi, to commemorate the second anniversary of the June 21, 1964, murder of three COFO workers, James Chaney, Andrew Goodman, and Michael Schwerner.

- **Greenwood, Mississippi, Broad Street Park:** The locations where Stokely Carmichael of SNCC led assembled marchers in the “Black Power” chant.
- **Canton, Mississippi, Holy Child Jesus school gymnasium:** The area where the marchers camped after they were denied use of the grounds of the public school.
- **Jackson, Mississippi, grounds of the state capitol building:** The area where the final rally of 15,000 participants convened for the end of the march.



FIGURE 44. MARCH AGAINST FEAR, HERNANDO SITE (JUNE 2019)

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CHAPTER 3: EVALUATION OF STUDY AREAS FOR INCLUSION IN THE NATIONAL PARK SYSTEM

This chapter presents the evaluation of the four criteria that must be met for a study area to be considered for designation as a national park unit. The application of these criteria follows agency and legislated guidance outlined in section 1.3 (Criteria for Inclusion) of NPS *Management Policies 2006*, as well as the National Park System New Areas Studies Act (title III of the National Parks Omnibus Management Act of 1998, PL 105-391; 54 USC 100507). For a study area to be considered for designation as a potential new unit of the national park system, it must fully meet the following four criteria for evaluation:

- possess nationally significant resources,
- be a suitable addition to the system,
- be a feasible addition to the system, and
- require direct NPS management or administration instead of alternative protection by other agencies or the private sector

These four criteria are analyzed sequentially, and several pathways exist for concluding the study process based on individual criteria findings. The study process may be truncated if a negative finding is made for any one of these criteria. The findings presented in this chapter serve as the basis for a formal recommendation from the Secretary of the Interior to Congress as to whether or not the study area should be designated as a new unit, or units, of the national park system. A summary of these findings can be found at the end of this chapter.

EVALUATION OF NATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE

Criteria for Establishing National Significance

National Park Service *Management Policies 2006*, section 1.3.1, directs that proposed additions to the national park system must possess significance at the national level. For cultural resources, national significance is evaluated by applying the National Historic Landmark (NHL) nomination criteria contained in 36 CFR Part 65.5.

The quality of national significance can be ascribed to districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that possess exceptional value or quality in illustrating or interpreting the natural or cultural themes of our nation's heritage. National Park Service *Management Policies 2006* provides that a resource will be considered nationally significant if it meets the following four criteria:

- It is an outstanding example of a particular type of resource.
- It possesses exceptional value or quality in illustrating or interpreting the natural or cultural themes of our nation's heritage.

- It offers superlative opportunities for public enjoyment or scientific study.
- It retains a high degree of integrity as a true, accurate, and relatively unspoiled example of the resource.

In addition to the four standards, nationally significant cultural resources must also satisfy at least one of the six following National Historic Landmark criteria:³³

- **Criterion 1:** that are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to, and are identified with, or that outstandingly represent, the broad national patterns of United States history and from which an understanding and appreciation of the patterns may be gained; or
- **Criterion 2:** that are associated importantly with the lives of persons nationally significant in the history of the United States; or
- **Criterion 3:** that represent some great idea or ideals of the American people; or
- **Criterion 4:** that embody the distinguishing characteristics or an architectural type specimen exceptionally valuable for the study of a period, style, or method of construction, or represent a significant, distinct, and exceptional entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
- **Criterion 5:** that are composed of integral parts of the environment not sufficiently significant by reason of historical association or artistic merit to warrant individual recognition but collectively compose an entity or exceptional historic or artistic significance, or outstandingly commemorate or illustrate a way of life or culture; or
- **Criterion 6:** that have yielded or may be likely to yield information of major scientific importance by revealing new cultures, or by shedding light upon periods of occupation of large areas of the United States. Such sites are those which have yielded, or which may reasonably be expected to yield, data affecting theories, concepts, and ideas to a major degree.

Evaluations of National Significance

The study legislation directs the National Park Service to conduct a study of “significant civil rights sites in the State of Mississippi”; therefore, this topic is the primary focus of this study’s analysis and findings. As explained in chapter 1, an extensive process of collecting public input and consulting with both NPS and external subject matter experts on the topic of civil rights history, nationally and within Mississippi, narrowed an initial list of over 220 study sites down to the resources, or groups of resources, that are described in chapter 2.

Those resources are evaluated for national significance in this section using NHL criteria. The use of the NHL criteria to determine national significance is the only link between the special resource study process and the NHL program regulations. Usage of these criteria does

33. National Park Service, National Register of Historic Places, *National Register Bulletin: How to Prepare National Historic Landmark Nominations*, <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nationalhistoriclandmarks/eligibility.htm>.

not recommend or confer landmark designation. All properties would need to undergo a separate NHL designation process governed by NHL program regulations. This chapter concludes with a summary of the study's findings for SRS Criterion 1 – National Significance.

Emmett Till Sites

The 11 sites described in chapter 2 as the “Emmett Till sites” are collectively analyzed here as a discontinuous historic district, as defined in National Register Bulletin 16a. For ease of reference, the sites will continue to be referred to as the “Emmett Till sites” throughout this document.

The Emmett Till sites are evaluated here under NHL criterion 1. The Scholars Meeting Group, who advised the African American National Historic Landmarks Assessment Study (NPS 2008b, 8–9), specifically named the lynching of Emmett Till as an event representative of violence during the 1950s and 1960s civil rights movement that could speak to the theme of Racial Intimidation and Violence, a theme underrepresented among existing National Historic Landmarks. The Till lynching is a particularly brutal example of the use of such violence to enforce social and political systems of white supremacy and one that had national repercussions. The environment of these sites, especially of the sites in Glendora, is emblematic of why racial discrimination and violence was so routine and extreme in Mississippi. For much of the state's history, White residents were long outnumbered by Black residents, whose labors were responsible for much of the state's economic prosperity. For the White power structure, this disparity seemed a precarious position and a threat, and the extremes of Mississippi's racially oppressive regime can be seen as a response to that. The rural, agricultural landscape in the Mississippi Delta represents this context—the oppressive power of the White establishment over Black farm workers, which allowed someone like J.W. Milam to control workers' movements, including their involvement in Emmett Till's murder. This landscape represents the context that allowed Bryant and Milam to commit murder with impunity.

Although a horror and a trauma for African American communities in Mississippi, lynching and other forms of racial terror were often ignored in plain sight by White citizens and the media. Therefore, it is significant that the lynching of Till was seen in its own time as particularly heinous, even by White communities. This reaction was due to Till's young age, the innocuous nature of his alleged transgression, the brutality of his torture and murder, and the nationwide publicity it garnered. Although one of thousands in the South, the lynching of Emmett Till and the impunity enjoyed by his murderers stood out. The singular importance of this one particular crime in the long history of racially motivated murder in the South is that it became widely known outside of the South and shocked White Americans into action. The scholarly consensus is that the national reporting of Emmett Till's lynching and the shock and anger that published images of a teenager's mutilated body inspired was a major contributor to the modern civil rights movement across America, during the period defined in the NPS Civil Rights Framework as 1954–1964 (Anderson 2015; NPS 2008a; Tell 2019, 129). Till's lynching exploded into a national and international story, evoking outcries of anger and sympathy. Many Americans reacted with horror to the murder and trial proceedings, and young African Americans, many of whom would take up the cause of civil rights, saw themselves in Till and realized that his fate could be theirs. A so-called “Emmett

Till Generation” of people who were teenagers or young adults in 1955 emerged, citing Till’s lynching as a terrible force that compelled them to act. Such individuals included Rosa Parks; Martin Luther King, Jr.; Medgar and Myrlie Evers; and US Representative John Lewis. In the aftermath of the trial, growing public demand for federal protection of civil rights led to the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1957. Two generations later, Emmett Till is still referenced in the titles of acts of Congress: In 2008, Congress passed, and the President signed, the Emmett Till Unsolved Civil Rights Crime Act.³⁴ On March 29, 2022, the 117th Congress (2021–2022) enacted new legislation establishing that an offense involving lynching is a hate crime act. This law is called the Emmett Till Antilynching Act.³⁵

All 11 sites described in chapter 2, under “Emmett Till Sites,” represent critical moments or fundamental aspects of this event. The role of each site is highlighted in the course of the historical background narrative or is noted in its individual resource description. Together, the sites represent the full scope of the event. Therefore, all 11 sites are determined to be contributing to a discontinuous Emmett Till historic district.

Integrity

Since there is scholarly consensus on the national impact of the Till case, the greater challenge of this evaluation has been identifying the individual sites that represent this national significance in ways that also meet the high standard of integrity outlined by NHL criteria, as required by special resource studies. The current conditions of each of the 11 Emmett Till sites are described in chapter 2. Here, the relationship between condition and historical integrity will be assessed for each site.

All that remains of **Bryant’s Grocery Store** is a portion of the building’s brick shell. The building is a ruin that is no longer recognizable as a grocery store (MDAH 2017). However, the site’s environment remains defined by a rural, undeveloped, agricultural character that is essentially unchanged from its character in 1955. Additionally, this is the location of the innocuous transgression that set off the whole horrible event, which lends the ruin a “transcendent importance in the nation’s history” (36 CFR 65.4(b)(3)). The site retains sufficient integrity of location, setting, association, feeling, and, in part, materials, so that, when combined with its transcendent importance, it qualifies under NHL exception 3 for buildings no longer standing. Bryant’s Grocery Store therefore retains sufficient integrity to contribute to the historic district.

The **Moses Wright Home** site in Money was largely destroyed by a tornado in 1971: the home is no longer extant, although parts of the site, including at least one outbuilding, remain intact (Tell 2019, 35). The site remains situated in farmed cotton fields within a setting defined by a rural, undeveloped, agricultural character, much as it did in 1955. Like the Bryant Grocery Store, Moses Wright’s home was central to the event’s narrative as the location of Till’s abduction, lending it a transcendent importance. The site retains sufficient integrity of location, setting, association, and feeling so that, when combined with its transcendent importance, it qualifies under NHL exception 3 for buildings no longer

34. Public Law 110-344 (10/07/2008). Available online, <https://www.congress.gov/bill/110th-congress/house-bill/923>.

35. Public Law 117-107 (03/29/2022). Available online, <https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/house-bill/55>.

standing. The Moses Wright's Home site therefore retains sufficient integrity to contribute to the historic district.

The **East Money Church of God in Christ Cemetery** site is cleared of vegetation so that the grave markers are visible, and the rural and undeveloped character of its surrounding environment appears much as it did in 1955. Although its associated church is in ruins, this historic landscape nevertheless retains integrity of location, setting, design, association, and feeling. The East Money Church of God in Christ Cemetery site is contributing to the historic district.

The **Cotton Gin** site in Glendora has undergone few alternations. The site appears much as it did in 1955, and therefore retains integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. This structure is adjacent to the J.W. Milam Home site, and its aspects of feeling and association extend to its rural, agricultural landscape. The cotton gin is contributing to the proposed historic district.

The **J.W. Milam Home** site is an open field: the home and its outbuildings are no longer extant, but the site's significant rural, agricultural setting in Glendora is intact (as discussed in chapter 2). The site therefore retains sufficient integrity of location, setting, association, and feeling so that, when combined with its transcendent importance to the Emmett Till narrative, it qualifies under NHL exception 3 for buildings no longer standing. The J.W. Milam Home site is contributing to the historic district.

The **King's Place Juke Joint** site in Glendora is an open landscape where the juke joint once stood. This site is adjacent to the J.W. Milam Home site and its significant rural, agricultural setting in Glendora is intact. The site therefore retains sufficient integrity of location, setting, association, and feeling so that, when combined with its transcendent importance to the Emmett Till narrative, it qualifies under NHL exception 3 for buildings no longer standing. The King's Place Juke Joint site is contributing to the historic district.

The **Graball Landing River** site in Glendora is located along the Tallahatchie Riverbank in the general area of where Emmett Till's body was found. The site's historic character as a riparian area in the midst of rural farmland is intact, and so it retains integrity of location, setting, association, and feeling. Graball Landing River site is contributing to the historic district.

The **Seed Barn** site in Drew remains in use as an ancillary outbuilding/barn. The structure's overall design is intact and the exterior alterations, described in chapter 2, used in-kind materials and appear to be reversible. The site's historic setting is largely unchanged: an analysis of aerial imagery from 1956 and 2018 shows the today, just as historically, the property is isolated and surrounded by farmland with few nearby structures (NETR n.d.). Although the property is no longer a working farm, the historic patterns of spatial organization and circulation networks, including the county road, largely remain intact. Therefore, the barn and its surrounding landscape could be restored more fully to their 1955 appearance. More significantly, the barn's interior, where Till was murdered, appears to be unchanged and conveys a high degree of association with the crime. The barn retains sufficient integrity of location, setting, materials, workmanship, association, and feeling to convey its historic character and is contributing to the historic district.

The **Tutwiler Funeral Home** site is an open site where the funeral home once stood. Although the historic structure has been demolished, the site, where it stood, retains sufficient integrity of location, setting, association, and feeling along Tutwiler’s primarily thoroughfare so that, when combined with its transcendent importance to the Till narrative, it qualifies under NHL exception 3 for buildings no longer standing. The Tutwiler Funeral Home site therefore retains sufficient integrity and is contributing to the historic district.

The **Tallahatchie County Jail** in Charleston appears to have undergone few exterior alterations and appears much as it did in 1955. Therefore, the exterior retains integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. The building’s interior was not available for inspection. The Tallahatchie County Jail is contributing to the historic district.

The **Tallahatchie County Courthouse and Sumner Square** retain a high degree of integrity to its 1955 appearance, and an ongoing restoration project is also returning key interior spaces to their historic appearance at the time of the trial. Historical research and photo comparisons, combined with on-site reconnaissance, find that the Tallahatchie County Courthouse and Sumner Square landscape is largely unchanged and retains a high degree of integrity of location, setting, association, and feeling and is contributing to the historic district.

Conclusion: Summary of National Significance Findings

The 11 sites analyzed here comprise an Emmett Till discontinuous historic district that is determined to be nationally significant under NHL criterion 1 for its association with 14-year-old Emmett Till’s lynching in 1955, an event that stood out in its own time as particularly heinous, despite the almost routine nature of lynching in Mississippi. National and international media coverage of the trial of the murderers, who were acquitted, drew widespread condemnation, even among White Americans, and inspired a generation of Black activists—a self-described “Emmett Till generation”—who became leaders of the civil rights movement of the 1960s. The legacy of Emmett Till continues to the present day—for example, when lynching was finally made a federal crime in 2022 through the Emmett Till Antilynching Act. The 11 constituent sites retain sufficient integrity to convey their historical significance.

1964 Freedom Summer Sites

The seven sites described in chapter 2 as the “1964 Freedom Summer sites” are collectively analyzed here as a discontinuous historic district, as defined in National Register Bulletin 16a. For ease of reference, these sites will continue to be referred to as the “1964 Freedom Summer sites” throughout this document.

The 1964 Freedom Summer sites are evaluated here under NHL criterion 1. While racial oppression was pervasive throughout the southern United States in the mid-1960s, it was most entrenched and violent in Mississippi. In the face of massive resistance and violence, the Council of Federated Organizations (COFO) trained its volunteers in nonviolent protest and nonviolent resistance, a key element to the movement, since Black Americans and their allies would be judged by a different standard than their White antagonists. The Freedom

Summer was expected to gain national attention, and any show of aggression on the part of the volunteers could alienate White Americans outside of the South. Unfortunately, when the movement did gain national attention, it was for the reason that organizer Bob Moses had predicted, though dreaded: a murder occurred, and White volunteers were among the victims.

In the mid-1960s, the brutal murders of James Chaney, Andrew Goodman, and Michael Schwerner trained national attention on the civil rights movement. Author Nicolaus Mills, professor of American studies at Sarah Lawrence College and author of *Like a Holy Crusade: Mississippi 1964—The Turning of the Civil Rights Movement in America* described why:

At work were three factors—the federal government’s decision to intervene rather than stay on the sidelines, the refusal of Freedom Summer leaders to call for retaliation against white Mississippians, and the shared national outrage over the three deaths. (Mills 2016)

The aftermath of the murders had national implications for public awareness and federal intervention. First, journalists from national syndicates flocked to the Neshoba County Courthouse lawn at the center of the square and reported on the missing volunteers, the discovery of their remains in an earthen dam, and the proceedings of the subsequent murder trial. At each step a national audience learned, to their horror, the extreme violence of white supremacy in Mississippi. The barrage of national and international condemnation and outrage based on the new reports changed the way Americans viewed the civil rights struggle for African Americans living in the Deep South and further solidified public support for the Civil Rights and Voting Rights Acts in Congress (Baughn 2005).

Importantly, COFO took the high ground. The Freedom Summer movement continued to push for voting rights peacefully and nonviolently in the face of extreme violence and murder from white supremacists. Their message remained powerful and persuasive: Black Mississippians were just trying to exercise their legal rights as citizens. The uproar over the murders and the refusal of Freedom Summer leaders to call for retaliation against White Mississippians sustained the sympathy and support of White Americans across the nation and proved to local White elites that violent resistance was counterproductive.

Finally, national outrage over the Freedom Summer murders pressured the federal government to directly intervene, whereas previously the FBI, for example, had been reticent to engage in civil rights issues. President Lyndon B. Johnson ordered the FBI to lead an investigation, and FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover personally oversaw the establishment of a field office in Meridian (Cagin and Dray 2006, 368–371). The subsequent investigation led agents to the bodies of the victims, led to apprehension of the killers in 1967, and ultimately contributed to the trial outcome in which 7 of 13 defendants were found guilty of violating Chaney’s, Goodman’s, and Schwerner’s civil rights—the first time an all-White jury in Mississippi convicted a White person on civil rights charges (Cagin and Dray 2006; NPS 2009). This event would prove to be a turning point in federal involvement in civil rights-related violence.

All seven sites, described in chapter 2 under “1964 Freedom Summer Murders,” represent critical moments or fundamental aspects of this event. The role of each site is highlighted in

the course of the historical background narrative or is noted in its individual resource description. Together, these sites represent the full scope of the event. Therefore, all seven sites are determined to be contributing to a 1964 Freedom Summer discontinuous historic district.

Integrity

Since there is scholarly consensus on the national impact of the Freedom Summer murders, the challenge of this evaluation has been in identifying the individual sites that represent this national significance in ways that also meet the high standard of integrity outlined by NHL criteria, as required by special resource studies. The current conditions of each of the seven 1964 Freedom Summer sites are described in chapter 2. Here, the relationship between condition and historical integrity will be assessed for each site.

The original **Mt. Zion Methodist Church** building was destroyed, and a new one was built on the location in 1967. While the current church building does not date to the 1964 incident, the surrounding landscape is virtually unchanged from that time. Surviving features include the cemetery (still active), the old Mt. Zion church bell and stand, and the circular dirt driveway that the Klansman used to trap, corner, and beat the church members during the arson attack. Historical photos demonstrate that the property was surrounded by wooded lots in a rural environment, just as it is today. The property therefore retains integrity of location, setting, association, and feeling sufficient to convey its historical character. While the new, successor church—still bearing the name Mt. Zion Methodist Church—would not be considered contributing to the property’s significance because of its construction after the period of historical significance, it is not intrusive, as it is consistent with the usage of the landscape just prior to the events that set off the Freedom Summer murders. The Mt. Zion Methodist Church landscape is contributing to the historic district.

The interior of the **Old Neshoba County Jail** had been altered sometime after 1978, when it was converted into two apartments, each with a kitchen, a living room, and two bedrooms, although the columns to which the jail bars had been attached remained in place as a reminder of its historical function during this site’s period of significance. When the building was viewed by the study team in February 2022, it retained integrity of location, setting, materials (its core is still a concrete block structure), design, workmanship, association, and feeling. However, this analysis may need to be revisited, since changes to the building exterior begun in July 2022 may have the potential to compromise design, workmanship, association, and feeling. Renovations to the exterior of the building include wood framing that has the potential to substantially alter the roof line (Swogetinsky 2022). The exact nature of these modifications or whether it could change this study’s analysis of national significance as it pertains to the site’s integrity are yet to be determined.

An analysis of the **Murder** site, through comparison of historical images of the general area with recent aerial images and on-the-ground photographs, demonstrates that the landscape has changed very little since 1964. The alignment of Road 515 appears unchanged, although it is possible (imagery analysis could not confirm this) that the erstwhile loose-gravel road has been resurfaced with compacted gravel, which is sometimes used for rural roads. Aside from this, the overall rural, undeveloped character of this “lonely road” outside of Philadelphia

retains sufficient integrity of location, setting, design, materials, association, and feeling to convey its historical character. The Murder site is contributing to the historic district.

An analysis of the **Burned Station Wagon** site, through comparison of historical photographs from the FBI files with current aerial images, demonstrates that the landscape has changed very little since 1964. The adjacent bridges where State Highway 21 crosses Owl Creek to the west and over Bogue Chitto Creek to the east were present at that time. The area remains rural and undeveloped and retains sufficient integrity of location, setting, association, and feeling to convey its historical character. The Burned Station Wagon site is contributing to the historic district.

The **Earthen Dam Burial** site is on private land with posted “no trespassing” signs and is not accessible for direct inspection. However, an analysis conducted through comparison of historical photographs with current aerial images demonstrated that the landscape has changed very little since 1964. The area remains undeveloped, rural, and tree covered, and the earthen dam is still visible in aerial photographs. This site therefore has sufficient integrity of location, setting, association, and feeling to convey its historical character. The Earthen Dam Burial site is contributing to the historic district.

The **Neshoba County Courthouse Square** has not essentially changed since 1964, despite some alterations to the courthouse building and surrounding landscape. The minor changes described in the resource description in chapter 2 are reversible, should there be a desire to restore the square more fully to its 1964 appearance. The views from the courthouse to the surrounding storefronts are largely intact, as the buildings have changed little over time. The integrity of the courthouse building interior is not assessed, since it is not contributing to the proposed historic district. The Neshoba County Courthouse Square retains integrity of location, setting, design, association, and feeling sufficient to convey its historical character, and is contributing to the historic district.

The **US Post Office and Courthouse** has not experienced any significant alterations since the time of the trial in 1967, and during a site visit the study team noted that its interior and exterior features are remarkably intact, including the two-story courtroom in which the trial was conducted. The US Post Office and Courthouse retains integrity of location, design, workmanship, materials, association, and feeling sufficient to convey its historical character and is contributing to the historic district.

Conclusion: Summary of National Significance Findings

The seven sites analyzed here comprise a 1964 Freedom Summer discontinuous historic district that is nationally significant under NHL criterion 1 for association with an act of racist violence that drove a fundamental change in the federal government’s strategy towards civil rights-related violence and galvanized public support for passage of the Civil Rights Act and Voting Rights Act in Congress. The district retains sufficient integrity to convey its historical significance.

Lynch Street Corridor, Jackson, Mississippi

The Lynch Street corridor is evaluated here under NHL criterion 1. This study finds that the Lynch Street corridor in Jackson has potential for historical significance at the local and statewide levels, but it does not meet NHL criteria for national significance. Of local importance, the neighborhood surrounding Lynch Street was the epicenter for the civil rights movement in both Jackson and for Mississippians statewide, when many of its buildings hosted national and state leaders and activists. Key to this was the establishment of the statewide NAACP offices in the M.W. Stringer Grand Lodge, followed by the COFO Center launch of its statewide civil rights efforts from its offices on Lynch Street. These two buildings were instead evaluated individually rather than as part of this corridor.

Integrity

The loss of many commercial buildings along Lynch Street has negatively impacted the integrity of the corridor in terms of its ability to convey the historical feeling and setting of the 1950s and 1960s, when it was a busy neighborhood business district. The Lynch Street corridor as a linear resource was not evaluated further in this study.

M.W. Stringer Grand Lodge

The M.W. Stringer Grand Lodge is evaluated here under NHL criterion 1. The Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (MFDP) achieved nationwide significance through its nationally televised testimony at the National Democratic Party's 1964 convention in Atlantic City, New Jersey. The involvement of civil rights leaders, including Ella Baker, Victoria Gray, Annie Devine, Fannie Lou Hamer, Bob Moses, Aaron Henry, and many others in the MFDP conventions contribute to the national significance of the party's meetings at the M.W. Stringer Grand Lodge. The Stringer Lodge's auditorium, with a capacity of 1,300, provided one of the few large spaces available in the state for African Americans to congregate under some relative protection from white supremacists. The Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party had a small headquarters space in a nearby house, but it was at the Stringer Lodge where larger meetings took place and the opposition platform presented at the 1964 National Democratic Convention took shape. Although the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party was ultimately unsuccessful in unseating the all-White delegation from Mississippi at the convention, its efforts marked a turning point. Civil rights leader Bob Moses reflected, "Never again were we lulled into believing that our task was exposing injustices so that the 'good' people of American could eliminate them. We left Atlantic City with the knowledge that the movement had turned into something else. After Atlantic City, our struggle was not for civil rights, but for liberation" (Dittmer 1994, 302). Nationally, the publicity from the convention and widespread disapproval of the result slowly began to erode the entrenched all-White politics in Mississippi. In challenging the legitimacy of the all-White Mississippi delegation, the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party struck the first blow against the long-established political convention system and thereby brought about sweeping change to the national political system (Baughn 2016).

The M.W. Stringer Grand Lodge is also evaluated under NHL criterion 2 for its association with Fannie Lou Hamer. From her roots as an impoverished sharecropper in the Mississippi Delta, Fannie Lou Hamer rose to cofound the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party and to

lead its efforts on a national stage at the 1964 Democratic National Convention to fight back against the entrenched white supremacy of the national political convention system. Hamer's impassioned speech as one of the opposition delegates was among the most powerful moments of the national convention. Most Americans had no idea of the extent of the brutal measures routinely exercised in Mississippi, the daily horrors that African Americans lived through, and the fundamental injustice of their being violently prevented from exercising their right to vote for change. President Lyndon Johnson so feared the impact that her speech could have on his reelection bid that he called an impromptu teleconference during the speech to divert the media's attention. Fannie Lou Hamer's speech was a defining moment in the MFDP's efforts to bring national attention to the injustices suffered by Black Americans in Mississippi.

Integrity

The exterior alterations to the building described in chapter 2 have, to some extent, compromised its outward historic appearance. However, the interior of the building remains largely unchanged from its original design and layout in 1955. It still contains the original stage and balcony, wooden floors, and large windows from about 3 feet off the floor to nearly ceiling height. The auditorium, in particular, is essentially identical to its appearance in 1964, when it served as the site of many significant civil rights events, including planning efforts for Freedom Summer and the conventions of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (Goodwin and McClendon 2005). Because the defining moments of Fannie Lou Hamer's rise to national significance occurred in the Stringer Lodge's auditorium, and because the auditorium's historical appearance remains intact, the changes to the building's exterior do not substantially detract from the building's overall ability to convey its historic character from its period of significance in 1964. The building therefore retains overall integrity of location, design, workmanship, association, and feeling.

Conclusion: Summary of National Significance Findings

The Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party mounted a significant challenge to the long-established national convention system at the 1964 Democratic National Convention that contributed to sweeping changes, and MFDP cofounder Fannie Lou Hamer's powerful speech was a major contributor to the national attention garnered by this effort. The Stringer Lodge, where the MFDP developed its opposition platform, is representative of the work of the MFDP and of Fannie Lou Hamer, and it retains sufficient integrity to convey those associations (see the "Evaluation of Suitability" section for comparisons with other potentially representative properties). The M.W. Stringer Grand Lodge is therefore determined to be nationally significant under NHL criterion 1 for its association with the reform efforts of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party and under NHL criterion 2 for its association with Fannie Lou Hamer, a nationally significant person.

COFO Center, Jackson, Mississippi

The COFO Center is evaluated here under NHL criterion 1. The Council of Federated Organizations (COFO) was unique to the Mississippi civil rights movement in that it provided an umbrella organization that unified the efforts of otherwise competing civil rights groups in

the face of fierce resistance from the White establishment. The COFO Center in Jackson was the command post where numerous civil rights organizations could coordinate their efforts to create new programs and momentum for the movement. COFO spearheaded organizational efforts for the Freedom Vote campaign of 1963 and the Freedom Summer activities of 1964. It was also instrumental in forming the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party, a nationally significant organization described above (see M.W. Stringer Grand Lodge). COFO's Freedom Vote activities put a national spotlight on the extreme racial oppression and violence that was occurring in Mississippi as a result of escalating KKK brutality. From its headquarters on Lynch Street, COFO organized a complex operation of voter registration efforts, challenged the National Democratic Party at their convention in New Jersey, and provided security and housing for volunteers across the state (Dittmer 1994). For this reason, the COFO Center is found to be nationally significant for its association with the Council of Federated Organizations and as the locus of the group's planning efforts.

Integrity

The COFO Center building's interior has been extensively remodeled and is no longer recognizable from its period of significance in the early 1960s. While the building was originally divided into three commercial units separated by interior party walls, each unit with separate entrances, the party walls have been partially removed to create a single open space. The interior was renovated in 2009 to serve as the COFO Civil Rights Museum and Education Center, which includes the original open space that housed the COFO headquarters. Therefore, the building's interior has lost integrity and cannot convey its historical significance. But if the interior is restored to its original configuration as a separate unit to resemble the COFO interior of the early 1960s, this evaluation could be reconsidered.

Conclusion: Summary of National Significance Findings

Although the COFO Center is nationally significant, it has lost integrity and cannot convey its historical significance. Therefore, the COFO Center does not meet the NHL criteria and will not be evaluated further in this study.

Farish Street Neighborhood, Jackson, Mississippi

The Farish Street neighborhood is evaluated here under NHL criterion 1. The area is an important example of postbellum African American community development in the state of Mississippi. This vibrant and economically independent community of Black elites, bankers, and working-class professionals is an important example of Black agency and institution building during the Jim Crow era. However, this study did not find evidence that events and developments in the neighborhood were influential or impactful beyond the bounds of Mississippi.

Integrity

This site retained integrity at the time of its 1980 national register nomination. However, since this study affirmed the neighborhood's state level of significance, the integrity of this site was not reassessed during this study.

Conclusion: Summary of National Significance Findings

This study affirms the National Register of Historic Places listing of the Farish Street neighborhood as significant at the state level as an excellent example of an economically independent Black community during the Jim Crow era. However, the neighborhood does not meet the NHL criteria for national significance, and as a result it will not move forward to be evaluated by the other special resource study criteria.

Town of Mound Bayou, Mississippi

Mound Bayou is evaluated here under NHL criterion 1. Thirty-four buildings in Mound Bayou dating from 1904 to 1963 are contributing to an existing national register historic district that is significant at the state level. However, as discussed below (see the Isaiah T. Montgomery House), this study finds that the history of Mound Bayou is nationally significant for its early years and founding until the 1920s when its first period of prosperity came to an end.

Integrity

This study finds that the Mound Bayou Historic District does not retain sufficient integrity to convey its nationally significant historical character. Devastating fires in 1926 and 1941 destroyed most of the town's early buildings. The oldest surviving structure is from 1904; only 12 buildings predate 1926. These pre-1926 buildings are scattered throughout the town and do not form a cohesive assemblage. As a result, the district has insufficient surviving resources to convey a historical setting and a sense of the thriving African American community that existed during Mound Bayou's most prosperous and significant years, from the 1900s through the 1920s. The historic district does not retain sufficient integrity to convey that period of significance as an NHL district. Rather, the aspects of national significance found within Mound Bayou today that retain integrity are represented by individual sites: the Isaiah T. Montgomery House, associated with the cofounder of the town, and the Taborian Hospital, associated with Dr. T.R.M. Howard. These two sites are evaluated individually below.

Conclusion: Summary of National Significance Findings

Although the history of Mound Bayou is nationally significant, the town does not retain sufficient integrity to convey this significance as an NHL district. Therefore, Mound Bayou does not meet the NHL criteria and will not be evaluated further in this study as a district. Instead, the Isaiah T. Montgomery House and the Taborian Hospital are evaluated individually below.

Taborian Hospital

The Taborian Hospital is evaluated here under NHL criterion 2 for its association with Dr. T.R.M. Howard. Upon moving to Mound Bayou, Dr. Howard became a *tour de force* of civil rights leadership during the 1950s as a community leader, a politically connected activist, and especially for his establishment of the Regional Negro Leadership Council (RNLC) in the Delta, which he led from 1951 through 1956. This organization was among the earliest in Mississippi to organize civil rights-related events and brought nationally known

Black leaders to Mississippi. Dr. Howard opened doors for Black Mississippians who struggled for civil rights in the subsequent years and decades, and his influence extended to future leaders. Medgar Evers and Rosa Parks are among those he motivated to directly engage in the movement.

During the 1955 murder trial of Emmett Till, Dr. Howard's sphere of influence extended to the national stage. He served as Mamie Till-Mobley's local contact in the Delta and was a central figure in the national media during the trial. He made his home a headquarters for an independent investigation into Till's lynching, as well as a place of refuge and safety for African Americans taking part in the trial. Black journalists, trial witnesses, African American Congressional Representative Charles Diggs, and Mamie Till-Mobley herself, whom he personally escorted to and from the Sumner courthouse via armed caravan, were reassured by the measures he took for their safety and were encouraged to continue their respective roles in the trial. After the inevitable acquittal of the murderers, Dr. Howard's national speaking tour ensured that the federal government and the American public understood in absolute terms the brutality of the lynching and the enormity of the court's injustice. He reached audiences of thousands in major cities across the country, where he continued to publicly criticize the FBI for failing to address the violence in Mississippi. Dr. Howard continued to influence the national civil rights dialogue long after the Till trial.

Integrity

The building underwent a significant restoration project starting in 2012. Although the building's interior is currently in poor condition, its exterior retains a high degree of original features and materials, and today, it appears much as it did when it first opened in around 1942. The building therefore retains integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, association, and feeling, sufficient to convey its historic character.

Conclusion: Summary of National Significance Findings

Dr. T.R.M. Howard's time in Mound Bayou has national significance for his activities in support of the civil rights movement as a community leader, a politically connected activist, the leader of the RNLC, a nationally known speaker during the Emmett Till trial, a protector of Mamie Till-Mobley and others during the trial, the leader of an independent investigation into Emmett Till's murder when the federal government failed to intervene, and an energetic advocate of social justice for African Americans after the trial. The Taborian Hospital best represents Dr. Howard's life and legacy and retains sufficient integrity to convey that association (see the "Evaluation of Suitability" section for comparisons with other potentially representative properties). The Taborian Hospital is therefore determined to be nationally significant under NHL criterion 2 for its association with Dr. T.R.M. Howard, a nationally significant person.

Isaiah T. Montgomery House

The Isaiah T. Montgomery House is evaluated here under NHL criterion 1 and under NHL criterion 2 for its association with Isaiah T. Montgomery.

Mound Bayou survives as a unique community which, under Montgomery's early leadership, flourished and allowed African Americans freedom from the brutal oppression and violence that was routine throughout Mississippi at the time. Mound Bayou thrived as an independent, self-governing community, while the rest of Mississippi was racially segregated and mired in institutional Jim Crow laws and codes. Nationally known Black leaders, Black businessmen, and the US president visited the town or made it their home. Its early years—from its founding until the 1920s when its founder passed away and its economy collapsed—are particularly significant as an exemplar of a flourishing Black township during the transition from Reconstruction into the Jim Crow era. While the town's fortunes subsequently waxed and waned, its status as a place of safety and refuge for African Americans remained intact, as is evident from its role during the trial of Emmett Till's murderers in 1955, when Black visitors from out of town—including Emmett Till's mother and key Black witnesses in the trial—felt safer staying in Mound Bayou than in Sumner where the trial was being held.

Montgomery's leadership defined the early history of Mound Bayou, but he has left a more complicated legacy because he lived in complicated times. As such, he represents an excellent and important case study in the difficulties and fraught opportunities faced by Black leaders under Jim Crow. His accommodationist philosophy led him in 1890—as the only African American delegate to Mississippi's constitutional convention—to support the exclusion of illiterate voters and therefore nearly two-thirds of Black voters at that time and to strive to maintain good relations with the White elites who kept him and his fellow Black citizens under their boot (McMillen 2007). His decisions were at the time, and remain today, controversial, and even loathsome to many, but his reasoning behind these decisions provides an important insight into the fraught options available to African American leaders nationwide under Jim Crow.

Mound Bayou is Montgomery's major life achievement. Despite his complicated legacy, he worked tirelessly to shape the social and political landscape to the extent possible given the times that he lived in. Mound Bayou survives to this day as a testament to Black agency and ingenuity in creating their own space for social and economic freedom in the oppressive context of the Jim Crow South.

Integrity

Although the house is in poor condition because of the deterioration of its materials and finishes due to vacancy and neglect, the structure retains a high level of historical integrity overall because of the preservation of character-defining features that continue to express its design, workmanship, location, setting, feeling, and association.

Conclusion: Summary of National Significance Findings

The Isaiah T. Montgomery House has already been designated a National Historic Landmark for its associations with post-Reconstruction African American community planning and settlement and associations with African American civic leader Isaiah T. Montgomery (Graves 1976). The current study likewise finds that the Isaiah T. Montgomery House is nationally significant under NHL criterion 1 for its association with an all-Black township that played a nationally important role in African American social, political, and economic

life in the 19th and 20th centuries and under NHL criterion 2 for its association with the town's founder, Isaiah T. Montgomery.

Lyceum – The Circle Historic District

Lyceum – The Circle Historic District is evaluated here under NHL criterion 1. The insurrection at the University of Mississippi demonstrated the refusal of Southern segregationists to comply with federal authority and the extreme measures they were willing to take in order to uphold their system of racial segregation. But the shocking display of violence and destruction had a sobering effect on many of the states' residents and leaders, both White and Black. This realization marked a turning point. Citizens' Council's membership began to slowly decline and, most importantly, the color line that had gripped public schools through the Jim Crow Era and beyond was finally broken in Mississippi (Ford 2007). The importance of this event's outcome went beyond the dismantling of the university's racial segregation practices: it challenged and upheld the authority of the federal judiciary, and by extension, the ability of any branch of the federal government to enforce federal law and deliver justice. President Kennedy's deployment of federal troops to enforce the law, combined with his televised pronouncement, demonstrated to the American people that the federal government held a serious commitment to upholding the Constitution during a time of crisis (Ford 2007). The Kennedy administration would apply this new-found clout to a similar conflict the following year when the University of Alabama was desegregated. Because of the precedent in Mississippi, this showdown fizzled into a relatively short, symbolic show of dissent.

Integrity

Collectively, the academic buildings and landscape features that comprise Lyceum – The Circle Historic District retain a high degree of integrity to the period of significance, from September 30 to October 1, 1962. The buildings and landscape retain integrity of location, setting, design, association, and feeling sufficient to convey their historical character from the period of significance.

Conclusion: Summary of National Significance Findings

Lyceum – The Circle Historic District was designated a National Historic Landmark in 2008 for its association with the era of Southern massive resistance to school desegregation in the mid-20th century and as a decisive turning point in the federal government's enforcement of the US Supreme Court's 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* decision (Ford 2007). The current study likewise finds that the events surrounding James Meredith's enrollment at the University of Mississippi is nationally significant under NHL criterion 1 for its association with the desegregation of public schools and as a turning point in federal enforcement of civil rights.

Former Medical Office of Dr. Gilbert Mason, Sr.

The former medical office of Dr. Gilbert Mason, Sr. is evaluated here under NHL criterion 1. The building is listed in the National Register of Historic Places documentation at a state level of significance for its association with Dr. Mason and association with medicine and

with civil rights history in Mississippi (Blokker 2017). This study confirms the site's significance at the state level rather than at the national level. If the wade-in demonstrations are revealed to be nationally significant through future research and scholarship, however, Dr. Mason's 1966 medical office may not be the best site to represent those events due to its later period of significance; the office was built three years after the last wade-in occurred in 1963, thus making it outside of the period of significance of those demonstrations.

Collectively, the three wade-in events of 1959, 1960, and 1963 that were led by Dr. Mason in Biloxi, Mississippi, represent an important moment in African Americans' struggle to gain equal access to the Mississippi's public spaces. These events combined the tactics of direct action through peaceful protest with a well-planned and steadfast legal campaign supported by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). The nonviolent protests were met with violent resistance by white segregationists. The strategy was successful and broke down the racial barriers that had denied Black citizens access to the public beaches. As possibly the first significant direct-action demonstration in the state, the impact of the 1959 wade-in went well beyond Biloxi and inspired additional grassroots efforts throughout Mississippi.

At this time, however, this analysis points to a state level of significance, rather than a national level of significance. The importance of the Biloxi wade-ins is not in doubt: these events led to a crucial early victory in a nascent civil rights movement in Mississippi that would eventually contribute crucially to the national movement. But in 1959, at the time of the first wade-in, while other southern states were already making incremental gains in their civil rights struggles, Mississippi remained implacably mired in segregation and racism. At the time of the wade-ins, civil rights victories in Mississippi were not yet resonating on a national stage. However, although this analysis did not reveal a justification for national significance, emerging research on the topic of segregated African American recreational spaces and civil rights activism may reveal that Dr. Mason's Biloxi wade-ins are nationally significant. Therefore, it is possible that a reevaluation of the beach wade-in sites using not-yet-available scholarship could be worthwhile in the future.

Integrity

The former medical office of Dr. Gilbert Mason, Sr. was rehabilitated in 2018, and its exterior and interior appear much as they did in 1966, as does the building's setting along Division Street, despite several buildings in the vicinity having been removed (Blokker 2017). The property retains integrity of location, feeling, association, design, materials, and craftsmanship sufficient to convey its historical character.

The beach sites where the three wade-in demonstrations took place may have integrity to those events, but since they were not found to have national significance, an in-depth analysis of the sites' changes since 1959, 1960, and 1963 was not conducted. If future research reveals that the demonstrations have national significance, then a detailed analysis of the changes to the landscapes, including their setting, feeling, associations, and viewsheds, would be required as part of a reevaluation.

Conclusion: Summary of National Significance Findings

This study affirms the state level of significance of the former medical office of Dr. Gilbert Mason, Sr. because the site is associated with Dr. Mason's period of significance after the wade-in demonstrations occurred. Therefore, the building does not meet the NHL criteria for national significance. The Biloxi wade-in sites are also significant at the state level as a crucial, early victory in a nascent civil rights movement in Mississippi that would eventually contribute crucially to the national movement. At the time of the first wade-in, however, civil rights victories in Mississippi were not yet resonating beyond the state. As a result, sites associated with the wade-ins in Biloxi it will not move forward to be evaluated by the other special resource study criteria.

Tougaloo College

Tougaloo College is evaluated in this study under NHL criterion 1. From its founding in 1869, the college played a pivotal role in advancing the causes of the African American community in Jackson and in promoting interracial engagement and understanding. During the modern civil rights movement starting in the 1950s, the college's academic independence and progressive tradition allowed its faculty and students to engage in civil rights planning and action that generated a groundswell of activism across Mississippi through its students, faculty, and alumni. The college stands out for its grassroots civil rights activism, which reached its zenith during the Tougaloo Movement period from 1963 through 1967. That the Mississippi State Sovereignty Commission considered Tougaloo College a center of activism and targeted its president, Dr. Beittel, for removal demonstrates the importance of the institution in the statewide struggle for civil rights. However, this study did not find evidence that the school was influential or impactful beyond the bounds of Mississippi. The activism at the college had definitive statewide, but not national, impacts.

Integrity

In 1960, a master plan was developed that proposed the demolition of many of the historic buildings on campus and their replacement with new, interconnected structures. While the master plan was not fully carried out, three new buildings were constructed from that plan. This change does not significantly impact the historic association, setting, or feeling of the district. With some exceptions, most of the buildings and landscape features comprising the Tougaloo College National Register Historic District retain historical integrity (Wise 1998).

Conclusion: Summary of National Significance Findings

Tougaloo College is significant at the state level for its role in civil rights activism from its founding and especially during the Tougaloo Movement period from 1963 through 1967. The college does not meet the NHL criteria for national significance and as a result, it will not move forward to be evaluated by the other special resource study criteria.

Lanier High School

Lanier High School is evaluated in this study under NHL criterion 1. The school is an excellent, preserved example of the Jackson School Board's strategies to bolster "separate but equal" education and stave off desegregation in public education. As such, it is a locally

significant example of a historically segregated school and is representative of historical attempts by the city to improve African American schools enough to claim they were equal to White schools. Neither Lanier High School nor its students or faculty played a direct role in challenging public school segregation. However, the students played a locally significant role in the efforts of Jackson's African American youth to end segregation of public accommodations. Their participation in the Jackson Movement, especially their walkout in response to the Woolworth's sit-in, was met with violence by White citizens and police. While their efforts did not receive attention from federal agencies, they contributed to a shift in focus by the NAACP regarding how to further the Jackson Movement. Lanier High School is an excellent, locally significant representation of the segregated school system in Jackson, and its students played an important role in the Jackson Movement. However, this study did not find evidence that the school was influential or impactful beyond the bounds of Jackson, Mississippi.

Integrity

Despite the additions and modifications described in chapter 2, Lanier High School retains a high degree of integrity from the modern civil rights period of significance. The school has retained its Modernist design, which was a prevalent local style in Jackson for schools built between 1956 and 1961.

Conclusion: Summary of National Significance Findings

This study affirms that Lanier High School is significant at the local level as an example of a "separate but equal" model school and for its role in civil rights activism in Jackson during the early 1960s. The school does not meet the NHL criteria for national significance and as a result, it will not move forward to be evaluated by the other special resource study criteria.

March Against Fear

Preliminary research on the March Against Fear indicates that this event may meet the NHL criteria for national significance. However, this study finds that, as a 200-mile-long linear resource, the march route is better suited for study and evaluation as a potential national historic trail. Because evaluation under national historic trail criteria involves a different process than evaluation under special resource study criteria, a separate research effort is needed to properly evaluate the march route. Such an evaluation is typically conducted within the scope of a trail feasibility study or similar study, as required under the National Trails System Act. As a result, the March Against Fear resource is not evaluated further within the scope of this special resource study.

Summary of National Significance Findings for All Properties

Of the 14 sites evaluated in this section, 6 are found to meet SRS criterion 1 for national significance because this study's analysis demonstrates that each is representative of an outstanding event or individual who shaped events related to the ongoing struggle for civil rights at a national level. The remaining 8 sites were found either to lack significance at the national level or to have lost sufficient integrity to convey that significance and as a result, will not move forward to be evaluated by the other special resource study criteria. The

following 6 sites, which met SRS criterion 1, will be further evaluated in this study under SRS Criterion 2 – Evaluation of Suitability:

- Emmett Till sites
- 1964 Freedom Summer sites
- M.W. Stringer Grand Lodge, Jackson, Mississippi
- Taborian Hospital, Mound Bayou, Mississippi
- Isaiah T. Montgomery House National Historic Landmark, Mound Bayou, Mississippi
- Lyceum – The Circle Historic District, Oxford, Mississippi

EVALUATION OF SUITABILITY

Criteria for Establishing Suitability

To qualify as a potential addition to the national park system, an area that is nationally significant must also meet the criterion for suitability. National Park Service *Management Policies 2006*, section 1.3.2, states “an area is considered suitable for addition to the national park system if it represents a natural or cultural resources type that is not already adequately represented in the national park system or is not comparably represented and protected for public enjoyment by other federal agencies, tribal, state, or local governments, or the private sector.”³⁶ Adequacy of representation is determined on a case-by-case basis through the comparison of the proposed area to other similar resources within the national park system or other protected areas. The comparison should determine whether the study area would expand, enhance, or duplicate resources or visitor use opportunities found in other areas.

Type of Resource Represented by the Study Area

The resources within the study area vary in type and association. Rather than list them here, the resource type(s) for each site will be described in its own section before the comparative analysis.

Theme or Context in Which the Study Area Fits

In considering the most appropriate historical themes with which the study area is associated, this study referenced the Revisions of the National Park Service’s NHL Thematic Framework (NPS 1996) as well as more recent studies that identified and sought to remedy gaps in the current thematic framework used to evaluate national significance for National Historic Landmarks and national park units. These studies, conducted in partnership with the Organization of American Historians and others, include *Civil Rights in America: A Framework for Identifying Significant Sites* (NPS 2008a) and the *African American NHL Assessment Study* (NPS 2008b). The Mississippi Civil Rights sites identified herein are

36. See appendix B for the full text of the criteria for inclusion.

associated with the following themes and theme topics. In the suitability analyses that follow, relevant themes or theme topics are identified and listed for each individual property.

NHL Theme II: Creating Social Institutions and Movements

Subtheme 1: Clubs and Organizations

Subtheme 2: Reform Movement

This theme focuses on the diverse formal and informal structures, such as schools or voluntary associations, through which people express values and live their lives. Americans generate temporary movements and create enduring institutions in order to define, sustain, or reform these values. Both the diverse motivations people act upon and the strategies they employ are critical concerns of social history. This category will also encompass temporary movements that influenced American history but did not produce permanent institutions (NPS 1996). The study acknowledges the uncomfortable fact that white supremacy was a cultural value in Mississippi and elsewhere during the study's period of significance, and it was expressed and reinforced by organizations such as White Citizens' Councils and the Ku Klux Klan (KKK). These organizations played a role in the events represented by many of the current study sites. The study sites do not celebrate these organizations, but rather the reform movements and organizations that challenged and finally broke them. These include the Regional Council of Negro Leadership (RNLC), the Council of Federated Organizations (COFO), the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), Southern Conference Leadership Council (SCLC), the NAACP, and the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (MFDP), all of which represented and fought for fundamental cultural values, such as equal representation under the law, which are consistent with the promise of the Constitution and the struggle for a more perfect Union.

NHL Theme IV: Shaping the Political Landscape

Subtheme 1: Parties, Protests, and Movements

Subtheme 2: Government Institutions

This theme encompasses political and governmental institutions that create public policy and those groups that seek to shape both policies and institutions. Sites associated with political leaders, theorists, organizations, movements, campaigns, and grassroots political activities all illustrate aspects of the political environment. The political landscape has been shaped by military events and decisions, by transitory movements and protests, and by political parties. Places associated with leaders in the development of the American constitutional system, such as Abraham Lincoln's home in Illinois and the birthplace of Martin Luther King, Jr. in Atlanta, embody key aspects of the political landscape (NPS 1996). The current study area includes sites that represent political movements, such as the MFDP, which changed America's national political convention system, and that represent fundamental changes in how government institutions engaged with civil rights-related violence, such as President Johnson ordering the FBI to investigate the Freedom Summer murders, and President Kennedy ordering military units to enforce a court order at the University of Mississippi.

Civil Rights Theme: Racial Desegregation in Public Education

Subtheme: School Desegregation and Massive Resistance (1951–1967)

Property types under the Racial Desegregation in Public Education Theme Study will illustrate or commemorate key events, decisions, or persons in the historical movement to desegregate schools between 1849 and 1974. The period of this theme relevant to the current study is School Desegregation and Massive Resistance (1951–1967). During this phase, minorities attained and were subsequently denied legal access to a nondiscriminatory education. In its 1954 landmark *Brown v. Board of Education* decision, the US Supreme Court overturned the separate but equal doctrine. This decision was followed by an intense period of Southern reaction to school desegregation. Federal intervention through the courts and, later, the Civil Rights Act became necessary to assure desegregation. Properties associated with this phase include sites where groups and/or government either protested or enforced school desegregation, and an associative characteristic of such sites might be, for example, a federal government action that provided enforcement of school desegregation (NPS 2000, 108–112).

Civil Rights Theme: Racial Voting Rights

Subtheme: African American Voting Rights (1954–1965)

The Civil Rights Acts of 1957 and the Civil Rights Act of 1960 were the first major civil rights legislation passed since Reconstruction. The acts did not end voter discrimination, but they did invigorate national grassroots organizations, which created programs and campaigns to overcome massive Southern opposition to Black voting rights. Registration drives and a citizenship education program organized by the SCLC and SNCC in the South taught voting procedures, economic rights, and African American history. From 1961 to 1964, political activity associated with voting rights gained prominence in the nation. Mississippi, the most recalcitrant of the Southern states, became the focus of the civil rights movement's efforts. An umbrella group under the banner of the Council of Federated Organizations launched the Freedom Vote in 1963 and Freedom Summer in 1964. The campaign also fought against the exclusion of Blacks in Mississippi by forming the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party. At the executive level in 1964, President Johnson ordered the otherwise recalcitrant FBI to investigate the murder of three Freedom Summer civil rights workers: Michael Schwerner, James Chaney, and Andrew Goodman. A property associated with an event from this era may be eligible under criterion 1 if, for example, the event made a significant contribution to implementing critical aspects of SCLC's Citizenship Education Program, the Freedom Vote of 1963, Freedom Summer of 1964, or the MFDP, which proved pivotal to national reform (NPS 2009, 114–115).

Theme Topic: Era of Jim Crow. In the *NPS African American NHL Assessment Study* (NPS 2008b), the Scholars Meeting Group determined to prioritize the 1880s–1930s, designating the period as the “Era of Jim Crow” to encompass both its thematic and chronological aspects. The Era of Jim Crow includes a number of historical trends and events, the most relevant of which in this study are institution and community-building post-Reconstruction, and the extreme racial violence and intimidation of African Americans. This theme has not yet been fully developed as an official NHL theme but has been identified as a critically

underrepresented theme in the national park system, which the current study area is well-positioned to fill.

Theme Topic: Racial Violence and Intimidation. In the *NPS African American NHL Assessment Study* (NPS 2008b), in order to address critically underrepresented themes in the national park system, the Scholars Meeting Group recommended Racial Violence and Intimidation as a thematic area warranting future research and documentation. This theme spans the establishment, maintenance, and demise of the American slave system; lynching and white racial riots of the late 19th and early 20th centuries; as well as violence during the 1950s and 1960s civil rights movement, such as the 1955 murder of Emmett Till. The theme also encompasses the history of resistance to such violence through anti-lynching campaigns, the establishment of institutions such as the NAACP, theories such as nonviolence and self-defense, and events such as the integration of Little Rock Central High School in Arkansas. This theme has not yet been fully developed as an official NHL theme. A historic context study is currently in progress examining the history of racist violence against people of African descent.

Theme Topic: Criminal Injustice. In the NPS civil rights thematic framework (NPS 2008a), Criminal Injustice was identified as a potential prominent theme that represents a gap in the current NPS framework for establishing national significance of sites. The theme covers multiple topics and minority groups, often with a focus on violence and harassment and how these minority groups were categorized as antisocial and a menace to society. This sort of villainization and dehumanization was essential to the context in which racial violence occurred, and the injustices typically persisted after the violence, in that the perpetrators were not convicted. Lynching throughout the late 19th and early 20th centuries, in particular, is identified as a civil rights crime applicable to this theme. This theme has not yet been fully developed as an official NHL theme but has been identified as a critical underrepresented theme in the national park system, which the current study area is well-positioned to fill.

Theme Topic: Migration and Movement. In the *NPS African American NHL Assessment Study* (NPS 2008b), the Scholars Meeting Group recommended this theme as a target for future research and nomination efforts. Broader than the settlement/exploration area of significance category currently used by the NHL Program, African American movement extends beyond the simple “peopling” of the United States to encompass the reality that, in Black history, movement becomes a method for either claiming or being denied freedom in American society. This theme also closely aligns with the Racial Intimidation and Violence theme because voluntary movement by African Americans was often an attempt to escape intimidation and violence, leading to the establishment of all-Black townships among other outcomes identified in the study. This theme has not yet been fully developed as an official NHL theme but has been identified as a critical underrepresented theme in the national park system, which the current study area is well-positioned to fill.

Comparative Analysis of Resources

The following comparative analysis will determine whether the current study sites are duplicative of sites that are already adequately represented and protected for public enjoyment, per the criteria for establishing suitability as defined above. Duplicative sites will not move forward to be evaluated by the other special resource study criteria.

Emmett Till Sites

Type of Resource Represented by the Site

The resource under consideration is a discontinuous historic district consisting of 11 contributing resources—3 buildings and 8 sites as defined in National Register Bulletin 16a—that are associated with the 1955 lynching of Emmett Till and subsequent trial of his murderers. This suitability analysis will be applied to the district as a whole.

Themes or Context in Which the Site Fits

Theme Topic: Racial Violence and Intimidation

Theme Topic: Criminal Injustice

Descriptions of Similar Resources

Roberts Temple Church of God in Christ. Located in Chicago, this was the location of Emmett Till's funeral in 1955. As discussed in chapter 2, Mamie Till-Mobley's decision to hold an open-casket funeral and encourage broad attendance contributed to the public outrage over the brutal torture and murder of her son. National attention over the murder, funeral, and trial, facilitated by national media coverage, mobilized a generation of civil rights leaders, galvanized modern civil rights movements across the country, and contributed to passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1957. The building is currently an active church in private ownership and was named by the National Trust for Historic Preservation as one of the 11 most endangered historic places in 2020.

Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument. This site is a single property associated with racially motivated violence in Mississippi that gained national attention. The property was the home of Medgar and Myrlie Evers, both of whom were leaders in the civil rights movement. The mid-century house is in the Elaine subdivision of Jackson, the first post-World War II subdivision created for middle-class African Americans in Mississippi. Medgar Evers was the first field secretary for the NAACP in Mississippi and was at the forefront of every major civil rights event in the state from 1955 until his assassination. He was murdered in his own driveway by a lone rifleman in June 1963. His assassination was the first murder of a nationally significant civil rights leader and it both shocked and galvanized the civil rights movement, becoming one of the catalysts for the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Evers's murderer was a member of the White Citizens' Council chapter in Greenwood, Mississippi. He was brought to trial twice in 1964 and in both cases the all-white jury deadlocked, requiring the judge to declare mistrials. In 1994 he was finally convicted of the murder and sentenced to life in prison (Baughn 2016). The home is the only NPS-

administered park unit in Mississippi whose primary purpose is to interpret themes related to the modern civil rights movement.

Birmingham Civil Rights National Monument. This is a multiple-property national park unit associated with racially motivated intimidation and violence in Alabama that gained national attention; a nationally coordinated civil rights campaign; desegregation of public spaces; and civil rights legislation. Encompassing roughly four city blocks in downtown Birmingham, Alabama, and situated within the larger Birmingham Civil Rights District, the national monument interprets events that occurred at the A.G. Gaston Motel, the 16th Street Baptist Church, the Bethel Baptist Church, Kelly Ingram Park, Birmingham Civil Rights Institute, St. Paul United Methodist Church, and portions of the 4th Avenue Business District. In May and June of 1963, the Gaston Motel served as residence and headquarters for nationally known civil rights figures such as Martin Luther King, Jr. as they planned the nonviolent Birmingham Campaign targeting the city's segregation laws and practices. During the campaign, protests by African Americans, including many children, were violently disrupted by police dogs and water cannons, shocking images of which were spread internationally through the media. The Gaston Motel was bombed in May 1963, injuring four and sparking riots during which Black protestors burned businesses and confronted police downtown. In September 1963, Klansmen bombed the 16th Street Baptist Church, killing four young Black girls who were preparing for Sunday school. Initially, no charges were filed against the perpetrators of this act of domestic terrorism, although over subsequent decades they would eventually be convicted. The downtown riots and the church bombing galvanized efforts that led eventually to the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The national monument was established in January 2017 (NPS n.d.[a]).

Freedom Riders National Monument. This site consists of two separate sites associated with racially motivated intimidation and violence that gained national attention; a nationally coordinated civil rights campaign; desegregation of public spaces; and civil rights legislation. In 1961, the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) organized "Freedom Rides" to challenge discriminatory practices in the South that reinforced segregation of public transportation. In May of that year, a small, interracial group of Freedom Riders boarded two buses in Washington, DC, intending to ride them through the Deep South to New Orleans. The first bus, as it pulled into the Greyhound bus station in Anniston, was met by a violent mob that threw rocks, broke windows, slashed its tires, and then pursued the bus until the slashed tires failed and the driver was forced to pull over. The mob set the bus on fire and attempted to trap the Freedom Riders inside. Upon escape, the Freedom Riders found it difficult to obtain medical care and were harassed even at the Anniston Hospital. Meanwhile, the second bus carrying Freedom Riders arrived at the Trailways bus station in Anniston. A group of Klansmen boarded it and harassed the Freedom Riders as they traveled to the Birmingham station, where they were met by another mob that attacked with impunity. The local police were absent. The next day, horrific images of the first burning bus appeared on the front pages of newspapers across the nation. The movement grew stronger. Thirteen Freedom Riders had boarded the first two buses in May 1961, but by the end of the summer their number had grown to over 400. The press would continue to cover Freedom Rides and the brutal scenes of violence committed by White, segregationist mobs shocked many Americans and raised awareness of the issue of racial segregation in interstate travel. On May 29, 1961,

Attorney General Robert Kennedy petitioned the Interstate Commerce Commission to issue regulations banning segregation, and the commission subsequently decreed that by November 1, 1961, bus carriers and terminals serving interstate travel had to be integrated. The former Greyhound bus station building in Anniston and the site of the attack on the Greyhound bus outside of town comprise a national monument that is owned and interpreted by the National Park Service.

Tulsa Race Riot of 1921 Historic District, Tulsa, Oklahoma. This site is a multiple-property district associated with racially motivated violence in the American West, known as the Tulsa Race Massacre or Riot or the Tulsa Greenwood Massacre. The Greenwood District in Tulsa, Oklahoma, was an affluent African American residential community and business district, often referred to as “Black Wall Street,” that flourished after the First World War. The KKK was active in Tulsa, and the Black community was subjected to White vigilantism and lynchings, at times with the knowledge of police and city officials. On May 30, 1921, Dick Rowland, a Black shoe shiner, entered an elevator with a White elevator operator. Exactly what happened is unclear, but the White woman screamed and Rowland ran. He was eventually arrested. The story was embellished as word spread, including through local newspapers, until it settled on a typical formula used to justify lynchings or precipitate race riots across the nation during the Jim Crow era: the myth of the rapacious Black male dishonoring a White female.³⁷ A mob of White Tulsans gathered outside the Tulsa County Courthouse and demanded that the police relinquish Rowland. When they refused, the mob looted and burned homes and businesses in the Greenwood District and elsewhere in the city. More than 1,000 Black homes and businesses were destroyed, hundreds were injured, and as many as 300 people are estimated to have been killed (estimates vary widely). The Greenwood District had been almost entirely leveled: an estimated 8,000 African Americans were left homeless, many of whom would spend that winter living in tents. Public officials and civic leaders worked in tandem to cover up the massacre and protect their system of white supremacy: victims were buried in unmarked graves, police records disappeared, and inflammatory news articles were clipped out of local newspapers before they were transferred to microfiche. The massacre resurfaced in the 1990s when the State of Oklahoma commissioned a full study of the event that revealed its true magnitude. Few resources associated with the riot have been identified, though archeological resources are likely to exist. Those resources that survive are in private ownership within an active business district, and attempts to enter the district in the National Register of Historic Places have so far been unsuccessful (Ellsworth n.d.; Astor 2020). The National Park Service completed a reconnaissance survey for the 1921 Tulsa Race Riot in 2005.

Suitability Analysis

This section compares the character, quality, quantity, and rarity, combination of resource values, and themes of the historic sites described above to the Emmett Till sites.

The Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home and the Birmingham Civil Rights sites are associated with racially motivated violence against African Americans and represent events that immediately gained national attention in connection with modern civil rights movements.

37. Ann V. Collins, *All Hell Broke Loose: American Race Riots from the Progressive Era through World War II*, ABC-CLIO, 2012, 1–33.

Medgar Evers' assassination, the first of such a prominent civil rights leader, was reported nationally and shocked the country. Similarly, the various sites comprising the Birmingham Civil Rights National Monument are associated with nationally prominent civil rights leaders and events, specifically a nationally coordinated civil rights campaign. The Gaston Motel was bombed for serving as a campaign headquarters. The St. Paul United Methodist Church was used to train young protesters for the nonviolent direct action campaign, and in Kelly Ingram Park, the protesters were intimidated and attacked by police. At 16th Street Baptist Church, white supremacists planted a bomb, killing four young girls, to intimidate Birmingham's Black community in response to proposed school integrations. National media coverage of these events shocked the nation. Images of violent mobs attacking the Freedom Riders, too, brought national attention to the issue of segregated transportation and the lengths to which white supremacists in the South were willing to go to preserve this system. However, the Emmett Till sites are of a different character, and the national attention his murder received was a milestone. His murder was not a direct response to a particular social or political event or movement, and Till was not a public figure calling for social or political change. The truly horrific aspects of his murder were his age and the utter brutality of his torture and murder. His mother, Mamie Till-Mobley, bravely turned her grief into a clarion call to action by insisting that photographs of the mutilated remains of her son be published in the national media. The subsequent trial and acquittal of his murderers was covered by nationally syndicated press, and Americans were horrified at what they saw. For many White Americans, this was their first exposure to the violence, intimidation, and terrorism normalized in the South that Black citizens there lived with every day. The ripple effects of this event go far beyond that of the comparable sites described above: it would inspire an "Emmett Till Generation," compelling young men and women to join the civil rights struggle a decade later, including Medgar and Myrlie Evers and Martin Luther King, Jr.

Roberts Temple Church of God in Christ is an important part of the Emmett Till history because it represents the moment in US history when Mamie Till-Mobley made the decision to allow news media—and the American public—to see and understand the brutal lynching of her son. However, the church, individually, does not represent the events and complete historic context of Till's lynching as powerfully as the places where the murder happened, in the Mississippi Delta.

The Tulsa Race Riot of 1921 historic district is thematically related to the Emmett Till sites in that it is associated with racially motivated violence. Like Emmett Till, Dick Rowland was not a public figure, and the incident represents the routine, normalized violence of white supremacy. Rowland's entanglement in vigilantism began similarly to Till's, as he was accused of behaving inappropriately towards a White woman, at first in vague terms, but which became more sinister with each telling, which led to calls for lynching. But at this point, the stories crucially diverge. Rowland was not lynched, and the energy of the frustrated mob was unleashed in a race riot that propagated mass murders and the obliteration of a prospering Black business and residential community. Most significantly, until very recently, this massacre was unknown to the nation at large. The cover-up by city officials was so systematic and efficient that the event remained largely unknown to the nation 80 years after it happened. The event had been largely forgotten in the very city where it occurred. The Tulsa Race Riot did not reach a national audience and inspire horror that

motivated change, as did Emmett Till’s lynching, because the riot was not nationally known. The Tulsa Race Riot did not result from national civil rights activism or lead to civil rights legislation. The riot did not become a national rallying cry for change, and is therefore not comparable to the Emmett Till sites. Finally, the Tulsa Race Riot historic district is not protected or interpreted for the public comparably to a national park unit.

Conclusion: Summary of Suitability Evaluation

The scholarly consensus is that the national reporting of Emmett Till’s murder and the shock and anger it inspired was a major contributor to the modern civil rights movement. Yet, while there are many museums and historical markers that interpret aspects of the Emmett Till story, there are currently no public or private sites that are managed, interpreted, or protected comparably to a national park unit that tell the complete story and its historical significance. The public has no location to experience a sense of place related to this seminal event, where the historical context and harrowing details are fully explained. The nature of the Emmett Till narrative is significantly different in character and quality than comparable narratives of racially motivated violence and civil rights movements, as discussed above. Even in an era of violence towards African Americans, and in a state that stood out for its brutality, the murder of Emmett Till and its aftermath were unique.

The addition of the Emmett Till sites to the national park system would expand and enhance the historical narratives presented by existing civil rights sites by preserving the locations of a particularly horrific lynching with long-lasting, national repercussions. The events that this district represents inspired a generation of future civil rights leaders and participants whose actions are memorialized and interpreted at so many other civil rights-related sites. In many ways, the modern civil rights movement begins with Emmett Till.

1964 Freedom Summer Sites

Type of Resource Represented by the Site

The resource under consideration is a discontinuous historic district consisting of seven contributing resources—one building and six sites as defined in National Register Bulletin 16a—that are associated with the 1964 Freedom Summer murders and subsequent trial of the murderers. This suitability analysis will be applied to the district as a whole.

Themes or Context in Which the Site Fits

NHL Theme II: Creating Social Institutions and Movements

- Subtheme 1: Clubs and Organizations
- Subtheme 2: Reform Movements

NHL Theme IV: Shaping the Political Landscape

- Subtheme 1: Parties, Protests, and Movements
- Subtheme 2: Government Institutions

Civil Rights Theme: Racial Voting Rights

- Subtheme: African American Voting Rights (1954–1965)

Theme Topic: Racial Violence and Intimidation

Theme Topic: Criminal Injustice

Descriptions of Similar Resources

Emmett Till Sites (proposed in this study). The Emmett Till sites are another set of properties under consideration in this study, and there is potential overlap with the 1964 Freedom Summer sites regarding the themes or context in which the two districts fit. The Emmett Till sites are described in detail in chapter 2 of this study and in the national significance analysis, above. These sites will be analyzed alongside the 1964 Freedom Summer sites below.

Birmingham Civil Rights National Monument. This monument is described under the Emmett Till sites “Descriptions of Similar Resources” section above.

Freedom Riders National Monument. This monument is described under the Emmett Till sites “Descriptions of Similar Resources” section above.

Suitability Analysis

This section will compare the character, quality, quantity, and rarity, combination of resource values, and themes of the historic sites described above to the Freedom Summer murder sites.

The Emmett Till sites stand alone in their significance and horror. While all of the properties compared in this section represent racially motivated violence, the Emmett Till sites tell a different type of narrative than the 1964 Freedom Summer sites, Birmingham Campaign National Monument, and Freedom Riders National Monument. These latter sites tell a story of conflict, of an active civil rights movement and of white supremacists fighting back in an increasingly desperate effort to maintain segregation and their racial dominance. But the Emmett Till sites demonstrate what that violence looked like at the outset of the modern civil rights struggle, when it was normalized and unchallenged in the South. Till’s lynching was not a response against coordinated challenges to white supremacy, but rather illustrates the quotidian routine of enforcing and upholding it, albeit to an unusually brutal extreme. The event is also different in its consequences at the national level. The nationwide horror and public outcry over Till’s lynching did not induce the federal government to intervene, and the impunity enjoyed by white supremacists in Mississippi was laid bare to the world. The nationwide impact, rather, was found in the “Emmett Till Generation,” who as children witnessed these events on national television and who as adults resolved to fight back. In contrast, the 1964 Freedom Summer sites represents violence and murder in the context of a mature civil rights movement, perpetrated as a warning and reprisal against coordinated activities that were posing a real threat to systems of white supremacy. The murders were nationally reported and—crucially—spurred a forceful federal response that ultimately led to the conviction of some of the conspirators by a White jury. The Freedom Summer murders were a turning point in the history of federal responses to racially motivated violence, a different kind of turning point in the history of the civil rights struggle than that represented

by the Emmett Till lynching. The two properties complement and enhance each other's narratives.

The Birmingham Civil Rights National Monument, Freedom Riders National Monument, and 1964 Freedom Summer sites all represent the use of intimidation and violence to uphold systems of white supremacy but, crucially, they each represent different facets of the fight for civil rights conducted at different scales and in different settings. The Birmingham Campaign targeted the city's segregation laws and practices, and the Freedom Riders project targeted segregation of interstate transportation. Both campaigns witnessed violence in Alabama. The aim of desegregation of public spaces and public accommodations were crucial facets of the overall civil rights struggle—equality for all under the law—but different from the Freedom Summer Project, which was focused on voting rights and access to education for Black Americans. The Freedom Summer Project's scale and setting was also different: as discussed above, Mississippi stood out among Southern states for violence against Black Americans and also in its disenfranchisement as the state with the largest African American population but the lowest numbers of registered Black voters in the South. The Freedom Summer project was a massive, national effort focused uniquely on Mississippi, “perhaps the most ambitious extended campaign of the entire Civil Rights Movement” that brought in over 1,000 volunteers, mostly White students from elite private universities (Sturkley 2016). Another difference between these events lies in the federal response, which was unimpressive in the case of the Freedom Riders and Birmingham Campaign. Although FBI agents investigated the church bombing, they made no arrests. In contrast, the massive federal response to the Freedom Summer murders led to the discovery of the victims' bodies and the arrests and convictions of several of the perpetrators. This marked a turning point in the federal response to civil rights-related violence.

The different narratives presented by these properties—campaigns against three different facets of systematic oppression—speak to the sprawling scale of the system of white supremacy that civil rights activists were fighting to dismantle, and together, present a more complete narrative of the entirety of the modern civil rights movement.

Conclusion: Summary of Suitability Evaluation

The 1964 Freedom Summer sites paint a complete picture of a premeditated murder, executed by colluding local citizens and law enforcement officials, and its aftermath. James Chaney, Andrew Goodman, and Michael Schwerner took part in perhaps the most ambitious and extended campaign of the civil rights movement, one focused on voting rights and education for Black Americans, one that COFO leader Bob Moses knew had to be integrated to be successful, since the presence of White activists in such an ambitious and dangerous undertaking could make the difference in raising it to national public prominence. The murders of the volunteers created a frenzy in the national media and a public outcry that finally—after so much racially motivated violence and so many murders—elicited a massive federal response and resulted in the conviction of the murderers within a few years of the crime.

This is an important moment in the modern civil rights movement, and currently, there is nowhere that the public can visit where the historical context and significant details are

explained and where one can get a sense of place for the event within the landscape where it happened. The addition of the 1964 Freedom Summer sites to the national park system would therefore substantially expand upon and enhance its ability to tell this nationally significant landmark event in the modern civil rights movement.

M.W. Stringer Grand Lodge

Type of Resource Represented by the Site

The resource under consideration is a building located in the Lynch Street neighborhood of Jackson, which is associated with civil rights leader Fannie Lou Hamer and the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party, which held its statewide conventions at the lodge in 1964.

Themes or Context in Which the Site Fits

NHL Theme II: Creating Social Institutions and Movements

- Subtheme 1: Clubs and Organizations
- Subtheme 2: Reform Movements

NHL Theme IV: Shaping the Political Landscape

- Subtheme 1: Parties, Protests, and Movements
- Subtheme 2: Government Institutions

Civil Rights Theme: Racial Voting Rights

- Subtheme: African American Voting Rights (1954–1965)

Descriptions of Similar Resources

The Prince Hall Masonic Temple and Tabor Building in Atlanta, Georgia, was completed in 1940, and an addition was constructed in 1955 to house commercial space and additional Masonic offices. The three-story brick building is constructed with arches and decorative banding. In 1963, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., then president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, established the organization's headquarters on the first floor and basement of the building and led a national campaign to end segregation from this space. When the organization first set up in the Temple there were only about five members, including King, Ella Baker, and Andrew Young. However, before long, membership grew and the temple was very busy with civil rights meetings and activities. Above Dr. King's office was WERD Atlanta, the first radio station owned and operated by African Americans in the United States. The radio station broadcasters were well known throughout the country. Dr. King used the proximity of the station and the popularity of the radio personalities to broadcast the message of the civil rights movement throughout the South. Speaking at a 1967 convention of Atlanta radio broadcasters, Dr. King noted that without the involvement of disc jockeys in the South, the civil rights movement would not have advanced as it did. The temple was also a frequent meeting location for other civil rights groups, such as the Atlanta Civic Political League, which championed voting rights, and the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car

Porters, a labor union for African Americans. In 1980, the Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historic Site and Preservation District was established, and in 2017, the national historic site was redesignated as a national historical park and its boundary was expanded to include the Prince Hall Masonic Building (Lord Aeck Sargent 2019).

The Masonic Temple in Birmingham, Alabama, contained a Grand Hall that was used as a formal meeting place for up to 2,000 attendees, and it served as a social and cultural center for the city's African American community during segregation. Built in 1922, this seven-story Renaissance-Revival style building was designed by Robert Taylor and Louis Perry, one of the first accredited African American architectural firms. The full cost of the building's construction was paid for through contributions, making it the most state-of-the-art facility of its time that was built and paid for by African Americans. The Birmingham Masonic Temple housed many offices used by notable African American businesses, professionals, organizations, and civil rights groups, including the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the Southern Negro Youth Congress, and the Right to Vote, among others. In addition, the office of Arthur Shores, who played a major role in numerous court cases regarding voting rights and education during the 1950s and 1960s, was housed on an upper floor of the building (Kent n.d.). The temple is privately owned but located within the park boundary of the Birmingham Civil Rights National Monument, established in January 2017.

Other Sites Associated with Fannie Lou Hamer. Few resources survive that represent the nationally significant work of Fannie Lou Hamer. Her home and place of work in her hometown, where she was intimidated and assaulted and became determined to join the civil rights struggle, have been destroyed. Her burial site does not meet NHL criteria because it is not associated with her productive life and does not reflect the time period when she achieved significance. Other extant sites where Hamer briefly spent time are associated with events that occurred after the period of significance of her contributions to the civil rights movement. The M.W. Stringer Grand Lodge is the only known extant building in which events associated with Fannie Lou Hamer's role in the national civil rights movement occurred.

Suitability Analysis

This section compares the character, quality, quantity, and rarity, combination of resource values, and themes of the historic sites described above to the M.W. Stringer Grand Lodge.

All of the resources under comparison are notable as buildings that created space during the period of segregation for African Americans to meet, work, conduct private business, and organize public movements. All of them housed offices of national civil rights organizations, such as the NAACP and the Masonic Temple in Birmingham, which like the M.W. Stringer Grand Lodge, featured an auditorium to support larger gatherings of these groups. The Prince Hall Masonic Building served as a headquarters for the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, at first a five-member organization that grew to be a nationally significant civil rights organization, not unlike the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party in the M.W. Stringer Grand Lodge. Both organizations played nationally significant roles in the

modern civil rights movement and included members who were themselves nationally significant civil rights leaders.

The M.W. Stringer Grand Lodge, however, has associations that are unlike the other two resources compared here. The lodge is where the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (MFDP) developed the opposition platform that it brought to the 1964 Democratic National Convention, which so threatened the established order of political party conventions that the sitting president—the head of its own party—attempted to sabotage the speech of one of its cofounders and leaders, Fannie Lou Hamer. The MFDP nevertheless struck the first blow against this political convention system and ultimately brought about sweeping change. Four years later, the Mississippi delegation to the Democratic National Convention was integrated. The M.W. Stringer Grand Lodge is the resource that best represents the nationally significant work of the MFDP and of its cofounder, Fannie Lou Hamer.

Conclusion: Summary of Suitability Evaluation

The bold opposition of the MFDP to its own national party during the 1964 Democratic National Convention was an important moment in the modern civil rights movement that led to lasting change in the political convention system and that shined a light on the violence-enforced disenfranchisement of Black voters in Mississippi through the powerful testimony of the party's delegates. In particular, Fannie Lou Hamer's speech at the national convention made her a national heroine of the civil rights movement and the face of the grassroots struggle for voting rights. Currently, there is nowhere the public can visit that adequately represents and explains the historical context and significant details of these events.

The addition of the M.W. Stinger Grand Lodge to the national park system would therefore substantially expand upon and enhance its ability to tell the nationally significant story of the modern civil rights movement by adding a location associated with the development of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party's convention-shattering platform and is the only suitable location associated with the legacy of civil rights leader Fannie Lou Hamer.

Taborian Hospital

Type of Resource Represented by the Site

The resource under consideration is a building in Mound Bayou, Mississippi, that is associated with Dr. T.R.M. Howard, who helped bring national attention to the plight of Black Americans in Mississippi and inspired civil rights activists, including Medgar Evers and Rosa Parks.

Themes or Context in Which the Site Fits

Theme II: Creating Social Institutions and Movements

- Subtheme 1: Clubs and Organizations
- Subtheme 2: Reform Movement

Theme Topic: Racial Violence and Intimidation

Theme Topic: Criminal Injustice

Descriptions of Similar Resources

Friendship Clinic in Mound Bayou. While serving as lead surgeon at the Taborian Hospital, Dr. Howard also ran a private practice across the street. Controversially, he became a leading provider of abortions when it was illegal and was an advocate for legal prostitution. In 1947, this role and his philosophical differences with the Knights and Daughters of Tabor led to their denying Dr. Howard a renewal of his contract. He left the hospital and the following year, in 1948, opened the Friendship Clinic in a small, brick structure across the street. He continued to work at the Friendship Clinic until his departure from Mississippi in 1956. In subsequent years, the building underwent modifications, and a large addition was added on one side. The building is currently not open to the public and its condition is poor. The building's historical interpretation is limited to a roadside historical marker.

Howard Residence and Estate. At this estate in Mound Bayou, Dr. Howard held civil rights rallies that attracted thousands of attendees and featured nationally known speakers and entertainers. His home was converted to an armed compound during the Emmett Till trial and served as a safe haven for trial witnesses and for prominent Black visitors, such as Mamie Till and African American Congressional Representative Charles Diggs. Dr. Howard coordinated an independent investigation into Emmett Till's murder from this home. Today, the residence and estate are no longer extant.

The Pauli Murray Family Home. Located in Durham, North Carolina, the home is significant for its association with Pauli (Anna Pauline) Murray (1910–1985), a ground-breaking civil rights activist, lawyer, educator, writer, and Episcopal priest. Her scholarship and activism were influential in American legal history and the women's and civil rights movements, and US Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsberg, among others, acknowledged her as a mother to feminist legal strategy. In the 1940s Murray pioneered and promoted nonviolent types of activism that would later become mainstays in the Black civil rights movement, and her vision for a civil rights association for women would become the National Organization for Women. Murray did not maintain a long-term residence or office, and the Durham home is the only extant building closely associated with her life. Murray moved away from Durham after 1926, and her nationally significant activities occurred after this. However, the unique support of her family and community set her up for success. The period of significance of the home begins in 1914, when Pauli Murray came to live with her grandparents and her aunts, and ends in 1948, when her aunts moved to Brooklyn to live with Murray. The house is significant under NHL Themes: II Creating Social Institutions and Movements and IV Shaping the Political Landscape. The home is a National Historic Landmark and is currently managed by the Pauli Murray Center for History and Social Justice.

Although not connected to Dr. T.R.M. Howard, the Murray home demonstrates a precedent for selecting a resource to represent the defining contributions of a nationally significant person when it may not have direct associations with their defining work, if there are no other directly associated resources surviving. This will be discussed below.

Suitability Analysis

This section compares the character, quality, quantity, and rarity, combination of resource values, and themes of the historic sites described above to the Taborian Hospital.

Dr. T.R.M. Howard's time in Mound Bayou has national significance for his activities in support of the civil rights movement. The Friendship Clinic is not directly representative of these events and activities because the structure today appears to have lost a considerable amount of integrity due to the subsequent modifications and a large addition. Because of these alternations, the clinic does not convey its historical character. Perhaps the best resource to represent Dr. Howard's legacy would be his Mound Bayou residence and estate. There, he hosted national figures like Thurgood Marshall and Mahalia Jackson and drew thousands of attendees to RCNL civil rights rallies. During the Emmett Till trial, his home was converted to an armed compound and served as a safe haven for trial witnesses and for prominent Black visitors, such as Mamie Till-Mobley and African American Congressional Representative Charles Diggs. From his estate, Howard also coordinated an independent investigation into Emmett Till's murder that would later provide fodder for his speeches in major cities across the country, where he spoke out against the indifference of federal investigators and through which he inspired future civil rights leaders like Rosa Parks. Unfortunately, Dr. Howard's residence and estate is no longer extant and therefore cannot serve to represent his life and legacy.

A surviving resource that is associated with Dr. Howard's achievements in Mound Bayou is the Taborian Hospital. Dr. Howard's quest to uplift the Black residents of the Mississippi Delta through his role as the lead surgeon at this new hospital is the reason he moved from Nashville to Mound Bayou in 1941. Although the hospital is not directly associated with his civil rights work, his work there is clearly linked to his increasing civil rights leadership in the Delta during the 1940s. The Pauli Murray Family Home discussed above similarly demonstrates a precedent as the best representative resource for a nationally significant figure, even when the property is not directly linked to the nationally significant activities, when no other suitable properties are extant.

Dr. Howard's desire to undertake faith-based, community-oriented medical services at the new Taborian Hospital—one of only a few full-service, state-of-the art hospitals that served African Americans in Mississippi—was what drew him away from his prosperous medical practice in Nashville and into the impoverished Mississippi Delta. This decision is a testament to his character and to the qualities that made him a strong advocate for social justice. Beginning with his work at the hospital, Dr. Howard built himself up first into a local community leader and then into a national civil rights leader. The Taborian Hospital is the only surviving resource that represents his legacy in the Mississippi Delta and retains a high degree of integrity.

Conclusion: Summary of Suitability Evaluation

Dr. T.R.M. Howard was a nationally significant civil rights leader who helped bring national attention to the plight of Black Americans in Mississippi and inspired civil rights activists including Medgar Evers and Rosa Parks. Most properties associated with his life and work have lost integrity and cannot convey their historic character. The desire to serve a greater

cause is what drew Dr. Howard to the Taborian Hospital in Mound Bayou, and it was while working there that he established himself as a community leader who would later become a national civil rights leader. The Taborian Hospital retains integrity and is the best surviving resource to represent Dr. Howard's life and legacy.

Currently, there is nowhere the public can visit to physically connect with Dr. Howard's life and civil rights work. The addition of the Taborian Hospital to the national park system would therefore substantially expand upon and enhance its ability to tell the nationally significant story of the modern civil rights movement by providing a locus to represent and interpret the legacy of Dr. T.R.M. Howard.

Isaiah T. Montgomery House

Type of Resource Represented by the Site

The resource under consideration is a building in Mound Bayou, Mississippi, the former residence of Isaiah T. Montgomery, who founded and led this unique all-Black township.

Themes or Context in Which the Site Fits

Theme Topic: Era of Jim Crow

Theme Topic: Migration and Movement

Descriptions of Similar Resources

Farish Street National Register Historic District. This historic district is located in the city of Jackson, Mississippi, and represents a community built by formerly enslaved African Americans. Farish Street was a self-contained, economic hub of Jackson's African American community. The district held the whole spectrum of businesses, all of which were African American owned. These businesses included five and dime stores, dress shops, florists, medical care services (doctor offices, a hospital), legal services, restaurants, funeral homes, a movie theater, churches, a furniture store, community centers, and salons. The district was and continues to be the home of Jackson College (now Jackson State University). Ownership of the historic district is a mix of private and public spaces, including residential buildings, commercial businesses, and institutional buildings (City of Jackson 2000).

Reconstruction Era National Historical Park. Beaufort, South Carolina, contains a collection of resources that are perhaps the single best representation of the political, economic, organizational, and religious transformations of the Reconstruction era. When federal troops occupied Beaufort and neighboring Sea Islands in 1862, the area became one of the first places in the United States where formerly enslaved people began integrating themselves into free society as a community. Beaufort's residents built long-lasting political, religious, and educational institutions that survive today. Many of Beaufort's surviving structures are associated with this period and its most prominent residents, such as Robert Smalls. For these reasons, Beaufort was chosen by the US president to represent the national themes and stories of the Reconstruction era and designated, along with nearby Penn Center on St. Helena Island and Camp Saxton in nearby Port Royal, as the Reconstruction Era National Monument in 2017 (redesignated the Reconstruction Era National Historical Park

in 2019). The area also contributed to the national modern civil rights movement. The Penn Center served as a training site for the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, including Martin Luther King, Jr., between 1964 and 1967. The Beaufort Historic District and the Penn Center are designated NHL districts. The Reconstruction Era National Historical Park is administered by the National Park Service.

Josephine City Historic District. The Josephine City Historic District near Berryville, Virginia, was a community of African Americans that exemplified collective land buying and community building by freed people. “Created in 1870 by a group of former slaves who purchased land from a white plantation owner, the community stood apart from the neighboring town of Berryville until the second half of the twentieth century. A school, a church, several homes, and a fellowship hall date to the 1880s and 1890s” (Judd 2013). Ownership of the historic district is a mix of private and public (local) properties, including family homes, churches, and schools (Kalbian and Peters 2015).

Suitability Analysis

This section compares the character, quality, quantity, and rarity, combination of resource values, and themes of the historic sites described above to the Isaiah T. Montgomery House.

The Farish Street National Register Historic District is comparable to Mound Bayou as a community that was also built by former enslaved African Americans. Farish Street was a self-contained, economic hub of Jackson’s African American Community and included a whole spectrum of businesses, all of which were African American owned. However, it is not the sort of rural, isolated town that characterizes Mound Bayou. Beyond economic freedom, a significant aspect of the story of Mound Bayou is that of physical separation from White communities for the sake of physical security, which was important during the life of Isaiah T. Montgomery and also later during the Emmett Till trial, as discussed under the Taborian Hospital section. For this reason, the Farish Street district in Jackson tells a different sort of story than Mound Bayou.

Upon the capture of Beaufort, South Carolina, during the Civil War, US troops and agents and religious missionaries began supporting education and economic autonomy among the freed people who were living there and on the nearby Sea Islands. In contrast, Mound Bayou was founded in 1887 by and for Black Americans, as Reconstruction was giving way to the Jim Crow era. Whereas Beaufort was bolstered by the federal Freedman’s Bureau, the new town of Mound Bayou did not have the benefit of government assistance. The geographic and historical contexts of coastal South Carolina (for Beaufort) and the Mississippi Delta (for Mound Bayou) were also notably different during the late 19th century, as each responded to their own individual political, economic, and social contexts of their ages. The geographic contexts of Virginia (for Josephine City) and of Mound Bayou likewise stand out as notably different.

Mound Bayou is an example of a city established by and for African Americans during the Jim Crow era in Mississippi. The 2017 *NPS NHL Theme Study on the Reconstruction Era* identifies other all-Black towns established during Reconstruction, however it identifies no other towns exactly like Mound Bayou when considering the city’s insular protection from the white violence and suppression that was commonplace elsewhere in the Mississippi Delta

and across the South. As many properties associated with shaping Reconstruction are located in urban environments, Mound Bayou’s rural isolation stands out (NPS 2017, 102–118).

Mound Bayou’s very existence had lasting impacts in the Delta, in Mississippi, and nationally. However, today, most of the buildings from the town’s period of national significance, when it was a thriving small city in the 1900s–1910s, have been demolished or lost. One key exception is the Isaiah T. Montgomery House, the home of Mound Bayou’s founder and first mayor, Isaiah T. Montgomery. The Montgomery Home—already designated as a national historic landmark—is a rare survivor from the period of the town’s early prosperity. Thus, while the integrity of Mound Bayou’s early and most important period is no longer intact, the Montgomery House, individually, represents the town’s national significance.

Conclusion: Summary of Suitability Evaluation

The Isaiah T. Montgomery House is the best surviving resource to represent Mound Bayou—especially its early period of prosperity—and the life and legacy of its founder. The addition of the house to the national park system would therefore substantially expand upon and enhance its ability to tell the nationally significant history of the struggle for African American civil rights in the Jim Crow era by providing a locus to represent and interpret the important history of Mound Bayou and the legacy of Isaiah T. Montgomery.

Lyceum – The Circle Historic District

Type of Resource Represented by the Site

The resource under consideration is a district comprising an oval, parklike, treed landscape surrounded by a group of eight academic buildings located at the University of Mississippi (“Ole Miss”) campus in Oxford, Mississippi. The landscape was the site of a riot in opposition to desegregation of the university.

Themes or Context in Which the Site Fits

NHL Theme IV: Shaping the Political Landscape

- Subtheme 2: Government Institutions

Civil Rights Theme: Racial Desegregation in Public Education

- Subtheme: School Desegregation and Massive Resistance (1951–1967)

Theme Topic: Racial Violence and Intimidation

Theme Topic: Criminal Injustice

Descriptions of Similar Resources

Little Rock Central High School National Historic Site, Little Rock, Arkansas. In the fall of 1957, Central High School in Little Rock became a symbol of state resistance to school desegregation when nine African American students encountered massive resistance to their enrollment at the all-White school. In direct violation of the US Supreme Court’s recent desegregation ruling, Governor Orval E. Faubus ordered the National Guard to prevent the

African American students from entering the school, and the soldiers were joined by a mob of white segregationists. In response, President Dwight D. Eisenhower commanded federal troops to protect the nine students as they entered the school in an event that captured national media attention. These federal soldiers were led by Major General Edwin A. Walker, a staunch segregationist who regretted supporting the nine African American students and who would later, as a private citizen, incite a mob to violence against James Meredith at the University of Mississippi. Governor Faubus later countered President Eisenhower by closing Little Rock's schools. This incident was the first fundamental test of America's resolve to enforce African American civil rights in the face of massive Southern defiance during the period following the *Brown v. Board of Education* decisions. President Eisenhower's response to Arkansas's intransigence made him the first president since the post-Civil War Reconstruction period to use federal troops in support of African American civil rights (Ford 2003; Ford 2007; NPS n.d.[b]). The high school is currently part of the Little Rock Central High School National Historic Site and is administered by the National Park Service.

Foster Auditorium, University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa, Alabama. In June 1963, the University of Alabama became the center of national attention when Alabama Governor George Wallace initially defied a federal order to comply with desegregation in what has become known as the "stand in the schoolhouse door" incident. Wallace had become governor in 1962, partly through his strong and consistent promises to defy court orders mandating racial integration "even to the point of standing in the schoolhouse door in person" to block them (Ford 2003). Previous attempts to integrate had occurred. In 1956, Autherine Lucy, with backing from the courts and the NAACP, became the first African American student to enroll at the University of Alabama, but university officials expelled her a few days later after mob violence erupted. African American students continued to apply, and in 1963, James Hood and Vivian Malone were accepted and poised to register. President John F. Kennedy and his Attorney General Robert Kennedy prepared for an inevitable showdown with Governor Wallace. On June 11, a militarized but carefully choreographed performance unfolded at the entrance to Foster Auditorium, where students registered for classes. All parties concerned had learned a lesson from the violence at the University of Mississippi the year before. Hood and Malone arrived on campus in a motorcade with Assistant Attorney General Nicholas Katzenbach and a detail of federal officers. State troopers formed a perimeter around Foster Auditorium and took up positions on the roof. Governor Wallace, as promised, personally stood at the entrance to bar Hood and Malone from entering. While the students remained in the car, Katzenbach tried to convince the defiant governor to step aside. President Kennedy, apprised of these developments as they unfolded, signed an executive order that sent Brigadier General Henry Graham and the 31st Dixie Division of the Alabama National Guard to Tuscaloosa. General Graham met with General Taylor Hardin, a confidant of George Wallace, and the two came to agreement that would end the standoff. With troop carriers and armed infantrymen standing by in military formation, General Graham approached the auditorium entrance and asked Governor Wallace to stand down. After a brief speech, he stepped aside and left the campus. James Hood and Vivian Malone entered Foster Auditorium and registered for classes.

The ultimately peaceful resolution of the "stand in the schoolhouse door" incident marked a significant departure in the way the executive branch of the federal government used its

powers in the civil rights crisis. The previously massive resistance to civil rights—exemplified one year prior by a violent and deadly riot at the University of Mississippi—had been reduced to a single man standing symbolically in a doorway. Furthermore, the incident galvanized support for civil rights legislation. Approximately four hours after Hood and Malone registered for classes, President Kennedy delivered a nationally televised address in which he informed the nation of the events that had just transpired and made a moral case for racial equality. A week later, President Kennedy submitted a comprehensive civil rights bill that became the foundation of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, instituting a coordinated effort between all branches of federal government to protect civil rights by authorizing the federal government to withhold federal funds and file suits against segregated school districts. These important events are represented by Foster Auditorium, currently a National Historic Landmark that is owned and still actively used by the University of Alabama. A historical marker stands outside the building to identify it as a national historical landmark (Ford 2003, 2007).

Suitability Analysis

This section compares the character, quality, quantity, and rarity, combination of resource values, and themes of the historic sites described above to Lyceum – The Circle Historic District.

Lyceum – The Circle Historic District, Little Rock Central High School, and Foster Auditorium at the University of Alabama are all resources representative of the massive resistance phase (1956–1964) of Southern desegregation. Federal responses to violence against African Americans and resistance to civil rights changed dramatically during this period, and these three resources each represent very different moments along this transition, each of them crucial and defining in a unique way. The event at Little Rock Central High School was the first test of national resolve and required President Eisenhower to use federal troops to enforce a decision of the courts. After this, in the face of federal intervention, white segregationists in southern states increasingly turned to defiance in the form of mob violence.

This violence reached its apogee at the University of Mississippi in 1962. The differences in the details between the University of Mississippi and the University of Alabama outlined above are remarkable. In both cases, the governor of a state loudly and consistently encouraged defiance of the federal courts and resistance to integration. But in the aftermath of the desegregation of the University of Mississippi, six cars had been set on fire; hundreds more vehicles damaged; hundreds of people injured, including 160 federal marshals; several hundred arrested; and two people had been murdered. The “Battle of Oxford” was declared the most violent and bloodiest event involving school desegregation in the history of the United States. According to the Office of the Chief of Military History, the official count of regular army and National Guard soldiers alerted, deployed, and committed was 30,656, at that time possibly the largest military buildup for a single disturbance to date (Scheips 2005). One year later at the University of Alabama, in contrast, a National Guard division stood by neatly in formation as a state governor, an assistant US Attorney General, and two Army generals performed a choreographed negotiation before the governor stepped aside and Hood and Malone were able to peacefully register for classes (Ford 2003, 2007). Lyceum –

The Circle Historic District uniquely represents the end of violent massive resistance to school desegregation (Ford 2007).

Conclusion: Summary of Suitability Evaluation

Lyceum – The Circle Historic District is nationally significant for associations with racial desegregation of public schools. The murderous violence that occurred on the night that James Meredith came to campus to register for classes represents the highwater mark of massive White resistance to the integration of public schools. This is evidenced by the fact that less than a year later in June 1963, Governor Wallace’s resistance to integration at the University of Alabama amounted to a solitary, symbolic stand in the doorway of the registration building.

“The Battle of Oxford” at the University of Mississippi is a crucial event in the history of massive resistance to integration and in federal responses to it. There are no more suitable resources to represent this important moment in the overall history of the modern civil rights movement than the battlefield where the event occurred and the registration building which the federal marshals defended. Lyceum – The Circle Historic District provides the public with a powerful sense of place for the event and affords opportunities to explain the historical context and significant details. The addition of Lyceum – The Circle Historic District to the national park system would therefore substantially expand upon and enhance its ability to tell the nationally significant story of the modern civil rights movement.

Summary of Suitability Findings for All Properties

All of the properties that met SRS criterion 1 for national significance also meet SRS criterion 2 for suitability because the study’s suitability analysis demonstrates that each property is not already represented in the national park system or protected in similar ways by other entities or organizations. Therefore, each of these properties is further evaluated in this study under SRS Criterion 3 – Evaluation of Feasibility.

EVALUATION OF FEASIBILITY

An area or site that is nationally significant and meets suitability criteria must also meet feasibility criteria to qualify as a potential addition to the national park system. To be feasible as a new unit or as an addition to an existing unit of the national park system, an area must be of sufficient size and appropriate configuration to ensure sustainable resource protection and visitor enjoyment (taking into account current and potential impacts from sources beyond proposed park boundaries) and be capable of efficient administration by the National Park Service at a reasonable cost.

Three individual sites and three districts are further evaluated under SRS criterion 3 for feasibility in this section:

- Emmett Till sites (district with 11 contributing sites)
- 1964 Freedom Summer sites (district with 7 contributing sites)
- M.W. Stringer Grand Lodge

- Taborian Hospital
- Isaiah T. Montgomery House
- Lyceum – The Circle Historic District

For a site to be considered feasible as a new unit of the national park system, a variety of factors must be considered, including the following:

- size and boundary configurations of the site
- land ownership, local planning, and potential land uses
- existing and potential threats
- access and public enjoyment potential
- public support (including landowners)
- economic and socioeconomic impacts
- costs associated with acquisition, development, and operation

These feasibility factors are used in this study as an analytical tool to support this study’s analysis of the hypothetical scenario of a new unit of the national park system being established at or including these sites. However, this study’s analysis and findings do not guarantee the establishment of a national park unit or future funding for any NPS actions based on the information presented in this chapter. Even if a national park unit is established, while new units share common elements, each unit requires a distinct organizational structure, which could be different from the framework analyzed here. The organizational structure of an established national park unit may be influenced by that unit’s enabling legislation or proclamation, its size, resources, scope and delivery of public programming, and its location. Further, national park units are not considered operational (i.e., prepared to welcome visitors, preserving resources, and providing programming and services on a regular basis) until they receive an operating appropriation from Congress, which can take years. The evaluation of the feasibility of establishing a new national park unit considers all of the above factors in the context of current NPS management. Evaluation of these factors under SRS criterion 3 must also consider if the National Park Service can feasibly manage the proposed new park unit, given current agencywide limitations and constraints.

As part of the special resource study process, the National Park Service conducted two site visits in 2019 and 2022, during which the study team gathered information on the SRS criteria for feasibility and the need for direct NPS management. Each fieldwork trip included viewing the study sites to inform ongoing research and analysis per SRS criteria. During all on-site visits, property owners (or delegates), local officials and representatives, and other interested stakeholders were consulted for feedback and site information. Information related to the current condition of site resources was collected, and cost estimates were developed based on available information collected during these site visits, as well as additional data, such as construction documents and drawings. These cost estimates accounted for potential

one-time facility improvements, if included in a potential new national park unit. Gross cost estimates are presented in fiscal year 2022 dollar amounts and include base construction, federal management, contingency, and design and compliance costs.

Pursuant to US *Department of the Interior Department (DOI) Departmental Manual* part 602 chapter 2 (602 DM 2), the National Park Service is required to conduct a preacquisition environmental site assessment (PA-ESA) on each site prior to acquisition to determine the likelihood of the presence and extent of hazardous substance-related or other environmental liabilities. This process is intended to minimize the agency's exposure to environmental liabilities and potential response costs under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA), as amended, 42 USC 9601, et seq., Oil Pollution Act, as amended, 33 USC 2701, et seq., and other federal and state authorities.

For any property proposed for acquisition in this study, the National Park Service would conduct a phase 1 PA-ESA at each site pursuant to 602 DM 2 prior to acquisition. Based on the results of the analysis, some select sites may require additional investigation, a phase 2 PA-ESA, and, potentially, some may require remediation depending on the findings. Estimates of investigation and remediation costs are derived from NPS data and methodology. Variables considered include site type and complexity, contaminants, size, affected media, and average NPS costs for similar sites. Remediation costs for sites of lower complexity, including but not limited to those with lead-based paint and asbestos contamination, may cost approximately \$50,000 or more per site. Remediation of contaminated sites of higher complexity may cost up to \$1 million or more per site.

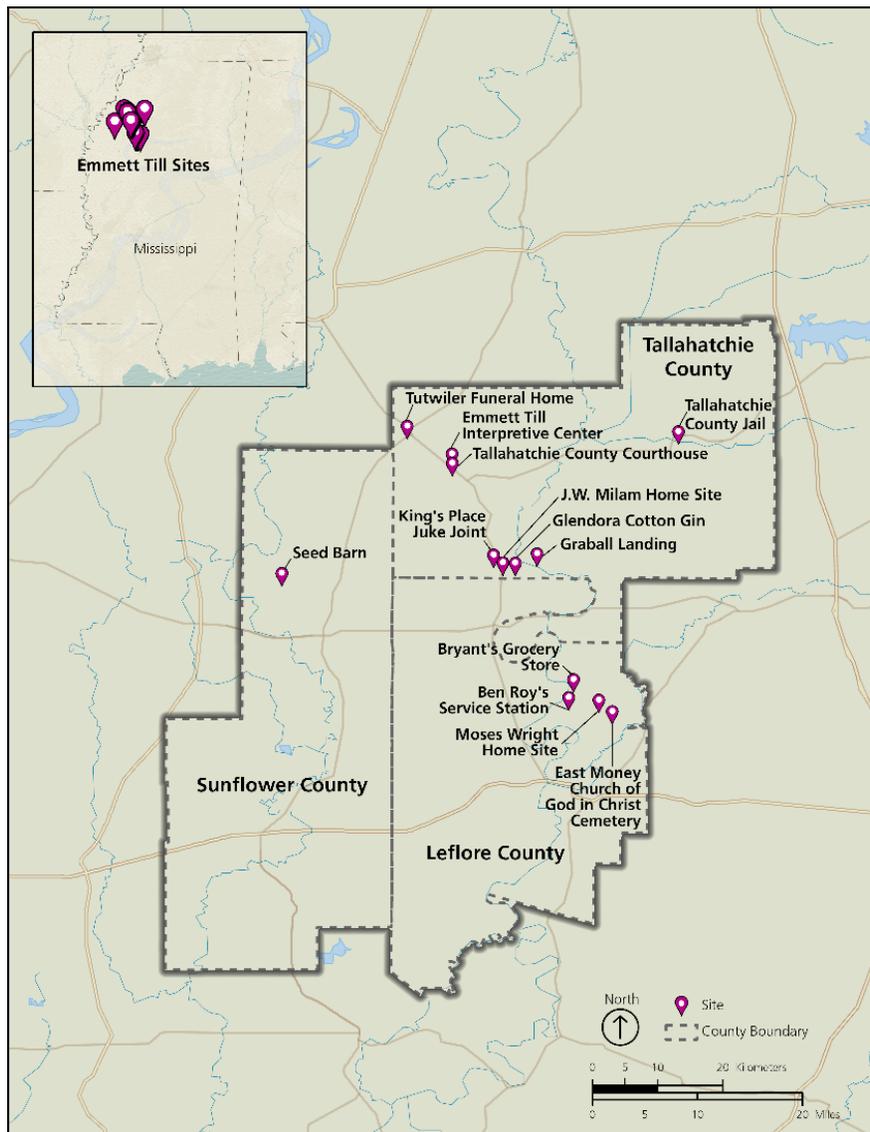
The cost of the phase 1 PA-ESA work is included in the total cost of acquisition for each site proposed for acquisition in the study. However, any site-specific remediation costs would be identified and estimated after completing the phase 1 PA-ESA and any other additional investigations prior to acquisition. These remediation costs are unknown based on the scope of this study. However, per DOI policy, all remediation would occur prior to acquisition of the property.

Each study site, including each contributing site of the districts, are evaluated individually according to the feasibility factors, which when taken combined, inform the study's finding of feasibility for that site. Each site's feasibility finding is presented at the conclusion of each site's analysis. There are three options for the feasibility findings: the site is *feasible* as a potential national park unit or part of a national park unit; the site is *not feasible* (or infeasible) as a potential national park unit or part of a national park unit; or the site is *conditionally feasible* in cases where there is a possibility that the reason a site is currently infeasible could change in the future. Sites noted to be conditionally feasible could be reevaluated at a future time if their circumstances change.

Evaluation of Feasibility by Site

1. Emmett Till Sites

The Emmett Till sites include 11 individual sites that span several counties in the Mississippi Delta region: 3 sites in and around the unincorporated community of Money in Leflore County; 4 sites in and around the village of Glendora in Tallahatchie County; 1 site in the town of Sumner in Tallahatchie County; 1 site in the town of Tutwiler in Tallahatchie County; 1 site in the city of Charleston in Tallahatchie County; and 1 site near the city of Drew in Sunflower County. Map 6 shows the geographical relationships between these sites. A feasibility analysis of each contributing site is described below, followed by a summary of the sites collectively.



MAP 6. EMMETT TILL SITES IN LEFLORE, SUNFLOWER, AND TALLAHATCHIE COUNTIES

Contributing Sites: Bryant's Grocery Store Site and Ben Roy's Service Station (Money, Leflore County, Mississippi)

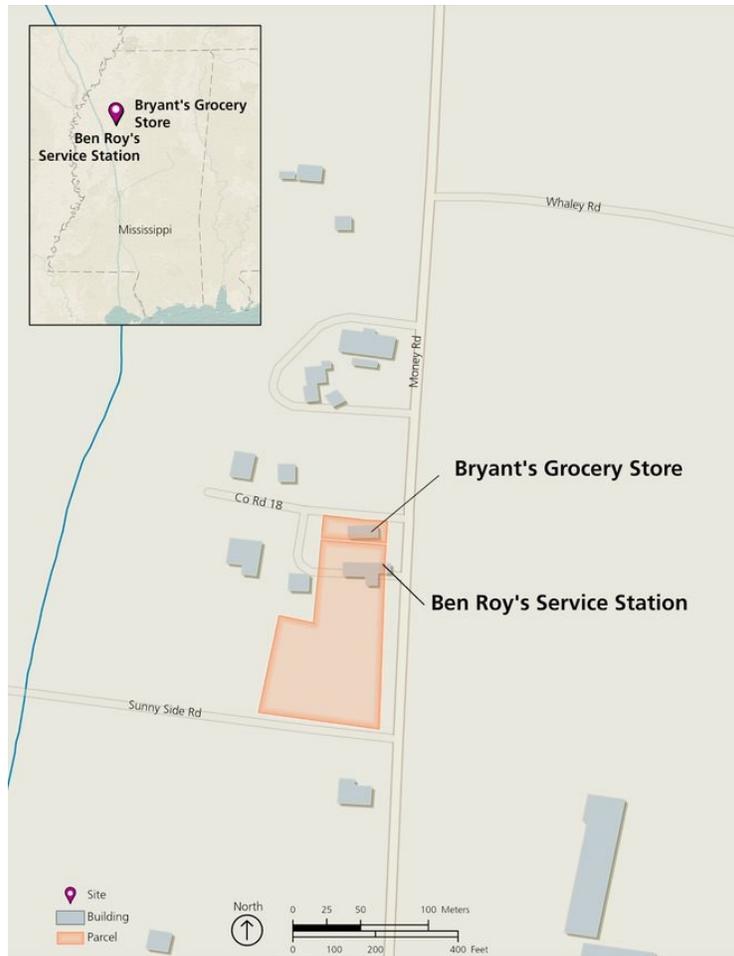
The following feasibility evaluation includes both the Bryant's Grocery Store site and the adjacent Ben Roy's Service Station site. The rationale for evaluating these two sites together is that the acquisition of the Ben Roy's Service Station site is necessary for adequate care, management, and safe visitor access to the historic Bryant's Grocery Store.

Size and Boundary Configurations

The remains of the two-story Bryant's Grocery Store are on a 0.18-acre legal parcel. The site is a square lot located between the main street of Money Road and County Road 24, which is a secondary one-way street that sees little traffic. County Road 24 passes one residential property and ends at the Riverside Baptist Church adjacent to the Tallahatchie River. Although this site is situated within the legal subdivision of a larger approximately 30-acre property, the 0.18-acre parcel on which the store site stands is sufficient for the store's management and preservation as a structural ruin. However, the 0.18-acre parcel is not large enough to provide appropriate parking and visitor contact/access to the site. Therefore, inclusion of the adjacent Ben Roy's Service Station site in the site boundary is also proposed.

The Ben Roy's Service Station site sits on a 2.0-acre legal parcel immediately adjacent to the Bryant's Grocery Store site. The property is situated within the larger subdivision of approximately 30 acres, which is privately owned by the same owner as the Bryant's Grocery Store. The property borders both the main street of Money Road and County Road 559. The 2.0-acre parcel provides ample space to develop parking, visitor services, and access for both Ben Roy's Service Station and Bryant's Grocery Store.

An appropriate boundary size and configuration for the Bryant's Grocery Store site would combine the store parcel with the adjacent Ben Roy's Service Station's 2.0-acre parcel for a total 2.18-acre area to preserve resources, provide access, support park operations, and provide a positive visitor experience (see map 7).



MAP 7. BRYANT'S GROCERY STORE AND BEN ROY'S SERVICE STATION SITE OVERVIEW, LEFLORE COUNTY

Land Ownership, Local Planning, and Potential Land Uses

Money is an unincorporated community located along an active railroad line in Leflore County, Mississippi. The Tallahatchie River also runs through the town parallel with the railroad line and county roads. The rural community of Money was originally developed for cotton cultivation and currently has fewer than 100 residents. A majority of the land in Money is used for agriculture and farming. An active church (the Riverside Baptist Church) and one single-family residential home are in the immediate proximity of the Bryant's Grocery Store site. The rest of the land surrounding the property in Money is private property and is primarily used for agriculture. Large grain silos and a cotton gin are visible in the distance on an adjacent parcel.

Both the Bryant's Grocery Store site and Ben Roy's Service Station site are owned by the same owners. The service station building (0.15 acres) is operating under an active preservation and maintenance covenant held by the State of Mississippi, which is eligible from September 10, 2011, to September 10, 2036. The purpose of the covenant is to ensure the protection and preservation of the architectural and historical integrity of the property and the State of Mississippi's investment in the property. The property cannot be altered,

destroyed, or impaired during that period without written approval from the Mississippi Department of Archives and History.

Existing and Potential Threats to Resources

The Bryant's Grocery Store site is a brick, two-story building that was built around 1910 but stands mostly in ruins today. The structural condition of its remaining brick walls is fragile. Largely missing or collapsed are its roof, second floor, interior walls and finishes, and the building's front facade. The remaining portions are large sections of brick-masonry exterior walls, which are covered in thick vegetation and heavy vines. This vegetation virtually obscures the structure from view when they are foliated outside of the winter months.

The store's roof was severely damaged from storms related to Hurricane Katrina in 2005, and its loss precipitated the building's extreme state of deterioration. The remaining structural walls will continue to be vulnerable to further damage from future hurricanes and tornadoes. The existing condition of the building presents a significant threat to site integrity and a potential threat for visitor safety. The cost of necessary improvements to stabilize the structure to a safe condition are identified in the one-time development estimate below.

Ben Roy's Service Station is in stable condition. The building was restored and rehabilitated in 2011 with funding from a grant from the State of Mississippi. An underground fuel tank lies below the service station structure, and it may require chemical remediation to remove hazardous substances from the environment for visitors and staff health and safety. The need for remediation has not been formally evaluated but if required, it must occur before acquisition of the property, per DOI policy. An additional potential threat to visitor safety is high-speed vehicle traffic on Money Road and from passing trains from the adjacent railroad track. The road and the active train line also produce significant background noise at times which would be disruptive to verbal interpretation at the site in outdoor settings.

The surrounding undeveloped lands reflect the community's agricultural setting and character from the time of the 1955 events associated with Emmett Till. Although there are no current plans, possible future development on those lands could impact the cultural viewshed beyond its boundary outward to the surrounding, rural, undeveloped farmland that is so evocative of its historic character today. However, development on those adjacent lands was not identified to be an imminent threat by the community.

Access

Due to the rural location, these sites are typically accessed by vehicle. The interior of the Bryant's Grocery Store structure is not currently open to visitors. Visitor access to the interior of the Bryant's Grocery Store site (e.g., within the brick shell ruin), is not anticipated in the future, even if there is a potential designation as a national park unit, due to the safety concerns of the fragile structure. The desired state of long-term preservation (such as stabilization or clearing the site) has not yet been determined; however, for the purposes of the feasibility analysis, stabilization of the structure is proposed. The feasible level of access to the site would likely be limited to the outer edges of the site so that a person could view the structure from nearby or within the public right-of-way along the roadway, which is how the public currently experiences the site.

Although Ben Roy's Service Station is not currently open to the public, there is potential for visitor public access to this site and the adjacent grocery store. The front portion of the building could serve as a visitor contact station for the overall site. Accessing the inside of the building requires a person to walk up three steps, indicating accessibility improvements would be required at the entrance. A parking lot would be needed to safely accommodate visitors and provide direct access to the site. The site has a suitable space for developing a parking lot on the south section of the Ben Roy's Service Station property bordering County Road 559. The lot would provide space for approximately 2 buses and 12 vehicles.

Public Enjoyment Potential

The Bryant's Grocery Store building's exterior has a high potential for visual value and interpretation without making the interior accessible to visitors. The main contribution the site offers to a potential national park unit is the evocative character of the Bryant's Grocery Store as a ruin. The store site is the place where the alleged social transgression that led to the crime of Emmett Till's lynching occurred. Because of this, people are drawn to visit and view it from the public right-of-way to gain an understanding of its larger meaning within the rural context of Money, Mississippi. Many visitors describe their experience of viewing the Bryant's Grocery Store ruin as a highly compelling and moving experience. Because of this, people come to the site from across the nation and even internationally to gain an immersive firsthand experience that seeing the store offers, even in its ruined state. Additionally, the setting in Money surrounding the store site generally reflects the village's quiet, agricultural character from the time of the event, which provides valuable environmental context for the history of Emmett Till's visit in the Mississippi Delta.

The Ben Roy's Service Station provides adequate opportunities to support interpretation and other visitor services for the adjacent Bryant's Grocery Store site. The building's interior store space at the front of the building could be used to support visitor services, while offices for NPS operations and management could be housed in the rooms at the rear of the building. The 2-acre legal parcel includes a suitable area to build a parking lot for visitors to safely access both sites.

Public Support (including Landowners)

The Bryant's Grocery Store site and the Ben Roy's Service Station site are currently owned by the same property owner, who supports a potential national park unit designation and is willing to sell the property. The owner is maintaining the Ben Roy's Service Station under an active preservation and maintenance covenant for Mississippi Landmark designation.

The general level of public support for the site's inclusion in a potential national park unit varies and reflects a sensitivity surrounding the history of Emmett Till's lynching in the Delta that persists today. Some members of the public, both locally and nationally, have expressed dismay that the site has fallen into its extreme state of disrepair and ruin instead of repairing and maintaining the site over time. They have expressed frustrations that property owners have invested resources into preserving and maintaining the adjacent Ben Roy's Service Station, while the Bryant's Grocery Store site has not been preserved. These members of the public are concerned neglect of the Bryant's Grocery Store site constitutes an active form of erasing the history of Emmett Till's brutal lynching in the community. However, there is no

dispute of the historical significance of the Bryant's Grocery Store and the desire for preservation of what remains.

Concerns were raised by members of the public regarding the potential sale of the Bryant's Grocery Store property, particularly if the sale price exceeds the current market value. These concerns are noted here for the record. This study's analysis makes no assumptions or projections about the property's value beyond the property value described below.

Costs Associated with Acquisition, Development, and Operation

Based on comparable local land values, the estimate for the acquisition of the Bryant's Grocery Store site is \$80,000, and the estimate for acquisition of the Ben Roy's Service Station property is \$210,000. The cost estimate for one-time site development of the combined Bryant's Grocery Store site and Ben Roy's Service Station property is approximately \$5.1 million. The Bryant's Grocery Store is considered a structural ruin, and it includes aging infrastructure for plumbing, electric, and other utilities that previously serviced the grocery store and the residential apartment that once existed within the building. Based on its current condition, the study finds it infeasible to fully restore and reopen Bryant's Grocery Store site for visitor facilities; however, stabilizing and preserving the building to create a visitor experience for viewing the building's exterior has been determined to be feasible.

The estimate for developing the potential supporting facility, Ben Roy's Service Station, includes site rehabilitation for visitor and administrative purposes and site development, such as a parking lot, restrooms, site security, and the development and installation of interpretive waysides. The service station building will need interior rehabilitation to be suitable for visitor services and NPS operations and to meet Architectural Barriers Act Accessibility Standards (ABAAS). Additional costs include the development of an adequate sewage system to accommodate visitor use. The "Existing and Potential Threats to Resources" section above describes an underground fuel tank in the vicinity of the service station that may require remediation to remove hazardous substances from the environment for visitors and staff health and safety. Potential costs of fuel tank remediation were not included in this estimate for site development, because the National Park Service has not formally evaluated whether remediation will be required. Refer to tables 1a–1c for a summary of site development and associated costs that would be required for these sites and appendix E for a detailed list of anticipated improvements.

Feasibility Finding

The Bryant's Grocery Store site is feasible as a historic site within a potential national park unit for Emmett Till sites. This finding assumes that the former store structural ruin would be stabilized, creating a visitor experience to view the exterior of the building along with interpretive waysides and materials. The interior would not be accessed by visitors due to safety concerns for visitors. The Ben Roy's Service Station is also feasible as a supporting site for NPS operations and visitation of the adjacent Bryant's Grocery Store site.

Contributing Site: Moses Wright Home Site (Greenwood, Leflore County, Mississippi)

Size and Boundary Configurations

The Moses Wright Home site is on a 1.75-acre legal parcel. The proposed site boundary aligns with the legal parcel boundary, which forms a trapezoidal shape fronting County Road 542 (Whaley Road) in rural Leflore County, Mississippi (see map 8). The home site consists of a single-family dwelling at the center of the parcel and several small outbuildings adjacent to the home. Several structures farther from the home at the parcel edges appear to be used for storage or sheds. Several large trees are on the property, including a very large tree immediately adjacent to the home dwelling that, upon examining historical photos of the Moses Wright home site in 1955, may have been the same tree that stands today, though this possibility has not been confirmed. The single-family home on the property today is a replacement of the Wright’s house, which is no longer extant.



MAP 8. MOSES WRIGHT HOME SITE OVERVIEW, LEFLORE COUNTY

Land Ownership, Local Planning, and Potential Land Uses

The Moses Wright Home site is privately owned and currently used as a residential home and landscape. The property is less than 3 miles to the east of Money, situated along County Road 542. The land surrounding the site is predominantly privately owned and is used for agriculture, specifically as planted fields. No public spaces are near this property. County Road 542 does not include a shoulder at the margins of the roadbed. Little potential land use is evident beyond the property's current function as a residence and agricultural land.

Existing and Potential Threats to Resources

The landscape surrounding the site currently reflects the rural, undeveloped agricultural character from the time of the 1955 lynching of Emmett Till. As such, future development on this property or on the adjacent farmland could threaten the integrity of feeling and association that is closely associated with Moses Wright's home and the surrounding land's use for farming in 1955. However, development on these lands has not been identified as an immediate threat. If this changes in the future, it could compromise the broader visitor experience and understanding of the site's historical setting. An additional potential threat to potential visitor safety is the relatively high-speed vehicle traffic on County Road 542.

Access

Currently, no public access to the Moses Wright Home site exists because it is used exclusively as a private residence. The public cannot enter the site, but they can drive by the property and view it from County Road 542. There is a lack of vehicular access from the county road that the property faces because the road does not have a shoulder wide enough to accommodate a pulloff or parking—therefore, the public cannot stop and look at the site from the public right-of-way while driving past it. Moreover, since the property is used as a private residence, the current owners discourage stopping in front of the property to view it for consideration of their privacy. Reports have documented inappropriate uses of the property, such as buses attempting to turn around using the site's private driveway.

Given its proximity to Bryant's Grocery Store, the site has easy access from Money down County Road 542. If the property were to be acquired in the future as a potential national park unit, visitor access would need to be developed. Adequate space appears to exist for this type of development off County Road 542, either on the Moses Wright Home site or an adjacent property.

Public Enjoyment Potential

The public enjoyment potential for the Moses Wright Home site is low due to the site's private use and ownership and its lack of public access. Viewing the property while driving along the county road is difficult but is currently promoted by a privately developed interpretive smart phone application (app) that identifies the location of many sites associated with the lynching of Emmett Till, including this property. The current virtual approach appears to be the maximum potential of public understanding and interpretation available for this property at this time. Promotion of access to the site, such as stopping or entering the private property, is inappropriate and would be discouraged unless or until the

property could be acquired by the National Park Service as part of a multisite park interpreting Emmett Till.

Public Support (including Landowners)

The current property owner is not supportive of a national park designation that includes this property and does not have an interest in selling the property at this time. Beyond the current wishes of the property owner, a lack of public feedback to the study team about this site specifically indicates that there is not a high level of public awareness about its existence. However, the site is identified and promoted within the smart phone app described above. Public interest in this site appears to be relatively low when compared with the other sites associated with the Till lynching in the region.

Costs Associated with Acquisition, Development, and Operation

Costs associated with acquisition, park development, and operations were not developed for this site due to lack of owner support for inclusion of this site in a potential national park. If conditions change in the future related to the owner's willingness to sell to the government, there would be additional one-time costs to acquire the property, provide appropriate access, and develop site interpretation.

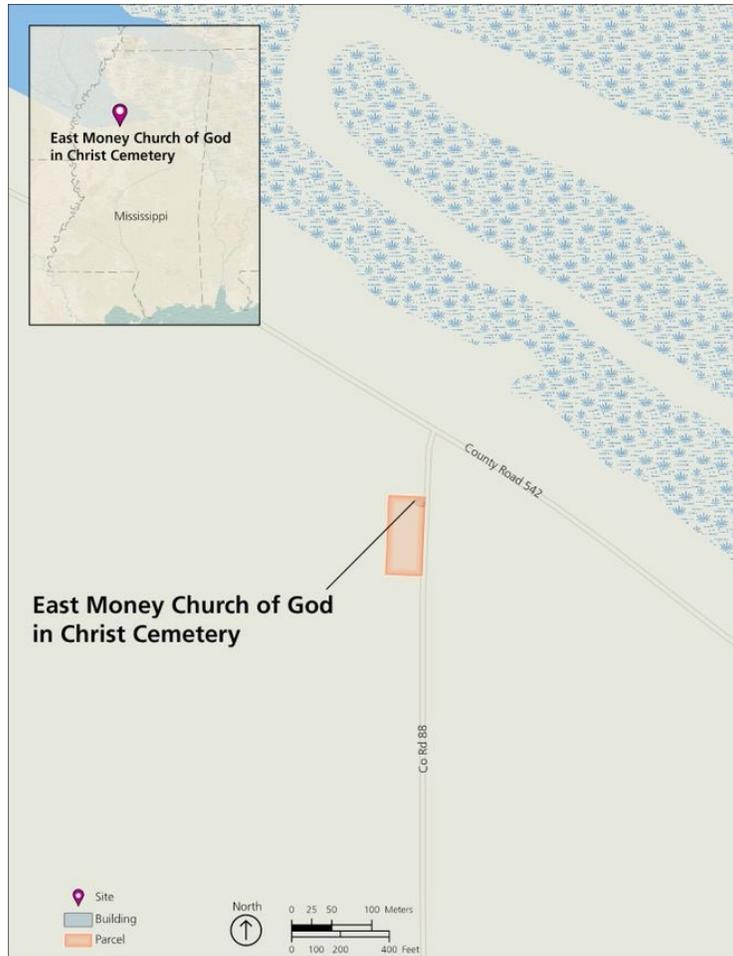
Feasibility Finding

The Moses Wright Home site is currently not feasible due to the property owner's wishes to keep it as a private, residential property that is not accessible to the public. However, if this circumstance changes in the future related to the owner's willingness to sell to the government, the feasibility of the site could be reconsidered. Therefore, a finding of "conditional feasibility" applies to the Moses Wright Home site based on the potential for future acquisition if the property owner becomes willing to sell at another time.

Contributing Site: East Money Church of God in Christ Cemetery (Greenwood, Leflore County, Mississippi)

Size and Boundary Configuration

The East Money Church of God in Christ Cemetery site encompasses a 1.62-acre rectangular-shaped legal parcel. County Road 88 forms the eastern boundary of the site, which is due south of the road's intersection with County Road 542 in rural Leflore County, Mississippi (see map 9). This parcel includes the ruins of the former East Money Church of God in Christ at its northeast corner, adjacent to the county road. The rest of the landscape is developed as a cemetery containing a variety of headstones and markers dispersed across its acreage.



MAP 9. EAST MONEY CHURCH OF GOD IN CHRIST CEMETERY SITE OVERVIEW, LEFLORE COUNTY

Land Ownership, Local Planning, and Potential Land Uses

The church and cemetery are privately owned by the Church of God in Christ organization, which does not have a physical presence at the site, as the site no longer functions as a church due to the structure’s extreme disrepair. The site’s current function is only that of an active cemetery.

The site is in rural Leflore County, less than 4 miles east of Money, along County Road 542. Adjacent properties are undeveloped, free of structures, and are used for agricultural purposes, such as cotton farming. Because this site mostly comprises a developed cemetery, potential land uses for other purposes or uses would not be possible other than for interpretation.

Existing and Potential Threats to Resources

The East Money Church of God in Christ Cemetery site is an active cemetery. Potential activities within the cemetery could impact the integrity of the historical landscape over time. The exact location of where Emmett Till’s grave was dug is not known. Therefore, potential management of the cemetery would need to be considered as a whole, without a specific focal point within it.

Safety improvements at this rural site would need to be considered if the National Park Service were to manage the East Money Church of God in Christ Cemetery site, including some form of surveillance to deter vandalism of the cemetery. The former church structure on the property is in an extreme state of disrepair; all that remains is the shell of the exterior concrete block walls and a caved-in roof and scattered debris. Removing the remains of the church structure would likely need to be considered for safety considerations.

Access

While there is some access to the site, access is limited overall due to the site being an active cemetery on private property. The public cannot enter the site, but they can drive by the property and view it from County Road 88. Vehicular access from the county road the property faces is poor because the road does not have a shoulder wide enough to accommodate a pulloff or parking. Therefore, the public cannot stop and look at the site from the public right-of-way while driving past it. County Road 88 is a narrow, gravel road that is difficult for two-way travel and does not include a shoulder wide enough for safe off-street vehicular parking. Currently, there is no clear area for parking or a vehicular turnaround on the county road, and a small tour bus or larger vehicle arriving to the site would not have adequate space to turn around within the county roadbed. The lack of safe public access is a key concern.

Given its proximity to Bryant's Grocery Store, there is easy access to the site from Money down County Road 542. If the property were to be acquired in the future as a potential national park unit, visitor access including parking or development of a vehicular pullout and space for vehicles to safely turn around would need to be developed. Adequate space for this type of development appears to exist off County Road 542 or County Road 88, either on the site or an adjacent property. The site's inclusion of a small, active cemetery requires that it remain open to the people affiliated with the burial sites. Active cemeteries managed in federal ownership require such access, and this additional aspect of management and administration would need to be considered as well.

Public Enjoyment Potential

Potential exists for a positive visitor experience at the East Money Church of God in Christ Cemetery site because the cemetery's setting provides valuable context for the historic event involving the near-burial of Emmett Till at this site. The site provides visitors with the opportunity to imagine an alternative outcome in which Emmett Till's open-casket funeral in Chicago, Illinois, did not catalyze the national impact and legacy of his lynching. The interpretive potential of that key event is diminished slightly by the lack of information about the exact location of the grave site that was initially dug for Emmett Till's burial, which is not known or documented. In light of that, historical interpretation of this site would focus on the intact, evocative setting of the cemetery and the pivotal role this site played in the sequence of events involved in Emmett Till's lynching.

Public Support (including Landowners)

The current property owner of this site, the Northern Mississippi Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction of the Church of God in Christ, has communicated to the Secretary of the Interior in a letter

dated July 20, 2022, their interest in donating the cemetery site to the Department of the Interior for the purpose of being included in a national park for Emmett Till. In their letter, the owner explains that the church is no longer functioning or operating in the local community. The site also appears to have public support for including it in the interpretive program of a potential park unit.

Costs Associated with Acquisition, Development, and Operation

The Northern Mississippi Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction of the Church of God in Christ has communicated their willingness to donate the cemetery site property to the National Park Service to become part of a potential park unit. In this scenario, the estimated cost of acquiring the 1.62-acre site would be approximately \$50,000 to cover costs involved in the property transfer. The total estimated costs for developing the cemetery site are approximately \$492,000. The site will likely require visitor infrastructure, including a parking area, accessibility improvements, security developments, and interpretive waysides. Refer to tables 1a–1c for a summary of site development and associated costs that would be required, and refer to appendix E for a detailed list of anticipated improvements.

Feasibility Finding

The East Money Church of God in Christ Cemetery site is feasible as a contributing site within a potential national park unit for Emmett Till sites. This finding assumes that the property would be conveyed to the National Park Service by the current owner and developed to provide access and visitor infrastructure improvements.

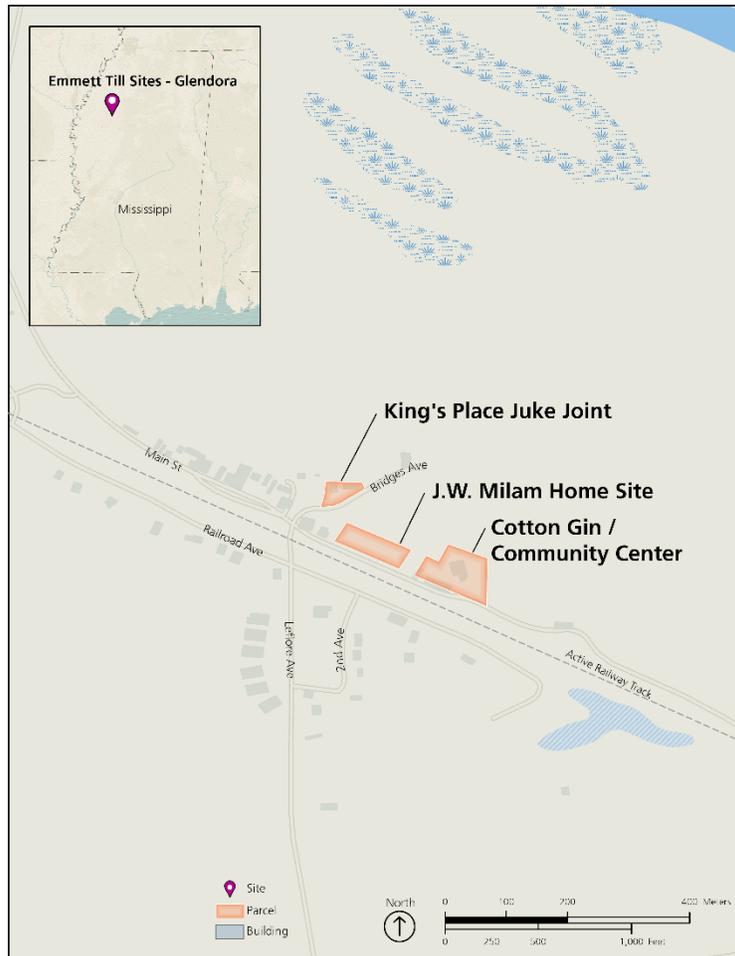
Contributing Site: Glendora Cotton Gin/Community Center (Glendora, Tallahatchie County, Mississippi)

Size and Boundary Configurations

The Glendora Cotton Gin and Community Center are co-located on a 1.5-acre parcel at the southeast end of the village of Glendora in Tallahatchie County and together are managed as the Emmett Till Historic Intrepid Center. The buildings are two separate, adjacent structures within this parcel. The large cotton gin building occupies a central position within the parcel while the community center, which is housed in a large, rectangular Quonset hut structure, is located alongside and parallel with Thomas Street. Thomas Street forms the southern boundary of the site and is also the public access road to the site. The other three sides of the somewhat rectangular parcel boundary are defined by an unpaved driveway separating the site from adjacent farmland to the north and east and a driveway loop with parking at the west end of the parcel. The 1.5-acre area within the boundary would be an appropriate size for a potential national park unit to preserve resources, provide access, support park operations, and provide a positive visitor experience (see map 10).

The cotton gin is a large, three-story, 14,900-square-foot former industrial building. A smaller metal-framed structure has been built internally that houses museum spaces and facilities within the cotton gin building shell—effectively converting the space into a public museum. The insertion of that metal structure within the gin is not visible from the exterior. The gin-turned-museum houses an entrance lobby, movie room, exhibit spaces, offices, and restrooms.

The community center building is a 4,000-square-foot former Quonset hut structure, which is a long, barrel-vaulted metal-framed building. The building has been converted for use by the Glendora community for large gatherings in its open meeting room. A residential apartment, including restrooms and a kitchen, has been developed at the front of the structure.



MAP 10. VILLAGE OF GLENDORA SITE OVERVIEW, TALLAHATCHIE COUNTY

Land Ownership, Local Planning, and Potential Land Uses

Both the Glendora Cotton Gin and Community Center are publicly owned by the Village of Glendora, a municipality, and the associated Glendora Economic and Community Development Corporation, a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization. The Emmett Till Historic Intrepid Center is managed by this 501(c)3 nonprofit organization and operated by five volunteer staff and five board of aldermen for the Village of Glendora. The museum was established with the support of grant funding, which did not include property restrictions, monitoring requirements, easements, or similar. The property includes a broadband antenna but has no requirement to maintain that antenna in its current location, and it could be moved elsewhere if necessary.

The lands surrounding this property include a large area of open farmland surrounding the property on two sides, while the front of the property is adjacent to the former J.W. Milam Home site described below. An active railroad line is also adjacent to the other property boundary. The land surrounding the site is predominantly privately owned and is used for agriculture, specifically as planted fields. The land appears to have little potential use beyond the property's current function.

Existing and Potential Threats to Resources

The Glendora Cotton Gin and Community Center is immediately adjacent to an active railroad that carries train traffic as much as an estimated 25 times per day. The trains produce significant background noise and vibration at times, which would be disruptive to verbal interpretation at the site in outdoor settings. The vibrations from frequent train traffic in such proximity to the buildings can also expedite the deterioration of the buildings and structures at a faster rate than would happen otherwise. This low-level but recurring physical impact to the buildings would need to be considered in the long-term maintenance needed for the structures and their longevity. The adjacent railroad line would also likely require additional visitor safety requirements to ensure visitor safety in proximity with the frequent train traffic.

The site's surrounding undeveloped farmland reflects the village's agricultural setting and character from the time of the 1955 events. Future development of the parcels beyond the site boundary area could threaten site integrity concerning the viewshed to surrounding rural, undeveloped farmland that is evocative of the site's historic character. Development on adjacent lands was not identified to be an imminent threat by the community.

Access

The site is currently open to visitors and easily accessed by vehicle on the gravel road via Thomas Street. There are multiple parking spaces along the site's gravel loop road and an uneven pathway to provide access to the museum and community center. The site's accessibility is moderate, and modifications to the landscape and interior of both buildings are necessary to meet Architectural Barriers Act Accessibility Standards (ABAAS) for federal buildings and properties. As stated above, development of a national park unit at this site would likely require the installation of a barrier, such as a fence, between the site and the active railroad to ensure visitor safety.

Public Enjoyment Potential

The Glendora Cotton Gin has a high potential for public enjoyment. Functionally, the building is already developed as a museum that is open for public interpretation. The museum includes ample space for visitation and opportunities for public education of the events associated with the 1955 lynching of Emmett Till. The building currently features a series of well-developed exhibits and a film. Annual visitation to this remote, rural site was approximately 3,000 visitors in 2017.

An important aspect of the public enjoyment potential of the Glendora Cotton Gin and its larger landscape and setting is the site's ability to support the interpretation of the historic context in which the crime of Emmett Till's lynching occurred. The Glendora Cotton Gin

represents the cotton economy in the Mississippi Delta that depended on an oppressive Jim Crow sharecropping structure involving the African American community of Glendora and similar surrounding towns. This system of racism provided a power structure that set the stage for Emmett Till's lynching to occur by enabling J. W. Milam, one of the White murderers, to coerce Black subordinate workers who worked for Milam to be accomplices in the lynching of Emmett Till. J.W. Milam lived in Glendora and was an overseer in the cotton farming industry, where he effectively controlled the movements of the Black men who worked for him. Including the Glendora Cotton Gin in the park unit would allow NPS staff to tell this critical aspect of the crime within the immediate historic, well-preserved setting of Glendora, which continues to be a rural cotton farming community. The relatively unchanged setting of the Cotton Gin site contributes a compelling aspect of the larger context of Emmett Till's lynching. For these reasons, the potential for interpretation and education at the Glendora Cotton Gin site is high.

Furthermore, the community building adjacent to the cotton gin has a high potential as a supporting structure for NPS operations and visitor services. While the exterior of the building contributes to the historic setting of the historic landscape, the interior spaces within the building are not contributing features. Therefore, the interior could be adaptively reused for NPS offices and as gathering space for school groups or public events.

Public Support (including Landowners)

Residents of the village of Glendora have expressed strong support for designating a national park unit based on the history of Emmett Till's lynching that includes sites in Glendora. In their feedback, residents of Glendora specifically assert that the Glendora Cotton Gin building, with its current function as the Emmett Till Historic Intrepid Center, should be a central resource in a park unit that interprets the history of Emmett Till. The village of Glendora supports the ongoing interpretation of Emmett Till's lynching, with special emphasis on its historical connection to Glendora. The Glendora mayor and other local residents have expressed that they want these stories told within the village and they want to be involved in future activities involving public interpretation and visitation. The village mayor and community members have invested much of their own limited human and financial resources into the museum's creation, planning, development, infrastructure, maintenance, and operations.

On behalf of the Village of Glendora, the current mayor has communicated to the National Park Service in a letter dated August 31, 2022, their interest in establishing a formal partnership relationship with the National Park Service for the purpose of being included in a potential national park for Emmett Till. This partnership would provide a broader perspective for visitors to increase their knowledge, understanding, sensitivity, and on-site experience with the ongoing struggle to promote civil and human rights, as well as provide potential employment, volunteer, and recreational opportunities for the residents of Glendora. The letter identifies that the "partnership would include collaborating on the museum and park operations including procurement and preservation of artifacts; exhibit expansion and digitization; tours and curation of exhibits, and trails; educational, environmental and community initiatives and events; museum, park and ground

maintenance; technical support, workforce development and training; marketing; and other operational necessities to further the shared interests of all parties.”

The letter describes a desire for a fifty-fifty partnership with the National Park Service but did not identify specific roles or responsibilities for individual parties or a specific preference in regards to ownership of the museum or other identified properties. From previous communications with the mayor, federal acquisition of the Glendora Cotton Gin and Community Center has not been the Village of Glendora’s stated preference; however, they may be willing to consider NPS ownership and management of the site if it provides a greater opportunity for enhanced preservation and interpretation and a robust partnership with the community. Including the site as part of a potential park unit appears to be the Village of Glendora’s greatest priority. Further discussions with the village leadership, including the mayor, would be necessary to continue to evaluate these options and opportunities.

Costs Associated with Acquisition, Development, and Operation

Although federal acquisition is not the stated preference at this time, there is indication that this could change in the future. Therefore, the study team prepared cost estimates for the acquisition and development of the Glendora Cotton Gin and Community Center site in the scenario of the property owner’s wishes changing in the future. The estimate for acquisition of the entire property, including the cotton gin building and the Quonset hut structure, is approximately \$320,000 based on current local property values.

The estimate for site development is \$2.9 million. This estimate includes overall site development to improve water service, sewage lift stations, parking areas, exhibits and waysides, site security, and landscaping. The estimate also includes individual, one-time developments for both the cotton gin building and the community center building. These building-specific developments include ABAAS improvements, restroom rehabilitation, exterior repairs, and office space development for NPS operations. The overall estimate for site development includes the cost of installing interpretive wayside panels at the adjacent J.W. Milam Home site property and at the nearby King’s Place Juke Joint. Both sites are conditionally feasible and described separately below. Refer to tables 1a–1c for a summary of site development and associated costs that would be required for these sites and appendix E for a detailed list of anticipated improvements.

Feasibility Finding

The Glendora Cotton Gin and Community Center site are feasible as a historic site within a potential national park unit for Emmett Till sites. This finding assumes that the overall site would be managed and developed in a manner similar to how the two buildings currently function, with the cotton gin building focusing on interpretation with museum exhibits and programs and the community center providing spaces for large group gatherings and potential NPS operations. The nature of the ownership/partnership arrangement with the Village of Glendora would need to be better defined leading up to park establishment.

Contributing Site: J.W. Milam Home Site (Glendora, Tallahatchie County, Mississippi)

Size and Boundary Configurations

The J.W. Milam Home site is an open landscape encompassing a 0.87-acre legal parcel. The property is in the shape of a long rectangle along N. Railroad Avenue (also called Thomas Street) in the village of Glendora (see map 10). The former home site is now an open, grassy field devoid of structures.

Land Ownership, Local Planning, and Potential Land Uses

The J.W. Milam Home site is privately owned, and the surrounding properties are either owned privately or by the Village of Glendora. The site is located south of several residential properties and is adjacent to the Glendora Cotton Gin and Community Center, to its immediately southeast. Beyond this immediate area are a mixture of agricultural lands and commercial properties to the northwest. The land to the north of the site is a much larger parcel consisting of open farm fields. An active railroad line exists nearby to the south, parallel with N. Railroad Avenue/Thomas Street. No other potential changes in land uses have been specifically identified for this parcel or for the adjacent lots.

Existing and Potential Threats to Resources

The former J.W. Milam Home site is currently an empty lot. Any future development of the property that removes or obscures its setting could be a site-specific threat; however, development is not anticipated. The site is immediately adjacent to an active railroad that carries train traffic an estimated 25 times per day. This frequency would impact potential park activities at this site, such as disruptions to on-site, ranger-led interpretation or possibly to self-guided interpretation at the site.

The surrounding undeveloped lands reflect the village's agricultural setting and character from the time of the 1955 events associated with the lynching of Emmett Till. Future development on the parcels beyond site boundary area could threaten site integrity's concerning its viewshed beyond its boundary outward to the surrounding, rural, undeveloped farmland that is evocative of its historic character. However, development on adjacent lands was not identified to be an imminent threat by the community, and the community has experienced minimal physical changes in recent decades. No changes to the larger setting are anticipated at this time.

Access

The potential for public access to the J.W. Milam Home site is good. The site is easily viewed from the public right-of-way along N. Railroad Avenue/Thomas Street. Off-street public parking is available at the adjacent Emmett Till Historic Intrepid Center, which is open to public access. However, there are no ABAAS-accessible paths that allow a visitor to walk to this site.

Public Enjoyment Potential

Interpretation of the J.W. Milam Home site has a high potential of conveying the oppressive historic context of Emmett Till's lynching and more specifically, J.W. Milam's oppressive

intimidation over the Black community in Glendora. Viewing the site from the public right-of-way would allow the public to view the landscape and larger setting of Glendora and to contemplate the historical themes and contexts that have been described in this study as key to understanding the larger significance and meanings of the Emmett Till lynching in the Mississippi Delta in 1955.

In terms of the site's physical development, the site currently supports a low level of interpretation because the public can view it from the public right-of-way in Glendora. A historical marker explaining the J.W. Milam Home site role in the events associated with Emmett Till exists on the site. The marker was installed by the Emmett Till Memorial Commission around 2008.

Public Support (including Landowners)

In a letter to the National Park Service dated August 31, 2022, the Glendora mayor expressed support for the development of a national park unit interpreting the history of Emmett Till in the Glendora community that would potentially include the J.W. Milam Home site. The letter describes a community interest in interpreting the role of Glendora as a whole in the events associated with Emmett Till. Confirmation from the current property owner of this site was not received regarding their willingness to sell the property or their level of support for a potential national park unit.

Costs Associated with Acquisition, Development, and Operation

Costs associated with acquisition, development, and operations were not developed for this site due to lack of clear owner support for inclusion of this site in a potential national park. If conditions change in the future related to the owner's willingness to sell to the government, there would be additional one-time costs to acquire the property, provide appropriate access, and develop site interpretation.

Feasibility Finding

The J.W. Milam Home site is currently not feasible as a contributing site within a potential park unit due to unknown property owner support. However, if circumstances change in the future in relation to the owner's willingness to sell to the government or donate the property, the feasibility of the site could be reconsidered. Therefore, a finding of "conditional feasibility" applies to the J.W. Milam Home site based on the potential for future acquisition if the property owner becomes willing to sell at another time.

Contributing Site: King's Place Juke Joint Site (Glendora, Tallahatchie County, Mississippi)

Size and Boundary Configurations

The King's Place Juke Joint site is a landscape encompassing a 0.40-acre legal parcel in the Village of Glendora. The property is a triangular-shaped parcel that borders several residential properties. The site is located on Bridges Avenue, which runs to the northeast from the village's main street of N. Railroad Avenue/Thomas Street (also called Burroughs

Street) (see map 10). The former site of the juke joint is now an open, grassy field devoid of structures.

Land Ownership, Local Planning, and Potential Land Uses

The King's Place Juke Joint parcel is privately owned. The surrounding properties are either owned privately as residential properties with single-family dwellings, or by the Village of Glendora. An active railroad line exists in the site's immediate vicinity, to the south, across the street from N. Railroad Avenue/Thomas Street. No other potential land uses have been specifically identified for this parcel or the adjacent lots.

Existing and Potential Threats to Resources

The former King's Place Juke Joint site is currently an empty lot. Any future development of the property that removes or obscures its setting could be a site-specific threat; however, this is not anticipated. The site is immediately adjacent to an active railroad that carries train traffic an estimated 25 times per day. This frequency would impact potential park activities at this site, such as disruptions to on-site, ranger-led interpretation or possibly to self-guided interpretation at the site.

Although the general context of the Village of Glendora appears mostly intact and evocative of its historic character in 1955, the residential properties in the immediate vicinity of the King's Place Juke Joint site do not appear to date to 1955, and thus the immediate environment is less of a contributing factor of the site's integrity. Development on adjacent lands was not identified to be an imminent threat by the community.

Access

The King's Place Juke Joint site is easily viewed from the public right-of-way from nearby roads. Off-street public parking is available on the dirt driveway adjacent to the site or at the nearby Emmett Till Historic Intrepid Center, which is a short walk away and open to public access. However, a sidewalk or ABAAS-compliant path that allows visitors to walk to this site does not currently exist.

Public Enjoyment Potential

King's Place Juke Joint site has moderate potential for interpretation. The site symbolizes the private investigation of Emmett Till's murder that was undertaken outside of the local legal system, pursued by journalists and others from the Black community. Additionally, discussing the former juke joint at this site would allow interpretation of the lives of local sharecroppers and the role that the juke joint served for this community, which was a social place of enjoyment and recreation for Black residents of Glendora and the larger region. Considering the heavy cloak of racial oppression on the Black community in 1955, this aspect would contribute an important element of the story that is not currently interpreted elsewhere in the broader region as it relates to the history of Emmett Till's lynching.

In terms of the site's physical development, the site currently supports a low level of interpretation because the public can view it from the public right-of-way in Glendora. A

historical marker explaining the juke joint's historical role exists on the site. The marker was installed by the Emmett Till Memorial Commission around 2008.

Public Support (including Landowners)

In a letter to the National Park Service dated August 31, 2022, the Glendora mayor expressed support for the development of a national park unit interpreting the history of Emmett Till in the Glendora community that would potentially include the King's Place Juke Joint site. The letter describes a community interest in interpreting the role of Glendora as a whole in the events associated with Emmett Till. Confirmation from the current property owner of this site was not received regarding their willingness to sell the property or their level of support for a potential national park unit.

Costs Associated with acquisition, development, and operation

Costs associated with acquisition, development, and operations were not developed for this site due to lack of clear owner support for inclusion of this site in a potential national park. If conditions change in the future related to the owner's willingness to sell to the government, there would be additional one-time costs to acquire the property, provide appropriate access, and develop site interpretation.

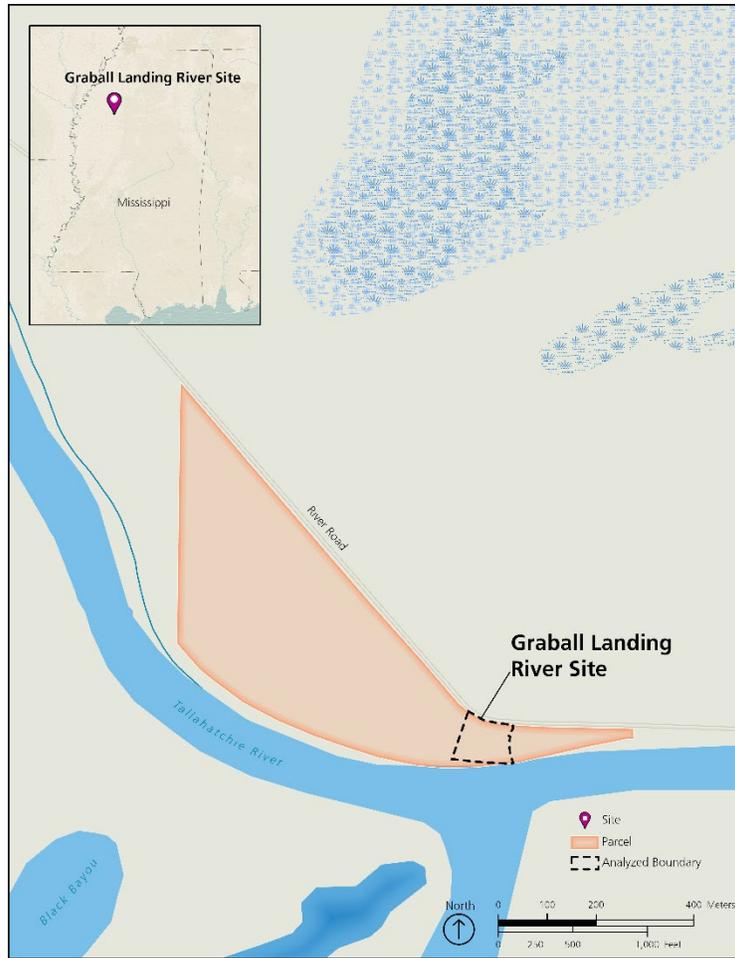
Feasibility Finding

The King's Place Juke Joint site is currently not feasible as a contributing site within a potential park unit due to unknown property owner support. However, if this circumstance changes in the future, related to the owner's willingness to sell to the government or donate the property, the feasibility of the site could be reconsidered. Therefore, a finding of "conditional feasibility" applies to the King's Place Juke Joint site based on the potential for future acquisition if the property owner becomes willing to sell at another time.

Contributing Site: Graball Landing River Site (Glendora, Tallahatchie County, Mississippi)

Size and Boundary Configurations

The Graball Landing River site is part of a 50-acre parcel of undeveloped land in Tallahatchie County, across the river from Glendora at the confluence of the Tallahatchie River and the Black Bayou (see map 11). Although the site is technically in Glendora, it stands apart from the village due to its remote location east of the Black Bayou. The site consists of a wooded landscape with a dirt roadway and unpaved path that extends from a gravel road, called River Road, which forms its northeast boundary at the site's entry point. For the purposes of this study, an approximately 2-acre portion of the larger 50 acres is identified to be the appropriate size and configuration that could adequately support park operations and provide a positive visitor experience at this site. This 2-acre area currently has no dedicated parking, but it does have an interpretive panel and dirt walking path that leads from River Road toward the riverbank to view the Tallahatchie River.



MAP 11. GRABALL LANDING RIVER SITE OVERVIEW, TALLAHATCHIE COUNTY

Land Ownership, Local Planning, and Potential Land Uses

The river site was acquired by Tallahatchie County, specifically the Emmett Till Memorial Commission, for the purpose of providing the public and visitors a memorial site where they can view the Tallahatchie River as a feature associated with the history Emmett Till’s lynching in the Mississippi Delta. The local land use surrounding this 2-acre parcel is entirely undeveloped agricultural farm fields. This study assumes that these lands will continue to be used for farming into the future.

Existing and Potential Threats to Resources

The two primary threats to the Graball Landing River site are flooding and security, which are overarching threats for a majority of the sites analyzed in this study. The village of Glendora has experienced severe flooding in recent years, including in 2017 and 2019. The frequency and intensity of extreme precipitation events that contribute to flooding at this site is expected to increase over time in response to factors from climate change.

Visitor safety and security is another primary concern considering the remote location of the site, which is an approximately 5.5-mile drive from the village of Glendora by vehicle in rural

Tallahatchie County. If a park unit including this site is developed, a protocol would need to be developed for managing visitor safety and limiting access to the site after dark.

Access

Public access to the Graball Landing River site is possible using River Road, which is a county-owned and maintained gravel road. To access the site, one must drive approximately 2.3 miles down River Road, which requires approximately six minutes of travel time from the main road, Sharkey Road. A four-wheel drive car is not necessary to drive this road. Upon arriving, visitors must park their vehicle at the entry point along River Road, as there is no driveway developed to access the site further. The entry point includes space for only a few cars, and additional vehicular access would need to be developed to accommodate full NPS visitation. Within the site is an unpaved dirt walking path that leads to a small area to view the Tallahatchie River. The site currently is not ABAAS accessible.

Public Enjoyment Potential

Interpretation of the river site has a high potential of demonstrating the environmental context of a key event in the history of Emmett Till's lynching in the Delta. Tallahatchie County has informed the study team that this site has been informally used for the past 15 years by the public as a memorial site for visitors to view and experience the river and to contemplate Emmett Till's death. As such, the site is currently a site of memorialization. This interpretive function and its unique experiential value could contribute greatly to a multisite park unit.

Public Support (including Landowners)

In a letter to the National Park Service, dated April 6, 2022, the Tallahatchie County Board of Supervisors communicated its strong support for a national park unit designation on the history of Emmett Till and specifically its willingness to potentially donate the river site property for this purpose.

On June 1, 2022, the Mississippi State government authorized Tallahatchie County to convey, lease, or transfer three sites currently owned by the county, including the Graball Landing River site (Mississippi Legislature 2022). Additionally, through a variety of public feedback gathered, the public generally appears to support the county and the potential inclusion of the river site in a national park unit for Emmett Till sites.

Costs Associated with Acquisition, Development, and Operation

Tallahatchie County has communicated its willingness to donate the river site property to the National Park Service to become part of a potential park unit. In this scenario, the estimated cost for acquisition of a 2-acre portion of the site would be approximately \$50,000 to cover costs involved in the property transfer. The total estimated costs for development of the river site are approximately \$941,000. It is anticipated that the site would require visitor infrastructure, including a parking area, a restroom facility, a shade pavilion, security developments, and interpretive waysides. These developments are needed to provide a comfortable stopping point for visitors, who may be driving many hours across rural Mississippi on the full interpretive driving tour. The site would remain in an overall natural

setting to support a contemplative visitor experience. Refer to tables 1a–1c for a summary of site development and associated costs that would be required for this site and appendix E for a detailed list of anticipated improvements.

Feasibility Finding

The Graball Landing River site is feasible as a contributing site within a potential national park unit for Emmett Till sites. This finding assumes that the property would be conveyed to the National Park Service by Tallahatchie County and continue to serve as a memorial site with limited visitor infrastructure improvements.

Contributing Site: Seed Barn Site (Drew, Sunflower County, Mississippi)

Size and Boundary Configurations

The Seed Barn site is on a 10.9-acre legal parcel along Drew Ruleville Road in rural Sunflower County near the city of Drew, Mississippi (see map 12). The seed barn site has a proposed boundary of 12.0 acres. This 12-acre area encompasses the boundary of the residential farmstead and includes the full bayou at the front of the property, the primary dwelling, and the three outbuildings that are currently on the site, including the seed barn. A modern house (constructed after 1955) on the property includes an in-ground pool and adjacent, detached pool house outbuilding. The analyzed 12.0-acre area shown in map 12 includes a 1.1-acre addition along Drew – Ruleville Road that would be necessary to expand the intersection of the property’s driveway at the road for safety and to provide space for possible bus parking.



MAP 12. SEED BARN SITE OVERVIEW, SUNFLOWER COUNTY

Land Ownership, Local Planning, and Potential Land Uses

The Seed Barn site stands within a property that is privately owned and is currently used as a residential property. The seed barn and additional barn structure were part of the landscape in 1955 and are currently used for storage. The property is in an unincorporated area of Sunflower County near the City of Drew, which has a population of approximately 1,600. The property maintains a rural character, with a bayou and a rolling grassy hill separating the barn and house structures from the road. The property is in the vicinity of several large farms. The small 1.1-acre addition along Drew – Ruleville Road is owned by a different property owner than the seed barn but is part of a larger parcel surrounding the barn property.

Existing and Potential Threats to Resources

The landscape surrounding the site currently reflects the rural, undeveloped agricultural setting and character from the time of the 1955 lynching of Emmett Till. As such, future development on this property or on the adjacent farmland could threaten the integrity of feeling and association that is closely associated with the Seed Barn site and the surrounding land’s use for farming in 1955. However, development on adjacent lands was not identified to

be an imminent threat by the community, and the area has experienced minimal physical changes in recent decades. No changes to the larger setting are anticipated at this time.

The site is currently accessible by a single-lane bridge causeway. This design leaves risk for visitor safety and security due to the single entry and exit point. Flooding of the causeway is also a concern. Developments to the entry causeway would be required to protect access to the resource from potential security and environmental risks. This change can be addressed with the additional 1.1 acres at the front of the property that was analyzed beyond the 10.9-acre legal parcel.

Access

The Seed Barn site is located along a public roadway where the public can view the barn from the public right-of-way. The site is not open to visitation; however, visitors may access the property on a limited basis by contacting the property owner. Small vehicles may enter the property to visit the barn, but larger vehicles are not allowed due to past impacts to the landscape. Additional development of a parking lot with space for a large vehicle turnaround and other key visitor services would be necessary to provide adequate, accessible visitor access without compromising the site's intact historic setting.

Public Enjoyment Potential

Interpretation of the site has a high potential of demonstrating the physical context of the murder of Emmett Till and for memorializing the tragedy of his brutal lynching in this location. The barn provides a powerful opportunity to anchor the story in a place that maintains much of the same character as the time of the event. The barn is currently visited on a somewhat frequent basis, with permission from the property owner, by members of the public seeking a better understanding of Emmett Till's lynching. Those who have visited the barn have described it as a powerful and somber experience. Many of them regard the barn as a sacred space that can provide an opportunity for deep reflection on the events that transpired there. As with all the Emmett Till sites, the history at the barn will have to be interpreted thoughtfully by highly trained and supported NPS interpreters.

Public Support (including Landowners)

The owner's primary residential home is located approximately 100 yards from the barn, and they want to maintain this home as their residence. The owners are not willing to sell the property at this time but may be open to selling the barn and the remainder of the property in the future. The owner's primary residential home is located approximately 100 yards from the barn, and they want to maintain this home as their residence. Despite not being willing to sell at this time, the property owner supports commemoration of the site and has graciously allowed visitors, including large groups, to visit the barn over the years. Additional feedback gathered as part of the study indicated a general level of public support.

Costs Associated with Acquisition, Development, and Operation

Costs associated with acquisition, park development, and operations were not developed for this site due to lack of owner support for inclusion of this site in a potential national park unit at this time. If conditions change in the future related to the owner's willingness to sell the

property to the government, there would be additional one-time costs to acquire the property and develop it to provide appropriate public access, visitor services, staff support facilities, and site interpretation.

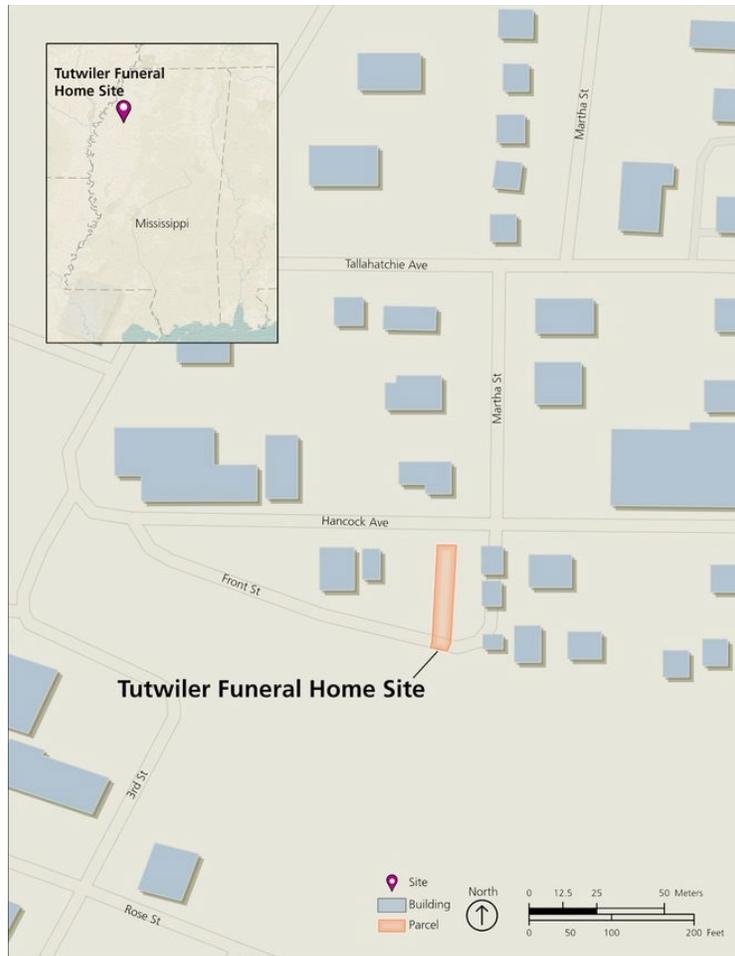
Feasibility Finding

The Seed Barn site is currently not feasible due to the property owner's wishes to keep it as a private, residential property that is not accessible to the public. However, if this circumstance changes in the future, related to the owner's willingness to sell to the government, the feasibility of the site could be reconsidered. Key features to acquire would be both barns, the modern house, and the access driveway. Therefore, a finding of "conditional feasibility" applies to the Seed Barn site based on the potential for future acquisition if the property owner becomes willing to sell at another time.

Contributing Site: Tutwiler Funeral Home Site (Tutwiler, Tallahatchie County, Mississippi)

Size and Boundary Configurations

The Tutwiler Funeral Home site is located on a 0.13-acre legal parcel within the Town of Tutwiler, Tallahatchie County, Mississippi. The site is a rectangular parcel that fronts Hancock Avenue near the center of the town (see map 13). The property is an open, undeveloped site, as the building is no longer extant.



MAP 13. TUTWILER FUNERAL HOME SITE OVERVIEW, TALLAHATCHIE COUNTY

Land Ownership, Local Planning, and Potential Land Uses

The Tutwiler Funeral Home site is owned by the Town of Tutwiler. The town’s mayor has described plans to develop the site into a visitor welcome center and museum as part of a larger park to be developed on the open lot behind the former Tutwiler Funeral Home site. The town expected to begin phased construction of the center in 2022. Therefore, the potential land use of the property will be a municipal-owned facility for public use and visitation.

Existing and Potential Threats to Resources

Development of the new visitor welcome center could impact the integrity of the town’s historic setting in which the funeral home stood, which continues to appear largely unchanged since 1955. Since the funeral home building itself is no longer extant, this potential integrity impact can be considered a threat to the site’s ability to convey its historical associations with the narrative of Emmett Till’s lynching.

Access

Currently, the potential for public access to the Tutwiler Funeral Home site is good because the public can access it from the public right-of-way along Hancock Street.

Public Enjoyment Potential

Currently, the Tutwiler Funeral Home site has the potential to interpret the context of a key event in the history of Emmett Till—the embalming of Emmett Till’s body and the role that the funeral home director played in the trial of Till’s murderers—affecting the outcome of the trial and the murderers’ acquittal. Although the building is no longer standing, the existing preserved setting of the site provides an opportunity for visitors to learn about the site and the events that occurred. The former funeral home site currently supports a low level of interpretation because the public can view it from the public right-of-way in Tutwiler and a historical marker explaining the funeral home’s historical role exists on the site. The marker was installed by the Emmett Till Memorial Commission around 2008.

Although the development of the planned visitor center could negatively impact a visitor’s experience and understanding of the town’s 1955 setting, the center would include interpretation about Emmett Till in the facility, in addition to the Tutwiler Funeral Home’s role in the sequence of events in 1955. The development of this interpretation could enhance a visitor’s understanding and experience of the site. Since construction had not started at this time of this study, details of how this potential interpretation will be developed is to be determined.

Public Support (including Landowners)

The property owner, the Town of Tutwiler, supports a national park unit designation that includes interpretation of the former Tutwiler Funeral Home site. The town’s mayor has communicated a potential interest in partnering with the National Park Service in some way at a future time.

Costs Associated with Acquisition, Development, and Operation

Costs associated with acquisition, park development, and operations were not developed for this site due to a desire by the Town of Tutwiler to maintain ownership of the site and develop plans for a welcome center on-site. If conditions change in the future related to the owner’s willingness to sell to the government, there would be additional one-time costs to acquire the property, provide appropriate access, and develop site interpretation.

Feasibility Finding

The Tutwiler Funeral Home site is currently not feasible due to the property owner’s wishes to maintain ownership and develop the property for other purposes. However, a finding of “conditional feasibility” applies to the Tutwiler Funeral Home site because the property owner, the Town of Tutwiler, is interested in partnering with the National Park Service rather than allowing direct federal acquisition of the site. If a national park unit established for the history of Emmett Till is created, this finding would not preclude the Town of Tutwiler from working with the National Park Service to develop a partnership agreement to

jointly interpret the historical role of the former Tutwiler Funeral Home site in interpreting the park unit. This evaluation may need to be reconsidered in the future, depending on the extent of the changes made to the property and property owner feedback.

Contributing Site: Tallahatchie County Jail (Charleston, Tallahatchie County, Mississippi)

Size and Boundary Configurations

The Tallahatchie County Jail, also called the Tallahatchie County Jail, is on a 0.26-acre legal parcel in the City of Charleston, Tallahatchie County, Mississippi. This parcel is a rectangular site in the center of the town facing North Court Street (see map 14). Within this area, the jail structure itself is a one-story brick building with a flat roof.



MAP 14. TALLAHATCHIE COUNTY JAIL SITE OVERVIEW, CHARLESTON, TALLAHATCHIE COUNTY

Land Ownership, Local Planning, and Potential Land Uses

The Tallahatchie County Jail is owned by Tallahatchie County, which continues to use it as a county jail facility operated by the Tallahatchie Police Department. Continuing its current function as a county jail is the only site use identified for this property now and into the future.

Existing and Potential Threats to Resources

The setting of the jail site in the City of Charleston currently reflects the general historic character of the time of the 1955 lynching of Emmett Till. The potential for future development in the surrounding area in ways that could threaten site integrity of that setting is not known.

Access

No public access is available for interpretation of the jail facility. While access to the inside of the jail facility is restricted, the public can view the exterior of the building within the public right-of-way along N. Court Street in Charleston.

Public Enjoyment Potential

Tallahatchie County Jail site has some potential to interpret its role in the history of the Emmett Till lynching and the subsequent days before and during the trial. Tallahatchie County Jail is where, allegedly, two Black men who were coerced accomplices of J.W. Milam were confined during the Till trial to prevent their testimony against the defendants, Milam and Bryant. The complicated factors around this history, including whether or not the confinement happened, would be best told in the setting of the jail site because of its high level of historic integrity to 1955. The site would have to be interpreted from the public right-of-way in front of the building, which could be effective. For example, a viewing site with NPS interpretive panels could be installed from the public right-of-way, or a partnership could be developed between the property owner and the National Park Service.

Public Support (including Landowners)

The owner of the site, Tallahatchie County, expressed in a letter to the National Park Service dated April 6, 2022, that it supports national park unit designation of an Emmett Till site that includes the jail site. The letter states that the county “would be interested in discussing a partnership with the National Park Service in which the Tallahatchie County Jail could remain a functioning jail.”

Costs Associated with Acquisition, Development, and Operation

Costs associated with acquisition, park development, and operations were not developed for this site due to its current use as a county jail with limited access for interpretation. This situation is unlikely to change in the future.

Feasibility Finding

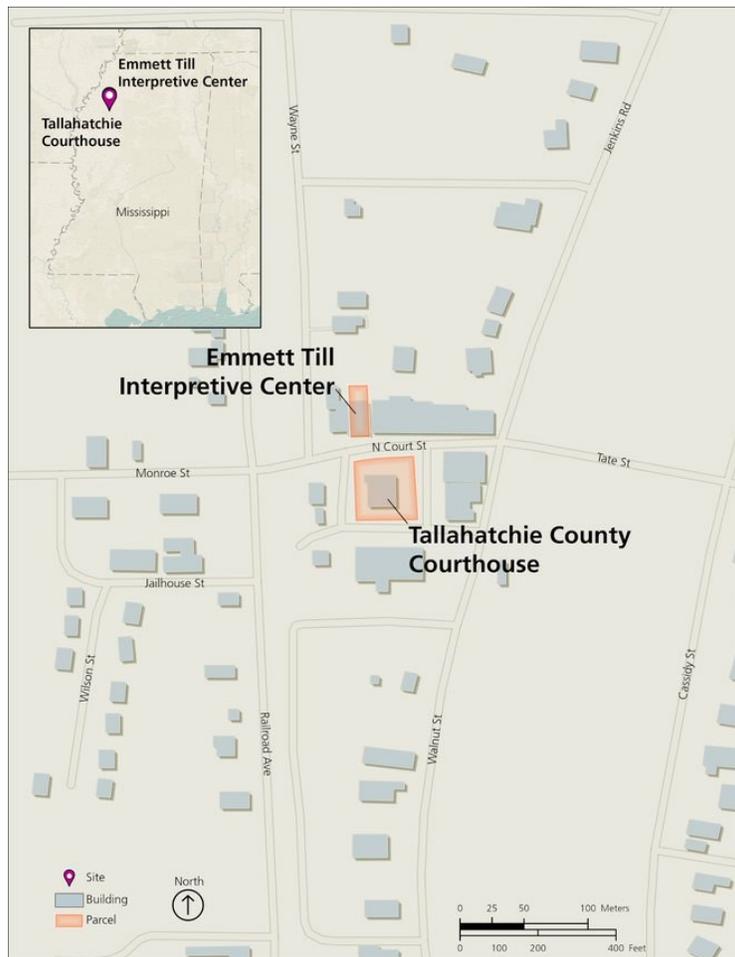
The Tallahatchie County Jail site is determined to be not feasible due to the need for its continued use as a county jail. If a national park unit is established for the history of Emmett Till, Tallahatchie County could work with the National Park Service to interpret the historical role of the jail at an off-site location or possibly within the public right-of-way adjacent to the building, as long as ongoing operations of the jail are not compromised.

Contributing Site: Tallahatchie County Courthouse and Emmett Till Interpretive Center, Sumner Square (Sumner, Tallahatchie County, Mississippi)

The following feasibility evaluation includes both the Tallahatchie County Courthouse and the nearby Emmett Till Interpretive Center. The rationale for evaluating these two sites together is that the acquisition of the Emmett Till Interpretive Center is necessary for the adequate care, management and visitor access to the historic Tallahatchie County Courthouse that still functions as an active courthouse.

Size and Boundary Configurations

The Tallahatchie County Courthouse sits on a 0.50-acre legal parcel and is located in Sumner Square on a square lot directly across N. Court Street from the Emmett Till Interpretive Center. The Emmett Till Interpretive Center, also called the courthouse annex building, is a 0.15-acre legal parcel. The parcel is a rectangular lot directly across N. Court Street from the Tallahatchie County Courthouse (see map 15).



MAP 15. TALLAHATCHIE COUNTY COURTHOUSE AND EMMETT TILL INTERPRETIVE CENTER SITE OVERVIEW, TALLAHATCHIE COUNTY

Land Ownership, Local Planning, and Potential Land Uses

Both properties are owned by Tallahatchie County. They are in the Town of Sumner, Mississippi, which has a population of approximately 400 and is one of the two county seats of Tallahatchie County (Charleston, Mississippi, being the other). Sumner is located on the west side of Tallahatchie County and the Tallahatchie River, which runs through the county north to south. The courthouse is located in Sumner Square, which is adjacent to Cassidy Bayou. The courthouse is in the center of Sumner Square, which includes several public buildings, including the Department of Motor Vehicles, and several small businesses. The Emmett Till Interpretive Center is operated by the county's Emmett Till Memorial Commission. Land use in this area has been consistent, and there are no identified potential major changes in land use.

The courthouse is in excellent condition and has been restored to its 1955 condition through restoration efforts that took place between 2007 and 2020. The courthouse was restored in three phases from 2010 to 2014 by a private architectural firm to match original photos and include Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) modifications. Significant funding for restoration activities came from a Mississippi Community Heritage Preservation Grant issued in 2015. The courthouse is operating under an active preservation and maintenance covenant for Mississippi Landmark designation, held by the State of Mississippi and eligible from September 8, 2015, to September 8, 2040. The purpose of the agreement is to ensure the protection and preservation of the architectural and historical integrity of the property and the State of Mississippi's investment in the property. The property cannot be altered, destroyed, or impaired in that time without a permit from the Board of Trustees of the Mississippi Department of Archives and History.

Existing and Potential Threats to Resources

Prior to its restoration, the courthouse building suffered termite damage. Though this threat is not a current issue, it could be a risk in the future without proper precautions. No other known threats to the building exist. No known threats to the interpretive center exist.

Access

The potential for public access is moderate. The courthouse itself is a two-story building of approximately 8,600 square feet. The building is an active courthouse used for occasional trials, town meetings, and other essential county functions, with several staff offices and other court administrative functions on the first floor. The primary interpretive resource includes the second-floor restored courtroom. Guided tours of the courthouse and courtroom are currently offered to the public, but availability is dependent on the courthouse schedule. The courthouse has a ramp entrance and a working elevator to the second floor. The building meets ADA accessibility standards but is not ABAAS compliant. The building exterior is easily accessible from the public right-of-way. Ample, free street parking is available along with a large parking lot behind the Emmett Till Interpretive Center. The lot is owned by two entities—the south half is privately owned, and the north half is owned by the town of Sumner. The lot provides parking for staff and partners and space for large vehicles and tour buses visiting the site.

Public Enjoyment Potential

The Tallahatchie County Courthouse site has a high potential for interpretation of a key event in the history of Emmett Till's lynching in the Delta—the dramatic trial of his murderers. The second-floor courtroom has been restored to its appearance from 1955. Public access to the courthouse is typically coordinated through the Emmett Till Interpretive Center across the street. The Emmett Till Interpretive Center is a high-ceiling, one-story accessible structure open to the public with a small exhibit hall, administrative offices, and a small conference room. The building is already developed as a museum and site open for public interpretation and educational events. The museum operates during business hours from Monday to Friday and features an online booking system for visitors to arrange their visit. The Emmett Till Interpretive Center created a free app, the Emmett Till Memory Project, to help visitors embark on self-guided tours of historic sites in the Mississippi Delta.

The Emmett Till Interpretive Center currently coordinates interpretive programs and tours of the Tallahatchie County Courthouse. They hosted approximately 2,500 annual visitors before the COVID-19 pandemic. The center works in conjunction with two to three local tour companies to provide one-hour tours. The largest volume of consistent visitors with groups of 10 or more occurs from March to October, with the highest visitation falling between late May to late September. The courthouse has seen visiting parties upward of 100 people per group, with student groups being an important form of public visitation. The center typically hosts one to two student groups of 10–40 students and chaperones a month, totaling approximately 500–800 school group visitors annually.

The courthouse is a key interpretive landmark of the Emmett Till lynching because it is both a symbol of white supremacy in the Mississippi Delta based on the acquittal of the two known murderers by an all-White jury of their peers, but also represents the courage of the Black witnesses who risked their lives to testify against the defendants during the trial. Nuanced interpretation may need to be developed regarding the Tallahatchie County Confederate Monument, which is located on the courthouse grounds. Clear interpretation to explain the monument's role in the historic setting of 1955, and the way in which the monument served as a visual reminder of racial oppression in Tallahatchie County, would be needed to interpret this historic context to the public.

Public Support (including Landowners)

The property owner, Tallahatchie County, supports national park unit designation, including the courthouse. In correspondence as part of the study, in a letter dated April 6, 2022, the county expressed wholehearted support and belief that a national park unit designation would ensure protection of the site and greatly benefit the public. Tallahatchie County stated in their letter, “The miscarriage of justice of the Milam-Bryant trial should never be forgotten. Our community has confronted this past head on and has worked hard to use the lessons of the site to promote truth, justice, and racial reconciliation.” At the request of Tallahatchie County's Board of Supervisors, on June 1, 2022, the Mississippi State government authorized Tallahatchie County to convey, lease or transfer three sites owned by the county, including the Tallahatchie County Courthouse in Sumner (identified in the bill as the Second Judicial Courthouse of Tallahatchie County) and the Emmett Till Interpretive

Center (identified as the annex building at 158 North Court Street in Sumner) (Mississippi Legislature 2022). The county has communicated to the National Park Service its hopes that these properties will be interpreted in relation to the broader civil rights activities taking place in the Mississippi Delta both before and after 1955. Building on its state-supported authority to convey, lease, or transfer the Tallahatchie County Courthouse and the interpretive center to the National Park Service, the county expressed interest in donating these buildings to become part of a potential national park site open to the public while allowing for their continued use of the courthouse as an active courthouse. The interpretive center would continue to support visitor services and NPS operations.

The Emmett Till Interpretive Center launched TillNationalPark.org to inform the public about different critical sites and gather public support for preservation. The organization has also worked to gain letters of support from political and community leaders in the greater Mississippi Delta. The level of public support for a potential national park unit designation is high.

Costs Associated with Acquisition, Development, and Operation

Without knowing the exact nature of the partnership operations model that could be developed with Tallahatchie County for the courthouse, the majority of costs included in the feasibility analysis focus on the necessary improvements for development of the Emmett Till Interpretive Center as an NPS visitor contact station. The costs associated with a property transfer via donation of the Tallahatchie County Courthouse and Emmett Till Interpretive Center are an estimated \$50,000. If the courthouse is acquired by the National Park Service, there would likely be additional one-time costs to make it ABAAS accessible and to provide additional site security. These data are not known at this time.

The initial cost estimates for development of both the Emmett Till Interpretive Center and Tallahatchie County Courthouse are approximately \$1.5 million, which includes a new roof for the interpretive center, additional restrooms, site security, exhibits and wayside panels, and necessary audio-visual equipment, and rehabilitation of office space. Refer to tables 1a–1c for a summary of site development and associated costs that would be required for these sites and appendix E for a detailed list of anticipated improvements.

Feasibility Finding

The Tallahatchie County Courthouse is feasible as a historic site within a potential national park unit for Emmett Till sites. The courthouse and its surrounding landscape are in good condition and currently support visitor access and interpretive operations. This finding assumes that a partnership model for continued courthouse functions would be developed between Tallahatchie County and the National Park Service, while the Emmett Till Interpretive Center, a feasible supporting site, could be acquired and developed for NPS operations and visitation of the nearby courthouse.

Feasibility Summary for the Emmett Till Sites

Feasible Sites

1. Bryant's Grocery Store site
 - a. Ben Roy's Service Station (supporting site)
2. East Money Church of God in Christ Cemetery site
3. Glendora Cotton Gin/Community Center
4. Graball Landing River site
5. Tallahatchie County Courthouse
 - a. Emmett Till Interpretive Center (supporting site)

Conditionally Feasible Sites

1. Moses Wright Home site
2. J.W. Milam Home site
3. King's Place Juke Joint site
4. Seed Barn site
5. Tutwiler Funeral Home site

Sites Not Feasible

1. Tallahatchie County Jail

Feasibility Analysis for all Emmett Till Sites

Cost of Development and Operations

Tables 1a–1c present a summary of the estimated costs of one-time development, acquisition, and annual operations for each of the sites analyzed for feasibility and the total costs of all sites combined. A detailed, itemized cost estimate is available in appendix E.

Table 1a. Estimated One-Time Development Costs for Emmett Till Sites, by Site

Site Name	Proposed Development	Cost
Bryant's Grocery Store (Money, Mississippi)	Construction costs (includes stabilization, debris removal, and fencing)	\$1,700,000
Ben Roy's Service Station (Money, Mississippi)	Construction costs (includes exterior and interior development)	\$464,000
	Other development to support both sites (includes parking lot, lighting, landscaping, signage, exhibits, waysides, site security)	\$492,000
	Direct Cost Total	\$2,656,000
	Indirect Cost Total*	\$2,471,000
	Total Estimated Cost for All Development of Bryant's Grocery Store/Ben Roy's Service Station	\$5,127,000
East Money Church of God in Christ Cemetery site	Construction costs (including site clearing, parking lot, accessibility improvements, waysides, and security)	\$255,000
	Direct Cost Total	\$255,000
	Indirect Cost Total*	\$237,000
	Total Estimated Cost for All Development at East Money Church of God in Christ Cemetery Site	\$492,000
Glendora Cotton Gin Building (Glendora, Mississippi)	Construction costs (includes interior and exterior development, office area rehabilitation, restrooms, and utilities)	\$647,000
Community Center Quonset Hut	Construction costs (includes ABAAS access, interior and exterior development, restrooms, and utilities)	\$289,000
	Other development to support both sites (includes sewage and water service development, lighting, signage, landscaping, wayside exhibits**, parking lot improvements, site security)	\$570,000
	Direct Cost Total	\$1,506,000
	Indirect Cost Total*	\$1,402,000
	Total Estimated Cost for All Development of Glendora Cotton Gin/Community Center Site	\$2,908,000
Graball Landing River site (Glendora, Mississippi)	Construction costs (includes pavilion, restrooms, site access improvements, lighting, signage, landscaping, wayside exhibits, parking lot development, site security)	\$488,000
	Direct Cost Total	\$488,000
	Indirect Cost Total*	\$453,000
	Total Estimated Cost for All Development at Graball Landing River Site	\$941,000
Emmett Till Interpretive Center/Tallahatchie County Courthouse (Sumner, Mississippi)	Construction costs (includes interior development and renovations, roofing, restrooms, audio visual system repair, site security, exhibits)	\$784,000
	Direct Cost Total	\$784,000

Site Name	Proposed Development	Cost
	Indirect Cost Total*	\$730,000
	Total Estimated Cost for All Development in Sumner, Mississippi	\$1,514,000

* Includes location factor, design contingency, contracting fees, bonds and insurance, escalation, and other adjustments

** Includes cost estimate for interpretive wayside panels at the conditionally feasible J.W. Milam Home site and King's Place Juke Joint site

Table 1b. Summary of Estimated One-Time Development Costs for Emmett Till Sites

Summary	Total Estimated Cost of One-Time Development
Bryant's Grocery Store and Ben Roy's Service Station sites	\$5,127,000
East Money Church of God in Christ Cemetery site	\$492,000
Glendora Cotton Gin/Community Center	\$2,908,000
Graball Landing River site	\$941,000
Tallahatchie County Courthouse/Emmett Till Interpretive Center	\$1,514,000
Total Estimated Cost for One-Time Development*	\$10,982,000

Table 1c. Summary of Estimated Acquisition Costs for Emmett Till Sites

Summary	Total Estimated Cost of One-Time Acquisition
Bryant's Grocery Store and Ben Roy's Service Station sites	\$290,000
East Money Church of God in Christ Cemetery site	\$50,000
Glendora Cotton Gin/Community Center	\$320,000
Graball Landing River site	\$50,000
Tallahatchie County Courthouse/Emmett Till Interpretive Center	\$50,000
Total Estimated Cost of Property Acquisition	\$760,000

The total estimated one-time costs for acquisition of property interests and addressing identified development improvements at the feasible Emmett Till sites are approximately \$11.7 million.

Annual Operating Cost

National park unit operating costs vary widely depending on their overall size, the types and quantities of resources managed, the number of visitors, the level of programs offered, safety and security issues, staffing, and many other factors. At a minimum, the operating cost of a proposed new park unit for the Emmett Till sites would need to include grounds and facilities maintenance, utilities, communications, administration, and other miscellaneous expenses. Operating costs would include staffing. Personnel would be required to design and deliver interpretive programming (e.g., personal interpretation, exhibits, special events), maintain

facilities and grounds, perform administrative functions (budget, management, planning, and compliance), provide for law enforcement (if necessary), and conduct outreach to local communities and schools.

An additional analysis of operational costs from other existing national park units, such as Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historical Park; Vicksburg National Military Park; Shiloh National Military Park; and Richmond National Battlefield Park were used as a baseline for comparison. These units were chosen because of their similarities to the potential Emmett Till national park unit in terms of size, complexity, and having multiple dispersed sites to manage. These sites have annual operating budgets ranging from \$3.0 million to \$4.6 million. To operate an Emmett Till national park unit with multiple sites, staff such as park guides, interpreters and other rangers, facility assistants, and resource specialists would likely be needed, at an estimated cost of \$2.1 million to \$2.4 million (see table 1d for likely proposed staffing requirements). Since this unit would be a new, nonstaffing operations costs are estimated to be between \$0.9 million and \$1.1 million per year to include, for example, utilities, equipment, supplies, and contracted work. The total annual maintenance and operational costs are estimated to be between \$3.0 million and \$3.5 million.

Additional considerations for operational costs involve the two potential threats affecting many of the sites. First is the threat of flooding and tornado exposure. The Bryant's Grocery Store and Ben Roy's Service Station have a moderate risk of flooding based on Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) flood data, falling within a 500-year flood risk zone. All sites in Glendora, Mississippi, are in a FEMA "special flood hazard area" within a 100-year flood plain. Further, all 11 Emmett Till sites are listed in the Department of the Interior Strategic Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment Project database as having high exposure to tornados. Flooding and tornados could present a substantial threat to the resources under consideration, as protection and impacts from floods and tornados could substantially increase the costs associated with development, management, and operations of potential national park units.

The second threat that could potentially influence annual operating cost is the threat of vandalism. Repeated instances of vandalism have occurred at existing sites interpreting the history of Emmett Till, which allude to a degree of unrest around preserving the history among some individuals in the local community. Community members have expressed concern about vandalism to sites that represent racial violence in the broader region and the safety and the well-being of staff and visitors. Various security measures may be needed to protect the sites, particularly those in isolated, rural areas. Additionally, ensuring that staff and visitors are safe and feel welcomed is important for preserving both the resources and the overall visitor experience. Planning for law enforcement, security, and safety protocols will be necessary to help protect visitors, NPS park staff, and resources.

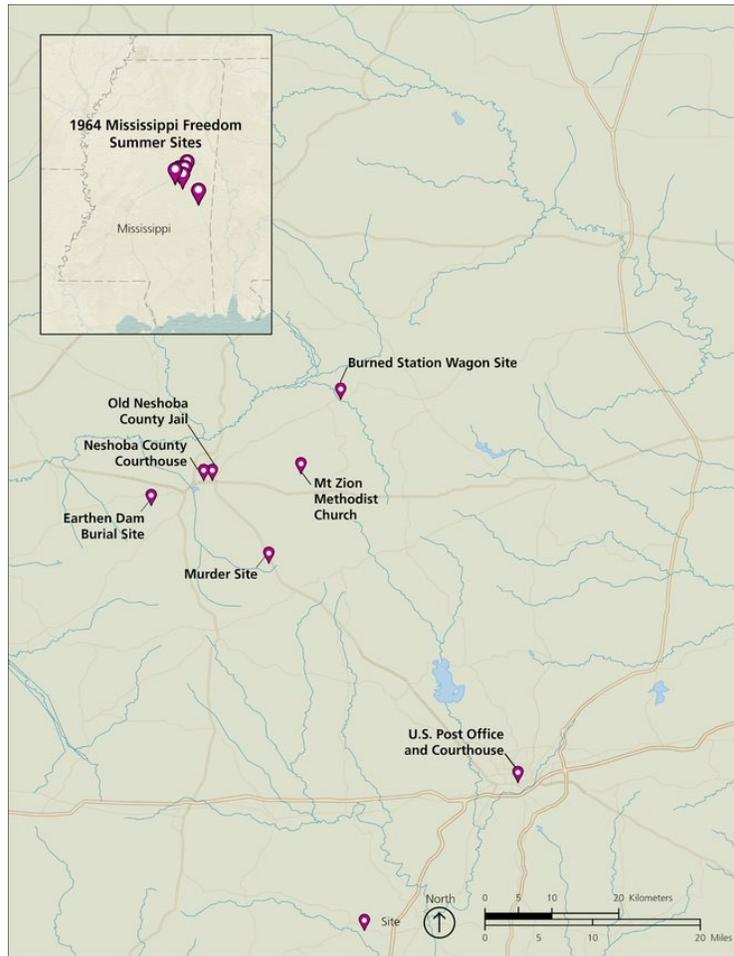
The following staffing estimates account for NPS staff who would work across all potential Emmett Till sites. More information about staff coordination and management responsibilities can be found in chapter 4 of this study.

Table 1d. Estimated Staffing Requirements for Emmett Till Sites

Number of Positions	Position	Responsibilities
5	Park and program managers	Managers consist of a superintendent, facility manager, interpretation manager, resource supervisors, operations director
8	Facility specialists	Perform routine maintenance and facility upkeep across all sites under the direction of the facility manager.
8	Interpretation and education specialists	Provide interpretation, education, and basic visitor services to the public across all sites under the direction of the interpretation manager. Staff may cover multiple sites.
2	Law enforcement rangers	Provide law enforcement and visitor/resource protection associated with specific sites.
2	Natural and cultural resources specialists	Implement actions to protect and maintain the cultural and natural resources at all sites under the direction of the resource supervisor.
2	Administrative specialists	Perform routine information technology, budget, and park operations management under direction of the operations director.
Total Positions	27	

2. 1964 Freedom Summer Sites

The 1964 Freedom Summer sites include seven sites that span two counties in central Mississippi: two sites in the center of the city of Philadelphia in Neshoba County; four sites in rural unincorporated areas within Neshoba County; and one site in the city of Meridian in Lauderdale County (see map 16). A feasibility analysis of each contributing site is described below, followed by a summary of the sites collectively.



MAP 16. 1964 FREEDOM SUMMER SITES IN NESHOPA AND LAUDERDALE COUNTIES

Contributing Site: Mt. Zion Methodist Church Site (Philadelphia, Neshoba County, Mississippi)

Size and Boundary Configurations

The Mt. Zion Methodist Church site is on a 5.6-acre triangular legal parcel located at 11191 Road 747 in the Longdale community near Philadelphia, Neshoba County, Mississippi (see map 17). The property contains contributing features associated with the 1964 Freedom Summer murders: the rebuilt church, a cemetery, the old Mt. Zion church bell and stand, and other landscape features. Noncontributing features include the Prince Hall Masonic Lodge (due to relocation and modifications) and commemorative markers, which were placed on

the landscape in 1989. The church features two distinct wings: a two-story traditional sanctuary for worship and a one-story community space called “Fellowship Hall,” added in around 2001, separated by several offices and restrooms in between the two wings.



MAP 17. MT. ZION METHODIST CHURCH SITE OVERVIEW, NESHOPA COUNTY

Land Ownership, Local Planning, and Potential Land Uses

The entire nationally significant landscape is within the 5.6-acre legal parcel owned by the United Methodist Association. Philadelphia is an incorporated municipality and the county seat of Neshoba County, Mississippi, with a population of approximately 7,100. The area surrounding Mt. Zion Methodist Church is sparsely populated and primarily privately owned and either rural, agricultural, or residential in character. No other potential changes in land uses have been specifically identified for this parcel or the surrounding area.

Existing and Potential Threats to Resources

This site is on County Road 747, which sometimes has high-speed traffic that could impact visitor safety and access. The Mt. Zion Methodist Church cemetery is located to the rear of the church and is actively used by the local community, with burials still occurring. The church is also actively used by the community for regular services and events. Managing the

active use of the cemetery and church with NPS visitation could be a challenge for management of the site.

Access

The site is not open to the public for direct access; however, the church does allow visitors to visit the site to learn more about the events that happened there by viewing the existing commemorative markers. The potential for public access is good from the U-shaped private driveway, which is a fundamental historic feature of the property. A small parking area next to the church building, including several accessible parking spaces, is available for church members. Other parking accommodations may need to be developed to provide NPS visitor access without compromising the historic setting and current function as an active church and cemetery. A complication for accessing the site is that Mt. Zion Church is located on a narrow county road, requiring either 1.0 or 2.2 miles of travel (depending on the direction of travel) from the nearest main road. The narrow road could potentially become congested if two buses or large vehicles needed to pass one another.

Public Enjoyment Potential

Moderate potential exists for visitors to understand this key site and its environmental context from the public right-of-way. The site has high potential with more direct access to the site and the landscape. The main contribution that the site offers to a 1964 Freedom Summer national park unit is the evocative character of the church landscape as it relates to the Freedom Summer events. The U-shaped driveway was central to the KKK ambush that took place at Mt. Zion Methodist Church, and the rebuilt church structure portrays a story of hope and resilience among community members in the aftermath of tragedy. Because of this, many people currently visit the site to view it from the public right-of-way. Many describe the Mt. Zion Methodist Church as a highly compelling site for visitor experience. Direct public access to the church's interior would be dependent on acquisition and development. Interpretive elements, including waysides, would need to be designed and installed for effective interpretation of the landscape.

Public Support (including Landowners)

The Mt. Zion Methodist Church requires approval from the United Methodist Association for decisions about the property. The current reverend of Mt. Zion Methodist Church has been in contact with the organization's leadership, which also oversees a broader district of over 60 other Methodist churches. The United Methodist Association supports a national park unit designation and is willing to sell the property at a fair market value. Church leadership reported that parish members voted in favor of park unit designation that includes the Mt. Zion Methodist Church, as well as consideration of potential acquisition by the National Park Service for such purposes.

A potential national park unit designation has support. Many community members strongly support preserving the history of Mt. Zion Methodist Church. The church property has a historical marker for the events and has actively commemorated the historic events by holding an annual memorial for the last 57 years without pause. The church is also actively

used by the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) to provide a meeting location for trainings around voter registration and voter suppression education.

Costs Associated with Acquisition, Development, and Operation

Based on comparable local land values, the estimate for the acquisition of the 5.6 acre-parcel, including the church, is approximately \$300,000. The estimated costs of development to support a national park unit at the site is approximately \$2.2 million. The site requires parking lot improvements, accessibility improvements, rehabilitation of interior spaces of the church, exterior repairs, site security, a new heating, ventilation, and air conditional (HVAC) system, interpretive waysides, and potentially removal or repurposing of the noncontributing lodge building on the property.

Feasibility Finding

The Mt. Zion Methodist Church site is feasible as a historic site within a potential national park unit for the 1964 Freedom Summer sites. The church and its surrounding landscape are in good condition. This finding assumes that the property would be acquired from the church and developed as a supporting site for visitation and NPS operations.

Contributing Site: Old Neshoba County Jail (Philadelphia, Neshoba County, Mississippi)

Size and Boundary Configurations

The Old Neshoba County Jail is on a 0.11-acre legal parcel located at 422 East Myrtle Street in a commercial district in downtown Philadelphia, Mississippi. The parcel is a rectangular lot surrounded by small private lots on three sides (north, east, and west), all within the city grid of Philadelphia (see map 18). The building is a total of approximately 2,248 square feet.



MAP 18. OLD NESHOBA COUNTY JAIL OVERVIEW, NESHOBA COUNTY

Land Ownership, Local Planning, and Potential Land Uses

The Old Neshoba County Jail is privately owned. The original jail building was renovated to be used as a residential space, but it was recently purchased (February 2022) and is being converted to special event space use. The property is in the downtown area of the city of Philadelphia, Mississippi. Philadelphia is incorporated as a municipality and is the county seat of Neshoba County. The city has a population of approximately 7,100. The area surrounding the former jail is commercial in character, featuring locally owned restaurants and retail stores, some of which include vacant storefront space. The property is about two blocks from the Neshoba County Courthouse Square. East Myrtle Street is a narrow roadway with no sidewalks; however, sidewalks and crosswalks are available for pedestrian travel within downtown Philadelphia.

Existing and Potential Threats to Resources

The Old Neshoba County Jail was purchased in February 2022 by a local business owner who plans to use the building to support operations at a nearby event space, located across East Myrtle Street. As of July 2022, local reports indicate that changes have been made to the

jail building, namely to the roof structure. The extent of these alterations to the structure are uncertain at this time and to be determined at a later date.

The owner who purchased the Old Neshoba County Jail building uses the adjacent building at the south side of East Myrtle Street to hosts large events, such as weddings and bridal showers. Those events could limit availability of on-street parking and could also affect interpretation of the Old Neshoba County Jail due to noise levels and visual distractions. The surrounding setting of the former jail generally reflects the historic character of the time of the 1964 Freedom Summer murders. However, potential future development to the surrounding area of downtown Philadelphia could impact the site's integrity of setting. For example, plans for a new hotel at the end of the block have been proposed within view of the Old Neshoba County Jail, though construction has not yet commenced at the time of this study.

Access

The building is currently not open to the public. The potential for public access is moderate, primarily due to limited parking availability. While surrounding city blocks have ample on-street parking, there are only four spots in front of the jail (one being an accessible spot). Access within the building is good, though minor upgrades are required to meet accessibility standards.

Public Enjoyment Potential

Interpretation of the site has a high potential for demonstrating the environmental context of a key event in the story of the Freedom Summer murders. Interior restoration of the jail building would be needed in order to bring the site back to its period of significance from its current state. The building has new windows and internal framing where the jail cells formerly were, in addition to some damage to the interior walls and ceiling that would need to be restored to maintain historic integrity.

The former jail building changed ownership and underwent renovations since the NPS study team visited the site in February 2022. Although the details of these modifications have not been evaluated, rehabilitation may be needed to restore the building's historic character as a jail. Interpretive elements would also need to be designed and installed for effective interpretation of the site.

Public Support (including Landowners)

The former jail property was acquired by its new owner in February 2022, and the new owner's level of support for the property becoming part of a potential national park unit is unknown. Considering that the building was purchased for the apparent purpose of supporting the event space business across the street, the use of the site to support park interpretation of the 1964 Freedom Summer murders seems unlikely. However, confirmation of the new property owner's level of support is still needed.

In a letter to the National Park Service from the Neshoba County Board of Supervisors dated September 7, 2021, the county supervisors included a resolution of written support for national park unit designation. The resolution stated, "We urge the National Park Service to

acquire the Old Neshoba County Jail and lend our support for same in order to preserve and protect this important resource.” Based on study outreach feedback, the local community appears to agree with the Neshoba County Board of Supervisor’s support for a potential national park system designation. No dissenting opinions expressing concern about the establishment of a park interpreting the 1964 Freedom Summer murders was shared with the National Park Service.

Costs Associated with Acquisition, Development, and Operation

Costs associated with acquisition, development, and operations were not developed for this site due to lack of clear owner support for inclusion of this site in a potential national park. If conditions change in the future related to the owner’s willingness to sell to the government, there would be additional one-time costs to acquire the property, provide appropriate access, and develop site interpretation.

Feasibility Finding

The Old Neshoba County Jail is currently not feasible as a contributing site within a potential park unit due to unknown property owner support from the property’s recent change in ownership. However, if this circumstance changes in the future, related to the owner’s willingness to sell to the government or donate the property, the feasibility of the site could be reconsidered. Therefore, a finding of “conditional feasibility” applies to the Old Neshoba County Jail based on the extent of changes made to the building and the potential for future acquisition if the property owner becomes willing to sell at another time.

Contributing Site: Murder Site (Neshoba County, Mississippi)

Size and Boundary Configurations

The murder site is an undefined location at or near the intersection of County Road 515 (also called “Rock Cut Road”) and County Road 284 in unincorporated Neshoba County, Mississippi (see map 19). This location is near State Highway 19, to the east. The location of this site has been identified in FBI reports, though the exact boundaries and dimensions of the site are undetermined. Detailed information is lacking that would inform this study’s analysis due to unreliable reports and police records associated with the crime.



MAP 19. MURDER SITE OVERVIEW, NESHOPA COUNTY

Land Ownership, Local Planning, and Potential Land Uses

This site is likely within or adjacent to the public right-of-way near the intersection of County Roads 515 and 284. The lands fronting this intersection are heavily wooded, privately owned parcels that appear to be mostly undeveloped and rural in character. Private residences are nearby, but those structures are not visible from this site at the intersection. The potential uses of the site and the adjacent private properties for uses other than rural, privately owned, residential use has not been identified. Current uses are expected to continue in the future.

Existing and Potential Threats to Resources

Due to the murder site's remote location in rural Neshoba County, site security and potential vandalism of any park-built infrastructure is the most significant threat. As such, protocols would need to be developed for managing visitor safety at this site, particularly concerning after-dark access to the site. Security is the primary reason this site is found infeasible.

Access

The potential for public access is currently low due to a lack of local landowner consent and support. Although the murder site is currently accessible from the public right-of-way, the

site has no space for off-street parking. A visitor could park along the road's shoulder but encouraging public visitation to this site using the roadside right-of-way should not be encouraged, with concern for the private ownership of adjacent properties and safety concerns for visitors. This site's location within a residential community provides for poor overall access.

Public Enjoyment Potential

The potential for public experience of the murder site is low due to poor access to the site and potential concerns for visitor safety. A historical marker was installed in 2009 to commemorate the site; however, it was purposely installed at a different location along State Highway 19 due to concerns from the local community about installing the sign in its more accurate location. These concerns indicate a lack of local support and the potential for lingering animosity concerning interpretation of the 1964 murders and for interpretation specifically at this site. This event is a reminder of how recent the 1964 murders occurred and that individuals and descendent family members of many people who were involved still live in the Philadelphia community and in Neshoba County. If public visitation of any form were to happen at the murder site, a high level of surveillance, such as regular monitoring and measures for visitor protection, would be required.

Public Support (including Landowners)

In 2021, the Neshoba County Board of Supervisors communicated its support for the development of a national park unit that interprets the 1964 Freedom Summer murders. However, local public support for this murder site specifically is not well known. The events concerning the installation of a historical marker in 2009 suggest that lingering tension among the local community may persist. Moreover, the wishes of the private property owners of the lands adjacent to this site are not known.

Costs Associated with Acquisition, Development, and Operation

Costs associated with acquisition, park development, and operations were not developed for this site due to poor access considerations, visitor safety considerations and lack of clear owner support for inclusion of this site in a potential national park. This situation is unlikely to change in the future.

Feasibility Finding

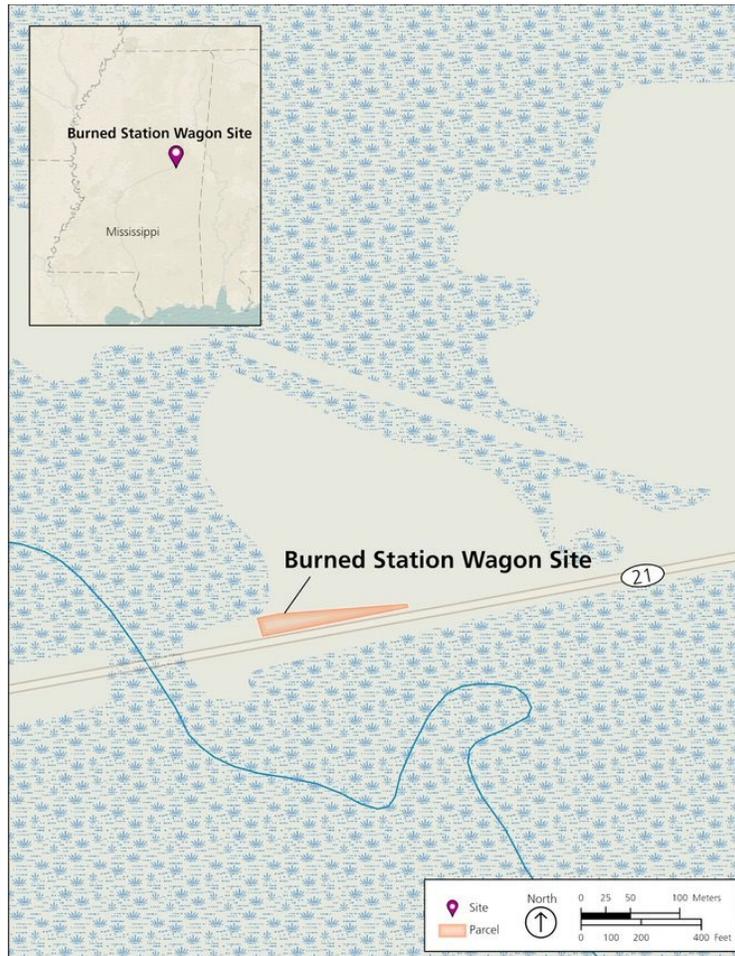
The murder site associated with the 1964 Freedom Summer murders is determined to be not feasible due to potential visitor safety and security concerns of this rural site and the likely lack of local support for interpretation at this site. Therefore, the development of this site for the purpose of on-site interpretation is not feasible. If any of these circumstances change in the future, the site could be analyzed again for feasibility.

Contributing Site: Burned Station Wagon Site (Neshoba County, Mississippi)

Size and Boundary Configurations

The Burned Station Wagon site is a small roadside area, approximately 300 feet long and 50 feet wide, totaling approximately 0.6 acres (see map 20). The proposed boundary is a

narrow triangle encompassing a pulloff area adjacent to the Bogue Chitto swamp where the burned station wagon vehicle was originally found on the side of Mississippi Highway 21.



MAP 20. BURNED STATION WAGON SITE OVERVIEW, NESHOPA COUNTY

Land Ownership, Local Planning, and Potential Land Uses

The roadside site is within the public right-of-way, about 80 feet from the north side of Mississippi Highway 21. The Burned Station Wagon site is owned by the Mississippi Department of Transportation and located near the Bogue Chitto Swamp, approximately 13 miles northeast of Philadelphia, Mississippi. The site is located near a utility easement, but on land owned by the Mississippi Department of Transportation. Much of the surrounding land is owned and managed as a reservation by the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians. The surrounding area is primarily rural, agricultural, and residential in character. Tribal engagement will likely be necessary in the potential development and management of this property.

Existing and Potential Threats to Resources

The site is in a FEMA flood hazard zone, in a floodplain of the nearby Owl Creek. The primary threat to integrity is risk of flooding from adjacent wetlands. While a flooding event

would affect the historic site itself, the interpretive pullout for visitor access would likely be unaffected, as it is located off the main road at a higher elevation. Due to climate change, an increase in frequency and intensity of extreme precipitation events that contribute to flooding is expected.

Access

The potential for public access is moderate, as the site is within a state highway right-of-way (within 100 feet of the road). Currently, the site has a gravel pull-off from the main road, which could fit approximately eight closely parked vehicles. The terrain from the pulloff down to the Burned Station Wagon site is uneven, and site access will be limited to interpretive waysides at the pulloff.

Public Enjoyment Potential

There is high potential for interpretation of the site for demonstrating the environmental context of a key event in the history of the Freedom Summer murders. Public access would be limited to a pulloff that would be part of a multisite unit in Neshoba County. The pulloff could feature interpretive waysides explaining the history and significance of the Burned Station Wagon site. The area would not have visitor services and would be kept in a natural setting to allow personal reflection of the events.

Public Support (including Landowners)

The Mississippi Department of Transportation supports a national park unit designation and has indicated a willingness to consider creating a more robust pulloff for visitation. The Mississippi Department of Transportation has also discussed the potential to slow the current highway speed limit to support commemoration and visitor safety if necessary.

While the Neshoba County Board of Supervisors has expressed support for a national park unit designation, community support may be mixed due to the sensitive nature of the history. Some concerns exist for site security, due to vandalism of historic markers of nearby civil rights-related sites. Because the property is in proximity to Choctaw lands, tribal consultation will likely be necessary. The level of tribal support is not currently known. The National Park Service will need to actively work with the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians to assess level of support and gather input for potential interpretation.

Costs Associated with Acquisition, Development, and Operation

There are no anticipated acquisition costs, as the desired management model is a partnership with the Mississippi Department of Transportation or donation from the state, if necessary. The National Park Service would partner with the Mississippi Department of Transportation to develop minimal on-site infrastructure to support interpretation and education. The estimated cost for this work is approximately \$301,000. This estimate includes the construction of a safe pullout for visitor access, including a parking area for several cars and a bus, site security, and interpretive waysides. Stabilization to address potential flooding concerns, if necessary, was not included in this estimate.

Feasibility Finding

The Burned Station Wagon site is feasible as a historic site within a potential national park unit for the 1964 Freedom Summer sites. This finding assumes that the property would be developed with the Mississippi Department of Transportation as a pull-off to support visitor interpretation at this location.

Contributing Site: Earthen Dam Burial Site (Neshoba County, Mississippi)

Size and Boundary Configurations

The exact size and boundary of the Earthen Dam Burial site has not been identified in this study due to a lack of access. Federal Bureau of Investigation records indicate that the site is located near Mississippi State Highway 21 in Neshoba County, southwest of the city of Philadelphia. The site is embedded within a large undeveloped parcel of private property that, according to publicly available aerial photography of the area, includes a dammed pond surrounding by forested lands (see map 21).



MAP 21. EARTHEN DAM BURIAL SITE OVERVIEW, NESHOPA COUNTY

Land Ownership, Local Planning, and Potential Land Uses

The Earthen Dam Burial site is privately owned in rural Neshoba County. Other local planning or potential land uses have not been identified for this site.

Existing and Potential Threats to Resources

Due to the study team's lack of access to this site, an evaluation of existing and potential threats to the site are not known to support an analysis of site threats or related factors.

Access

The potential for public access to this site is low because it is on private lands and closed to the public, with a "No Trespassing" sign posted nearest to the state highway. The earthen dam and its immediate environment are not visible from a public right-of-way and the site is inaccessible.

Public Enjoyment Potential

Currently, the public has no opportunities to visit the Earthen Dam Burial site because it is closed from public access and view. If this situation changes in the future, public interpretation as part of a possible national park unit could be evaluated at that time.

Public Support (including Landowners)

While the Neshoba County Board of Supervisors has expressed support for national park unit designation, community support may be mixed due to the sensitive nature of the story and the presence of descendent family members of individuals involved in the events associated with the 1964 Freedom Summer murders. The property owner of the Earthen Dam Burial site is not known to be a willing seller at this time and is unlikely to be interested in being involved in the formation of a national park unit that includes this property.

Costs Associated with Acquisition, Development, and Operation

Costs associated with acquisition, park development, and operations were not developed for this site due to poor access and lack of clear owner support for inclusion of this site in a potential national park unit. This situation is unlikely to change in the future.

Feasibility Finding

The Earthen Dam Burial site associated with the 1964 Freedom Summer murders is determined to be not feasible due to its inaccessible location and the likely lack of property owner and local support for interpretation at this site. Therefore, the development of this site for the purpose of on-site interpretation is not feasible. If any of these circumstances change in the future, the site could be analyzed again for feasibility.

Contributing Site: Neshoba County Courthouse Square (Philadelphia, Neshoba County, Mississippi)

Size and Boundary Configurations

The Neshoba County Courthouse Square is on a legal parcel that spans one city block in the historic downtown area of Philadelphia, Mississippi. The boundary is surrounded by public sidewalks on all sides and is bordered by Byrd Avenue North (also called Range Avenue), West Main Street, Center Avenue North, and West Beacon Street (see map 22). The site features the main courthouse building, surrounded by a landscaped property with small paths for walking. The main entrance of the courthouse is framed by two flag poles and a historic standalone clock.



MAP 22. NESHOPA COUNTY COURTHOUSE SQUARE OVERVIEW, NESHOPA COUNTY

Land Ownership, Local Planning, and Potential Land Uses

The site is owned by Neshoba County. The property is located in the city of Philadelphia, Mississippi. The area surrounding the Neshoba County Courthouse is commercial in character, featuring locally owned restaurants and retail stores. The property is

approximately two blocks from the Old Neshoba County Jail, with sidewalks and crosswalks available for pedestrian travel.

Existing and Potential Threats to Resources

No known threats to this resource exist. A fair amount of vehicular traffic and traffic noise are in the vicinity, but this is not expected to affect interpretation at the site.

Access

The potential for public access to the site's exterior is good from the public right-of-way; however, the courthouse is active for trials and other county requirements, which limits interior public access. The primary significance for the courthouse is the exterior landscape; therefore, access to the interior of the courthouse is not necessary or required for the visitor experience. The site has ample free street parking on surrounding blocks, in addition to free parallel parking in front of the courthouse. The building has ramps and an accessible entrance on the Beacon Street side of the property.

Public Enjoyment Potential

Interpretation of the site has a high potential of demonstrating the context of a key event in the story of the Freedom Summer murders. The site has ample free parking on the street for visitors and clearly marked sidewalks and crosswalks in the vicinity of the courthouse square. Interpretive waysides would need to be developed and installed to support visitor enjoyment. A large renovation occurred in 2003 that changed the interior floor plan of the courthouse from its historic context—old-style doors were updated; the courtroom configuration was changed; the courthouse balcony, columns, and interior stairs were removed; and an HVAC system was installed. Though the courthouse is accessible, the building interior would not be offered for NPS public visitation. Public access would be limited to a walking tour of downtown Philadelphia that includes the exterior of the courthouse.

Nuanced interpretation may need to be developed regarding the Neshoba County Confederate Monument, which was constructed using funds raised by the public in 1912 and restored by the citizens of Neshoba County in 2006. Clear interpretation to explain the monument's role in the historic setting of 1964, and the way in which the monument served as a visual reminder of racial oppression in Neshoba County, would be needed to explain this important historic context.

Public Support (including Landowners)

The property owner supports national park unit designation and is willing to work with the National Park Service to identify an appropriate level of access and interpretation involving the Neshoba County Courthouse and surrounding landscape. Public support was generally positive for inclusion of this site.

Costs Associated with Acquisition, Development, and Operation

The site does not need to be acquired because the National Park Service does not seek to acquire any property and instead would partner with Neshoba County to provide expanded interpretation and commemoration of the courthouse from the exterior. Recognizing the

need for additional interpretation of the site, the estimated cost of development is approximately \$78,000, including the development and installation of interpretive waysides on the building's grounds. Direct NPS management is not needed. The courthouse is on landscaped grounds, and the two-story red brick building is maintained in excellent condition by the county.

Feasibility Finding

The Neshoba County Courthouse Square is feasible as a historic site within a potential national park unit for the 1964 Freedom Summer sites. The courthouse and its surrounding landscape are in good condition and provide a high opportunity for visitor access and interpretation as part of an interpretive driving or walking tour within downtown Philadelphia. This finding assumes that a partnership model would be developed between Neshoba County and the National Park Service to develop additional waysides and interpretation.

Contributing Site: US Post Office and Courthouse (Meridian, Lauderdale County, Mississippi)

Size and Boundary Configurations

The US Post Office and Courthouse is centered on a parcel that spans one city block at 2100 9th Street in Meridian, Lauderdale County, Mississippi. The block is bound by 10th Street to the north, 22nd Avenue to the west, Constitution Avenue to the east, and 9th Street the south (see map 23). The US Post Office and Courthouse building is a large, three-story building of approximately 91,000 square feet (Odom 1983). This study also evaluated the courtroom within this building as the historic site that contributes to the significance of the 1964 Freedom Summer murders. The courtroom is a two-story space on the building's second floor, approximately 2,000 square feet in size (Odom 1983).



MAP 23. US POST OFFICE AND COURTHOUSE OVERVIEW, LAUDERDALE COUNTY

Land Ownership, Local Planning, and Potential Land Uses

The US Post Office and Courthouse, including the building, is owned by the US Postal Service. The building is mostly vacant and is no longer used as a federal courthouse, but the US Postal Service still operates a post office on the first floor. Apart from the post office spaces, most rooms in the building are unoccupied. The building has a variety of potential uses, such as office spaces or NPS operations supporting historical interpretation of the courtroom.

This site is located in an urban setting in the city of Meridian, which has eight recognized historic districts and neighborhoods. The Meridian Community Development Department is responsible for the planning and preservation of historic buildings and districts. The City of Meridian Comprehensive Plan states goals for preserving and enhancing the value of places and objects of historical significance and cultural importance to the community (Meridian 2009). The 2009 plan indicates that the US Post Office and Courthouse were within the residential zone in 2009 but is planned to be part of a commercial zone. Whether this update has officially taken place is uncertain.

Existing and Potential Threats to Resources

The primary threat concerning the US Post Office and Courthouse is its vacancy. Without active use and maintenance, the building could quickly deteriorate. The building's status as excess property of the US Postal Service could lead to the agency selling the property out of federal ownership. If a transfer of ownership were to occur, then the character-defining features of the building, and specifically the courtroom that relates to the 1964 trial associated with the Freedom Summer murders, could be at risk of modification or loss if they are not maintained or preserved by the new owner. This potential scenario has not been identified as an immediate or imminent threat concerning this building, but it is one to be aware of regarding the building's long-term preservation.

Access

Public access to the site is low. Under the current operation of the site, the public may only access the building's first floor postal service spaces. Access beyond that first-floor area is restricted because the remainder of the building is unoccupied and closed for access and use at this time. Closed areas include the second-floor courtroom. As a federal building, the site appears to meet ABAAS accessibility standards. Ramps leading to the entrance are present, and the building's three interior levels are accessible by elevator.

Public Support (including Landowners)

The NPS study team met with representatives of the US Postal Service, the current owner, to learn about opportunities to share space in the building for the purpose of providing the public an opportunity to view the historic courtroom. The US Postal Service considers limited public access to the building's interior for interpretive purposes to be infeasible for a variety of reasons. Similarly, it considers a partnership for access and interpretation to be infeasible in general. Rather, the US Postal Service indicated that it could consider selling the entire property to the National Park Service.

Costs Associated with Acquisition, Development, and Operation

The US Postal Service communicated that it could consider selling the building to the National Park Service. However, considering the building's large size of about 91,000 square feet and the National Park Service's focused interest in the courtroom, which is about 2,000 square feet, acquisition of the entire building would not be feasible due to the high cost of maintenance, development, and operation, as well as the cost of acquisition of the entire building. Based on this assessment, cost estimates for the development and operations of the building were not developed.

Feasibility Finding

- The US Post Office and Courthouse in Meridian, associated with the 1964 Freedom Summer murders, is determined to be not feasible due to the high cost of acquisition, development, operations, and ongoing maintenance of the building.

Feasibility Summary for the 1964 Freedom Summer Sites

Feasible Sites

1. Mt. Zion Methodist Church site – buildings and landscape (Neshoba County, Mississippi)
2. Burned Station Wagon site (Neshoba County, Mississippi)
3. Neshoba County Courthouse Square (Neshoba County, Mississippi)

Conditionally Feasible Sites

1. Old Neshoba County Jail (Neshoba County, Mississippi)

Sites Not Feasible

1. Murder site (Neshoba County, Mississippi)
2. Earthen Dam site (Neshoba County, Mississippi)
3. US Post Office Building and Courthouse (Meridian, Mississippi)

Cost of Development and Operations

Tables 2a–2c present a summary of the estimated costs of one-time development, acquisition, and operations for each of the sites analyzed for feasibility, and the total costs of all sites combined.

Table 2a. Estimated One-Time Development Costs for 1964 Freedom Summer Sites

Site Name	Proposed Development	Cost
Mt. Zion Methodist Church	Construction costs (includes interior and exterior development, office area rehabilitation, restrooms, and utilities)	
	Direct Cost Total	\$1,141,000
	Indirect Cost Total*	\$1,076,000
	Total Estimated Cost for All Development of Mt. Zion Methodist Church Site	\$2,217,000
Burned Station Wagon site (Philadelphia, Mississippi)	Construction costs (includes pavilion, restrooms, site access improvements, lighting, signage, landscaping, wayside exhibits, parking lot development, site security)	
	Direct Cost Total	\$155,000
	Indirect Cost Total	\$146,000
	Total Estimated Cost for All Development at Burned Station Wagon Site	\$301,000
Neshoba County Courthouse Square (Philadelphia, Mississippi)	Construction costs (includes wayside exhibits)	

Site Name	Proposed Development	Cost
	Direct Cost Total	\$40,000
	Indirect Cost Total*	\$38,000
	Total Estimated Cost for All Development at Neshoba County Courthouse Square	\$78,000

* Includes location factor, design contingency, contracting fees, bonds and insurance, escalation, and other adjustments

Table 2b. Summary of Estimated One-Time Development Costs for 1964 Freedom Summer Sites

Summary	Total Estimated Cost of One-Time Development
Mt. Zion Church	\$2,217,000
Burned Station Wagon site	\$301,000
Neshoba County Courthouse Square	\$78,000
Total Estimated Cost for One-Time Development*	\$2,596,000

* Includes location factor, design contingency, contracting fees, bonds and insurance, escalation, and other adjustments

Table 2c. Summary of Estimated Acquisition Costs for 1964 Freedom Summer Sites

Summary	Total Estimated Cost of One-Time Acquisition
Mt. Zion Church	\$300,000
Total Estimated Cost of Property Acquisition	\$300,000

The total estimated one-time costs for acquisition of property interests and addressing identified development improvements at the feasible 1964 Freedom Summer sites are approximately \$2.9 million.

Annual Operating Cost

National park unit operating costs vary widely, depending on their overall size, the types and quantities of resources they manage, the number of visitors, the level of programs offered, safety and security issues, staffing, and many other factors. At a minimum, the operating cost of a proposed new park unit for the 1964 Freedom Summer sites would need to include grounds and facilities maintenance, utilities, communications, administration, and other miscellaneous expenses. Operating costs would include staffing (see table 2d). Personnel would be required to design and deliver interpretive programming (e.g., personal interpretation, exhibits, special events), maintain facilities and grounds, perform administrative functions (budget, management, planning, and compliance), provide for law enforcement (if necessary), and conduct outreach to the community and schools.

An additional analysis of operational costs from other existing national park units, such as Fort Sumter and Fort Moultrie National Historical Park, Jimmy Carter National Historical Site, and Natchez National Historic Park, were used as a baseline for comparison. These units were chosen because of their similarities to the potential 1964 Freedom Summer national park unit in terms of size, complexity, and having multiple dispersed sites, including

partner sites, to manage. These sites have annual operating budgets ranging from \$1.2 million to \$2.5 million. To operate a national park unit with multiple sites, staff such as park guides, interpreters and other rangers, facility assistants, and resource specialists would likely be needed, at an estimated cost of \$1.26 million to \$1.54 million (see table 2d for likely proposed staffing requirements). Since this estimate would be a new unit, nonstaffing operations costs are estimated to be between \$540,000 and \$660,000 per year. The total annual maintenance and operational costs are estimated to be between \$1.8 million and \$2.3 million for the proposed sites above.

Additional considerations for operational costs involve the two potential threats affecting many of the sites. First is the threat of flooding and tornado exposure. The Burned Station Wagon site is susceptible to flooding, as it is in a FEMA flood hazard zone. Because of climate change, the frequency of 100- and 500-year flood events are increasing, so the property is at greater risk of flooding in the future than likely accounted by FEMA data. All sites are listed in the Department of the Interior Strategic Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment Project database as having high exposure to tornados. Flooding and tornados could present a substantial threat to the resources under consideration for protection, and impacts from floods and tornados could substantially increase the costs associated with development, management, and operations of potential national park units.

The second threat that could potentially influence annual operating costs is the threat of vandalism. Repeated instances of vandalism have occurred at existing sites interpreting the history of Emmett Till, which allude to a degree of unrest around preserving the history among some individuals in the local community. Community members have expressed concern about vandalism to sites that represent racial violence in the broader region and the safety and well-being of staff and visitors. Various security measures may be needed to protect the sites, particularly those in isolated, rural areas. Additionally, ensuring that staff and visitors are safe and feel welcomed is important for preserving both the resources and the overall visitor experience. Planning for law enforcement, security, and safety protocols will be necessary to help protect visitors, NPS park staff, and resources.

The following staffing estimates account for NPS staff who would work across all potential 1964 Freedom Summer sites (see table 2d). More information about staff coordination and management responsibilities can be found in chapter 4 of this study.

Table 2d. Estimated Staffing Requirements for 1964 Freedom Summer Sites

Number of Positions	Position	Responsibilities
4	Park and program managers	Managers consist of a superintendent, facility manager, interpretation/resource supervisor, operations director
5	Facility specialists	Perform routine maintenance and facility upkeep across all sites under the direction of the facility manager.
5	Interpretation and education specialists	Provide interpretation, education, and basic visitor services to the public across all sites under the direction of the interpretation manager. Staff may cover multiple sites.
1	Natural and cultural resources specialists	Implement actions to protect and maintain the cultural and natural resources at all sites, under the direction of the resource supervisor.
3	Administrative specialists	Perform routine information technology, budget, and park operations management under the direction of the operations director.
Total Positions	18	

3. M.W. Stringer Grand Lodge (Jackson, Hinds County, Mississippi)

Size and Boundary Configurations

The M.W. Stringer Grand Lodge is on a 1.18-acre legal parcel (see map 24). The site of interest is the main brick building, which has a footprint of approximately 0.53 acres. The lodge is located between Cleary Street and J.R. Lynch Street and borders Jackson State University.



MAP 24. M.W. STRINGER GRAND LODGE SITE OVERVIEW, HINDS COUNTY

Land Ownership, Local Planning, and Potential Land Uses

The property is privately owned by the fraternal Most Worshipful Stringer Grand Lodge organization. The Most Worshipful Stringer Grand Lodge owns the main lodge building, a small neighboring building, and an adjacent parking lot, though the main lodge building is the site of interest. The lodge is in Jackson, Mississippi. Jackson is the capital and most populous city of the state of Mississippi, with approximately 153,700 residents.

M.W. Stringer Grand Lodge borders Jackson State University, a public historically Black university (HBCU). Jackson State University is one of the largest HBCUs in the United States and the fourth largest University in Mississippi in terms of student enrollment, with approximately 7,000 students attending the university. Aside from the university, M.W. Stringer Grand Lodge is bordered by residential and commercial properties, in addition to a community mixed-use district and a special use district (Mt. Olive Cemetery) across Lynch Street.

Existing and Potential Threats to Resources

Although no specific plans were shared during this study, the building needs an elevator to make the second floor accessible and, potentially, upgraded utilities, which will need to be completed with negative impacts to the building's character-defining features. Apart from these changes, a general concern is the challenge of maintaining and preservation such a large structure for the indefinite future. No external threats to the site have been identified.

Access

The potential for public access is moderate. The historic auditorium is accessible, but the building currently does not have an elevator to the second floor where the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) offices are located. However, the M.W. Stringer Grand Lodge has a full record of structural plans for elevator installation. Though M.W. Stringer Grand Lodge owns an adjacent parking lot, the lot is closed frequently to prevent university students from parking. The Lodge currently offers parking to members and tenants only. Free on-street parking is currently available in the city right-of-way on Cleary Street and Lynch Street, at the front entrance of the M.W. Stringer Grand Lodge.

Public Enjoyment Potential

Interpretation of the site has a high potential for demonstrating the context for civil rights organizing in Mississippi. While the building is closed to the public, historical tours are offered by lodge staff to the auditorium and NAACP offices. The lodge received between 1,500 and 1,800 annual visitors between 2011 and 2020. The interior space evokes a strong feeling of connection to the organizational activities that occurred at M.W. Stringer Grand Lodge, with interior features intact from the historical period of significance. A single bullet hole in an upstairs NAACP office window provides a powerful interpretive opportunity, demonstrating the very tangible risks and sacrifices that civil rights organizers undertook in their daily work.

Public Support (including Landowners)

The property owner has communicated a preference to retain the ownership, management, and operations of M.W. Stringer Grand Lodge but would likely want to partner with the National Park Service for preservation, interpretation and administrative use of the lodge associated with a national park unit. The owner expressed a willingness to coordinate with the National Park Service so that tours and access could be accommodated on a regular schedule, provided tours do not conflict with lodge functions and member meetings. Federal acquisition of the lodge is not the owner's stated preference; however, the owner may be willing to consider NPS ownership (including partial or some form of preservation easement) and management of the site if it provides a greater opportunity for enhanced preservation and interpretation. Including the site as part of a potential park unit appears to be of greatest priority. The National Park Service anticipates strong public support for a NPS partnership at the M.W. Stringer Grand Lodge.

Costs Associated with Acquisition, Development, and Operation

There is no need for site acquisition due to the fact that the National Park Service does not seek to acquire any property interests but would prefer to instead partner with the M.W. Stringer Grand Lodge organization to provide public interpretation, preservation, operations, and administration. The lodge could also be considered to provide operational support and interpretive opportunities associated with the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument, a national park unit located within a 15-minute drive from the M.W. Stringer Grand Lodge in Jackson.

Given an anticipated partnership approach, including the M.W. Stringer Grand Lodge in a potential national park unit, approximately \$300,000 is estimated to be required in annual NPS operations and maintenance costs to support a range of partner activities and functions. Specifically, the study team proposes that one NPS staff liaison would be required to support operations and interpretations, coordinate activities with the lodge, and seek to identify appropriate NPS funds to support general repairs and maintenance of the historic site according to anticipated terms of a partner/cooperative agreement. If congressionally authorized, the National Park Service could also assist the M.W. Stringer Grand Lodge organization in securing funding, through grants or other means, for more substantial and mutually beneficial building investments, such as making the building ABAAS compliant. Further discussions with the leadership of the M.W. Stringer Grand Lodge organization would be necessary to continue to evaluate these options and opportunities for a potential partnership.

Feasibility Finding

The M.W. Stringer Grand Lodge is feasible as a historic site within a potential national park unit. The lodge and its interior spaces are in good condition and provide a high opportunity for visitor access and interpretation. This finding assumes that a partnership model using appropriate NPS authorities would be developed between M.W. Stringer Grand Lodge and the National Park Service for interpretation, preservation, operations, and administration at the site, as necessary.

4. Taborian Hospital (Mound Bayou, Bolivar County, Mississippi)

Size and Boundary Configurations

The Taborian Hospital is on a 1.78-acre legal parcel at the intersection of Fisher Avenue and Martin Luther King Drive in Mound Bayou, Mississippi (see map 25). Within this boundary, the hospital is a one-story brick building with a symmetrical U-shaped footprint.



MAP 25. TABORIAN HOSPITAL SITE OVERVIEW, BOLIVAR COUNTY

Land Ownership, Local Planning, and Potential Land Uses

The site is privately owned by the International Order of Twelve Knights and Daughters of Tabor, an African American fraternal organization that filed as a nonprofit in 2014. The Taborian Hospital is located in the City of Mound Bayou, which has a population of approximately 1,400. The City of Mound Bayou was founded as an independent Black community in 1887. The area around the Taborian Hospital is composed of residential, commercial, and mixed-use zones. The hospital site is situated between the John F. Kennedy Memorial High School and the I.T. Montgomery Elementary School. The Taborian Hospital was leased to the City of Mound Bayou in 2010 for a 30-year lease term. In 2015, the city subleased both buildings to the Taborian Urgent Care Center.

Existing and Potential Threats to Resources

In June 2021, heavy rain led to a severe flood that devastated many homes and buildings in Mound Bayou. The flood caused extreme interior structural damage to the Taborian Hospital building, leaving all medical equipment and administrative spaces severely damaged, and several parts of the building's ceiling collapsed. Beyond structural damage, there is a health and safety threat due to persistent mold within the building. Because of this,

the building interior is currently not occupied or in use. Though the mold could potentially be mitigated without further damaging historic integrity, intervention would be costly given the current structural state of the building.

Access

The potential for public access to the site's interior is poor due to severe deterioration of the building's interior and related health and safety issues concerning the interior environment. Public access to the site's exterior is good. The site has a paved parking lot with accessible spaces in front of the hospital structure and an ADA-accessible ramp leading to the building's front entrance.

Public Enjoyment Potential

The potential for public enjoyment is high for exterior visual value and interpretation but low for interior environment due to air quality, mold, and structural deterioration.

Public Support (including Landowners)

The property owner of the Taborian Hospital is not willing to sell the property at this time, and they do not desire NPS ownership or envision being included within a potential national park unit. The International Order of Twelve Knights and Daughters of Tabor envision a future in which the hospital can be reopened as a rural urgent care center or independently repurposed in a way that economically benefits the community. Several efforts have been made in the past to reopen the hospital. In 2011, the International Order of Twelve Knights and Daughters of Tabor received a \$2.9 million federal grant for building restoration. In 2014, the hospital was further restored through an agreement with the City of Mound Bayou. In 2016, the Delta Jewels project opened the hospital for public tours, but those have been discontinued. The ownership and leasing agreements for the building between the International Order of Twelve Knights and Daughters of Tabor and the City of Mound Bayou have been legally disputed in recent years and were ongoing at the time of this study.

Costs Associated with Acquisition, Development, and Operation

Costs associated with acquisition, park development, and operations were not developed for this site due to lack of owner support for inclusion of this site in a potential national park. If conditions change in the future related to the owner's willingness to sell to the government, there would be significant additional one-time costs to acquire the property, remediate and redevelop the interior, and/or develop and install interpretive waysides for the building's exterior.

Feasibility Finding

The Taborian Hospital site is determined to be not feasible due to the high cost of remediation and rehabilitation of the site as well as the property owner's wishes to maintain ownership and not be included in the establishment of a national park unit. Therefore, the development of this site for the purpose of on-site interpretation is not feasible. If any of these circumstances change in the future, the site could be analyzed again for feasibility.

5. Isaiah T. Montgomery House (Mound Bayou, Bolivar County, Mississippi)

Size and Boundary Configurations

The Isaiah T. Montgomery House is on a 0.38 acre legal parcel in a residential area of Mound Bayou, Mississippi (see map 26). The site is located on 302 South West Main Street, in Mound Bayou, Mississippi. Built in around 1919, this red brick structure is irregular in plan and consists of two stories over a full above-grade basement.



MAP 26. ISAIAH T. MONTGOMERY HOUSE SITE OVERVIEW, BOLIVAR COUNTY

Land Ownership, Local Planning, and Potential Land Uses

The site is owned privately by BDT Housing, LLC, a nonprofit organization. The Isaiah T. Montgomery House is located in the City of Mound Bayou. Mound Bayou is composed of primarily residential, commercial, and mixed-use zones; however, the land uses surrounding the Isaiah T. Montgomery House are primarily private residences. The site is located on West Main Street, which has a moderate amount of local thru-traffic and pedestrian traffic.

Existing and Potential Threats to Resources

Both the interior and exterior structure are in moderate states of deterioration, though the property owner is actively working to pursue grants to restore and rehabilitate the home. Moisture and termite damage has compromised the framing of the building. Without intervention, termite damage could cause a serious threat to the structure. Flooding is another concern for the structure.

Access

The potential for public access is moderate from the building's exterior and low from the building's interior, due to severe deterioration of the building's interior and lack of accessibility to all floors. The building is in critical need of repairs, with a minimum need to stabilize the structure, secure the exterior, and ventilate the interior.

Public Enjoyment Potential

The potential for public enjoyment is high for exterior visual value and interpretation. Interpretive waysides would need to be developed and installed if the site were to be included as part of an interpretive driving tour.

Public Support (including Landowners)

The property owner of the Isaiah T. Montgomery House is not willing to sell the property at this time, and they do not desire NPS ownership or envision being included within a potential national park site. The current owner is interested in developing the Isaiah T. Montgomery House in a manner apart from a national park unit. However, the local community and the public generally support rehabilitating the Isaiah T. Montgomery House for interpretation. Past plans included repurposing the building into a bed and breakfast, but no development has occurred in recent years. The City of Mound Bayou has expressed interest in some form of NPS recognition/designation within the community. The current owner, as well as the town's mayor, has communicated a potential interest in partnering with the National Park Service at a future time.

Costs Associated with Acquisition, Development, and Operation

Costs associated with acquisition, park development, and operations were not developed for this site due to the site owner's desire to maintain ownership and develop their own plans to rehabilitate the property for non-NPS uses. If conditions change in the future related to the owner's willingness to sell to the government, there would be additional one-time costs to acquire the property, conduct structural stabilization, mitigate termites, rehabilitate the house, and develop and install interpretive waysides to provide appropriate visitor access and site interpretation.

Feasibility Finding

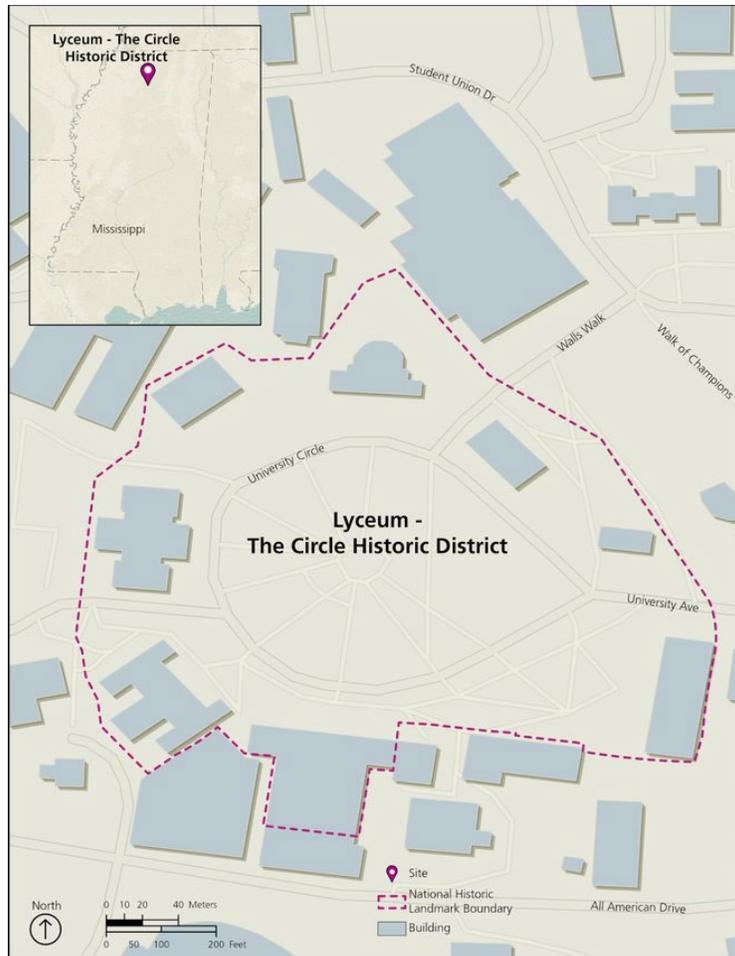
The Isaiah T. Montgomery House site is currently not feasible due to the property owner's wishes to maintain ownership and develop the property for other purposes. The property owner has suggested the possibility of a potential partnership with the National Park Service rather than direct federal acquisition of the site. If this circumstance changes in the future

related to the owner’s willingness to sell to the government or engage in a specific partnership agreement, the feasibility of the site could be reconsidered. Therefore, a finding of “conditional feasibility” applies to the Isaiah T. Montgomery House based on the potential for future acquisition if the property owner becomes willing to sell at another time. If a national park unit is established, this finding would not preclude BDT Housing, LLC from working with the National Park Service to develop a partnership agreement to jointly interpret the historical role of Isaiah T. Montgomery and his home. This evaluation may need to be reconsidered in the future, depending on the extent of the changes made to the property and property owner feedback.

6. Lyceum – The Circle Historic District (Oxford, Lafayette County, Mississippi)

Size and Boundary Configurations

Lyceum – The Circle Historic District includes a 3.5-acre parklike green space at the center of the University of Mississippi’s campus in the city of Oxford, Mississippi. Surrounding The Circle is a one-way, single-lane circular vehicular roadway named University Circle. Beyond this, the district includes the footprints of eight academic buildings that face The Circle area (see map 27). The district encompasses this entire area, and it also comprises the potential park boundary analyzed here. The focus of this analysis is on the exterior features, primarily The Circle landscape, and not the interiors of the contributing buildings of this historic district.



MAP 27. LYCEUM – THE CIRCLE HISTORIC DISTRICT SITE OVERVIEW, LAFAYETTE COUNTY

Land Ownership, Local Planning, and Potential Land Uses

The entire property is owned by the State of Mississippi as part of the larger University of Mississippi campus. Local planning is governed by the state through its system of governance over state-run universities. The university’s leadership has confirmed its intentions to continue to preserve, maintain, and manage the district’s contributing historic buildings and landscape features in this manner. This study has identified no other potential land uses for this area.

Existing and Potential Threats to Resources

Lyceum – The Circle Historic District has no known threats. The district’s contributing historical features are well-preserved, and the university maintains them in good condition. The university administration has communicated to the NPS study team its intention to continue its high level of stewardship of this property, and it plans to continue to own and manage it for the long-term future.

Access

The potential for public access to the property is high because it is open to the public and access is unrestricted within the university's campus. Over 17,000 students attend the university, and Lyceum – The Circle area is a heavily tracked area for both students and external visitors. Visitors from outside the university may enter the campus freely and walk or drive up to The Circle area. The university's administration notes that the campus attracts visitors from around the world, though it does not specifically track visits to Lyceum – The Circle area. Within the landscape are university-maintained paved sidewalks. Some on-street parking is available on the university Circle roadway within the district boundary and along adjacent streets. Visitor parking permits are available for purchase.

Public Enjoyment Potential

Public enjoyment is currently functioning at a high level because the university offers interpretive tours upon request to interpret the history of James Meredith's 1962 matriculation at the university that resulted in the school's integration. A life-sized commemorative statue depicting Meredith walking through the columns of the Lyceum academic building stands on the landscape behind the Lyceum building. The university's administration acknowledged that there is potential for this historical interpretation to be developed further for the benefit of students and the public. They shared that they have been discussing additional opportunities, such as a self-guided cell phone tour, to increase public awareness of the 1962 events. The potential to develop these projects is high, and thus so is the potential to expand public awareness and understanding of the property's historical importance in the national civil rights movement.

Public Support (including Landowners)

The University of Mississippi prefers to retain its ownership, management, and interpretation of Lyceum – The Circle National Historic Landmark District. Because the landscape is a central focal point and social node on campus, it is regularly used as an informal gathering place for students, including large groups. The university administration is concerned that NPS activities, such as ranger-led interpretation and ongoing public access, could potentially conflict with the university's other events or gatherings that regularly happen there. Although the university is considering ways to enhance the district's historical interpretation themselves, they would welcome NPS assistance in developing interpretive materials, such as a self-guided, app-based tour.

Costs Associated with Acquisition, Development, and Operation

Costs associated with acquisition, park development, and operations were not developed for this site due to lack of owner support for inclusion of this site in a potential national park. If conditions change in the future related to the owner's willingness to sell to the government, there would be additional one-time costs to provide appropriate access and site interpretation.

Feasibility Finding

Lyceum – The Circle Historic District is not feasible due to the University of Mississippi’s desire to continue to administer, maintain, and preserve the site, as well as interpret its civil rights history, rather than establish a national park unit to take over those same functions. Therefore, the development of this site for the purpose of on-site interpretation is not feasible. If any of these circumstances change in the future, the site could be analyzed again for feasibility.

Feasibility Summary for the M.W. Stringer Grand Lodge, Taborian Hospital, Isaiah T. Montgomery House, and Lyceum – The Circle National Historic District

Feasible Sites

1. M.W. Stringer Grand Lodge (Jackson, Mississippi)

Conditionally Feasible Sites

1. Isaiah T. Montgomery House (Mound Bayou, Mississippi)

Sites Not Feasible

1. Taborian Hospital (Mound Bayou, Mississippi)
2. Lyceum – The Circle National Historic District (Oxford, Mississippi)

Economic and Socioeconomic Impacts

The economic benefits of national parks are well established, as the National Park Service preserves unique resources for the enjoyment of future generations. Nationwide, visitors to NPS lands purchase goods and services in local gateway regions, and these expenditures generate and support economic activity within those local economies. Such visitor spending is far-reaching, directly affecting sectors such as lodging, restaurants, retail, recreation industries, and transportation. The 2021 NPS Visitor Spending Effects Report analyzes and presents an estimated amount of annual dollars that visitors spend in gateway economies across the country. The model uses information from visitor survey data, visitation data, and regional economic multipliers to generate estimates for visitor spending and economic contributions. The report showed that park visitors spent an estimated \$20.5 billion in local gateway regions while visiting NPS lands in 2021. These expenditures supported an estimated 323,000 jobs, \$14.6 billion in labor income, and \$42.5 billion in economic output to the national economy (NPS 2022b).

In 2021, the State of Mississippi welcomed 6.6 million park visitors to their national parks, which resulted in an estimate \$224 million spent in local gateway regions. These expenditures supported a total of 2,850 jobs, \$75.7 million in labor income, and \$246 million in economic output in the Mississippi economy (NPS 2022b). National park units in the state of Mississippi include both smaller park units as well as larger more complex national park units with higher visitation, such as Natchez Trace Parkway. Any new potential national park unit designation would likely contribute on a smaller scale to these estimates.

At present, the socioeconomic impact of a new unit of the national park system on the local area is uncertain but is projected to be modest. Social and economic impacts of national park unit designation would vary, depending on the size and scope of the new park, management approach, staffing levels, and especially visitation. Any impacts would accumulate over time as a new unit became better established within the national park system. Socioeconomic impacts correlate directly with the number of visitors to a site. Designation of a new unit would likely result in some increased spending in local restaurants, hotels, and retail establishments, and these purchases would generate tax revenues.

Visitation statistics are difficult to collect for national historic districts and are more accurately reported for specific sites and buildings; however, it is assumed that a potential designation as a historic district would attract visitors. To determine the estimated visitation of a potential historic district where management is shared, visitation statistics were analyzed for established NPS reference sites that shared similarities in geographic proximity or resource type.

The Emmett Till sites and the 1964 Freedom Summer sites are compared against national park units with designated sites spread out a distance from one another located in the southeast: Cane River Creole National Historical Park and Natchez National Historical Park. During the most recent 10-year period (2012–2021), Cane River Creole National Historical Park in Natchitoches, Louisiana, averaged 26,000 visitors annually (NPS 2022a). Natchez National Historical Park in Natchez, Mississippi, averaged 176,000 visitors annually (NPS 2022a). Estimated visitation of the Emmett Till sites and the 1964 Freedom Summer sites could range widely, from approximately 26,000 visitors per year to 176,000 visitors per year; however, due to the rural location of these sites, visitation is predicted to be closer to 26,000 annual visitors at each potential national park unit.

The M.W. Stringer Grand Lodge is compared against similar national park units that interpret a specific home or building of a nationally significant individual, group, or event. The comparable sites include Little Rock Central High School National Historic Site, Booker T. Washington National Monument, and Brown v. Board of Education National Historical Park. During the most recent 10-year period (2012–2021), Little Rock Central High School National Historic Site in Little Rock, Arkansas, averaged 119,000 visitors annually (NPS 2022a). Booker T. Washington National Monument in Hardy, Virginia, averaged 24,000 visitors annually (NPS 2022a). Brown v. Board of Education National Historical Park, in Topeka, Kansas, averaged 20,000 visitors annually. Estimated visitation of M.W. Stringer Grand Lodge could range widely, from approximately 20,000 visitors per year to 119,000 visitors annually; however, due to the small size of the site and the potential considerations for access and current building uses, visitation is predicted to be closer to 20,000 visitors annually.

Typically, the establishment of a new national park unit would also involve the construction of new visitor and administrative facilities. These construction activities would provide a modest and temporary economic benefit in the form of worker spending or local jobs. A new park would also require staff to operate facilities and care for the grounds. Presumably, some employees could be sourced from the local area, though job creation would likely be minimal, particularly when compared to larger units of the national park system. While the

impact on the local economy is uncertain, socioeconomic factors would not preclude the designation of a new unit of the national park system. Designation at any of the sites is not expected to result in negative economic impacts.

Conclusion: Summary of Feasibility Analysis

Since the National Park Service has a legislated mandate to conserve resources unimpaired for public enjoyment, the park units it manages would presumably continue to be managed according to this mandate indefinitely into the future. However, designation of a new unit of the national park system does not automatically guarantee that funding or staffing to administer that new unit would be appropriated by Congress. Any newly designated national park unit would have to compete with the more than 400 existing park units for limited funding and resources within a current fiscally constrained environment. Study areas that may be nationally significant, suitable, and technically feasible for designation as a new park unit may not be feasible in light of current budget constraints, competing needs across the entire agency, and the existing NPS deferred maintenance and repair backlog.

In a special resource study, analysis of feasibility provides an initial opportunity to understand the magnitude of costs required for acquiring park lands and establishing park operations. The full costs to acquire and sustain the site as a unit of the national park system are not known at present and would be affected by the level of visitation, requirements for resource preservation, and the desired level of facility development. Projects that would be both technically possible and desirable to accomplish for the new park may not be feasible in light of current budgetary constraints noted above. While the estimated costs of acquisition, development, and operations associated with the site would be modest in comparison to larger units of the national park system, any new expenditures would need to be carefully weighed in the context of the agency's existing maintenance backlog and other fiscal constraints and in terms of potential future visitation. Establishment of a new national park unit is a gradual process that happens in phases. As a result of agencywide priorities, it would likely take several years or more for the National Park Service to fully staff and operate any newly designated national park unit.

Completion and transmittal of the study does not guarantee establishment of a unit of the national park system or future funding for any NPS actions at any of the sites. Even if a unit is established, while new national park units share common elements, each national park unit requires a distinct organizational structure. The organizational structure may be influenced by the park unit's enabling legislation or proclamation, its size, resources, scope and delivery of public programming, and its location. National Park Service units are not considered operational (prepared to welcome visitors, preserve resources, and provide programming and services on a regular basis) until they receive an operating appropriation from Congress, for which there is no set timeline.

Nine (9) of the 22 sites that meet the SRS national significance and suitability criteria are also found to be feasible based on their ability to fully meet all or most feasibility factors (see table 3). Key feasibility factors include a site being of sufficient size and appropriate configuration to ensure sustainable resource protection and visitor enjoyment, current land ownership patterns amendable to the operations of a national park unit, minimal economic and socioeconomic

impacts, minimal potential threats to the resources, and the anticipated costs associated development, management, and operations of a potential national park unit.

Table 3. Summary of Feasibility Analysis Outcomes

Site Name	Overall Feasibility Finding
1. Emmett Till Sites	
• Bryant’s Grocery Store and Ben Roy’s Service Station (supporting site)	Feasible
• Moses Wright Home site	Conditionally feasible
• East Money Church of God in Christ Cemetery site	Feasible
• Glendora Cotton Gin/Community Center	Feasible
• J.W. Milam Home site	Conditionally feasible
• King’s Place Juke Joint site	Conditionally feasible
• Graball Landing River site	Feasible
• Seed Barn	Conditionally feasible
• Tutwiler Funeral Home site	Conditionally feasible
• Tallahatchie County (Charleston) Jail	Not feasible
• Tallahatchie County Courthouse and Emmett Till Interpretive Center (supporting site)	Feasible
2. 1964 Freedom Summer Sites	
• Mt. Zion Methodist Church	Feasible
• Old Neshoba County Jail	Conditionally feasible
• Murder site	Not feasible
• Burned Station Wagon site	Feasible (partner site)
• Earthen Dam Burial site	Not feasible
• Neshoba County Courthouse Square	Feasible (partner site)
• US Post Office and Courthouse	Not feasible
3. M.W. Stringer Grand Lodge	Feasible (partner site)
4. Taborian Hospital	Not feasible
5. Isaiah T. Montgomery House	Conditionally feasible
6. Lyceum – The Circle Historic District	Not feasible

For the Emmett Till sites in the Mississippi Delta, 5 of the 11 contributing historic sites are found to be feasible for potential inclusion in a national park unit based on the history of Emmett Till’s lynching in the Mississippi Delta. The 5 feasible historic sites are the Bryant’s Grocery Store (along with its associated Ben Roy’s Service Station) and the East Money Church of God in Christ Cemetery site in Money, Mississippi; Glendora Cotton Gin (along with its associated community center) in Glendora, Mississippi; Graball Landing River site in Glendora, Mississippi; and the Tallahatchie County Courthouse (and its associated interpretive center) in Sumner, Mississippi. Five (5) of the 11 Emmett Till-related historic sites are found to be conditionally feasible, which means that current conditions that make the site infeasible now could change in the future. These

5 sites are the Moses Wright Home site in Money, Mississippi; the Seed Barn in Drew, Mississippi; J.W. Milam Home site and King's Place Juke Joint site in Glendora, Mississippi; and Tutwiler Funeral Home site in Tutwiler, Mississippi. One (1) site, the Tallahatchie County Jail in Charleston, Mississippi, is infeasible due to its continued use as a county jail for the indefinite future.

For the 1964 Freedom Summer sites, three (3) of the seven (7) contributing historic sites are found to be feasible. These are Mt. Zion Methodist Church site in Philadelphia, Mississippi; the Burned Station Wagon site in rural Neshoba County; and the Neshoba County Courthouse Square in Philadelphia, Mississippi. The Old Neshoba County Jail in Philadelphia, Mississippi, is found to be conditionally feasible due to the property's recent change in ownership and modifications to the building that have since commenced. Three (3) of the seven (7) sites found infeasible are the murder site and the Earthen Dam site in rural Neshoba County, and the US Post Office and Courthouse in Meridian, Mississippi.

The M.W. Stringer Grand Lodge in Jackson, Mississippi, is found to be feasible as an individual site because the lodge has a high potential to be considered as a partner-managed site within a potential national park unit.

The Isaiah T. Montgomery House National Historic Landmark in Mound Bayou, Mississippi, is conditionally feasible to reflect the owner's independent plans to interpret the significance of the site, but also the possibility of future NPS involvement. The Taborian Hospital in Mound Bayou, Mississippi, is not feasible to reflect the owner's long-term plans that are independent of a national park unit. Lyceum – The Circle Historic District in Oxford, Mississippi, is not feasible due to the University of Mississippi's desire to continue to administer, maintain, and preserve the site, as well as interpret its civil rights history.

EVALUATION OF THE NEED FOR DIRECT NPS MANAGEMENT

The fourth criterion in the special resource study evaluation process addresses whether the study area requires direct management by the National Park Service instead of protection by another public agency or the private sector. National Park Service *Management Policies 2006* (section 1.3.4) further requires direct NPS management not only to be needed but that its management be "the clearly superior alternative." Inclusion in the national park system would provide a study area with the stewardship mandate defined in the National Park Service Organic Act,

...which purpose is to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wild life therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations,...

Direct NPS management may be needed if current or potential management entities cannot provide opportunities for resource stewardship or public enjoyment. Unless direct NPS management is identified as the clearly superior alternative, the National Park Service recommends other existing organizations or agencies continue resource management

responsibilities, and the study area is not recommended for inclusion as a new unit of the national park system.

In the context of a special resource study, “direct NPS management” means the National Park Service owns or manages lands within an authorized park boundary and has lead responsibility for park operations, resource protection, and visitor services. This level of management provides national park units with a dual mandate of resource preservation while providing opportunities for visitor enjoyment. “Clearly superior” is understood to mean that the National Park Service could provide optimal resource protection and visitor opportunities when compared to current management or other management scenarios. In this section, management by public and private entities is evaluated to determine if these entities can effectively and efficiently provide long-term resource protection and visitor services or if direct NPS management is the clearly superior option.

Each of the study resources that were found to meet SRS criteria 1, 2, and 3 in the previous sections are analyzed below. These resources include five Emmett Till sites, three 1964 Freedom Summer sites, and the M.W. Stringer Grand Lodge.

Emmett Till Sites

The Emmett Till sites are owned by either the local municipal government or private landowners. The five Emmett Till sites that are analyzed below are the Bryant’s Grocery Store site/Ben Roy’s Service Station, East Money Church of God in Christ Cemetery site, Glendora Cotton Gin/Community Center, Graball Landing River site, and Tallahatchie County Courthouse/Emmett Till Interpretive Center.

Importantly, the Mississippi Delta National Heritage Area and Tallahatchie County’s Emmett Till Memorial Commission currently provide an essential coordination role for many of the existing Emmett Till sites in the Mississippi Delta. However, the national heritage area’s coordinating entity has a limited authority and role in the types and levels of technical assistance and funding opportunities it can provide to historic sites. The Emmett Till Memorial Commission also has limited resources for managing a series of sites across the Mississippi Delta and has thus advocated for NPS support through direct management and interpretive support. The hands-on management that the National Park Service could provide for the Till sites would supplement and bolster the current efforts of the Mississippi Delta National Heritage Area and Emmett Till Memorial Commission.

For all the Emmett Till sites, the loss of historical integrity is a primary threat, especially those that are privately owned with no formal guarantees of site protection. Uneven preservation activities have led to varying degrees of deterioration of historic sites over time, and the risk of further deterioration or total loss is constant. Environmental threats are also worth noting, as the Mississippi Delta region is prone to severe flooding and storm events that can cause significant damage to fragile resources. Many of the sites evaluated in this study are preserved today due to the dedication of local residents, who have volunteered extensive time to preserving and sharing the history of Emmett Till. In most cases, the communities that have worked tirelessly to preserve their important sites are historically disenfranchised and are operating their preservation and interpretation activities with minimal resources. Relying on

volunteer efforts presents a grave threat to these important sites, as it is possible that future generations may not be able to continue without additional support. For all of these reasons, the National Park Service can provide a significant benefit by taking on the direct management and long-term preservation of these important cultural resource sites.

1. Bryant's Grocery Store Site and Ben Roy's Service Station – Money, Leflore County, Mississippi

Summary of Existing Management

Bryant's Grocery Store and Ben Roy's Service Station sites are both owned by the same private property owner. The sites are 0.18-acre and 2.0-acre parcels, respectively, and are both legal subdivisions of a larger 30-acre property in Money, Mississippi. The Bryant's Grocery Store site is minimally managed by the current property owner. Makeshift fence posts with orange caution netting are installed around the perimeter of the ruin to deter trespassing into the unstable structure. Several entryways into the structure were also boarded up with plywood and "No Trespassing" signage, but those barriers have become warped and faded from years of weather exposure. Beyond these efforts to deter trespassing and protect public safety, there is no other management or interpretation of the site. The site is not open to the public, but, independently, visitors come to view the property from the public right-of-way.

Ben Roy's Service Station has been more actively preserved but is also not managed for public visitation. A 0.15-acre building footprint of the Ben Roy's Service Station building is operating under an active preservation and maintenance covenant for Mississippi Landmark designation, which is eligible from September 10, 2011, to September 10, 2036. The purpose of the agreement is to ensure the protection and preservation of the architectural and historical integrity of the property. The property cannot be altered, destroyed, or impaired in that time without written approval from the Mississippi Department of Archives and History. The interior building features a working restroom and some historical objects on display in the front room from the time the service station was an active business, but it is not open to the public. The property has two historical markers on-site; however, there is no other management or interpretation of the site.

Need for Direct NPS Management

Bryant's Grocery Store and Ben Roy's Service Station could continue to be owned by the current property owner. Maintaining current ownership is not preferable, however, because of concerns about continued deterioration of the historic Bryant's Grocery Store structure. Meanwhile, the adjacent Ben Roy's Service Station site has some infrastructure required for necessary park operations to manage and interpret the store; however, it is not fully open to the public and could benefit from the addition of parking for visitor safety, ABAAS-accessible restrooms and visitor contact spaces, as well as improvements in the drainage and septic systems.

Both sites meet this criterion because (1) they lack appropriate interpretation and opportunities for a visitor experience that explores the historic significance of the events at Bryant's Grocery Store, including the broader socioeconomic context in Money; (2) they are

not open for public interpretation and education; and (3) there is a current lack of financial resources for long-term historic preservation at both sites. Full acquisition and management of the Bryant's Grocery Store site is necessary because the current owners are not maintaining the store structure, which has a high risk of collapsing and being permanently lost. Similarly, full acquisition and management of the adjacent Ben Roy's Service Station is necessary to provide a similar level of preservation as well as the expanded opportunity for a visitor contact station at this site.

2. East Money Church of God in Christ Cemetery Site – Money, LeFlore County, Mississippi

Summary of Existing Management

The East Money Church of God in Christ Cemetery site is owned and managed by the Northern Mississippi Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction of the Church of God in Christ organization. However, the former church associated with this site is no longer functional, and the parish members and others associated with the site are no longer present locally. The site includes an active cemetery but does not appear to be receiving new burials. The site is not open to the public, and its history and relevance to the events surrounding the near-burial of Emmett Till's body in this cemetery is not being interpreted on this site. The Northern Mississippi Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction of the Church of God in Christ organization would like to donate the property to the Department of the Interior to be included in a national park unit for Emmett Till.

Need for Direct NPS Management

National Park Service acquisition of the East Money Church of God in Christ Cemetery site to provide direct NPS management is necessary for several reasons. First, the site lacks interpretation and opportunities for a visitor experience that explores the historic significance of the near-burial of Emmett Till's body in this cemetery. Interpreting this critical turn of events and the individuals involved, including Mamie Till-Mobley, Till's extended family members who lived in Money, and local law enforcement, could occur at this site, as it is currently not interpreted elsewhere. Therefore, NPS ownership and management is necessary for public interpretation and education of this cemetery site. Because the exact location of the grave that was initially dug for Emmett Till's burial is not known or documented, historical interpretation would need to focus on the intact, evocative setting of the cemetery and the pivotal role this site played in the sequence of events involved in Emmett Till's lynching. Full acquisition and management of the cemetery site is also proposed to develop safe visitor access while providing for the site's long-term preservation and stewardship. Currently, access is limited due to the site being a cemetery on private property. Additionally, there is no vehicular access from the adjacent county road or parking due to the lack of a roadside shoulder. Development of a safe pulloff or other parking options is needed for public access. With direct NPS management, the National Park Service could work with the local county government to identify ways to provide safe public access to the site. Although the site includes an active cemetery, NPS management could accommodate the access requirements for people who are affiliated with the burial sites.

3. Glendora Cotton Gin and Community Center – Glendora, Tallahatchie County, Mississippi

Summary of Existing Management

The Glendora Cotton Gin and Community Center site is owned by the Village of Glendora (municipal government) and managed by the Glendora Economic and Community Development Corporation, a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, as the Emmett Till Historic Intrepid Center. The Emmett Till Historic Intrepid Center is the public museum that exists within the cotton gin building and is managed by five volunteer staff and five board of aldermen for the Village of Glendora. The center was established with the support of grant funding and has visitor amenities such as an entrance lobby, interpretive exhibits, and an accessible restroom. The community center is managed for use by the Village of Glendora primarily for large gatherings in its open meeting room. While this site is actively managed for public use, it relies on volunteer staff, which makes it vulnerable to impacts to the continuation of services in the future.

The acquisition of the Glendora Cotton Gin and Community Center by the National Park Service is not the preferred management option of the local community of Glendora, including its mayor and stakeholders. Although these members of the local community support the concept of the site being included in an Emmett Till national park unit, they have expressed a preference to continue to own and manage the buildings themselves. They have invested many resources in the development, maintenance, and ongoing operations of the Emmett Till Historic Intrepid Center and the community center.

Need for Direct NPS Management

National Park Service acquisition of the site, including both structures, to provide direct NPS management is preferred if the community/owner are amenable to working with the National Park Service. Direct NPS management would allow the National Park Service to have a more direct role in the long-term preservation of the historic site, more easily address any needed facility improvements, and have a greater role in the interpretation of the Emmett Till history within Glendora. The Glendora Cotton Gin and the community center building are proposed for acquisition by the National Park Service to ensure the long-term preservation of the site. The Village of Glendora has been successful in leveraging state and federal grants to preserve and manage the site; however, there are a number of needed preservation and visitor access services that are lacking. This includes adequate space for on-site parking, ABAAS-compliant access to both facilities, and a number of infrastructure improvements to the water and wastewater systems for the site. The National Park Service would likely be better prepared to provide financial resources necessary to address these deficiencies over the long term.

The gin structure could continue to be used as a museum where in-depth interpretation would occur. A key aspect of expanded interpretation that the National Park Service could provide at this site, in particular, would be the opportunity to tie in the historic context and setting of racial oppression that established the circumstances of the lynching and resulted in Till's killers being acquitted. This nuanced but important aspect of the history is not currently being fully explored and interpreted at the physical sites in the Delta, and this gin

facility within the setting of Glendora would be an ideal location for the purpose of visitor interpretation and understanding. The National Park Service would likely be better prepared to address this need for expanded interpretation.

If NPS acquisition of some or all of the Glendora Cotton Gin and Community Center is not possible, then a partnership between the National Park Service and the Village of Glendora, possibly through an agreement to assist in the village's preservation and interpretive services at the site, could be explored. Community members of the village of Glendora have expressed an interest to discuss alternatives to direct NPS management such as this.

Both the Glendora Cotton Gin and Community Center meet this criterion because (1) aspects of historic significance associated with the lynching of Emmett Till, such as socioeconomic contexts and their consequences, are not being fully interpreted; (2) financial resources are currently lacking for long-term historic preservation at both sites; and (3) a compelling need exists for these sites to serve as NPS interpretive operations in Glendora.

4. Graball Landing River Site – Glendora, Tallahatchie County, Mississippi

Summary of Existing Management

The Graball Landing River site is a 50-acre parcel of undeveloped land that is owned by Tallahatchie County. The land was acquired by the county's Emmett Till Memorial Commission for the purpose of providing the public and visitors a memorial site where they can view the Tallahatchie River as a feature associated with the history of Emmett Till's lynching in the Delta. No historical marker exists at the site, which has been vandalized in the past. Beyond basic site ownership, there is no active management, interpretation, or visitor services at the site. Within the site is an unpaved dirt walking path that leads inward to the southwest to the Tallahatchie River riverbank. The site does not have an accessible trail, viewing area, or other visitor amenities, such as bathrooms or a shaded pavilion.

Need for Direct NPS Management

Maintaining ownership by the current property owner to provide minimal access and limited interpretation is a possible management framework. The owner has identified preliminary plans for the addition of some commemorative and memorial features on-site. However, these plans are still very preliminary, with no immediate funding source to implement. As described previously, visitor services and amenities are lacking at the site, as well as adequate parking and security. This level of development is required to provide a comprehensive visitor experience here. In addition, the Graball Landing River site is near where Emmett Till's body was removed from the river and offers a poignant visitor experience that is not offered by the other contributing sites. Direct NPS management would expand upon the current interpretation to connect Emmett Till's lynching and the fate of his body to the Tallahatchie River in a tangible and moving way for visitors.

The Graball Landing River site meets this criterion because (1) the site lacks a fully immersive, coordinated interpretive and visitor experience; (2) the site requires basic site amenities that could benefit from NPS resources; and (3) aspects of historic significance, such as the full extent of the connection with the Tallahatchie River, are not being fully interpreted. The Graball Landing River site is on undeveloped land. National Park Service

acquisition and direct management of an approximately 2-acre portion of the site would allow the National Park Service to develop the site in a way that would offer safe access, parking, restrooms, and other visitor services. Thus, NPS ownership and management of the 2-acre parcel would be the first choice, if acquisition of the property is possible.

5. Tallahatchie County Courthouse and Emmett Till Interpretive Center – Sumner, Tallahatchie County, Mississippi

Summary of Existing Management

The Tallahatchie County Courthouse is owned by Tallahatchie County (Board of Supervisors) and actively managed as a public courthouse. The site is used for occasional trials, town meetings, and other essential county functions, with several staff offices on the first floor. The courthouse is ADA accessible, and the public is allowed to visit, when not conflicting with court operations, through guided tours coordinated and led by staff from the Emmett Till Interpretive Center across the street from the courthouse. The Emmett Till Interpretive Center is also owned by Tallahatchie County and operated by the county's Emmett Till Memorial Commission. The one-story structure is accessible and managed for public visitation and features a small exhibit hall, a conference room, accessible restrooms, and a large parking lot in the back.

The county and the Emmett Till Memorial Commission, through the Emmett Till Interpretive Center's staff and others, have been instrumental in keeping Emmett Till's history and legacy alive in the Delta. This organization continues to provide a critical role in vastly expanding public awareness of Emmett Till's lynching through critical interpretation in Mississippi and nationwide.

Need for Direct NPS Management

A continuation of the county's current management of the Tallahatchie County Courthouse and Emmett Till Interpretive Center is one possible framework. Maintaining current ownership is not preferable, however. National Park Service direct management is preferred for the purpose of providing additional resources to preserve and maintain the significant previous investments in the courthouse and interpretive center. Resource protection for the courthouse and square would involve ongoing preservation and maintenance of the large building and its character-defining features. These elements are in good condition today due to the building's completion of a decade-long restoration and rehabilitation project but now require long-term maintenance and additional resources to ensure preservation of the courthouse for the life of the resource. Similarly, the Emmett Till Interpretive Center's interior spaces are well-developed for visitor access and use. However, they will require significant investment to preserve and maintain this condition.

Another compelling need for NPS management involves expanding the interpretation of Emmett Till's lynching and the socioeconomic contexts and national consequences of the crime in ways that are not part of the county's existing interpretive framework. Direct NPS ownership and management of the Emmett Till Interpretive Center would allow the National Park Service to augment and expand the interpretive opportunities at this site in important ways that are not currently possible. Although the Emmett Till Interpretive Center currently

includes interpretive panels in the building, they are narrowly focused on the trial and do not tell the entire history of Emmett Till's lynching in the Delta, nor the fullness of the historic context.

Members of the local public have expressed concern about the site's current focus on the trial and the ways in which the courthouse—and the acquittal of two White murderers—represents the structural white supremacy and systems of racial oppression associated with the 1955 murder of Emmett Till in the Mississippi Delta. Mississippi scholars who consulted with the National Park Service on the study stressed that the interpretive themes communicated at the courthouse should also emphasize the importance of the many Black individuals and groups involved in the trial. These people include those who courageously risked their lives to testify during the trial, including Mamie Till-Mobley, Willie Reed, and members of the Black press who gathered, investigated, and reported on the trial from Sumner Square. Interpretation should explore the larger social and historic contexts at play that explain important information about the lynching Emmett Till and the role of the trial in US history. The study scholars emphasized that full interpretation of these people, the events, and their consequences is lacking, and they recommend that the National Park Service step forward to interpret a more nuanced history.

The Tallahatchie County Courthouse and Emmett Till Interpretive Center meet this criterion because (1) a need exists for long-term investment in the preservation of these critical resources; (2) a need exists for expanded, National Park Service-led interpretation and operations in Sumner; and (3) a more full and expansive approach to interpretation is needed to be able to connect all the Emmett Till sites. Because these sites are also among the most visited sites related to Emmett Till, ensuring that the interpretive messages and opportunities are fully developed in this location is key. The National Park Service is the clearly superior management approach in providing these improvements by directly owning and managing these sites and providing this necessary function. In this scenario, the National Park Service would be building on a strong foundation of organizational structure, interpretation, relationship building, and outreach established by the Emmett Till Memorial Commission. The National Park Service would further develop these existing frameworks in a nuanced and sensitive way.

Although NPS ownership and management of the site are the most direct ways to accomplish these goals, alternatively, the National Park Service could work with Tallahatchie County through a partnership to improve the interpretation that is currently provided. The options of a partnership between the county and the National Park Service could be explored if direct acquisition of one or both of these sites is not possible.

Summary Analysis for the Emmett Till Sites

A need exists for direct NPS management of the Bryant's Grocery Store, Ben Roy's Service Station, East Money Church of God in Christ Cemetery Site, Glendora Cotton Gin and Community Center, the Graball Landing River site, Tallahatchie County Courthouse, and Emmett Till Interpretive Center because (1) these sites lack coordinated interpretation and visitor experience; (2) aspects of the historic significance of Emmett Till's lynching, such as socioeconomic contexts and their consequences, are not being fully interpreted at these sites;

(3) privately owned sites are not open for public interpretation and education; and (4) long-term historic preservation at several sites currently lacks financial resources. The National Park Service would be the clearly superior management entity for all of these sites.

1964 Freedom Summer Sites

The three 1964 Freedom Summer sites are owned by either government entities or private landowner (religious organization). The three sites that are analyzed below are the Mt. Zion Methodist Church, the Burned Station Wagon site, and Neshoba County Courthouse Square.

1. Mt. Zion Methodist Church – Philadelphia, Neshoba County, Mississippi

Summary of Existing Management

The Mt. Zion Methodist Church is owned by the United Methodist Association, which also oversees a broader district of over 60 other Methodist churches. The United Methodist Association supports national park unit designation. The site contains an active church, an active cemetery, and several contributing and noncontributing features of historic significance. The site has accessible restroom facilities and a small gravel parking area for church members, with room for approximately 12 vehicles along the U-shaped driveway. The site has no interpretive rangers or regularly scheduled programs to educate and guide visitors through the site, although educational experiences have been facilitated as part of special events, such as an annual memorial that has been held for the last 57 years.

Need for Direct NPS Management

The Mt. Zion Methodist Church pastor, organization, and leadership have communicated its support to be included in a national park unit, and they have also communicated that full acquisition and management by the National Park Service should be explored further. Continued management by the current property owner is a viable option, but due to the sensitive historic resources on the site, NPS ownership is preferred. If NPS acquisition of the site is not possible, a partnership between the National Park Service and United Methodist Church could be explored for the purposes of providing visitor access, interpretation, and/or facilities for NPS staff and operations. Whether the National Park Service acquires the site or it remains under current management, the National Park Service would consider the need to provide public access to the active cemetery located on the property and consider support to the annual commemorations on the property in future park planning and management.

The Mt. Zion Methodist Church meets the requirement for NPS management because (1) the site currently lacks coordinated interpretation and visitor experience; (2) aspects of historic significance, such as socioeconomic contexts and their consequences, are not being fully interpreted; (3) privately owned sites are not open for public interpretation and education; and (4) long-term historic preservation at the site currently lacks financial resources. The study finds that fee simple acquisition of the entire parcel and historic landscape would be the most efficient and direct approach to developing the site for national park unit visitation.

2. Burned Station Wagon Site – Philadelphia, Neshoba County, Mississippi

Summary of Existing Management

The Burned Station Wagon site is a small roadside area near the Bogue Chitto Swamp that is currently owned by the Mississippi Department of Transportation. The site can be accessed from the shoulder of the existing State Highway 21, but it does not have safe off-street parking nor interpretation of any kind at this site. The Mississippi Department of Transportation manages the area within its right-of-way. An informal access point to nearby Owl Creek for access to the water and fishing is also near this location.

Need for Direct NPS Management

The Mississippi Department of Transportation supports the establishment of a national park unit that includes interpretation in this location. This support indicates that direct NPS ownership and management may not be necessary for inclusion in the NPS concept or for its ongoing preservation and maintenance. Continued management by the Mississippi Department of Transportation owner is the preferred management framework, as the site does not require extensive development to be used as a place to interpret the events that happened there. The highway department also has a need to maintain safe and efficient operations of the highway as a primary interest. A partnership agreement between the National Park Service and the Mississippi Department of Transportation could be established to provide necessary development for an interpretive visitor pulloff as part of a driving tour. The Mississippi Department of Transportation has expressed a willingness to support NPS interpretation of the site by lowering the speed limit to support safe access. An agreement with the department could establish protocols for resource protection, management, and visitor access.

The Burned Station Wagon site does not meet this criterion and demonstrate a need for direct NPS management. The National Park Service would not be the clearly superior management entity due to the interest for continued management by the current owner, the Mississippi Department of Transportation. Thus, a partnership would be the first choice for the Burned Station Wagon site. Acquisition could be considered if the Mississippi Department of Transportation is willing to donate the land to the National Park Service to allow for more direct NPS management. However, this would be conditional on the ability to manage the NPS property in such a way as to allow for safe and efficient operations of Mississippi Highway 21.

3. Neshoba County Courthouse Square – Philadelphia, Neshoba County, Mississippi

Summary of Existing Management

The Neshoba County Courthouse and Square are owned and maintained by the Neshoba County government. The courthouse is managed as an active public courthouse and contains offices for public officials. The landscape and building are actively managed and accessible to the public. County supervisors submitted a letter to the National Park Service in 2021 stating their support for the establishment of a park based on the history of the 1964 Freedom Summer murders in Philadelphia and across Neshoba County. The site is currently publicly

accessible. Ample, free street parking exists around the square on surrounding roads, in addition to free off-street parallel parking in front of the courthouse square.

Need for Direct NPS Management

The Neshoba County Courthouse Square does not meet this criterion to demonstrate a need for direct NPS management. Continued management by the county is preferable because the site is being adequately managed and preserved by Neshoba County. The courthouse square is already publicly accessible and well maintained. A partnership between Neshoba County and the National Park Service would allow opportunities for on-site interpretation, such as the development of interpretative panels and waysides along the existing walking path that follows the perimeter of the building's exterior landscape, or on-site, NPS staff-led tours in the area.

Summary Analysis for the 1964 Freedom Summer Sites

Of the three 1964 Freedom Summer sites found to be feasible, only the Mt. Zion Methodist Church site meets SRS Criterion 4 – Need for Direct NPS Management. Direct ownership would be the superior management model for the Mt. Zion Methodist Church. Because the Burned Station Wagon site requires minimal direct NPS management and because the Neshoba County Courthouse Square is actively used by the county, partnerships to develop interpretive opportunities would be the superior management model for these two sites.

M.W. Stringer Grand Lodge

Summary of Existing Management

The main lodge building within the larger M.W. Stringer Grand Lodge property is privately owned by the fraternal Most Worshipful Stringer Grand Lodge organization. The building houses numerous offices and a variety of meeting spaces, including its large, historically significant auditorium. The Mississippi field office of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) is a current tenant as well. The lodge organization manages and maintains this building in good condition. Although the building is closed to the public, lodge staff regularly provide historical tours upon request and receive between 1,500 and 1,800 visitors annually. The lodge has a parking lot, but it is for members and tenants only. Free on-street parking is currently available in the city right-of-way on Cleary Street and Lynch Street, at the building's front entrance.

Need for Direct NPS Management

The M.W. Stringer Grand Lodge does not demonstrate a need for direct management by the National Park Service because the site is being well-preserved and managed by its current owner, the fraternal Most Worshipful Stringer Grand Lodge organization. The lodge organization is the clearly superior management entity because they are maintaining the building in good condition. Instead of direct ownership and management by the National Park Service, a partnership with the organization could fulfill the potential for NPS interpretive opportunities at this site. Although the building is not open to the public, a partnership between the organization and the National Park Service would allow continued and expanded opportunities for on-site interpretation, such as NPS staff-led tours in the

building. This model reflects the preferred management approach communicated by the lodge organization to the National Park Service. The lodge members have shared that they would welcome the National Park Service in taking over some or all of the interpretive tours that they currently offer and would be open to developing an agreement for this purpose.

Summary of SRS Criteria Findings

Table 4 summarizes the four SRS criteria findings for each study site analyzed in this chapter. This table organizes those sites into the 11 Emmett Till sites, seven (7) 1964 Freedom Summer sites, and the four (4) individual sites: M.W. Stringer Grand Lodge, Taborian Hospital, Isaiah T. Montgomery House, and Lyceum – The Circle Historic District.

Table 4. Summary of Study Findings – All SRS Criteria

Site Name	Criterion 1 – National Significance	Criterion 2 – Suitability	Criterion 3 – Feasibility	Criterion 4 – Need for Direct NPS Management
1. Emmett Till Sites				
• Bryant’s Grocery Store/Ben Roy’s Service Station	Yes	Yes	Feasible	Yes
• Moses Wright Home site	Yes	Yes	Conditionally feasible	N/A
• East Money Church of God in Christ Cemetery site	Yes	Yes	Feasible	Yes
• Glendora Cotton Gin/Community Center	Yes	Yes	Feasible	Yes
• J.W. Milam home site	Yes	Yes	Conditionally feasible	N/A
• King’s Place Juke Joint site	Yes	Yes	Conditionally feasible	N/A
• Graball Landing River site	Yes	Yes	Feasible	Yes
• Seed Barn	Yes	Yes	Conditionally feasible	N/A
• Tutwiler Funeral Home site	Yes	Yes	Conditionally feasible	N/A
• Tallahatchie County (Charleston) Jail	Yes	Yes	Not feasible	N/A
• Tallahatchie County Courthouse and Emmett Till Interpretive Center	Yes	Yes	Feasible	Yes
2. 1964 Freedom Summer Sites				
• Mt. Zion Methodist Church	Yes	Yes	Feasible	Yes
• Old Neshoba County Jail	Yes	Yes	Conditionally feasible	N/A
• Murder site	Yes	Yes	Not feasible	N/A
• Burned Station Wagon site	Yes	Yes	Feasible	No
• Earthen Dam Burial site	Yes	Yes	Not feasible	N/A

Site Name	Criterion 1 – National Significance	Criterion 2 – Suitability	Criterion 3 – Feasibility	Criterion 4 – Need for Direct NPS Management
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Neshoba County Courthouse Square 	Yes	Yes	Feasible	No
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> US Post Office and Courthouse 	Yes	Yes	Not feasible	N/A
3. M.W. Stringer Grand Lodge	Yes	Yes	Feasible	No
4. Taborian Hospital	Yes	Yes	Not feasible	N/A
5. Isaiah T. Montgomery House	Yes	Yes	Conditionally feasible	N/A
6. Lyceum – The Circle Historic District	Yes	Yes	Not feasible	N/A

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CHAPTER 4: NATIONAL PARK SERVICE MANAGEMENT ALTERNATIVES

Management alternatives are developed for the sites found eligible for potential inclusion in the national park system. These concepts identify the most efficient and effective way to protect significant resources and provide opportunities for public enjoyment. Two separate national park units are proposed as a conceptual management structure that includes all of the nationally significant sites that meet all four SRS criteria: one unit for the Emmett Till sites and one for a combination of sites themed around Mississippi Freedom, including the 1964 Freedom Summer sites and M.W. Stringer Grand Lodge.

This chapter describes the actions that the National Park Service can take to preserve key sites, conduct visitor services and interpretation, and manage and operate the sites described in each concept. The two concepts presented below are based on each site's feasibility and need for direct NPS management findings, as described in chapter 3. Included are the summary one-time costs for acquisition (if necessary) and development requirements for each site. Refer to the feasibility analysis in chapter 3 for a more detailed description of these cost estimates.

MISSISSIPPI DELTA EMMETT TILL NATIONAL PARK UNIT CONCEPT

A national park unit would be established to create a powerful, immersive visitor experience across multiple sites associated with Emmett Till in the Mississippi Delta. The preservation and interpretation of the proposed contributing sites is vital to continue educating the public about not only the brutal lynching of Emmett Till, but how the events surrounding his death became a key turning point in the struggle for African American civil rights in the United States. The sites associated with Emmett Till's lynching and the subsequent trial can provide the public with transformative context for how racial tensions in the Mississippi Delta catalyzed a national civil rights movement.

At the same time, direct contact with the sites associated with the larger landscape of racial oppression in the Mississippi Delta in 1955 would establish a deeper understanding of the system of racism that enabled the lynching to occur and the murderers to go unpunished. The history of Emmett Till's lynching is complex and painful. His murder impacted many local residents, including descendants of people who were directly and indirectly involved in the different events of 1955. There is a need to interpret the story across complex dimensions of historic significance, including socioeconomic contexts and their consequences. The sensitive, complex nature of the Emmett Till sites will require a nuanced approach to interpretation involving consistent community engagement and in-depth staff training.

This park unit would consist of numerous historic sites and supporting facilities in different locations across the region. This concept would likely comprise both NPS-owned and partner-owned sites to allow for visitation to certain sites in cases where property acquisition is not possible and the current property owner is willing to consider a partnership agreement with the National Park Service to support resource protection and interpretation. Each site contributes equally to the overall purpose, significance, and interpretive framework of a park that interprets the complex history and historic context of Emmett Till's lynching in

Mississippi. The National Park Service's role, management structure, resource protection, visitor experience, and costs are outlined for each of the sites below.

Each site would need to develop a strategy that addresses two common potential threats. First is the threat of flooding and tornado exposure. In Money, Mississippi, the Bryant's Grocery Store, Ben Roy's Service Station, and East Money Church of God in Christ Cemetery site are at a moderate risk of flooding based on Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) flood data, falling within a 500-year flood risk zone. All sites in Glendora, Mississippi, are in a FEMA "special flood hazard area" within a 100-year flood risk zone. The Village of Glendora, Mississippi, has also experienced severe flooding in recent years, particularly in 2017 and 2019. Because of climate change, the frequency of 100- and 500-year flood events are increasing, so these properties are at greater risk of flooding in the future. All sites are listed in the Department of the Interior Strategic Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment Project database as having high exposure to tornados. Flooding and tornados could present a substantial threat to the resources under consideration for protection and impacts from floods and tornados could substantially increase the costs associated with development, management, and operations of potential national park units.

The second threat that could potentially threaten this collection of sites is the threat of vandalism. Repeated instances of vandalism have occurred at existing sites interpreting the history of Emmett Till, which allude to a degree of unrest around preserving the history among some individuals in the local community. Various security measures may be needed to protect the sites, particularly those in isolated, rural areas. Additionally, ensuring that staff and visitors are safe and feel welcomed is important for preserving both the resources and the overall visitor experience. Planning for law enforcement, security, and safety protocols will be necessary to help protect visitors, NPS park staff, and resources.

This concept would require an efficient approach to physically coordinating the management of facilities, staff, and operations at multiple sites across a two-county or possibly three-county area. In addition, a coordinated approach in developing a strong interpretive framework will be critical due to the complexity of interpreting the history of Emmett Till's lynching across a large area in Mississippi—telling a story involving many different events, individuals, and historic contexts. Each contributing site played a different role in the chain of historic events in 1955. Visitors would be required to drive across rural Mississippi, traversing long stretches of rural roads without access to restroom facilities or dining options. The experience would be primarily self-directed, with interpretation being offered in different mediums at each site. Some sites may be entirely self-led, requiring visitors to drive down rural dirt roads to a pulloff with interpretive waysides. Other sites may feature a NPS ranger presence and more robust, active interpretation.

Driving through rural Mississippi to visit the Emmett Till sites may provide a uniquely immersive visitor experience because the region remains primarily agricultural, with little new development, and it still evokes a historic 1955 setting in many ways. Travel through the region may help visitors better understand the various settings and spatial relationships in the Mississippi Delta that contributed to the events. Logistically, an approach to interpretation must also consider the long distances between the sites. Staff time, site security, interpretive media, and visitor orientation will have to be thoughtfully approached to ensure operational

efficiency and a coordinated visitor experience across the collective sites. These considerations can be reasonably mitigated by the National Park Service through interactive interpretive materials, robust signage, and wayfinding materials. All of these considerations would need to be developed in a long-range interpretive plan that involves the public and stakeholders.

Meaningful opportunities for the public to participate in the development of the park would be critical to its success. The majority of public feedback communicated to the National Park Service has been positive support for national park unit designation for the Emmett Till sites. However, there are strong concerns around interpretation and equitable preservation of a potential established unit consisting of multiple sites. Many local residents want all sides of the story to be represented, but this presents a significant interpretive challenge when local understanding of the events varies greatly across communities and demographics to this day.

The National Park Service would likely involve the staff of the Mississippi Delta National Heritage Area in an essential coordination role, especially in the early stages of park development. The Mississippi Delta National Heritage Area already provides technical and financial assistance to many of the Emmett Till sites in Mississippi. However, the national historic area has a limited authority and role in the types and levels of technical assistance and funding opportunities it can provide to historic sites. The additional management that the National Park Service can provide is needed to supplement and bolster the Mississippi Delta National Heritage Area successes in a more direct way.

Examples of key stakeholder involvement must include family members of Emmett Till's relatives, residents, community members within and near all of the historic sites identified in this study and community leaders. All of these associated groups are passionate about the importance of telling the history of Emmett Till in their communities. They are eager to work with the National Park Service in a multitude of ways. This includes the Tallahatchie County Board of Supervisors; the Emmett Till Memorial Commission, based in Sumner; and the Emmett Till Historic Intrepid Center in Glendora. Additionally, people who were directly involved in the events of 1955 are still present in the communities analyzed in this study. Personal experiences and recognition of different points of view or different understandings of the history should be approached in an inclusive, sensitive way. As the coordinating entity, the National Park Service could serve a meaningful role by helping the local community move toward this shared goal.

This study recognizes that there are also key historic sites related to Emmett Till in Illinois, including his Chicago home, Roberts Temple Church of God in Christ, and Burr Oak Cemetery. Although the scope of this study is limited to sites in Mississippi, the inclusion of additional key historic sites such as these could be considered for a concept that involves, for example, an Emmett Till national park unit, including sites in two different states, or a concept that involves two separate Emmett Till national park units connected by coordinated park planning and interpretive frameworks. These park concepts are not analyzed in this study.

Proposed Management Structure

Bryant's Grocery Store Site and Ben Roy's Service Station

The Bryant's Grocery Store site and adjacent Ben Roy's Service Station would both be acquired for direct NPS management under this management alternative. Full acquisition of the store site is necessary because the current owners are not maintaining the store structure, which has a high risk of collapsing and being permanently lost. Because the store is in structural ruin, entering the site would likely not be safe for public access, even after the remaining brick walls are stabilized. National Park Service resource protection of the Bryant's Grocery Store site would require vegetation removal, structural stabilization, and ongoing maintenance.

Because the Bryant's Grocery Store property is a small 0.18-acre parcel that lacks space for developing supporting facilities needed for park operations, the National Park Service would acquire the adjacent Ben Roy's Service Station to provide visitor services and all necessary facilities for park operations. Space at the front of the building could provide an orientation area for visitors that currently does not exist. Public restrooms and administrative spaces could be developed in the rear of the building to support NPS staff office and operations. Within the larger 2.0-acre parcel, there would be land sufficient to develop parking for automobiles and larger vehicles including buses.

East Money Church of God in Christ Cemetery Site

The East Money Church of God in Christ Cemetery site would be acquired by the National Park Service via donation from the current property owner. Full acquisition of the site is necessary to provide public interpretation of the historical events that transpired at the cemetery in 1955 and to provide safe public access, neither of which is currently occurring or available because the site is in private ownership.

To mitigate the site's current access limitations, the National Park Service would need to develop safe vehicular access from County Road 88, which is a narrow, gravel road without a shoulder. The National Park Service would need to work with LeFlore County to identify ways for allowing a variety of vehicles to access the site from nearby County Road 542 to the north. Construction of a small amount of public parking would be necessary. Within the site's 1.62-acre parcel boundary, removal of the collapsed former church structure would be needed for safety considerations.

Development of interpretative waysides would be necessary to provide a basic visitor experience. If the nearby Ben Roy's Service Station in Money becomes open for visitation with a visitor contact station that includes restrooms, then additional visitor services would not be needed at the East Money Church of God in Christ Cemetery site.

In federal ownership, the site's active cemetery requires that it remain open to the people affiliated with the burial sites. A management approach that allows for access to the graves would be necessary.

Glendora Cotton Gin and Community Center

The Glendora Cotton Gin and adjacent community center building would be acquired by the National Park Service, if worked out with the community/owner, to ensure the long-term preservation of the site. Because the Glendora Cotton Gin is currently developed as a museum space for the Emmett Till Historic Intrepid Center, much of the facility development has been completed. The gin structure could continue to be used as a museum where in-depth interpretation would occur. A key aspect of interpretation at this site, in particular, would be the opportunity to tie in the historic context and setting of racial oppression that established the circumstances of the lynching and resulted in Till's killers being acquitted. This nuanced but important aspect of the history would benefit from interpretation at the gin facility within the setting of Glendora, an ideal location for the purpose of visitor interpretation and understanding.

The adjacent community center building (the Quonset hut) would be used as a facility for large gatherings of visiting groups, public restrooms, and other NPS administrative and operational support functions that would not fit within the gin structure. The landscape of the parcel that encompasses both the gin and community center currently includes space for on-site parking. The existing parking area could easily be developed further to provide ABAAS-compliant access to both facilities.

Although NPS acquisition of the Glendora Cotton Gin and Community Center is not the preferred management option of the Glendora community, acquisition of both sites would allow the National Park Service to have a more direct role in the long-term preservation of the historic site, more easily address any needed facility improvements, and have a greater role in the interpretation of the Emmett Till history within Glendora, as described above. If NPS acquisition of some or all of the Glendora Cotton Gin and Community Center is not possible, then a partnership between the National Park Service and the Village of Glendora, possibly through an agreement to assist in the village's preservation and interpretive services at the site, could be explored. Community members of the village of Glendora are open to discussing alternatives to direct NPS management such as this.

Graball Landing River Site

The Graball Landing River site is near where Emmett Till's body was removed from the river and offers a poignant visitor experience that is not offered by the other contributing sites. Specifically, the site's riverbank connects Emmett Till's lynching and the fate of his body to the Tallahatchie River in a tangible and moving way for visitors. Viewing the river from this site offers an opportunity to contemplate Till's death within a context that still evokes the same setting as in 1955.

The Graball Landing River site is proposed for NPS acquisition. The site's role in the park concept would likely be a continuation of its current function provided by the property owner, the Emmett Till Memorial Commission for Tallahatchie County. However, the land that comprises the Graball Landing River site is undeveloped and offers no visitor services or facilities and thus requires development for improved access. National Park Service acquisition and direct management of a small portion of this site, such as an approximately 2-acre parcel, would allow the National Park Service to develop the minimum site required to

offer safe access, parking, restrooms, and other visitor services without acquiring excess land. National Park Service resource protection of the site would involve facility and landscape maintenance.

Tallahatchie County Courthouse, Sumner Square, and Emmett Till Interpretive Center

The Tallahatchie County Courthouse and nearby Emmett Till Interpretive Center would both be acquired for direct NPS management to provide additional resources for preserving and maintaining the significant previous investments in the courthouse and interpretive center and expanding interpretation. Resource protection for the courthouse and square would involve ongoing preservation and maintenance of the large building and its character-defining features. These elements are in good condition today due to the building's completion of a decade-long restoration and rehabilitation project but now require long-term maintenance for the life of the resource. Even after acquisition, the National Park Service would partner with Tallahatchie County to allow the county to continue to provide county court trials and administrative functions in support of court operations.

The Emmett Till Interpretive Center would be acquired to provide NPS facilities for staffing and operations that would support visitation at the courthouse. The center would serve as a visitor contact station and site for interpretation. The building's location facing Sumner Square includes on-street parking in front of the building and in the square, while a large rear parking lot is available for buses to support large groups of visitors. These aspects would be a continuation of the Emmett Till Interpretive Center's current function, as it is managed by the Emmett Till Memorial Commission under Tallahatchie County. The building's interior spaces are well developed for visitor access and use, requiring relatively minimal development and NPS investment.

Direct NPS ownership and management of the Emmett Till Interpretive Center would allow the National Park Service to augment and expand the interpretive opportunities at this site in important ways. The courtroom provides the opportunity for interpretation that includes the Black individuals and groups involved in the trial and those who courageously risked their lives to testify. The landscape of the surrounding square conveys the importance of the large gatherings of journalists, trial participants, and onlookers who flocked to the square during the trial. Although the Emmett Till Interpretive Center currently includes interpretive panels in the building, they are narrowly focused on the trial and do not tell the entire history of Emmett Till's lynching in the Delta nor the fullness of the historic context. Interpretation should explore the larger social and historic contexts at play that explain important information about the lynching Emmett Till and the role of the trial in US history. Although NPS ownership and management of the site are the most direct way to accomplish that goal, alternatively, the National Park Service could work with Tallahatchie County through a partnership to improve the interpretation that is currently provided. The options of a partnership between the county and the National Park Service could be explored if direct acquisition of one or both of these sites is not possible.

Other Emmett Till Sites

Additionally, multiple sites identified as *conditionally feasible* could be reconsidered or reevaluated if their respective property owner wishes to donate or sell their property to the

National Park Service at a future time. Sites found to be conditionally feasible are the Moses Wright Home site, Tutwiler Funeral Home site, J.W. Milam Home site, King's Place Juke Joint site, and the Seed Barn site. Although each of these sites played key roles in the events surrounding the lynching of Emmett Till, the seed barn, in particular, is considered an especially important site. The seed barn has strong interpretive potential because the barn was the location of Till's brutal torture and murder, as told by witnesses in the murder trial. This seed barn is currently privately owned, not open to the public, and has no interpretation on-site. Because the barn played such a critical role in Emmett Till's murder, its inclusion in a potential national park unit would be especially important to pursue if the opportunity to acquire the seed barn property arises in the future.

Several of the sites found to be conditionally feasible could be included in the park concept in ways that require minimal NPS investment. For example, a self-guided or ranger-led walking tour between the sites could be explored for the J.W. Milam Home site and the King's Place Juke Joint site in Glendora, as both sites are proximate to the Glendora Cotton Gin/community center. The National Park Service could potentially partner with the Tallahatchie County government to provide exterior interpretation, such as a wayside interpretative panel, at the Tallahatchie County Jail in Charleston. Similarly, an NPS partnership with the Town of Tutwiler to interpret the role of the Tutwiler Funeral Home site could be developed so that the National Park Service could assist the town in providing on-site interpretive waysides or exploring other partner opportunities.

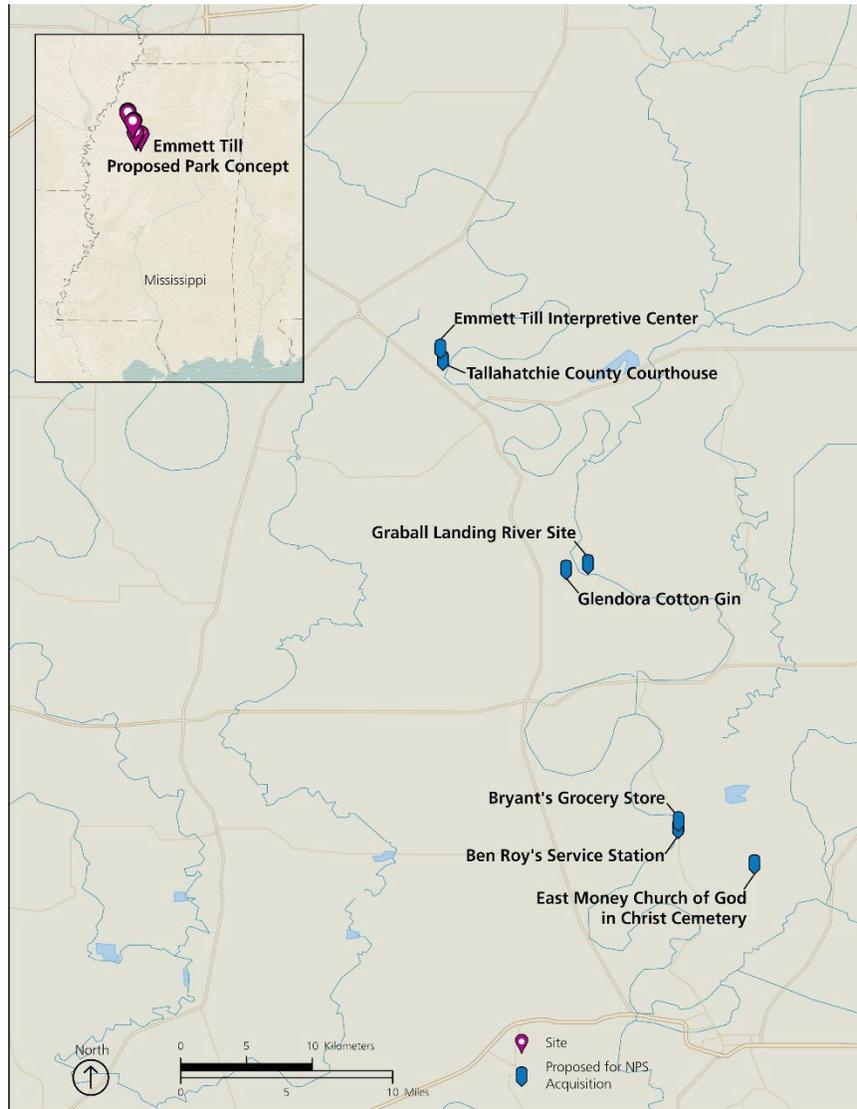
Combined, all of these partnership opportunities could eventually lead to all 11 Emmett Till sites being included in a national park unit, either through direct NPS management or through partnerships with external parties. Most importantly, including the maximum number of these contributing sites in an Emmett Till site would allow the National Park Service to explain critical aspects of the social and economic contexts of the Emmett Till's lynching in the Mississippi Delta in ways that are not currently offered, which can lead to misunderstandings or misinterpretations. For this reason, pursuing NPS partnerships such as those described above are recommended.

Summary of Mississippi Delta Emmett Till National Park Concept

A national park unit consisting of multiple Emmett Till sites across the Mississippi Delta would include the Bryant's Grocery Store site, Ben Roy's Service Station, and the East Money Church of God in Christ Cemetery site in Money; the Glendora Cotton Gin/Community Center and the Graball Landing River site in Glendora; and the Tallahatchie County Courthouse and Emmett Till Interpretive Center in Sumner (see map 28). This concept proposes that the National Park Service acquire all these sites for direct management. Potential inclusion of additional partner sites in Tutwiler and Charleston should also be considered. If conditions change in the future regarding the sites with unclear landowner intentions, they should all be considered for acquisition and addition to the park for direct NPS management.

The total estimated one-time development costs, including acquisition, for the direct NPS management of these sites is \$11.7 million. Annual operating costs would range from \$3.0 to \$3.5 million. The estimated staffing requirements for this district would be 27 total staff,

comprising 5 park and program managers, 8 facilities specialists, 8 interpretation and education specialists, 2 law enforcement rangers, 2 natural and cultural resource specialists, and 2 administrative specialists. In cases in which full acquisition and management is not possible, a partnership with the respective property owner and the National Park Service could be explored for the purposes of providing visitor access, interpretation, and/or facilities for NPS staff and operations. See the feasibility analysis in chapter 3 for a more detailed description of each site’s cost estimate.



MAP 28. MISSISSIPPI DELTA EMMETT TILL NATIONAL PARK UNIT CONCEPT

MISSISSIPPI FREEDOM NATIONAL PARK UNIT CONCEPT

A national park unit would be established, consisting of the 1964 Freedom Summer sites in Neshoba County, Mississippi, with the inclusion of the M.W. Stringer Grand Lodge in the city of Jackson, Hinds County, as an additional partner-owned site. Similar to the Emmett Till national park unit concept, this park unit would consist of multiple historic sites and

supporting facilities in different locations across two counties. This concept would also likely comprise both NPS-owned and partner-owned sites to allow for several instances in which the property owner is willing to consider a partnership agreement with the National Park Service to support resource protection and interpretation.

The purpose, significance, and interpretive framework of this unit would focus on the murders of the three civil rights volunteers, James Chaney, Andrew Goodman, and Michael Schwerner, and associated historic contexts and themes. Interpretation of this history is currently not occurring at any of the historic sites evaluated in this study. However, combining the M.W. Stringer Grand Lodge with the 1964 Freedom Summer murder sites would broaden the interpretation to encompass the larger array of the statewide “Mississippi Freedom” project that became nationally significant and influential in 1964. This concept goes beyond the murders of the three volunteers, James Chaney, Andrew Goodman, and Michael Schwerner, in the summer of 1964. In fact, their volunteer work was in service of the larger Mississippi Freedom project that took place across the state of Mississippi in 1964.

The Mississippi Freedom project was a nationally coordinated initiative that involved a multipronged campaign, including (1) “Freedom Vote” to increase voter registration among African American Mississippians, (2) “Freedom Schools” to establish and expand educational opportunities for local Black children, and (3) Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party formed to challenge the Democratic party’s all-White delegation in the 1964 presidential campaign. While Chaney, Goodman, and Schwerner worked to advance the Freedom Vote and Freedom Schools projects in central Mississippi in May and June of 1964, events held at the M.W. Stringer Grand Lodge that year became ground zero for the formation of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party in Jackson, Mississippi.

Therefore, the thematic concept proposes that the Freedom Summer sites in Neshoba County be organizationally combined with the M.W. Stringer Grand Lodge as a potential park unit that could be called the “Mississippi Freedom National Historical Park” or similar, in homage to the name of the Mississippi Freedom project of 1964. Each site contributes equally to the overall purpose, significance, and interpretive framework of a park that interprets the history and historic context of the statewide Mississippi Freedom project. Under this concept, a national park unit would fill a gap in the public interpretation and education of this nationally significant history, tied with its larger consequences nationwide, while providing immersive, in-person experiences at key sites.

Multiple sites would be included in the park framework, initially including three key sites in Neshoba County, the Mt. Zion Methodist Church site, the Burned Station Wagon site, and the Neshoba County Courthouse Square, along with M.W. Stringer Grand Lodge in Jackson, Hinds County (see map 29). A coordinated approach to park management and interpretation would be necessary. Staff time, site security, interpretive media, and visitor orientation will have to be thoughtfully approached to ensure operational efficiency and a coordinated visitor experience across the collective sites. Depending on the level of NPS ownership and management of each site, the logistics of staff traveling long distances between the sites would need to be considered.

An interpretive framework that encompasses the full history of the 1964 Mississippi Freedom Summer activities would be essential in light of the complexity of interpreting many different events, individuals, and historic contexts across a large area. In-person interpretation at all sites, such as ranger-led driving or walking tours of remote sites, would require additional NPS staffing and a coordinated approach to management. Sites like the Mt. Zion Methodist Church could feature an NPS ranger presence and offer more robust, active interpretation, while providing visitor orientation to all of the 1964 Freedom Summer sites. Some sites, like the Burned Station Wagon site, may be entirely self-led, requiring visitors to independently engage with interpretive waysides from a pulloff in the public right-of-way. Travel through the region may help visitors better understand the various settings and spatial relationships in rural Mississippi and offer a uniquely immersive visitor experience. For this experience, self-guided driving tours or mobile device applications could support nonpersonal interpretation.

Each site would need to develop a strategy that addresses two common potential threats. First is the threat of flooding and tornado exposure. The Burned Station Wagon site is susceptible to flooding, as it is in a FEMA flood hazard zone. Because of climate change, the frequency of flood events is increasing, so the property is at greater risk of flooding in the future. All sites are listed in the Department of the Interior Strategic Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment Project database as having high exposure to tornados. Flooding and tornados could present a substantial threat to the resources under consideration for protection, and impacts from floods and tornados could substantially increase the costs associated with development, management, and operations of potential national park units.

The second threat that could potentially impact this collection of sites is vandalism. Repeated instances of vandalism have occurred at existing sites interpreting the history of Emmett Till, which allude to a degree of unrest around preserving the history among some individuals in the local community. Community members have expressed concern about vandalism to sites that represent racial violence in the broader region and safety and the well-being of staff and visitors. Various security measures may be needed to protect the sites, particularly those in isolated, rural areas. Additionally, ensuring that staff and visitors are safe and feel welcomed is important for preserving both the resources and the overall visitor experience. Planning for law enforcement, security, and safety protocols will be necessary to help protect visitors, NPS park staff, and resources.

While the Neshoba County Board of Supervisors and many local residents have expressed support for national park unit designation, community support may be mixed due to the sensitive nature of the history of the Freedom Summer murders in Neshoba County. Another complexity is that there are local residents who are descendants of people who were directly and indirectly involved in the events, causing some uncertainty about public reception. Several contacts have been identified in local government and community leadership to develop an understanding of community support. Continuing to work with those contacts would be an important part of establishing a national park unit.

With a cluster of sites in Neshoba County, the concept identifies the Mt. Zion Methodist Church site as the initial center for park operations, staffing, and visitor orientation and services in that community. The other sites in Neshoba County would likely remain partner owned but interpreted by the National Park Service. The M.W. Stringer Grand Lodge would

potentially provide similar services in Jackson, although on a smaller scale, focused on the lodge. The National Park Service's role, management structure, resource protection, and anticipated visitor experience are outlined for each of the sites below.

Proposed Management Structure

Mt. Zion Methodist Church Site

As described above, the Mt. Zion Methodist Church site would initially serve as the park's center of interpretation and visitor services. The church is the only historic site among the seven 1964 Freedom Summer sites that is feasible, as its property owner could be willing to property. The site also includes ample facilities and spaces for the development of NPS operations and visitor services. Mt. Zion is a key historic site in the chain of events that led to the Freedom Summer murders and it offers exceptional in-person interpretive opportunities to address the overall historic context of these events.

The Mt. Zion Methodist Church pastor, organization, and leadership have communicated their support to be included in a park unit. Acquisition would need to be explored further under this management alternative. If NPS acquisition of the site is not possible, a partnership between the National Park Service and United Methodist Church could be explored for the purposes of providing visitor access, interpretation, and/or facilities for NPS staff and operations. However, NPS acquisition, ownership, and management of the Mt. Zion Methodist Church site is preferred.

National Park Service development of the Mt. Zion Methodist Church could occur within the church's existing 5.6-acre triangular legal parcel along Road 747 in rural Neshoba County, in the Longdale community. The park would continue to preserve and interpret the features associated with the 1964 Freedom Summer murders as they are described in the 2017 National Register of Historic Places nomination. These features are the cemetery; the old Mt. Zion church bell and stand; and landscape features, including the gravel driveways. Additionally, the Mt. Zion Church that was rebuilt in 1966 should be maintained as a contributing historic structure because the rebuilt church symbolizes the congregation's fortitude and resilience in the wake of the local KKK's church burning and direct attacks on its congregation members and the volunteers' murders in 1964. The church community's swift rebuilding of its destroyed church reflects the local community's exceptional resilience and resourceful action against the powerful white supremacist systems across the region.

The Mt. Zion property's noncontributing features include the 2001 (approximate) Fellowship Hall; the Prince Hall Masonic Lodge (due to relocation and modifications); and commemorative markers, which were placed on the landscape in 1989. These structures and features could be adaptively used or incorporated into a national park unit concept. The church interior and the Fellowship Hall's spaces could be used for gathering spaces for large groups of visitors and interpretive programs. The church's offices could be used by NPS staff offices and other supporting operations. Mt. Zion could also be used as a base of operations for other off-site interpretation conducted by park staff. In future park planning and management, the National Park Service would need to consider the need to provide public access to the active cemetery located on the property and consider support to the annual

commemorations that happen at the property, including an annual memorial service for the 1964 murders that have occurred at this site for the last 57 years without pause. Mt. Zion is also actively used by the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) organization to hold trainings for voter registration and voter suppression education—two programs that demonstrate that the tenets of the 1964 Freedom Summer program are still relevant today at this site.

Public access to the Mt. Zion Methodist Church could continue from the U-shaped private driveway, provided that this historic feature is not negatively impacted from increased use over time. While the church has several parking spaces adjacent to the building, additional parking accommodations would likely need to be developed to provide NPS visitor access without compromising the historic setting. Interpretive elements, including waysides, would need to be designed and installed for effective interpretation of the landscape.

The establishment of a park unit centered on the Mt. Zion Methodist Church site would need to involve both the local community and the public. Many community members strongly support preserving the history of Mt. Zion Methodist Church. However, the history of the site's violent past is sensitive, and local residents who are descendants of the KKK members associated with the Klan's murders and attacks on the Mt. Zion Church continue to live in the area. The development of the park would need to proceed cautiously to ensure that the local community and others who support the park concept are involved and feel safe and supported by the National Park Service.

Burned Station Wagon Site

Inclusion of the Burned Station Wagon site would allow the national park unit to interpret one of the events of the fateful night when James Chaney, Andrew Goodman, and Michael Schwerner were executed by the KKK lynch mob in rural Neshoba County. Because the other associated rural sites across the county are infeasible for various reasons, the Burned Station Wagon site has emerged as one site that can support interpretation and visitation. In turn, the site offers valuable interpretive opportunities for discussing the rural nature of the events of the evening, including illustrating the significant distance between sites associated with the murders. The site can also offer on-site interpretation of the FBI's discovery of Michael Schwerner's burned out-station wagon in this location and how photographs of the burned vehicle became an iconic symbol of the FBI's "Mississippi Burning" case and the national attention it garnered in the summer of 1964.

Based on FBI accounts, the Burned Station Wagon site is situated along the public right-of-way on the north side of Mississippi Highway 21 in rural Neshoba County. The Burned Station Wagon site is owned by the Mississippi Department of Transportation. The Mississippi Department of Transportation supports the establishment of a national park unit that includes interpretation in this location. This support indicates that direct NPS ownership and management may not be necessary for inclusion in the NPS concept or for its on-going preservation and maintenance. Instead of fee-simple site acquisition, the National Park Service could pursue a partnership agreement with the Mississippi Department of Transportation to develop a pull-off along the north shoulder of Mississippi State Highway 21 proximate to the site where the car was found. The pull-off could remain within the highway's public right-of-way and could feature interpretive waysides regarding the history and

significance of this site. The area would have limited visitor services and would be kept in a more natural setting to allow personal reflection of the events. The Mississippi Department of Transportation indicated to the study team that they may be willing to slow the current highway speed limit through this section of the highway to support commemoration and visitor safety along Highway 21. Thus, a partnership would be the first choice for the Burned Station Wagon site. An agreement with the department could establish protocols for resource protection, management, and visitor access. Acquisition could be considered if the Mississippi Department of Transportation is willing to donate the land to the National Park Service to allow for more direct NPS management. However, this arrangement would be conditional on the ability to manage the NPS property in such a way as to allow for safe and efficient operations of Mississippi Highway 21.

While the Neshoba County Board of Supervisors has expressed support for national park unit designation in general, community support for certain specific sites, such as this one, may be mixed due to the sensitive nature of the story and the descendants who continue to live in the community. Concerns for site security due to vandalism of historic markers of nearby civil rights-related markers would need to be considered at this site. Public involvement would be necessary in the development of a site for the park unit at the Burned Station Wagon site. Because the property is in proximity to Choctaw lands, tribal consultation with the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians would be also required, and the level of tribal support is not currently known.

Neshoba County Courthouse Square

The Neshoba County Courthouse Square is at the center of downtown Philadelphia in Neshoba County, Mississippi. The role of this site within the proposed national park unit would be to interpret the activities and movements of the many people—KKK members, FBI agenda, reporters, and protestors—who traversed this landscape and square after the three volunteers were reported missing. The high level of the square's integrity of setting within this landscape would make it a compelling addition to the park concept and would aid in the understanding of the local tensions and the national attention focused on this site in the summer of 1964.

The Neshoba County Courthouse and Square are owned and maintained by the Neshoba County government. County supervisors submitted a letter to the National Park Service in 2021 stating their support for the establishment of a park based on the history of the 1964 Freedom Summer murders in Philadelphia and across Neshoba County. The proposal is for the Neshoba County Courthouse Square to be included within the park unit as a partner-owned and managed site. A partnership agreement between Neshoba County and the National Park Service would allow opportunities for on-site interpretation, such as the development of interpretative panels and waysides, or on-site NPS staff-led tours and interpretation. The site is currently publicly accessible. Ample, free street parking exists around the square on surrounding roads, in addition to free off-street parallel parking in front of the courthouse square. The county has also indicated a willingness to explore opportunities to provide NPS office space within the courthouse building, if needed, to support park operations.

Nuanced interpretation may need to be developed regarding the Neshoba County Confederate Monument that currently stands in the square landscape. The 1912 monument was restored by the citizens of Neshoba County in 2006. Clear interpretation to explain the monument's role in the historic setting of 1964, and the way in which the monument served as a visual reminder of racial oppression in Neshoba County, would be needed to explain this historic context.

M.W. Stringer Grand Lodge

The M.W. Stringer Grand Lodge provides a compelling site for interpreting civil rights organizing in Mississippi, and specifically, for the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party's meetings and statewide convention in 1964. The building's interior evokes a strong feeling of connection to the party's organizational activities because the interior and its large auditorium are virtually unchanged. In the second-floor NAACP offices, bullet holes in the office window are a powerful reminder of the risks and sacrifices that civil rights organizers undertook in their daily work in the lodge since it opened in 1955. On-site interpretation could include viewing where Medgar Evers' NAACP office was housed in the lodge until his assassination at his nearby Jackson home in 1963. Although the M.W. Stringer Grand Lodge is closed to the public, historical tours that include these areas in the building are offered by lodge members upon request. Such tours occur regularly and usually involve viewing the lodge's auditorium and NAACP offices.

The fraternal order that owns, manages, and preserves the M.W. Stringer Grand Lodge has communicated to the National Park Service that they want to continue to own and manage the building but would support a partnership with the National Park Service whereby NPS staff would assume their interpretive role and provide tours in a manner similar to which they currently provide. Considering the timing of such tours, M.W. Stringer Grand Lodge members currently use the auditorium for regular evening meetings and occasionally on weekends, making daytime NPS-led tours possible. Lodge members have expressed a willingness to coordinate with NPS staff to accommodate NPS-led tours on a regular schedule. The lodge has also indicated a willingness to explore opportunities for providing NPS office space within the courthouse building, if needed, to support park operations.

To allow the National Park Service to assist the M.W. Stringer Grand Lodge organization as a partner, the proposed enabling legislation for the establishment of a national park unit based on this concept would need to include an authority for the National Park Service to provide financial and operational assistance for the building's preservation and maintenance. This assistance could be in the form of an agreement or easement consistent with the park's purpose and significance. As described previously, initially, one NPS staff liaison would potentially be required to support operations and interpretation, coordinate activities with the lodge, and seek to identify appropriate NPS funds to support maintenance and upkeep of the historic site according to anticipated terms of a partner/cooperative agreement.

Old Neshoba County Jail

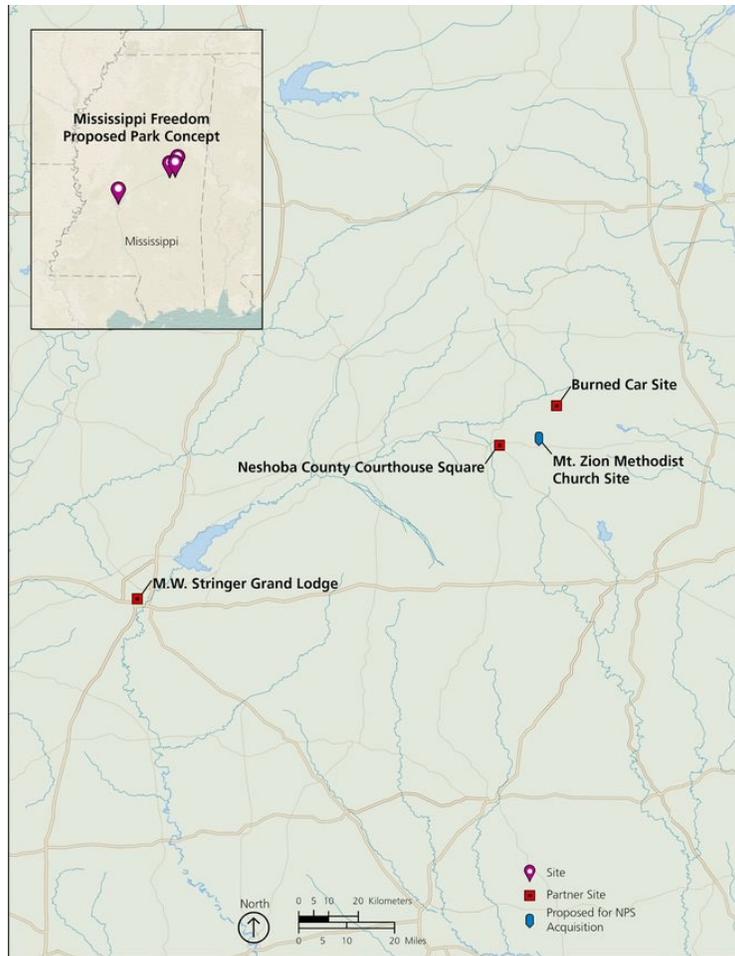
Additionally, the Old Neshoba County Jail, considered as *conditionally feasible*, could be reconsidered or reevaluated if the current property owner wishes to donate or sell their property to the National Park Service in the future. This site is also located in downtown

Philadelphia, two blocks away from the Neshoba County Courthouse Square. The site has a high potential for interpretation by demonstrating the environmental context of a key event in the story of the Freedom Summer murders. Interior restoration of the jail building would be needed in order to bring the site back to its period of significance from its current state. But this site would provide an excellent visitor contact station and historic site within the park framework. The front part of the old jail could be rehabilitated for use as a visitor contact station, with restoration of the rear portion of the old jail to reflect its appearance in 1964. In addition, a self-guided or ranger-led walking tour between the jail site and the Neshoba County Courthouse Square could be explored, given their close proximity to each other. The former jail is currently privately owned, not open to the public, and there is no interpretation on-site. The jail's inclusion in a potential national park unit would be important to pursue if the opportunity to acquire the property arises in the future.

Summary of Mississippi Freedom National Park Concept

A Mississippi Freedom national park unit would initially encompass four key sites: the Mt. Zion Methodist Church site, the Burned Station Wagon site, the Neshoba County Courthouse Square, and M.W. Stringer Grand Lodge (see map 29). This concept proposes that only the Mt. Zion Methodist Church site be acquired by the National Park Service for direct management. Acquisition of the entire 5.6-acre Mt. Zion Methodist Church property is proposed to support NPS operations and visitation. The Burned Station Wagon site, Neshoba County Courthouse Square, and M.W. Stringer Grand Lodge would be partner-owned sites for which the National Park Service could enter into agreements to support NPS interpretation. If conditions change in the future regarding the Old Neshoba County Jail, it should be considered for acquisition and addition to the park for direct NPS management.

The estimated acquisition and one-time development costs for all three sites combined is \$2.9 million, which includes contributions to preserve and interpret partner sites. Annual operating costs would be between approximately \$1.8 million and \$2.3 million for the proposed concept, including a potential partnership model with M.W. Stringer Grand Lodge. The estimated staffing requirements for this district would be 18 total staff, comprising 4 park and program managers, 5 facility specialists, 5 interpretation and education specialists, 1 natural and cultural resource specialist, and 3 administrative specialists. See the feasibility analysis in chapter 3 for a more detailed description of each site's cost estimate.



MAP 29. MISSISSIPPI FREEDOM PARK UNIT CONCEPT

OTHER OPPORTUNITIES FOR PRESERVATION

The National Park Service recognizes that, beyond the findings of this study, there is strong public support and many potential opportunities for enhancing the interpretation and preservation of the civil rights resources evaluated in this study. These opportunities could be pursued by property owners and local advocates independently of a national park unit designation.

Many of the study sites are within existing national heritage areas. National heritage areas are designated by Congress as places where natural, cultural, and historic resources combine to form a cohesive, nationally important landscape. Through their resources, national heritage areas tell nationally important stories that celebrate our nation’s diverse heritage. The Mississippi Delta National Heritage Area encompasses the Emmett Till sites, the Taborian Hospital and Isaiah T. Montgomery House sites in Mound Bayou, and many more important civil rights sites that are significant at the state and local levels. The Mississippi Hills National Heritage Area in the northeast part of the state includes Lyceum – The Circle Historic District in Oxford. The Mississippi Gulf Coast National Heritage Area includes Dr. Gilbert Mason, Sr.’s medical office in Biloxi. Opportunities may exist for property owners, as well as

museums and educational organizations, to engage more with their local national heritage area's coordinating entity. Unlike many national park units, national heritage areas are lived-in landscapes. National heritage area partnerships foster pride of place and an enduring stewardship ethic. The coordinating entities that administer them collaborate with communities to determine how to make heritage relevant to local interests and needs. In this way, national heritage areas are a grassroots, community-driven approach to heritage conservation and economic development. These areas can involve public-private partnerships and support historic preservation, natural resource conservation, recreation, heritage tourism, and educational projects.

Owners of sites that are significant for African American civil rights in Mississippi, as well as many more related sites, can apply to participate in the African American Civil Rights Grants Program, which is funded by the Historic Preservation Fund administered by the National Park Service. Additionally, the NPS African American Civil Rights Network encompasses properties, facilities, and interpretive programs that present a comprehensive narrative of the people, places, and events associated with the African American civil rights movement in the United States. Other civil rights properties in Mississippi may also qualify for grant opportunities from the NPS Underrepresented Community Grant Program, which provides funding to support the identification, planning, and development of nominations for designation of national historic landmarks to increase representation of Black, indigenous, and other communities of color.

Additionally, properties that meet the SRS criteria for national significance and suitability criteria might qualify for recognition as an NPS affiliated area. Affiliated areas can be established legislatively by Congress or through administrative action by the Secretary of the Interior under the authority of the Historic Sites Act of 1935 (54 USC 320101 et seq.). Affiliated areas are not national park units but are typically owned and administered primarily by nonfederal entities.

Federal funding for affiliated areas varies on a site-by-site basis. Historically, Congress has authorized federal funding for some affiliated areas in enabling legislation or through the annual appropriations process. However, under the Historic Sites Act, as amended, an administratively designated site (i.e., affiliated areas designated by the Secretary of the Interior) may not receive federal funding unless Congress specifically appropriates funding for that site. In some of those cases, affiliated areas receive no federal funding but may receive technical assistance from National Park Service (Congressional Research Service 2019).

To be eligible for affiliated area designation, proposed areas must (1) Meet the same standards for significance and suitability that apply to units of the national park system; (2) require some special recognition or technical assistance beyond what is available through existing NPS programs; (3) be managed in accordance with the policies and standards that apply to units of the system; and (4) be assured of sustained resource protection, as documented in a formal agreement between the service and the nonfederal management entity. Such a designation would recognize the national significance of an individual site and could provide a venue for continued NPS engagement and support of a property owner's long-term stewardship of a site. All of the Mississippi civil rights sites that meet SRS criteria 1 and 2 for national significance and suitability in this study, including sites that do not meet criterion 4 for feasibility, could be considered for affiliated area designation.

CHAPTER 5: PUBLIC OUTREACH

OVERVIEW OF PUBLIC OUTREACH

The National Parks Omnibus Management Act of 1998 requires that each special resource study “shall be prepared with appropriate opportunity for public involvement, including at least one public meeting in the vicinity of the study, and after reasonable efforts to notify potential affected landowners and State and local governments.” The National Park Service made a diligent effort to engage interested and affected individuals, groups, and agencies during the preparation of this study.

In early 2018, NPS personnel planned and conducted public outreach aimed at sharing information about the special resource study process and collecting information that would inform the study. The NPS study team solicited public input on the broad topic of identifying important sites and people associated with the civil rights movement in the State of Mississippi and general feedback about preserving and interpreting civil rights sites in Mississippi. This outreach phase also helped the study team assess the level of local support for adding a civil rights-related unit to the national park system.

Between 2018 and 2020, public input assisted the NPS study team’s development of a preliminary list of over 220 potential sites associated with civil rights history in Mississippi. The list of more than 220 potential sites was extensively studied and analyzed by the NPS study team, which included assistance from NPS scholars and historians and external Mississippi-based scholars, involving a scholars round table meeting held in February 2019. After identifying a refined list of sites that meet SRS criterion for national significance and suitability, the study team conducted a second phase of public outreach.

The second outreach phase focused on meetings between the NPS study team and property owners of the sites that met SRS criteria for national significance and suitability. These meetings began in 2021 and continued into 2022. The NPS study team sent letters to property owners that described the purpose of the special resource study and invited the owner’s responses to questions regarding their property and their potential interest in their property becoming part of a potential park unit, if such a park were to be established by Congress. The team conducted the meetings online by or phone. Property owner responses to the study team were provided via feedback and information shared during these meetings and/or through response letters to the NPS study team. The following section describes the public outreach efforts conducted as part of this study in more detail.

PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETINGS

The study team initiated a civic engagement process to inform the special resource study in early 2018. During this process, the National Park Service solicited feedback from the public through public meetings and the project website, which was created on the Planning, Environment, and Public Comment (PEPC) site (<http://parkplanning.nps.gov/>) to share project updates, share information regarding the virtual public meeting, and collect public comments.

During this public scoping period, the National Park Service solicited feedback from the public through a public scoping newsletter, the project website, and six public meetings, which were advertised through press releases in local and regional media and on partner websites. Approximately 1,000 copies of the public scoping newsletter were distributed to stakeholders, including federal, state, and nongovernmental agencies and organizations, in early April 2018. The newsletter included a brief history of Mississippi civil rights, a description of the study, the criteria used in special resource and boundary studies, and an invitation to submit comments via the project website or mailed correspondence. A letter describing the study process and potential implications for landowners, along with the newsletter, was sent to approximately 42 landowners in the vicinity of the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home in Jackson.

The official public scoping comment period opened on April 16, 2018, and closed on June 8, 2018. Six public meetings were held during the comment period in May 2018 throughout the state of Mississippi. The dates and locations for these meetings were:

Monday, May 7th in Cleveland and Sumner

Tuesday, May 8th in northern and central Jackson

Wednesday, May 9th in Philadelphia

Thursday, May 10th in Biloxi

A total of 248 people attended the six public open house meetings. During these events, members of the public were invited to submit comments to the PEPC website or to use the form provided by the park. During the public scoping period, the park received 151 individual correspondences. Of these, 118 were submitted directly to the PEPC website. Twenty-two of the correspondences were submitted on the park-provided form, seven were submitted via email, and four were mailed letters. These correspondences were entered into the PEPC website by NPS staff. Public comments were submitted from individuals in 24 states, Washington, DC, and three unknown locations. The following table 5 provides the distribution of public comments that were submitted directly to the PEPC website or to the team directly (as of July 1, 2018).

Table 5. Geographic Distribution of Correspondences

State	Percentage	Number of Correspondences
Mississippi	43.4%	66
New York	7.9%	12
California	4.6%	7
Louisiana	4.6%	7
Illinois	3.9%	6
Pennsylvania	3.9%	6
Georgia	2.6%	4
Washington	2.6%	4
Tennessee	2.6%	4
North Carolina	2.6%	4
Florida	2.6%	4
Texas	2.6%	4
Massachusetts	2.0%	3
Unknown	2.0%	3
Washington DC	2.0%	3
Colorado	1.3%	2
Utah	1.3%	2
Ohio	1.3%	2
Rhode Island	0.7%	1
Alabama	0.7%	1
Arizona	0.7%	1
Oregon	0.7%	1
New Jersey	0.7%	1
Wisconsin	0.7%	1
Maryland	0.7%	1
Vermont	0.7%	1
	Total	151

In addition to public comments, the National Park Service received letters from official representatives of the following agencies and organizations:

City of Grenada

The Delta Center and Mississippi Delta National Heritage Area

Emmett Till Memorial Commission and Mississippi Center for Justice

Fannie Lou Hamer Memorial Garden and Museum Foundation

Greenwood Convention and Visitors Bureau

Knights & Daughters of Tabor

McComb Black History Gallery

Most Worshipful Stringer Grand Lodge

National Council of Negro Women, Inc.

National Trust for Historic Preservation

State of Mississippi, Office of the Governor

Village of Glendora

PUBLIC COMMENTS

During the open comment period in April – June 2018, the National Park Service study team sought feedback on the special resource study by asking the public to answer four questions. The questions were listed in the public scoping newsletter as well as at the comment stations at the public meetings. The questions were:

1. What are the most important stories and people associated with the Civil Rights Movement in the State of Mississippi?
2. Do you have any ideas or concerns about preserving and interpreting Civil Rights sites in Mississippi?
3. What sites or places related to Civil Rights History would you suggest for consideration as part of this study?
4. What ideas or comments would you like to share with us?

The following is a brief overview of the comments received, broken down by the four main topics covered in the scoping questions listed above. During the analysis process, most of these topics were further broken down into several subtopics.

What We Heard

1. What are the most important stories and people associated with the Civil Rights Movement in the State of Mississippi?

The most frequently cited important stories associated with the civil rights movement in Mississippi were the murders of Emmett Till and Medgar Evers, as well as the activism of Fannie Lou Hamer in the 1960s. Many commenters noted how the Emmett Till murder brought the dark reality of racism and associated violence to the forefront of the nation's attention and how it ignited the modern civil rights movement. Commenters pointed to the links of the Emmett Till story to other nationally significant events and figures like Rosa Parks and Medgar Evers. Other frequently cited people associated with the civil rights movement include Vernon Dahmer, James Meredith, Stokely Carmichael, and Robert Moses. Commenters often noted that many people contributed to the civil rights movement, as it was a broad and largely bottom-up effort that manifested in all aspects of society. Commenters suggested telling the untold stories of the many people who organized communities at the local level, such as Aaron Henry, Amzie Moore, Dorie Ladner, George Metcalf, Hollis Watkins, Wharlest Jackson, Sr., and Rev. George Lee among many others; the people who helped desegregate schools; the youth involved in walkouts and who went to jail in the process; as well as the many victims of lynching and murders post-Civil War and throughout the Jim Crow era, such as James Chaney, Andrew Goodman, and Michael Schwerner, as well as less known victims, such as Birdia Kegl, Adlena Hamlett, Herbert Lee, and Louis Allen. Over 70 people were named by the public as important figures associated with the Mississippi civil rights story.

Commenters provided an extensive list of events associated with the civil rights movement in Mississippi, spanning the Reconstruction era through the early 1970s, that were deemed important in providing context and sharing with the public. The most-referenced events include:

- The murder of Emmett Till in 1955
- The Freedom Rides of 1961
- The establishment of first college-level NAACP chapter in Rust College in 1962 and the influence this had on other Historically Black Colleges and Universities in Mississippi
- The integration of public schools throughout the state, including the University of Mississippi by James Meredith in 1962
- The murder of Medgar Evers in 1963
- The Freedom Summer of 1964 and Freedom Schools operation
- The Black Power Speech in Broad Street Park (1966) in Greenwood, Mississippi
- Multiple marches, including James Meredith's March Against Fear in 1966
- The murders of civil rights activists and organizers, such as Herbert Lee in 1961; Louis Allen in early 1964; James Chaney, Andrew Goodman, and Michael Schwerner in mid-

1964; Vernon Dahmer and Birdia Keglar in 1966; Wharlest Jackson in 1967; and many others

- The Poor People's Campaign of 1968
- Statewide voter enrollment efforts
- The courageous activism of Fannie Lou Hamer throughout the 1960s
- The bombing and torching of churches throughout the state during this period

2. Do you have any ideas or concerns about preserving and interpreting Civil Rights sites in Mississippi?

Many commenters included specific ideas about various ways to preserve and interpret Mississippi civil rights sites, as well as some associated concerns.

Telling the Story. Many commenters expressed concern with how the story would be told; who would get to tell it; and who would be represented and involved in identifying sites, defining terms, and shaping the interpretation process. Specifically, commenters noted that many aspects of the history that is taught has been misrepresented or glossed over and were concerned about local and state resistance to telling the shameful conditions in Mississippi that propelled the civil rights movement. A few commenters noted the multiple museums already in place that tell the Mississippi civil rights stories, including those in Indianola, Cleveland, Clarksdale, as well as the Mississippi Civil Rights Museum that opened in late 2017 in Jackson. Commenters asked that these institutions continue to be supported.

Commenters noted that preserving individual stories and telling them in detail was essential to understanding the harshness of slavery and the Jim Crow era and the heroic nature of activists' actions. Commenters requested continued community involvement throughout the study process and noted that the identification and interpretive process needs to be transparent, inclusive, and representative of the communities whose stories are being told. One commenter suggested working with locals and families of civil rights activists to collect their stories and develop the narrative. Commenters suggested presenting the story in an inclusive manner so that it reaches as wide an audience as possible.

Emmett Till Sites. One commonly expressed idea was the importance of interpreting the Emmett Till sites, as there is no other resource either in the National Park Service nor in the country that can tell this story. Commenters noted the lasting influence of the Emmett Till story and the need to ensure that this story is preserved and interpreted at the national level. Many commenters expressed support for including all Emmett Till-associated sites in the study, including the Tutwiler Funeral Home, Tallahatchie County Courthouse and adjoining Emmett Till Interpretive Center, Emmett Till Historic Intrepid Center, Black Bayou Bridge, and the Sunflower County barn, among others. Some concerns included highlighting and protecting sites of injustice, such as courtrooms, jailhouses, and the Bryant store, as doing so may glorify aspects of the story. Other commenters were concerned about who may financially benefit from the establishment of an NPS site. One commenter suggested demolishing Bryant's store and recognizing the site with a historical marker.

Preservation and Management of Sites. Commenters expressed overwhelming support for the National Park Service’s involvement in preserving and maintaining the nationally significant history of civil rights in the state of Mississippi and noted that not enough preservation and interpretation is happening at the state and federal level. Commenters noted that establishing a new national park unit would raise public awareness of this nationally significant story. Many commenters suggested working with community-based, local museums and institutions to develop, preserve, and interpret the different sites spread out throughout the state. Commenters suggested that the National Park Service partner with the existing groups and organizations and provide outreach, preservation, and management support. Some commenters were concerned about designating sites that were too far apart and directing visitors to small sites where the larger historical context may not be well conveyed. One suggestion was to choose a few sites of great importance and use these few sites to tell the broader story. Another suggestion was to tell the story at the places where they took place. Multiple commenters suggested interpreting the sites as part of a statewide interpretive trail that honors the multiple sites, people, and stories that helped shape the country and history. Finally, there was a concern with displacing locals in poor areas if sites were to be designated.

Suggested Sources of Information. Multiple commenters noted that there are many stories throughout the state that are yet to be collected. The commenters suggested that the National Park Service work with different groups, communities, and organizations to gather these stories, including from activists who participated in the movement, their families, and independent public historians who have amassed a wealth of documentation. Commenters noted that there is an opportunity to properly archive historic materials currently held by many people.

Education. Commenters noted the significance of the civil rights movement in shaping the history of the country and how little of this history is formally taught in either textbooks or classrooms. Commenters noted that the National Park Service is in a unique position to help teach the American public locally and nationally about this important period of our history. Some of the suggestions to improve education included incorporating sites into local curriculum and developing summer camps for students.

Site Visits and Focus Groups. Commenters requested that the NPS study team spend more time in the state gathering insight and visiting sites throughout the whole state. One commenter suggested that the NPS study team hold focus group sessions and interviews in the different communities to help identify the most important people, stories, and sites associated with the civil rights movement.

Commemoration of Sites. Multiple commenters noted that many important sites lack historical markers or plaques that convey their historical significance and the difficulty of finding such sites without a guide. One commenter suggested recognizing all important sites with historical markers or memorials, including known lynching sites, and facilitating the public to help find the locations of the sites. A virtual civil rights sites trail was suggested as an option to facilitate access and highlight the different sites and stories.

Time Sensitivity. Commenters noted the poor state of some of the important sites identified and the need for fast action to protect the sites and resources. Many commenters noted the numerous people who participated in and witnessed civil right events in the state who are already in advanced age and whose oral stories should be collected before their generation passes. Commenters noted the relevancy of civil rights history and the need for younger generations to hear and learn about it from firsthand sources.

Vandalism. Many commenters expressed concern with current and future vandalism and desecration of historic sites associated with the civil rights movement. Commenters urged the National Park Service to proactively protect and monitor the identified sites.

Focus of Study. Some commenters were concerned that the study would concentrate on events that caught the national press attention versus concentrating on the local organizing and the many events and people that fueled the movement. One commenter suggested including the trail of the Freedom Riders in the study.

Limited Resources. Commenters noted the immense amount of work being done by local organizations all around the state to preserve and interpret the Mississippi civil rights history. Some commenters were concerned that many of these sites are run by volunteers, which may not be sustainable in the long run. Commenters noted that many important sites are in urgent need of rehabilitation and repair and could use financial and technical support from the National Park Service to stabilize and protect them. Continued NPS support for existing institutions, such as local museums, trails, historical monuments, was advocated.

3. What sites or places related to Civil Rights History would you suggest for consideration as part of this study?

Because the legislation authorizing this special resource study directed the Secretary of the Interior to consider significant civil right sites in the whole state of Mississippi, the National Park Service sought public feedback on what sites or places should be included in the special resource study. Other than the five sites identified in the authorizing legislation whose inclusion in the study was generally supported by the public, additional sites and places throughout the whole state were suggested for inclusion. Suggested sites ranged from post-Reconstruction era sites like the Isaiah T. Montgomery House and the Taborian Hospital in Mound Bayou, to additional sites associated with the Emmett Till story, as well as schools, churches and other landmarks where activists challenged segregation in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s.

Delta Area (Northwest and West Mississippi). The majority of sites suggested by the public in the Delta region of Mississippi are associated with the Emmett Till story, starting from the Bryant store where the events started, and included the Tutwiler Funeral Home where his body was prepared for burial and sites associated with the consequent trial. Various sites in Clarksdale, Mound Bayou, Greenwood, and Greenville associated with voter registration, freedom rides, and marches were highlighted. Also mentioned was the site of the Mule Train recruitment in the city of Marks. Leflore County was identified as second in number of lynching among southern states. Various sites in Sunflower County were identified as associated with Fannie Lou Hamer's activism, including the courthouse where she tried to

register to vote, the Freedom Farm cooperative established in the area, and the contemporary memorial garden that honors her legacy.

Hills Area (Northeast Mississippi). Sites identified in this area include Rust College; the University of Mississippi “Ole Miss” Lyceum; the historic site for Okolona College; and the communities of Grenada, Duck Hill, and Winona. The county of Panola was identified as an area that organized and was very active in the civil rights movement, including the formation of a Black farmer’s cooperative.

Pines Area (East-Central Mississippi). Multiple sites associated with the murders of Goodman, Cheney, and Schwerner in Philadelphia and the surrounding area were identified, including Mt. Zion United Methodist Church, Westside Park Church, Mount Nebo, the murder site, the FBI command post during the search, as well as the Council of Federated Organizations (COFO) office and the site of the WHOC radio station. Sites identified in Meridian include the historic First Union Baptist Church, where Martin Luther King, Jr. preached on several occasions; the Meridian Federal Courthouse; the site of the Meridian Baptist Seminary; and the COFO building. The Rosenwald school in Bay Springs was also identified by the public in this area.

Capital/River Area (Central-West Mississippi). Various sites were identified in the city of Jackson and surrounding area, including Jackson State University; M.W. Stringer Grand Lodge; Mount Olive Cemetery; Farish Street Historic District; the homes of midwives after slavery (Scott Ford houses); the former Walthall Hotel, where the Jackson Citizens Council met; the founding site for Republic of New Africa; the transportation terminal associated with Freedom Rides; and the site of the Woolworth’s sit-in. Other than the Evers home, sites outside of downtown Jackson identified include various buildings in Tougaloo College; a field near McNeal Elementary School in Canton, where a tear gas attack by the state highway patrol took place; the site of race riots in Clinton; the Rankin County Courthouse; and Piney Woods School. Commenters identified the Bethel AME Church and the old courthouse in Vicksburg as important sites to include. Other sites identified as important to include were the Parchment Penitentiary, various churches, and Natchez College Campus. A grocery store in Woodville and Prospect Hill in Lorman were also mentioned.

Coastal Area (South Mississippi). A few sites were identified in the Biloxi, Gulfport, and Waveland coastal areas. Other than the former office of Dr. Gilbert Mason, sites identified in the Biloxi area include the Keesler Air Force Base; the Biloxi Beach, where the wade-ins took place; and the post office on Main Street. The Gulf Side Assembly Center in Waveland and a Black juke joint in Bay Saint Louis were also identified. Other sites identified in this area include the Rosenwald school in Bay Springs and Pearl River County schools, for being the last to integrate.

In addition to specific sites, a number of cities and communities were also suggested for consideration, including Clarksdale, Grenada, Greenwood, McComb, Meridian, and Natchez for their layered civil rights history and the multiple sites still standing. The city of Hattiesburg was highlighted for its association to Vernon Dahmer.

4. What ideas or comments would you like to share with us?

Building Trust. Commenters suggested that enough time be allowed to gather, preserve, and interpret the stories from the different people involved in the civil rights movement. Multiple commenters noted the culture that has discouraged talking about civil rights activism and therefore the need to gain the trust of communities so that people will open up and share meaningful stories.

Including Other Groups' Stories. One commenter suggested including the struggles, contributions, and achievements of other groups in Mississippi who have fought for equality, including Chinese and Vietnamese Americans.

Diversity within the National Park Service. Some concern was expressed about the lack of African American historic preservationists within the National Park Service.

CONTINUED PUBLIC OUTREACH

Between 2018 and 2020, all forms of public input and feedback assisted the NPS study team's development and review of the extensive list of preliminary sites associated with civil rights history in Mississippi. In February 2019, the National Park Service convened a scholars round table meeting in Jackson, Mississippi. This meeting involved NPS scholars and historians and Mississippi-based scholars and subject matter experts, all of whom had specialized knowledge of the history of the civil rights movement in Mississippi and nationally. This consultation with scholars and subject matter experts, combined with on-site fieldwork conducted by the study team in June 2019, resulted in a refined list of potential sites found to meet SRS criterion for national significance and suitability.

Additional outreach was conducted in 2021 and 2022 to acquire site-specific information from property owners and support the study team's analysis of feasibility factors, need for NPS management, and potential management options for the sites found to be nationally significant and suitable. The NPS study team sent letters to property owners that described the purpose of the special resource study and invited the owner's responses to questions regarding their property and their potential interest in their property becoming part of a potential national park unit, if such a park were to be established by Congress. The NPS study team conducted the meetings online or by phone. These meetings included a tailored presentation, a Q&A session to answer feasibility and management questions, and time to solicit general feedback.

Property owner responses to the study team were captured and summarized in this study's analysis. In some cases, property owners also provided response letters, though letters were not required by the NPS study team. Of particular note is the Mississippi State government's authorization of Tallahatchie County to convey, lease, or transfer three sites currently owned by the county: the Tallahatchie County Courthouse in Sumner (identified in the bill as the Second Judicial Courthouse of Tallahatchie County), the Emmett Till Interpretive Center (identified as the annex building at 158 North Court Street in Sumner), and the Graball Landing River site. The bill (House Bill 1247) was passed by the state legislature and signed by the governor to be effective June 1, 2022. It states the following:

... the Board of Supervisors of Tallahatchie County is authorized to convey, lease or transfer, under such terms and conditions the board deems appropriate to promote the historical, educational and economic welfare of the county, any county-owned real property and any improvements thereon to the United States Government or any entity thereof, or a nonprofit organization dedicated to the preservation of historical and cultural sites, areas, items or artifacts of historical significance. The real property which shall be taken into consideration for purposes of conveyance, lease or transfer as authorized under this section are more particularly described as follows: (a) The Second Judicial Courthouse of Tallahatchie County, including the buildings and grounds located in Sumner, Mississippi; (b) the annex building located at 158 North Court Street in Sumner, Mississippi, which houses the Emmett Till Interpretive Center; and (c) Graball Landing on River Road in Tallahatchie County. (Mississippi Legislature 2022)

This special authorization is considered in the study analysis, along with all other forms of public and private feedback.

SITE VISITS TO MISSISSIPPI

In addition to the six in-person public open house meetings held in May 2018, the study team travelled to Mississippi to conduct four fieldwork trips for this special resource study. In February 2018, the team took part in an initial orientation trip of the five sites identified in the study legislation, plus many more historic sites associated with civil rights history that were recommended by the Mississippi Department of Archives and History and other stakeholders involved at the early onset of the study. In February 2019, the study team conducted site visits while in the Jackson area, facilitating the in-person Mississippi scholars round table meeting. In June 2019, the NPS study team conducted extensive fieldwork of numerous study sites across the state that were being evaluated for their potential to meet SRS criteria for national significance and suitability. A fourth site visit took place in February 2022 when NPS staff visited study sites to gather information on the SRS criteria for feasibility and the need for direct NPS management for each of the study sites that met SRS criteria 1 and 2. Each fieldwork trip included viewing the study sites to inform the team's ongoing research and analysis per SRS criteria. During all on-site visits, NPS staff met with property owners (or delegates), local officials and representatives, and other interested stakeholders to collect feedback and site information.

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**APPENDIXES: SELECTED REFERENCES, AND PREPARERS AND
CONSULTANTS**

**APPENDIX A: LEGISLATION FOR THE SPECIAL RESOURCES STUDY TO
PRESERVE CIVIL RIGHTS SITES (PL 115-31)**

Mississippi.

SPECIAL RESOURCE STUDY TO PRESERVE CIVIL RIGHTS SITES

SEC. 120. (a) STUDY.—The Secretary of the Interior (referred to in this section as the “Secretary”) shall conduct a special resource study of significant civil rights sites in the State of Mississippi, including—

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(1) the home of the late civil rights activist Medgar Evers, located at 2332 Margaret Walker Alexander Drive, Jackson, Mississippi;

(2) the Tallahatchie County Courthouse, located at 100 North Court Street, Sumner, Mississippi;

(3) the site of Bryant’s Store, located at the intersection of County Road 518 and County Road 24, Money, Mississippi;

(4) the site of the former office of Dr. Gilbert Mason, Sr., located at 670 Division Street, Biloxi, Mississippi; and

(5) the Old Neshoba County Jail, located at 422 Myrtle Avenue, East, Philadelphia, Mississippi.

(b) CONTENTS.—In conducting the study under subsection (a), the Secretary shall—

(1) evaluate the national significance of each site;

Evaluation.

(2) determine the suitability and feasibility of designating each site as a unit of the National Park System;

Determination.

(3)(A) take into consideration other alternatives for preservation, protection, and interpretation of each site by—

(i) Federal, State, or local governmental entities; or

(ii) private or nonprofit organizations; and

(B) identify cost estimates for any Federal acquisition, development, interpretation, operation, and maintenance associated with the alternatives; and

(4) consult with interested Federal, State, and local governmental entities, private and nonprofit organizations, and other individuals.

(c) APPLICABLE LAW.—The study under subsection (a) shall be conducted in accordance with section 100507 of title 54, United States Code.

(d) STUDY RESULTS.—Not later than 3 years after the date on which funds are initially made available for the study under subsection (a), the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Natural Resources of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources of the Senate a report that describes—

Reports.

(1) the results of the study; and

(2) any relevant conclusions and recommendations of the Secretary.

APPENDIX B: NPS MANAGEMENT POLICIES – CRITERIA FOR INCLUSION

1.3 CRITERIA FOR INCLUSION

Congress declared in the National Park System General Authorities Act of 1970 that areas comprising the national park system are cumulative expressions of a single national heritage. Potential additions to the national park system should therefore contribute in their own special way to a system that fully represents the broad spectrum of natural and cultural resources that characterize our nation. The National Park Service is responsible for conducting professional studies of potential additions to the national park system when specifically authorized by an act of Congress and for making recommendations to the Secretary of the Interior, the president, and Congress. Several laws outline criteria for units of the national park system and for additions to the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System and the National Trails System.

To receive a favorable recommendation from the National Park Service, a proposed addition to the national park system must

(1) possess nationally significant natural or cultural resources, (2) be a suitable addition to the system, (3) be a feasible addition to the system, and (4) require direct NPS management instead of protection by other public agencies or the private sector. These criteria are designed to ensure that the national park system includes only the most outstanding examples of the nation's natural and cultural resources. These criteria also recognize that there are other management alternatives for preserving the nation's outstanding resources.

1.3.1 National Significance

National Park Service professionals, in consultation with subject matter experts, scholars, and scientists, will determine whether a resource is nationally significant. An area will be considered nationally significant if it meets all of the following criteria:

1. It is an outstanding example of a particular type of resource.
2. It possesses exceptional value or quality in illustrating or interpreting the natural or cultural themes of our nation's heritage.
3. It offers superlative opportunities for public enjoyment or for scientific study.
4. It retains a high degree of integrity as a true, accurate, and relatively unspoiled example of a resource.

National significance for cultural resources will be evaluated by applying the national historic landmarks criteria contained in 36 CFR Part 65 (*Code of Federal Regulations*).

1.3.2 Suitability

An area is considered suitable for addition to the national park system if it represents a natural or cultural resource type that is not already adequately represented in the national

park system or is not comparably represented and protected for public enjoyment by other federal agencies; tribal, state, or local governments; or the private sector.

Adequacy of representation is determined on a case-by-case basis by comparing the potential addition to other comparably managed areas representing the same resource type, while considering differences or similarities in the character, quality, quantity, or combination of resource values. The comparative analysis also addresses rarity of the resources, interpretive and educational potential, and similar resources already protected in the national park system or in other public or private ownership. The comparison results in a determination of whether the proposed new area would expand, enhance, or duplicate resource protection or visitor use opportunities found in other comparably managed areas.

1.3.3 Feasibility

To be feasible as a new unit of the national park system, an area must be (1) of sufficient size and appropriate configuration to ensure sustainable resource protection and visitor enjoyment (taking into account current and potential impacts from sources beyond proposed park boundaries), and (2) capable of efficient administration by the National Park Service at a reasonable cost.

In evaluating feasibility, the National Park Service considers a variety of factors for a study area, such as the following:

1. size
2. boundary configurations
3. current and potential uses of the study area and surrounding lands
4. landownership patterns
5. public enjoyment potential
6. costs associated with acquisition, development, restoration, and operation
7. access
8. current and potential threats to the resources
9. existing degradation of resources
10. staffing requirements
11. local planning and zoning
12. the level of local and general public support (including landowners)
13. the economic/socioeconomic impacts of designation as a unit of the national park system

The feasibility evaluation also considers the ability of the National Park Service to undertake new management responsibilities in light of current and projected availability of funding and personnel.

An overall evaluation of feasibility will be made after taking into account all of the above factors. However, evaluations may sometimes identify concerns or conditions, rather than simply reach a yes or no conclusion. For example, some new areas may be feasible additions to the national park system only if landowners are willing to sell, or the boundary encompasses specific areas necessary for visitor access, or state or local governments will provide appropriate assurances that adjacent land uses will remain compatible with the study area's resources and values.

1.3.4 Direct NPS Management

There are many excellent examples of the successful management of important natural and cultural resources by other public agencies, private conservation organizations, and individuals. The National Park Service applauds these accomplishments and actively encourages the expansion of conservation activities by state, local, and private entities and by other federal agencies. Unless direct NPS management of a studied area is identified as the clearly superior alternative, the National Park Service will recommend that one or more of these other entities assume a lead management role and that the area not receive national park system status.

Studies will evaluate an appropriate range of management alternatives and will identify which alternative or combination of alternatives would, in the professional judgment of the National Park Service Director, be most effective and efficient in protecting significant resources and providing opportunities for appropriate public enjoyment. Alternatives for NPS management will not be developed for study areas that fail to meet any one of the four criteria for inclusion listed in section 1.3.

In cases where a study area's resources meet criteria for national significance but do not meet other criteria for inclusion in the national park system, the National Park Service may instead recommend an alternative status, such as "affiliated area." To be eligible for affiliated area status, the area's resources must (1) meet the same standards for significance and suitability that apply to units of the national park system; (2) require some special recognition or technical assistance beyond what is available through existing NPS programs; (3) be managed in accordance with the policies and standards that apply to units of the national park system; and (4) be assured of sustained resource protection, as documented in a formal agreement between the National Park Service and the nonfederal management entity. Designation as a "heritage area" is another option that may be recommended. Heritage areas have a nationally important, distinctive assemblage of resources that is best managed for conservation, recreation, education, and continued use through partnerships among public and private entities at the local or regional level. Either of these two alternatives (and others as well) would recognize an area's importance to the nation without requiring or implying management by the National Park Service.

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APPENDIX D: PRELIMINARY INVENTORY OF SITES CONSIDERED IN SPECIAL RESOURCE STUDY

As directed by Public Law 115-31, resources studied in this report include the five sites identified in the legislation (Tallahatchie County Courthouse; Bryant's Store; Medgar Evers home; former office of Dr. Gilbert Mason Sr.; and Old Neshoba County Jail). The study team also considered over 220 other sites that are related to the history of civil rights in Mississippi. These additional sites were not specifically listed in the legislation but identified through research, scholarly review, and public input. These sites consist of a variety of buildings, structures, landscapes, and objects across the state of Mississippi, which is the area considered for this study. Sites are presented alphabetically, by county. See chapter 2 for more information about the evaluation of SRS Criterion 1 – National Significance.

Table D-1. Sites Considered in Special Resource Study

Site Name	Address	County
Armstrong Tire and Rubber Company Plant	89 Kelly Avenue, Natchez, MS 39120	Adams
Beulah Baptist Church	710 B. Street, Natchez, MS 39120	Adams
Dr. John Bowman Banks House	9 Catherine Street, Natchez, MS 39120	Adams
Forks of the Road Slave Market at Natchez	232 St. Catherine Street, Natchez, MS 39120	Adams
Holy Family Catholic Church	16 Orange Avenue, Natchez, MS 39120	Adams
Jefferson Street Methodist Church	511 Jefferson Street, Natchez, MS 39120	Adams
Amite County Courthouse	Courthouse Square, 243 West Main Street, Liberty, MS 39645	Amite
Westbrook Cotton Gin	395 Gillsburg Rd Avenue, Liberty, MS 39645	Amite
Administration Building, H.M. Nailor School	600 Cross Street, Cleveland, MS 38732	Bolivar
Amzie Moore House	614 S Chrisman Avenue, Cleveland, MS 38732	Bolivar
Amzie Moore's Gas Station	800 S Davis Ave, Cleveland, MS 38732	Bolivar
Bolivar County Courthouse (currently known as the Bolivar County Chancery Clerk)	801 Main Street, Rosedale, MS 38769	Bolivar
Council for Negro Leadership	(Unknown address), Mound Bayou, MS 38762	Bolivar
Dr. T.R.M. Howard Home site	(Unknown address)	Bolivar
Isaiah T. Montgomery House	302 S W Main Avenue, Mound Bayou, MS 38762	Bolivar

Site Name	Address	County
Mound Bayou Bank	205 N. Edwards Avenue, Mound Bayou, MS 38762	Bolivar
Mound Bayou City Hall	106 Green Avenue, Mound Bayou, MS 38762	Bolivar
Mound Bayou Historic District	Mound Bayou, MS 38762	Bolivar
Rosedale Consolidated High School (currently West Bolivar High School)	505 Main Street, Rosedale, MS 38769	Bolivar
Taborian Hospital	101 N. Edwards Avenue, Mound Bayou, MS 38762	Bolivar
Blackhawk Hills Community Center	(Unknown address), 24866 Highway 17, Black Hawk, MS 38923	Carroll
Okolona College/Okolona Normal and Industrial School	651 N. Church Street, Okolona, MS 38860	Chickasaw
Port Gibson	Port Gibson, MS 39150	Claiborne
"Hanging Bridge" Chickasawhay River Bridge	(Unknown address), Shubuta, MS	Clarke
McCree Hotel	308 N Archusa Avenue, Quitman, MS 39355	Clarke
Aaron Henry's Pharmacy	213 Martin Luther King Boulevard, Clarksdale, MS 38614	Coahoma
Clarksdale Greyhound bus station	300 3rd Street, Clarksdale, MS 38614	Coahoma
F. W. Woolworth Building	207 Yazoo Street, Clarksdale, MS 38614	Coahoma
Hopson Plantation (currently known as Hopson Commissary)	001 Commissary Circle Road, Clarksdale, MS 38614	Coahoma
Myrtle Hall Library for Negroes	(Unknown address), Clarksdale, MS 38614	Coahoma
Site of Fourth Street Drug Store	(Unknown address), Clarksdale, MS 38614	Coahoma
Vera Mae Piggee's home	(Unknown address), Clarksdale, MS 38614	Coahoma
First Baptist Church – Clarksdale	115 Martin Luther King Boulevard, Clarksdale, MS 38614	Coahoma
Roberts Temple Church of God in Christ	4021 South State Street, Chicago, IL, 60609	Cook
March Against Fear – March Route-Hernando site	4263 US 51 South, Hernando, MS 38632	DeSoto
Barnes Dry Cleaning	409 Milton Barnes Avenue, Hattiesburg, MS 39401	Forrest
Bay Springs School (Rosenwald School)	37 Bay Springs Road, Hattiesburg, MS 39401	Forrest
COFO and MFDP Headquarters/Hattiesburg Freedom House/Woods Guest House	507 Mobile Street, Hattiesburg, MS 39401	Forrest

Site Name	Address	County
Eureka School	410 E 6th Street, Hattiesburg, MS 39401	Forrest
Forrest County Courthouse	630 Main Street, North, Hattiesburg, MS 39401	Forrest
Hattiesburg Lodge No. 115/Princes Hall/Hattiesburg Ministers Union Headquarters	522 Mobile Street, Hattiesburg, MS 39401	Forrest
Hattiesburg Public Library (old)	723 Main Street, North, Hattiesburg, MS 39401	Forrest
Mt. Zion Baptist Church (old) – Hattiesburg	901 Spencer Street, Hattiesburg, MS 39401	Forrest
Palmers Crossing Community Center (also known as Palmer's Crossing Community Center)	Unknown address	Forrest
St. James C.M.E. Church (Outreach of Faith & Fellowship Church)	408 E 7th Street, Hattiesburg, MS 39401	Forrest
St. Paul Methodist Church – Hattiesburg	215 E. 5th Street, Hattiesburg, MS 39401	Forrest
University of Southern Mississippi	(Unknown address), Hattiesburg, MS 36401	Forrest
USO Club (African American Military History Museum)	305 E. 6th Street, Hattiesburg, MS 39401	Forrest
Vernon Dahmer Home site (former house and property)	796 Monroe Road, Hattiesburg, MS 39401	Forrest
Victoria Gray's home	(Unknown address), Hattiesburg, MS 39406	Forrest
Zion Chapel African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church (St. James AME)	621 New Orleans Street, Hattiesburg, MS 39401	Forrest
Belle Flower Missionary Baptist Church	505 W. Pearl St, Grenada, MS 38901	Grenada
Courthouse Square – Grenada	83 S. Main Street, Grenada, MS 38902	Grenada
Gulfside United Methodist Assembly/Waveland	950 South Beach Boulevard, Waveland, MS 39576	Hancock
Pearl River County	Pearl River County, MS	Hancock
The 100 Men Hall	303 Union Street, Bay St. Louis, MS 39520	Hancock
Biloxi Beach Wade-In site	1027–1031 Beach Boulevard, Biloxi, MS 39530	Harrison
Dr. Faison' house, Biloxi Wade-ins	(Unknown address), Gulfport, MS 39503	Harrison
Dr. Felix Henry Dunn's residence	1919 38th Avenue, Gulfport, MS 39501	Harrison
Dr. Gilbert Mason, Sr. office	670 Division Street, Biloxi, MS 39530	Harrison
Dukate Elementary School	580 Howard Avenue, Biloxi, MS 39530	Harrison

Site Name	Address	County
Gorenflo Elementary School	160 St. Peter Avenue, Biloxi, MS 39530	Harrison
Gulfport lighthouse	(Unknown address), Gulfport, MS 39501	Harrison
Gulfport Wade-In site	3599 W. Beach Boulevard, Gulfport, MS 39501	Harrison
Keesler Air Force Base	4503 M. Street, Biloxi, MS 39530	Harrison
Leggett Memorial Methodist Church	1410 Beach Boulevard, Biloxi, MS 39530	Harrison
New Bethel Missionary Baptist Church	255 Main Street, Biloxi, MS 39530	Harrison
North Gulfport Good Deeds Association	15101 Madison Street Gulfport Vicinity, MS 39501	Harrison
Seashore Methodist Campground	1410 Leggett Drive, Biloxi, MS 39530	Harrison
Trinity Methodist Church/Trinity United Methodist Church	5007 Lawson Avenue, Gulfport, MS 39507	Harrison
Vernon Gilbert Lodge No. 576/Elks Club	636 Esters Boulevard, Biloxi, MS 39530	Harrison
Veteran's administrative building	200 E. Beach Boulevard, Gulfport, MS 39501	Harrison
Alexander Hall (no site identified)	N/A	Hinds
Campbell College/Green Hall	1400 John R. Lynch Street, Jackson, MS 39217	Hinds
Central United Methodist Church/1962-1963 boycott of Jackson merchants	512 N. Farish Street, Jackson, MS 39202	Hinds
Chambliss Shoe Hospital/Chambliss Building	932 John R. Lynch Street, Jackson, MS 39203	Hinds
Chilton's Store/Clinton's Store	112 W. Leake Street, Clinton, MS 39056	Hinds
Citizens Council of America Headquarters	254 East Griffith Street, Jackson, MS 39203	Hinds
Clinton Train Depot (currently known as Old Towne Depot)	281 E. Leake Street, Clinton, MS 39056	Hinds
COFO Office – Mississippi Headquarters	1017 John R. Lynch Street, Jackson, MS 39203	Hinds
Council School No. 1	555 Hartfield Street, Jackson, MS 39203	Hinds
Dr. Jacob Reddix's home	1136 Valley Street, Jackson, MS 39203	Hinds
Dr. Robert Smith's clinic	(Unknown address), Jackson, MS 39203	Hinds
Edison-Walthall Hotel (also known as the Walthall Hotel)	225 E. Capitol Street, Jackson, MS 39201	Hinds

Site Name	Address	County
Fairview Inn (Warren-Gunter-Guild-Simmons House)	734 Fairview Street, Jackson, MS 39203	Hinds
Farish Street Baptist Church/1962–1963 boycott of Jackson merchants/Citizens for Human Rights/Lanier High School nonviolent protest	619 N. Farish Street, Jackson, MS 39202	Hinds
Farish Street Neighborhood Historic District	Farish Street, Jackson, MS 39203	Hinds
Galloway Memorial United Methodist Church	305 North Congress Street Jackson, MS 39201	Hinds
Golden Key Senior Center/Fannie Lou Hamer Library	3450 Albermarle Road, Jackson, MS 39213	Hinds
Greater Blair Street AME Zion/Blair Street AME Zion Church/1962–1963 boycott	1106 Blair Street, Jackson, MS 39202	Hinds
Greyhound bus station – Jackson	219 N. Lamar Street, Jackson, MS 39201	Hinds
Jackson Municipal Library/Jackson Public Library	301 State Street, North Jackson, MS 39201	Hinds
Jackson State University (various events)	1400 John R. Lynch Street, Jackson, MS 39217	Hinds
King Edward Hotel (Mississippi Council on Human Relations)	235 W. Capitol Street, Jackson, MS 39201	Hinds
Lanier High School	833 Maple Street, Jackson, MS 39203	Hinds
Lula Ford House/Mary Green Scott House/Scott Ford Houses	136 E. Cohea Street, Jackson, MS 39202	Hinds
Lynch Street corridor	John R. Lynch Street, Jackson, MS 39203	Hinds
M.W. Stringer Grand Lodge – NAACP Field Office/Masonic Lodge	1072 John R. Lynch Street, Jackson, MS 39203	Hinds
Manhattan Academy/Council School No. 3/Council Manhattan High School/Woodland Hills Academy	5055 Manhattan Road, Jackson, MS 39206	Hinds
March Against Fear – Mississippi State Capitol (old capitol)	400 High Street, Jackson, Mississippi 39201	Hinds
Medgar and Myrlie Evers House	2332 Margaret W Alexander Drive, Jackson, Mississippi, 39213	Hinds
Mississippi State Fairgrounds	1207 Mississippi Street, Jackson, Mississippi, 39202	Hinds
Mt. Olive Cemetery	1051 Lynch Street, Jackson, Mississippi, 39203	Hinds
NAACP Field Office (first) (Big Apple Inn)	507 N. Farish Street, Jackson, Mississippi, 39202	Hinds

Site Name	Address	County
New Bethel Baptist Church	450 Culbertson Avenue, Jackson, Mississippi, 39209	Hinds
Old Jackson City Auditorium	320 E. Pearl Street, Jackson, Mississippi, 39201	Hinds
Pearl Street AME Church/Zion Travelers Missionary Baptist Church/1962–1963 boycott of Jackson merchants	925 West Pearl Street, Jackson, MS 39203	Hinds
Pratt Memorial United Methodist Church/1962–1963 boycott of Jackson merchants	1047 W. Pascagoula Street, Jackson, MS 39203	Hinds
Republic of New Africa/Republic of New Afrika	1148 Lewis Street, Jackson, MS 39203	Hinds
Rev. R.L.T. Smith's home and an office building on Valley Street	(Unknown address), Jackson, MS 39203	Hinds
Temple Beth Israel (III)	546 Woodrow Wilson Avenue, Jackson, MS 39213	Hinds
Unknown site	5315 Old Canton Road, Jackson, MS 39211	Hinds
WLBT TV Station (Lamar Life Radio and TV Studios)	715 S. Jefferson Street, Jackson, MS 39201	Hinds
Woolworth's Sit-In	(Unknown address), Jackson, MS 39201	Hinds
Robert G. Clark Jr. Homestead	(Unknown address), Ebenezer, MS	Holmes
Saints Industrial and Literary School	(Unknown address), Lexington, MS 39095	Holmes
Fannie Lou Hamer Civil Rights Museum	17150 Hwy 49, Belzoni, MS 39038	Humphreys
Sites associated with George Lee: Green Grove MB church	801 Church Street, Belzoni, MS 39308	Humphreys
Unita Blackwell's home	(Unknown address), Rosebud Street, Mayersville, MS 39113	Issaquena
Caswell Springs Methodist Church	18601 MS-63, Moss Point, MS 39562	Jackson
Bay Springs Negro School Complex/Bay Springs Middle School	124 Edmund King Drive, Bay Springs, MS 39422	Jasper
Prospect Hill Plantation	Lorman, MS 39096	Jefferson
Lyceum – University of Mississippi/The Circle Historic District	University of Mississippi, Oxford, MS 38677	Lafayette
Fielder & Brooks Drug Store, CORE/COFO office	2505 5th Street, Meridian, MS 39301	Lauderdale
First Union Baptist Church (currently known as Historic First Union Baptist Church)	610 38th Avenue, Meridian, MS 39307	Lauderdale
Meridian Federal Courthouse (US Federal Post Office and Courthouse)	2100 9th Street, Meridian, MS 39301	Lauderdale
Meridian Freedom School/Meridian Baptist Seminary	1526 32nd Avenue, Meridian, MS 39301	Lauderdale

Site Name	Address	County
Newell Chapel CME	1400 13th Avenue, Meridian, MS 39301	Lauderdale
Holbrook Benevolent Association	2508 5th Street, Meridian, MS 39301	Lauderdale
McDonald House	919 Martin Road, Carthage Vicinity, MS (Unknown address)	Leake
Mrs. Winson Hudson Home	Cathage, MS 39051	Leake
Bryant's Grocery Store	County Road 518 and County Road 24, Money, MS 38945	LeFlore
East Money Church of God in Christ	Whaley Road and County Road 88, Money, MS 38930	Leflore
Endesha Ida Mae Holland's home	(Unknown address), Greenwood, MS 38930	Leflore
First Christian Church – Greenwood	700 W. Washington Street, Greenwood, MS 38930	Leflore
Greenwood	Greenwood, MS	LeFlore
Jennings Temple CME Church/Jennings Temple	320 Ave. G, Greenwood, MS 38930	Leflore
Leflore County	Leflore County	Leflore
Leflore County Courthouse	310 W. Market Street, Greenwood, MS 38930	Leflore
March Against Fear – Greenwood site (Broad Street Park)	Corner of Broad Street and Avenue M, Greenwood, MS 38930	LeFlore
Moses Wright's Home	(Unknown address), Money, MS 38930	Leflore
Wesley Methodist Church	800 Howard Street, Greenwood, MS 38930	LeFlore
Ben Roy's Service Station	County Road 518 and County Road 24, Money, MS 38945	LeFlore
Annie Devine's home	(Unknown address), Canton, MS 39046	Madison
Canton Freedom House	838 George Washington Avenue, Canton, MS 39046	Madison
March Against Fear – Canton site	Holy Child Jesus School Gymnasium, 315 Garrett Street, Canton, MS 39046	Madison
McNeal Elementary School	364 Doctor M.L.K. Jr., Drive, Canton, MS 39046	Madison
Sister Thea Bowman permanent exhibit at the Canton Multicultural Center and Museum	141 N. Union Street, Canton, MS 39046	Madison
Tougaloo College	500 W. County Line Road, Tougaloo, MS 39174	Madison
Holy Child Jesus Catholic School	315 Garrett Street, Canton, MS 39046	Madison
Ida B. Wells-Barnett Museum and Cultural Center of African American History	220 North Randolph Street, Holly Springs, MS 38635	Marshall
Rust College	105 E. Rust Avenue, Holly Springs, MS 38635	Marshall

Site Name	Address	County
Binford Chapel United Methodist	411 Martin Luther King Jr. Drive, Duck Hill, MS 38925	Montgomery
Duck Hill	(Unknown addresses), Duck Hill, MS 38925	Montgomery
Duck Hill Miss	P.O. Box 428, Duck Hill, MS	Montgomery
Old Montgomery County Courthouse	Winona, MS 38967	Montgomery
Winona Jail	Winona, MS 38967	Montgomery
March Against Fear – March Route	Multiple	Multiple
Benwalt Hotel (former)	234 Byrd Ave., Philadelphia, MS 39350	Neshoba
Burned Station Wagon site	Highway 21, Philadelphia, MS 39350	Neshoba
County Road 515 (also known as Rock Cut Road)	Philadelphia, MS 39350	Neshoba
Delphia Court Motel (former)	1026 W. Beacon Street, Philadelphia, MS 39350	Neshoba
Earthen Dam Burial site	Near MS Highway 21	Neshoba
Highway site of the slayings of Chaney, Schwerner, and Goodman	County Road 515, Philadelphia, MS 39350	Neshoba
McClelland Cafe & Grocery	245 Carver Avenue, Philadelphia, MS 39350	Neshoba
Mount Nebo SDA Church/Mt. Nebo MB Church	257 Carver Avenue, Philadelphia, MS 39350	Neshoba
Mt. Zion United Methodist Church – Longdale	11191 Road 747, Philadelphia, MS 39350	Neshoba
Neshoba County Courthouse	401 W. Beacon St, Philadelphia, MS 39350	Neshoba
Neshoba County Jail (old)	401–413 East Myrtle Street, Philadelphia, MS 39350	Neshoba
Philadelphia COFO office	(Unknown address), Carver Avenue, Philadelphia, MS 39350	Neshoba
WHOC Radio Station	1016 W. Beacon Street, Philadelphia, MS 39350	Neshoba
Westside Park Church	Unknown address	Neshoba
Dr. Douglas L. Conner's office	123 Dr. Douglas L. Conner Drive, Starkville, MS 39759	Oktibbeha
Panola County	Unknown address	Panola
Burglund High School (renamed Higgins High School)	1000 Elmwood Street, McComb, MS 39648	Pike
Burglund Supermarket and Masonic Temple	630 Warren Street, McComb, MS 39648	Pike
C.C. Bryant home	1533 Venable Street, McComb, MS 39648	Pike
Greyhound bus station – McComb	206 Canal Street, McComb, MS 39648	Pike

Site Name	Address	County
Martin Luther King Memorial Center/McComb COFO headquarters	601 Summit Street, McComb, MS 3964	Pike
McComb Freedom House	702 Wall Street, McComb, MS 39648	Pike
McComb Jail	115 3rd Street, McComb, MS 39648	Pike
McComb's Woolworth store	205 Main Street, McComb, MS 39648	Pike
Pike County Courthouse	218 E. Bay Street, Magnolia, MS 39652	Pike
Pike County Jail	Magnolia, MS 39652	Pike
Society Hill Missionary Baptist Church	4098 US Highway 51, McComb, MS 39648	Pike
St. Paul United Methodist Church – McComb/Saint Paul United Methodist Church	715 Warren Street, McComb, MS 39648	Pike
Summit Street Historic District	(Unknown address), McComb, MS 39648	Pike
Mule Train	1218 M.L.K., Jr., Drive, Marks, MS 38646	Quitman
Piney Woods School	5096 US Highway 49, Piney Woods, MS 39148	Rankin
Rankin County Justice Courthouse	117 N. Timber Street, Brandon, MS 39042	Rankin
Drew – Multiple sites	Drew, MS 38737	Sunflower
Fannie Lou Hamer gravesite	(Unknown address), Ruleville, MS 38771	Sunflower
Fannie Lou Hamer Memorial Statue and Garden (monument)	726 Byron Street, Ruleville, MS 38771	Sunflower
Freedom Farm Cooperative	(Unknown address), Sunflower County, MS	Sunflower
Freedom School – Indianola	611 Jefferson Street, Indianola, MS 38751	Sunflower
Hollins Grocery/Bear's Grocery	200 Byas Street, Indianola, MS 38751	Sunflower
Parchman Penitentiary (Maximum Security Unit, Mississippi State Penitentiary, or Parchman Farm)	590 Parchman 40 Road, Parchman, MS 38738	Sunflower
Sunflower Barn	(Unknown address), Drew, MS 38737	Sunflower
Sunflower County Courthouse (Old)	200 Main Street, Indianola, MS 38751	Sunflower
William Chapel Baptist Church	899 O B Avenue, Ruleville, MS 38771	Sunflower
Black Bayou Bridge (#5)	Black Bayou Road, Glendora, MS 38928	Tallahatchie
Emmett Till Interpretive Center	120 N. Court Street, Sumner, MS 38957	Tallahatchie

Site Name	Address	County
Glendora – Multiple	Glendora, MS 38928	Tallahatchie
Glendora Cotton Gin (currently housing the Emmett Till Historic Intrepid Center)	33 E. Thomas Street, Glendora, MS 38928	Tallahatchie
Graball Landing River site	Near Glendora, MS	Tallahatchie
Hotel in Sumner (possibly the former Delta Inn)	Sumner, MS 38957	Tallahatchie
J.W. Milam Home site	N. Railroad Avenue, Glendora, MS	Tallahatchie
King's Place Juke Joint site	N. Railroad Avenue, Glendora, MS	Tallahatchie
Tallahatchie County Jail	10 Court Square, Charleston, MS 38921	Tallahatchie
Tallahatchie County Second District Courthouse	108 Main Street, Sumner, MS 38957	Tallahatchie
Tutwiler Funeral Home	202 Hancock Street, Tutwiler, MS 38963	Tallahatchie
West District High School (former)	1094 W. Friendship Road, Sumner, MS 38957	Tallahatchie
Carpenters for Christmas/Antioch Missionary Baptist Church	Blue Mountain, MS 38610	Tippah
Catfish Row Museum	913 Washington Street, Vicksburg, MS 39180	Warren
Vicksburg COFO Office; J&S Community Store	1720 Military Avenue, Vicksburg, MS 39180	Warren
Bethel AME Church	805 Monroe Street, Vicksburg, MS 39183	Warren
(Old) Warren County Court House	1008 Cherry Street, Vicksburg, MS 39183	Warren
Greenville Chinese Cemetery	114 Crescent Street, Greenville, MS 38701	Washington
Greenville Industrial College	140 8th Street, South Greenville, MS 38703	Washington
Weinberg House (currently housing the Greenville Reflection & Youth Development Museum)	639 Central Street Greenville, MS 38701	Washington
Anne Moody – Resources associated with her	(Unknown address), Centreville, MS 39631	Wilkinson
Arbuthnot's Grocery/Arbuthnot's Grocery and House Museum	8990 Pinckneyville Road, Woodville, MS 39669	Wilkinson
Carsie Hall (deceased) (no site identified)*	N/A*	N/A
Cotton Pickers Museum	N/A*	N/A
Ed Scott (no site identified)	N/A*	N/A
Fred Banks (no site identified)	N/A*	N/A

Site Name	Address	County
Jack Young (deceased) (no site identified)	N/A*	N/A
Melvyn Leventhal (no site identified)	N/A*	N/A
<i>Pigford v. Glickman</i> (no site identified)	N/A*	N/A
R. Jess Brown (deceased) (no site identified)	N/A*	N/A
Reuben Anderson (no site identified)	N/A*	N/A

*Suggestion made by the public, but attempts to identify an associated site were unsuccessful

APPENDIX E: DETAILED COST ESTIMATES FOR FEASIBLE SITES

Gross cost estimates are presented in Fiscal Year 2022 dollar amounts and include base construction, federal mark up, management, contingency, and design and compliance costs for the following sites. Construction unit costs are based on square feet (SF), linear feet (LF), lump sum (LS), or each individual item (EA).

1. COST ESTIMATES FOR EMMETT TILL SITES

Table E-1a. Estimated One-Time Development Costs for Emmett Till Sites
Bryant's Grocery Store and Ben Roy's Service Station

Item	Quantity	Unit	Unit Cost	Total Cost
Bryant's Grocery Store				
Demolish/salvage existing	1	LS	\$100,000	\$100,000
Support structure w/canopy	4,500	EA	\$300	\$1,350,000
Debris removal from site	8,000	SF	\$20	\$160,000
Barricade/fencing enclosure	300	LF	\$300	\$90,000
Subtotal				\$1,700,000
Ben Roy's Service Station				
Exterior clean up	10,000	SF	\$5	\$50,000
Reroof building	1	LS	\$10,000	\$10,000
Paint and water proofing	1	LS	\$10,000	\$10,000
Interior improvements	800	SF	\$100	\$80,000
HVAC system	800	SF	\$20	\$16,000
Upgrade lighting/power	800	SF	\$10	\$8,000
Interior security system	1	LS	\$15,000	\$15,000
ABAAS ramp/access	1	LS	\$25,000	\$25,000
New restrooms	1	LS	\$150,000	\$150,000
Septic/leach field system	1	LS	\$100,000	\$100,000
Subtotal				\$464,000
Site Work				
Revise water service	1	LS	\$50,000	\$50,000
Site access road improvements	1	LS	\$25,000	\$25,000
Parking – 50 stalls – asphalt/base rock	20,000	SF	\$8	\$160,000
Site lighting at parking/exterior	4	Light poles	\$8,000	\$32,000
Entrance signage	1	LS	\$10,000	\$10,000
Landscaping	1	LS	\$35,000	\$35,000
Exhibits and waysides	1	LS	\$150,000	\$150,000
Exterior security system	1	LS	\$30,000	\$30,000
Subtotal				\$492,000
Direct Cost Total				\$2,656,000

Item	Quantity	Unit	Unit Cost	Total Cost
Location factor adjustment	-12.5%			\$(332,000)
Remote factor adjustment	5.0%			\$132,800
Design contingency	25.0%			\$664,000
General conditions	12.0%			\$374,000
Government general conditions	5.0%			\$156,000
Contractors overhead	10.0%			\$365,000
Contractors profit	8.0%			\$292,000
Bonds and insurance	3.0%			\$129,000
Adjustment for contractor format	10.0%			\$431,000
Escalation – 6% per year – mid-point of construction 12 months	6.0%			\$259,000
Indirect Cost Total				\$2,471,000
Estimated Construction Cost Total				\$5,127,000

Table E-1b. Estimated One-Time Development Costs for Emmett Till Sites
East Money Church of God in Christ Cemetery Site

Item	Quantity	Unit	Unit Cost	Total Cost
Site clearing/preparation including debris removal	1	LS	\$100,000	\$100,000
Parking – gravel/base rock	10,000	SF	\$5	\$50,000
Site accessibility improvements	1	LS	\$20,000	\$20,000
Entrance signage	1	LS	\$5,000	\$5,000
Landscaping	1	LS	\$10,000	\$10,000
Exhibits and waysides	1	LS	\$40,000	\$40,000
Exterior security system	1	LS	\$30,000	\$30,000
Direct Cost Total				\$255,000
Location factor adjustment	-12.5%			\$(32,000)
Remote factor adjustment	5.0%			\$13,000
Design contingency	25.0%			\$64,000
General conditions	12.0%			\$36,000
Government general conditions	5.0%			\$15,000
Contractors overhead	10.0%			\$35,000
Contractors profit	8.0%			\$28,000
Bonds and insurance	3.0%			\$12,000
Adjustment for contractor format	10.0%			\$41,000
Escalation – 6% per year – mid-point of construction 12 months	6.0%			\$25,000

Item	Quantity	Unit	Unit Cost	Total Cost
Indirect Cost Total				\$237,000
Estimated Construction Cost Total				\$492,000

Table E-1c. Estimated One-Time Development Costs for Emmett Till Sites
Glendora Cotton Gin/Community Center

Item	Quantity	Unit	Unit Cost	Total Cost
Glendora Cotton Gin				
Access from parking area to building – sidewalks	500	SF	\$10	\$5,000
New doors/hardware	4	EA	\$3,000	\$12,000
Miscellaneous signage	1	LS	\$1,500	\$1,500
Revise exit doors/hardware	2	LS	\$2,500	\$5,000
Tenant finishes w/partitions	500	SF	\$120	\$60,000
Upgrade electrical service	1	LS	\$5,000	\$5,000
Upgrade internet connection	1	LS	\$2,000	\$2,000
Fire suppression system	6,120	SF	\$15	\$91,800
HVAC system	5,620	SF	\$20	\$112,400
Upgrade lighting/power	5,620	SF	\$10	\$56,200
Interior security system	1	LS	\$15,000	\$15,000
New roofing	6,120	SF	\$12	\$73,440
Exterior cleaning/water sealants	9,600	SF	\$10	\$96,000
New windows	10	EA	\$1,200	\$12,000
Restrooms	1	LS	\$100,000	\$100,000
Subtotal				\$647,000
Community Center				
Access from parking area to building – sidewalks	500	SF	\$10	\$5,000
New doors/hardware	4	EA	\$3,000	\$12,000
Miscellaneous signage	1	LS	\$1,500	\$1,500
Revise exit doors/hardware	2	LS	\$2,500	\$5,000
HVAC system	4,200	SF	\$15	\$63,000
Upgrade lighting/power	4,200	SF	\$10	\$42,000
Interior security system	1	LS	\$10	\$10
Exterior cleaning/water sealants	7,600	SF	\$10	\$76,000
New windows	4	EA	\$1,200	\$4,800
Restrooms	1	LS	\$80,000	\$80,000
Subtotal				\$289,000
Site Work				
Replace sewage lift station	1	LS	\$100,000	\$100,000
Exterior sewage piping	500	LF	\$85	\$42,500

Item	Quantity	Unit	Unit Cost	Total Cost
Revise water service	1	LS	\$50,000	\$50,000
Site access road improvements	1	LS	\$25,000	\$25,000
Parking – 50 stalls – asphalt/base rock	20,000	SF	\$8	\$160,000
Site lighting at parking/exterior	4	Light poles	\$8,000	\$32,000
Entrance signage	1	LS	\$10,000	\$10,000
Landscaping	1	LS	\$35,000	\$35,000
Exhibits and waysides	1	LS	\$100,000	\$100,000
Exterior security system	1	LS	\$15,000	\$15,000
Subtotal				\$570,000
Direct Cost Total				\$1,506,000
Location factor adjustment	-12.5%			\$(188,000)
Remote factor adjustment	5.0%			\$75,000
Design contingency	25.0%			\$377,000
General conditions	12.0%			\$212,000
Government general conditions	5.0%			\$89,000
Contractors overhead	10.0%			\$207,000
Contractors profit	8.0%			\$166,000
Bonds and insurance	3.0%			\$73,000
Adjustment for contractor format	10.0%			\$244,000
Escalation – 6% per year – mid-point of construction 12 months	6.0%			\$147,000
Indirect Cost Total				\$1,402,000
Estimated Construction Cost Total				\$2,908,000

Table E-1d. Estimated One-Time Development Costs for Emmett Till Sites
Graball Landing River Site

Item	Quantity	Unit	Unit Cost	Total Cost
Site Work				
Vault toilets	2	LS	\$100,000	\$200,000
Pavilion – 40' x 50'	2,000	SF	\$85	\$170,000
Site access road improvements – gravel	1	LS	\$20,000	\$20,000
Parking – gravel/base rock	10,000	SF	\$5	\$50,000
Entrance signage monument	1	LS	\$8,000	\$8,000
Landscaping	1	LS	\$10,000	\$10,000
Exhibits and waysides	1	LS	\$20,000	\$20,000
Exterior security system	1	LS	\$10,000	\$10,000
Direct Cost Total				\$488,000

Item	Quantity	Unit	Unit Cost	Total Cost
Location factor adjustment	-12.5%			\$(61,000)
Remote factor adjustment	5.0%			\$24,000
Design contingency	25.0%			\$122,000
General conditions	12.0%			\$69,000
Government general conditions	5.0%			\$29,000
Contractors overhead	10.0%			\$67,000
Contractors profit	8.0%			\$53,000
Bonds and insurance	3.0%			\$24,000
Adjustment for contractor format	10.0%			\$79,000
Escalation – mid-point – 12 months at 6% per year	6.0%			\$47,000
Indirect Cost Total				\$453,000
Estimated Construction Cost Total				\$941,000

Table E-1e. Estimated One-Time Development Costs for Emmett Till Sites
Tallahatchie County Courthouse and Emmett Till Interpretive Center

Item	Quantity	Unit	Unit Cost	Total Cost
New roofing/waterproofing	5,200	SF	\$20	\$104,000
Rehab interior office	1,000	SF	\$100	\$100,000
Repair audio visual system	1	LS	\$50,000	\$50,000
Additional restrooms	1	LS	\$200,000	\$200,000
Site security	1	LS	\$30,000	\$300,000
New exhibits	1	LS	\$300,000	\$300,000
Direct Cost Total				\$784,000
Location factor adjustment	-12.5%			\$(98,000)
Remote factor adjustment	5.0%			\$39,000
Design contingency	25.0%			\$196,000
General conditions	12.0%			\$111,000
Government general conditions	5.0%			\$46,000
Contractors overhead	10.0%			\$109,000
Contractors profit	8.0%			\$86,000
Bonds and insurance	3.0%			\$38,000
Adjustment for contractor format	10.0%			\$127,000
Escalation – 6% per year – mid-point of construction 12 months	6.0%			\$76,000
Indirect Cost Total				\$730,000
Estimated Construction Cost Total				\$1,514,000

2. COST ESTIMATES FOR 1964 FREEDOM SUMMER SITES

Table E-2a. Estimated One-Time Development Costs for 1964 Freedom Summer Sites
Mt. Zion Methodist Church

Item	Quantity	Unit	Unit Cost	Total Cost
Gravel parking area	20,000	SF	\$7.50	\$150,000
Traffic control barriers	20	EA	\$500	\$10,000
Side walks	1,000	SF	\$12.50	\$12,500
Accessibility ramps	100	SF	\$25	\$2,500
Site access road improvements – gravel	1	LS	\$20,000	\$20,000
Parking – curb stops	20	EA	\$200	\$4,000
Site lighting at pavilion	4	Poles	\$8,000	\$32,000
Exterior Improvements – repairs/fencing	1	LS	\$100,000	\$100,000
Interior improvements to church/restrooms	5,700	SF	\$50	\$285,000
NPS office space	1,500	SF	\$100	\$150,000
Demolish lodge building	1,000	SF	\$75	\$75,000
Entrance signage	1	LS	\$10,000	\$10,000
Landscaping	1	LS	\$20,000	\$20,000
Site drainage system	1	LS	\$20,000	\$20,000
Exhibits and waysides	1	LS	\$200,000	\$200,000
Exterior security system	1	LS	\$50,000	\$50,000
Direct Cost Total				\$1,141,000
Location factor adjustment	-12.5%			\$(143,000)
Remote factor adjustment	5.0%			\$57,000
Design contingency	25.0%			\$285,000
General conditions	12.0%			\$161,000
Government general conditions	5.0%			\$67,000
Contractors overhead	10.0%			\$157,000
Contractors profit	8.0%			\$126,000
Bonds and insurance	3.0%			\$56,000
Adjustment for contractor format	10.0%			\$185,000
Escalation – 6% per year – mid-point of construction 12 months	6.0%			\$125,000
Indirect Cost Total				\$1,076,000
Estimated Construction Cost Total				\$2,217,000

**Table E-2b. Estimated One-Time Development Costs for 1964 Freedom Summer Sites
Burned Station Wagon Site**

Item	Quantity	Unit	Unit Cost	Total Cost
Site access road improvements – gravel	1	LS	\$20,000	\$20,000
Parking – gravel/base rock	10,000	SF	\$5	\$50,000
Entrance signage	1	LS	\$5,000	\$5,000
Landscaping	1	LS	\$10,000	\$10,000
Exhibits and waysides	1	LS	\$40,000	\$40,000
Exterior security system	1	LS	\$30,000	\$30,000
Direct Cost Total				\$155,000
Location factor adjustment	-12.5%			\$(20,000)
Remote factor adjustment	5.0%			\$8,000
Design contingency	25.0%			\$39,000
General conditions	12.0%			\$22,000
Government general conditions	5.0%			\$9,000
Contractors overhead	10.0%			\$21,000
Contractors profit	8.0%			\$17,000
Bonds and insurance	3.0%			\$8,000
Adjustment for contractor format	10.0%			\$25,000
Escalation – 6% per year – mid-point of construction 12 months	6.0%			\$17,000
Indirect Cost Total				\$146,000
Estimated Construction Cost Total				\$301,000

**Table E-2c. Estimated One-Time Development Costs for 1964 Freedom Summer Sites
Neshoba County Courthouse Square**

Item	Quantity	Unit	Unit Cost	Total Cost
New waysides/exhibits	1	LS	\$40,000	\$40,000
Direct Cost Total				\$40,000
Location factor adjustment	-12.5%			\$(5,000)
Remote factor adjustment	5.0%			\$2,000
Design contingency	25.0%			\$10,000
General conditions	12.0%			\$6,000
Government general Conditions	5.0%			\$2,000
Contractors overhead	10.0%			\$6,000
Contractors profit	8.0%			\$4,000
Bonds and insurance	3.0%			\$2,000

Item	Quantity	Unit	Unit Cost	Total Cost
Adjustment for contractor format	10.0%			\$7,000
Escalation – 6% per year – mid-point of construction 12 months	6.0%			\$4,000
Indirect Cost Total				\$38,000
Estimated Construction Cost Total				\$78,000

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As the nation’s principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has responsibility for most of our nationally owned public lands and natural resources. This includes fostering sound use of our land and water resources; protecting our fish, wildlife, and biological diversity; preserving the environmental and cultural values of our national parks and historic places; and providing for the enjoyment of life through outdoor recreation. The department assesses our energy and mineral resources and works to ensure that their development is in the best interests of all our people by encouraging stewardship and citizen participation in their care. The department also has a major responsibility for American Indian reservation communities and for people who live in island territories under U.S. administration.

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