

# **A Guide to Atlanta's Black History, Heritage and Culture<sup>1</sup>**

Compiled by

Zandra L. Jordan, Spelman College

## **Atlanta University Center**

A vital part of Atlanta's African-American heritage, the Atlanta University Center is a consortium of six African-American educational institutions: Clark Atlanta University, Morehouse College, the Morehouse School of Medicine, Spelman College, Morris Brown College and the Interdenominational Theological Center. Most of these colleges and universities date back to the years following the Civil War. Several of them played a role in the Civil Rights Movement. Member campuses of the Atlanta University Center boast a distinguished group of alumni, among them Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., the NAACP's Walter White, writer James Weldon Johnson, opera singer Matilda Dobbs, filmmaker Spike Lee and Maynard H. Jackson, Jr., first African-American mayor of Atlanta. The Atlanta University Center makes its home in Atlanta's West End Historic District.

440 Westview Drive SW  
Atlanta, GA 30310  
404-523-5148  
[www.aucenter.edu](http://www.aucenter.edu)

## **Apex Museum**

The Atlanta Apex Museum is entirely devoted to African-American history in order to promote cultural awareness and the societal contributions by African-Americans in Georgia. From one of Atlanta's first Black owned businesses to pioneer stories to local historical information to baseball to videos at the Trolley Theater, the Apex Museum is full of artifacts, photographs, children's shows, presentations and more – all related to African-American culture, both past and present.

135 Auburn Ave  
Atlanta, GA 30303  
404-523-APEX  
<http://www.apexmuseum.org/HOME.html>

## **Auburn Avenue Research Library on African American Culture & History**

The Auburn Avenue Research Library maintains a collection that traces its roots to the Negro History Collection of Non-Circulating Books begun in 1934. The library has more

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<sup>1</sup> Much of the information presented has been compiled from Explore Atlanta's Atlanta Black History and Heritage webpage ([http://www.atlanta.net/visitors/african\\_american\\_historic\\_atlanta.html](http://www.atlanta.net/visitors/african_american_historic_atlanta.html)) and the attraction's or provider's own website.

than 20,000 books and 600-plus manuscript collections, along with artifacts, recordings, oral histories, periodicals, 250,000 photographs and other items.

Also at the Auburn Avenue Research Library are 800 works of art representing African and African-American artists. Literary holdings include pieces by Harlem Renaissance writers. Auburn Avenue Research Library offers lectures, workshops and other programs. Tours are available by reservation only and must be scheduled at least two weeks in advance.

101 Auburn Avenue, N.E.  
Atlanta, Georgia 30303  
404-730-4001  
<http://www.afpls.org/aarl>

### **Hammonds House Museum**

Hammonds House Museum is a great place to explore the artistic legacy, social history, and cultural diversity of peoples of African descent through a year-round calendar of exhibitions and cultural programming. Its permanent collection contains more than 350 works of art, and the Resource Center is a valuable repository of information on hundreds of artists.

503 Peoples Street, SW  
Atlanta, GA 30310  
(404) 752-8730  
[www.hammondshouse.org](http://www.hammondshouse.org)

### **Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historic Site**

**Birth Home Tours** - Tour the home that Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. lived in from birth to age twelve. Explore the community and family life that guided this future Civil Rights leader. Thirty-minute tours are available on a first-come first-serve basis. Reservations must be made in person the day of the tour. Tours fill up quickly and it is advised that visitors arrive early in the day. Obtain your free Birth Home tickets at the information desk located inside Freedom Hall at The King Center.

**Encounter History Presentations** - Discover the history that shaped the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. during this free 30-minute tour led by a Park Ranger. Information about Ebenezer Baptist Church, the Sweet Auburn neighborhood, The King Center, Dr. King and Coretta Scott King's tomb, the Birth Home and Historic Fire Station No. 6 are presented. Check at the information desk inside the Visitor Center for times and tour location.

No special arrangements are needed since most of the park is self-guided. However, you will need to register to tour the Birth Home of Dr. King. No advance reservations can be made. There are only 15 persons permitted on a tour. Groups can reserve up to three spaces (45 persons) the day of their tour.

Open from 9:00a.m. - 5:00p.m. Tours start at 10:00a.m. Admission and parking are free.

450 Auburn Avenue, NE  
Atlanta, GA 30312-1525  
Headquarters: (404) 331-5190  
Visitors Information: (404) 331-6922 (recording)  
[www.nps.gov/malu/](http://www.nps.gov/malu/)

**Shrine of the Black Madonna Cultural Center and Bookstore**  
*African Holocaust Museum*

Created in 1995 by Velma Maia Thomas, the African Holocaust Museum, on permanent display at the Atlanta location, inspired the 1997 book *Lest We Forget: The Passage from Africa to Slavery and Emancipation*.

946 Ralph D. Abernathy Blvd SW  
Atlanta, GA 30310  
Phone: (404) 752-6125  
<http://www.shrinebookstore.com/>

Atlanta Store Hours:  
Sunday: 1:45-3:00 PM  
Tuesday-Saturday: 11:00 AM-7:00 PM

**Ebenezer Baptist Church**

Since its founding in 1886, Ebenezer Baptist Church has been home to instrumental figures in creating the Atlanta of today. During the 1960s Martin Luther King Sr. and Martin Luther King, Jr. served as co-pastors, working hard in the surrounding community to provide spiritual guidance and serve as activists on behalf of African Americans.

407 Auburn Avenue, N.E.  
Atlanta, Georgia 30312  
(404) 688-7263  
<http://new.historicebenezer.org/>

**Friendship Baptist Church**

Founded in 1862, Friendship Baptist is Atlanta's oldest African American Baptist church. Once nothing more than a boxcar for gathering, Friendship played an integral part in building the education system that is revered to this day. The church was home to the first classroom of Atlanta University, as well as Morehouse College and Spelman College. The institutions deep roots and rich history have more than earned its reputation of the "Mother Church" among Atlanta Baptists.

437 Mitchell Street, SW  
Atlanta, GA 30313  
404-688-0026  
<http://www.fbcatlanta.org/index.html>

### **Wheat Street Baptist Church**

Wheat Street was found in 1869, and prides itself on having one of the oldest African American church credit unions. After a tragic fire in 1917 the church had to be rebuilt. The reconstruction during the early 1920s created the church that still stands on Auburn Avenue. Wheat Street was formerly pastored by Rev. William Holmes Borders, Sr., a major leader in the civil rights movement.

359 Auburn Ave.  
Atlanta, GA 30312  
404-659-4328  
<http://www.wheatstreetbaptist.org/index.htm>

### **Sweet Auburn Curb Market**

The Sweet Auburn Curb Market exists as an urban farmers' market that unites rural and urban Georgians through food and activities that celebrate local agriculture, the history of the Sweet Auburn neighborhood and the diversity of the city of Atlanta. To achieve this mission, the market operates as a self-sufficient entity that houses a wide variety of food vendors, including restaurants and food stands, and serves as a year-round destination and lively gathering place for community members and visitors.

209 Edgewood Ave.  
404-659-1665  
Mon. – Sat., 8:00a.m. – 6:00p.m.  
<http://www.sweetauburncurbmarket.com/index.html>

### **Sweet Auburn Bread Company**

Check out the shop of Chef/Owner Sonya Jones who grew up in the Sweet Auburn district. Her famous sweet potato cheesecake recipe, which President Bill Clinton raved about on a visit to Atlanta in 1999, was featured in one of Rachael Ray's cookbooks. Stop in for salmon croquettes and smoked sausage breakfast sandwiches, plus Sweet Potato n' Molasses and Hummingbird muffins.

234 Auburn Avenue NE  
Atlanta, GA 30303  
404-221-1157  
<http://www.sweetauburnbread.com/>

### **Gladys Knight and Ron Winans Chicken and Waffles**

Chicken and Waffles harkens back to 1930s Harlem days when celebrities frequented Wells restaurant in the early morning hours and couldn't decide if they wanted dinner or breakfast. The delicious combination of juicy fried chicken with sweet, syrupy waffles

was born, and Gladys Knight has recreated it in Atlanta. Open until 4 a.m. on weekends, stop for lunch, dinner or a late night snack from the musically themed menu. Experience the signature dish combination chicken & waffles and don't forget to top it off with delicious sweet potato cheesecake! Open for lunch & dinner, 7 days a week (until 4:00am Friday & Saturday). AE, MC, VISA accepted; handicapped accessible.

Atlanta, Downtown  
529 Peachtree Street NW  
Atlanta, GA 30308  
Phone: 404-874-9393  
Fax: 404-874-0798  
<http://gladysandron.net/index.html>

Hours of Operation  
Monday – Thursday 11:00 AM - 11:00 PM  
Friday & Saturday 11:00 AM - 4:00 AM  
Sunday 11:00 AM - 8:00 PM

### **Paschal's Restaurant at Castleberry Hill**

Martin Luther King Jr. and other civil rights leaders met at Paschal's Restaurant to plan key marches during the 60s. Famous for its fried chicken, Paschal's was founded by brothers James and Robert Paschal, who provided free fried chicken to students arrested for protesting. Originally in the West End district, Paschal's moved to Atlanta's historic Castleberry Hill in 2002. Today, Paschal's Restaurant at Castleberry Hill still hosts Atlanta's leaders for breakfast, lunch and dinner, seven days a week.

180 Northside Dr SW  
Atlanta, GA 30313  
404-525-2023  
[www.paschalsrestaurantatcastleberryhill.com](http://www.paschalsrestaurantatcastleberryhill.com)

### **The Beautiful Restaurant**

The crowd, which includes college students from the nearby Atlanta University Center, flocks to the no-frills cafeteria for breakfast, lunch or dinner that might include baked chicken, ham hocks, squash, beets, sweet potato soufflé, turkey wings, Cornish hens or baked salmon. On Tuesdays, all meals are \$5.99 and include a meat, two sides and a mini corn bread cake. And it really is famous, too: The Beautiful Restaurant has been featured in many magazines, publications and films since opening in 1979.

2260 Cascade Rd., SW  
Atlanta, GA 30311  
404-752-5931  
<http://www.beautifulrestaurant-atlanta.com/>

### **Busy Bee Cafe**

Since 1947, the Busy Bee Cafe has been one of Atlanta's best soul food restaurants. Busy

Bee is about as attractive as a soul food joint is going to be--which means recognizable signage, structured parking, even celebrity photographs and table service. With long waits at lunch, the tiny cafe sports a medley: city councilmen, cops, students and soul food junkies. Service is friendly and the restaurant is busy and cheerful.

810 Martin Luther King Jr. Dr., S.W.  
Atlanta, GA 30314  
404-525-921  
<http://www.thebusybeecafe.com/>

### **Thelma's Kitchen**

This hometown favorite relocated from Centennial Park to Sweet Auburn. A Coke cooler, a black-and-white portable, and large plate glass windows are the chief features of this humbly decorated restaurant. Be forewarned as you will have to make some tough decisions between dark meat special or pork chops, rice and gravy or macaroni and cheese, collard greens or lima beans, and most importantly, sweet potato pie or pineapple upside-down cake.

302 Auburn Ave  
Atlanta, GA 30303  
404-688-5855

### **Soul Vegetarian**

A description was unavailable, but I enjoy this restaurant. For vegetarians who like the taste of soul food, this is a great option!

879 Ralph David Abernathy Blvd SW  
Atlanta, GA 30310  
404-752-5194

### **Food for Life Supreme Restaurant**

Food for Life offers nutritious, affordable meals in a pleasant and unique atmosphere, producing the highest quality products.

A more detailed description was unavailable, but I enjoy this restaurant, too. The décor is vibrant and playful, and the food is delicious.

880 Martin Luther King Jr. Dr SW  
Atlanta, GA 30314  
404-880-9759  
<http://www.foodforlifesupreme.com/contactus/index.html>