

Mississippi Black History Greats and Civil Rights Historic Tours

— A Mississippi historic pictorial, five day, 900 mile driving trip —

By Meredith C. McGee
JA Contributing Writer/Photographer

Alice Thomas-Tisdale, Publisher, *Jackson Advocate* asked if I was available to do a pictorial travel article documenting Black History and Civil Rights tour sites in Mississippi. I accepted the assignment with pleasure on February 12, 2016 and embarked on a five day, 900 mile travel expedition. My husband, William McGee, Jr., who was born in Jackson,

accompanied me on the first three days of the trip, and my mother, Hazel Janell Meredith, a Mississippi author, a younger sister of James Meredith, and a native of Kosciusko, travelled with me to Natchez, Port Gibson, Vicksburg, and to sites in our hometown – Jackson.

We met Mississippi's finest; they displayed the most gracious forms of old fashioned, southern hospitality. Some people drove us

to sites, shared their knowledge of local history, and wished us well. We found historic treasures in urban areas as well as remote communities which tell the story of great Black Americans then and now who are contributors of our state's progress.

Though much of the state's history has been recorded, some has not. Call local and state leaders to encourage the continued preservation of Black history. Mississippi

is rich with history. *The Jackson Advocate* salutes Black Mississippians and social justice leaders past and present, who opened doors and laid the seeds to advance political, social, and economic strides for our race.

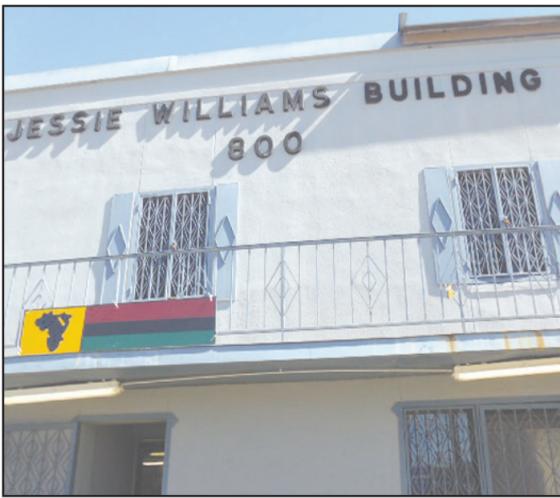
This article is dedicated to the memory of Herbert Lee (1912-1961), who was killed in Liberty for attempting to register to vote; to Louis Allen (1919-1964), who was murdered in Liberty during

the Civil Rights era, and Emmett Louis Till (1941-1955), a black teen who was tortured and murdered in Money for flirting with a white female store clerk. Till's complete historic tour in Money is open to the public.

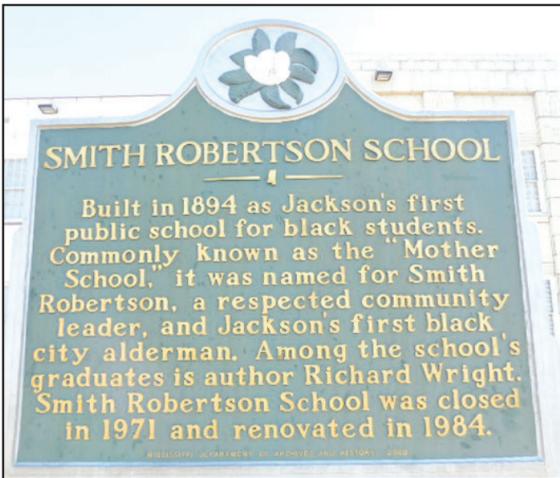
This land is your land, this land is my land... Partake of its beauty. Contact local Visitor Centers to obtain historic driving tour routes. Mississippi tourism is enriching. Try it!

Jackson

A state sponsored Civil Rights Museum will be complete in downtown Jackson for the state's centennial in 2017.



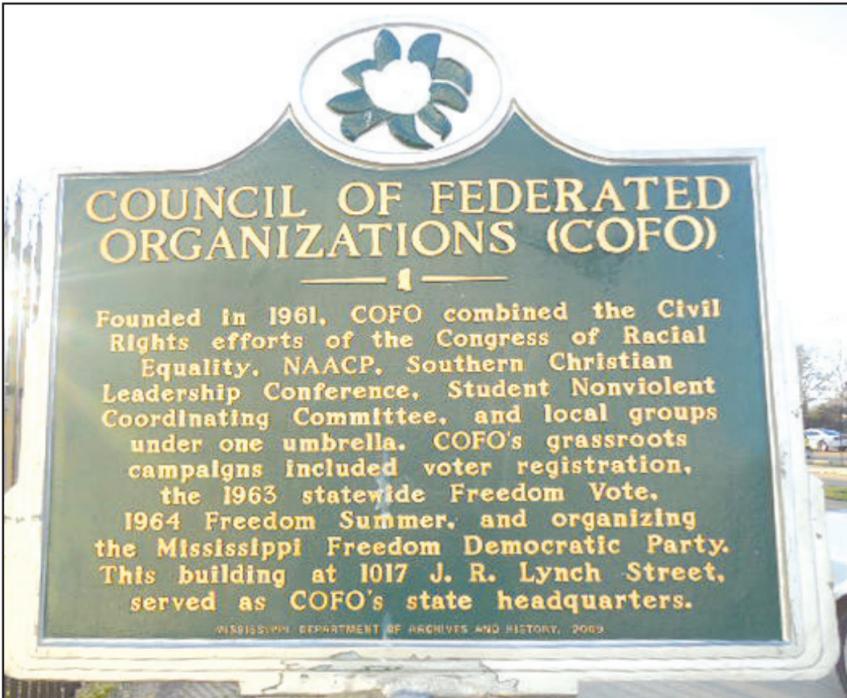
Afrikan Art Gallery



Smith Robertson Museum & Cultural Center



Republic of New Afrika home in Jackson



Jackson State University COFO Site 32

Personal story about a Republic of New Afrika (RNA) member

In 1968 our family rented a two story house on Central Street in West Jackson. Today that lot is empty. Five to seven of us often walked to Poindexter Elementary School on Robinson Rd. in the evening to play on the playground. White teenage boys, who lived on the opposite side of Robinson Rd., use to come on the playground and push us (ages 4-8) around, call us names, and make us leave. Several of the children attended school there, and the next evening after singing Jackson Five songs or playing we went to the playground to play again, even though we got the same results. One evening a black male dressed in all black with a black hat on saw us getting pushed around and he laid down the law.

He told the White teens, "Don't ever bother these children again. They have the right to play here."

Then he (RNA member) consoled us as we dried our tears and said, "You don't have to worry about them anymore, we're be watching out for you."

The teens never bullied us any more. I was five years old. I will never forget it. The lesson for me was speak up even if the bully is big. —Meredith C. McGee