in 1929, the educational building and sanctuary in 1950, a tent legacy of service, with the original building erected in three stages and represents the church's consistent purpose. NAACP, and cultivate local gospel music traditions that against black Memphians, the church's buildings provided seating capacity of 7,500 and state-of-the-art sound system. Known as a place that serves the families of the city. Among its many contributions, Knowledge Quest operates an after-school program to help address the neighborhood's challenges to have affordable, healthy foods.

3. People's Grocery Site and Marker / Four Way Restaurant
Public. Open every day except Monday.
A state historical marker notes the beginning point for one of the infamous events in Memphis history, the Curve Lynchings of 1892. Curve refers to a prominent bend in the street, part of the original streetcar design for this part of the city. African American businessman Thomas Moss owned the support of the community, the students then targeted segregated department stores and lunch counters, as well as segregated religious spaces (“inwalled-ins”), across the city. These protests had a great impact on the integration of Memphis public facilities, highlighted new issues, and energized the local struggle for civil rights.

7. Elmwood Cemetery
Walker Avenue at Neptune Street
Public. Open every day except Monday.
Established in 1852, Elmwood is the oldest active cemetery in Memphis. The elaborate landscaping and tree-lined paths are indicative of the Rural Cemetery Movement of the 19th century. Historically divided into racial sections, clusters of Jewish graves, Chinese graves, and African American graves, including the Robert Church family mausoleum and George W. Lee family marker, remain cardinal from some of the oldest, wealthiest white Memphis families’ plots. A large number of victims from the 1870s yellow fever epidemic are also buried in the cemetery. Grave markers range from simple, arched tombstones to Victorian sculptures. Today, the cemetery has interment records dating back to the first burial, which are open to the public for research.

1. Mason Temple
938 Mason Street
Open to the public Monday–Friday. No admission charged.
Listed in the National Register of Historic Places, Mason Temple is the international headquarters of the Church of God in Christ (COGIC). Located on the west side of the neighborhood, the temple was the home congregation for many COGIC members in the Soulsville neighborhood. The congregation, led by church founder C.H. Mason, secured a steel appropriation in World War II to complete the Art Moderne-style building in 1945, with a seating capacity of 7,500 and state-of-the-art sound systems. COGIC's ability to obtain supplies during wartime

2. Knowledge Quest
966 Jenette Place
Public. Open Monday–Friday.
Established in 1998, Knowledge Quest renovated a mid-20th-century brick building for a nonprofit effort to serve the families of Soulsville. Among its many contributions, Knowledge Quest operates an after-school program and a culinary academy for high school students. Across the street is the Green Leaf Learning Farm, an urban micro-farm that teaches sustainable, organic agriculture practices that help address the neighborhood's challenges to have affordable, healthy foods.

5. Metropolitan Baptist Church
767 Walker Avenue
Private. Tours may be arranged by appointment with church.

The Rev. Dr. Samuel Augustus Owen pastored this historic congregation (c. 1896) for 50 years beginning in 1923. During his tenure, a new Baptist junior college for African Americans was named for Owen, who negotiated the 1968 merger that produced LeMoyne-Owen College. While leading this congregation, Owen was instrumental in forming the Progressive National Baptist Convention (the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was a convention member), whose focus on civil rights provided support to congregations all over the country that were facilitating local movements. In the midst of rampant violence against black Memphians, the church's buildings provided safe places for residents of the Soulsville neighborhood and students of nearby colleges to hear positive messages from speakers such as King. Strategize with the NAACP and cultivate local gospel music traditions that energized resistance to daily racial discrimination. Pioneer gospel music composer Lucy Campbell played organ and piano here and organized youth music programs that still serve the neighborhood today. The current facility was built in three stages and represents the church's consistent service, with the original building erected in 1926, the educational building and sanctuary in 1950, and office complex and gymnasium in 1965.

LeMoyne-Owen College

6. LeMoyne-Owen College
807 Walker Avenue
Located on the west end of the Soulsville neighborhood, LeMoyne-Owen is a historically black college created by a 1968 merger. LeMoyne College opened in 1871 as a freedmen's school and moved to its current location on Walker Avenue in 1914. The separate Owen Junior College was founded in 1954 by the Tennessee Baptist Missionary and Educational Convention and named for the Rev. Dr. Samuel Augustus Owen, pastor of the nearby Metropolitan Baptist Church. Along with representing the history of African American education in Memphis, students from these institutions are recognized for shaping Memphis civil rights by demanding immediate integration. Inspired by the success of student protests in Nashville, Memphis students engaged in a large sit-in to protest segregation at the Memphis libraries. With the support of the community, the students then targeted segregated department stores and lunch counters, as well as segregated religious spaces (“inwalled-ins”), across the city. These protests had a great impact on the integration of Memphis public facilities, highlighted new issues, and energized the local struggle for civil rights.

Soulsville USA, also known as South Memphis, is one of the city's oldest neighborhoods, home to famous African American colleges, schools, churches, businesses, homes, and music. This neighborhood is immersed in history. While it is often acclaimed for its rich musical legacy, Soulsville USA is much more than the music. It boasts a rich civil rights history, a strong commitment to education, a powerful and impactful faith-based community, and well-known historical figures—people such as the Rev. James Lawson, Willie Mitchell, Joseph E. Walker, Mason Walker, Ida B. Wells, Carla Thomas, Lucie Campbell, Isaac Hayes, David Porter, Memphis Slim, and the Rev. C.H. Mason. This nation—and the world—would be a far poorer place if not for the contributions and lives of these leaders in faith, business, politics, education, and music.
8. Memphis Slim Collaboratory
1130 College Street
Private. Visits may be arranged through the Memphis Slim Collaboratory.

Born in 1915, John "Puter" Chatman was surrounded by blues music. His father played in blues bands and operated juke joints across Memphis. Growing up around the clubs on Beale Street, Chatman learned to play piano and picked up on the Memphis blues style. He moved to Chicago in 1939 and started to perform with local blues musicians. By 1940, Chatman signed with Bluebird Records and established himself as Memphis Slim. Some of his top songs include "Beer Drinkin' Woman," "Everyday I Have the Blues," and "Rockin' the House." He eventually settled overseas in Paris, where he continued playing blues and operated his own club. Chatman spoke out about the opportunities afforded to him in Paris that he would not have received had he stayed in the U.S. due to racial violence and discrimination. Today, his childhood home has been converted into the Memphis Slim Collaboratory for local musicians.

9. Jones Beauty Salon
941 East McLemore Avenue
This small commercial building stands at the corner of McLemore Avenue and the Stax Museum. The brightly painted single-story building most recently housed the Jones Beauty Shop, owned by African American entrepreneur Louella Jones and Mildred Cook. Historically, African American beauticians have been some of the most successful capitalist shopkeepers, strategically policed actively females in African American communities. Simultaneously public and private, beauty shops gave black women space to share information, plan, and learn from each other, not only away from whites but away from African American men as well. In 2003, the building and lot were deeded to the South Memphis Renewal Community Development Corp. While the building has stood vacant for over 10 years, the vibrant paint and murals have remained intact. Today, Soulsville USA is renovating the property to become a welcome center for the neighborhood.

10. Stax Museum of American Soul Music
926 East McLemore Avenue
Open Tuesday–Sunday; closed on Monday.

In 1960, Jim Stewart and Estelle Axton chose the abandoned Cotton Club as a studio for their Satellite Records label. The studio's first single, "Cause I Love You," by Carla and Rufus Thomas, became a local hit and then a regional one through a distribution deal with Atlantic Records. In 1961, the label name was changed to Stax and quickly the studio became a center for Southern soul music. Otis Redding, Sam and Dave, and Booker T and the MGs are just a few of the legendary acts that once recorded here at this location. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, Al Bell helped build Stax as an independent label and produced some of its most famous soul records, by Isaac Hayes and the Staple Singers, during the Soul Explosion. The Capitol Theater was demolished in 1989. With the help of Soulsville USA and the Soulsville Foundation, the Stax Recording Studios were rebuilt, and the museum opened in 2003.

11. Memphis Rox Climbing and Community
879 McLemore Avenue
Open to the public in the spring of 2018.

This new neighborhood initiative, launched by movie director and University of Memphis filmmaker-in-residence Tom Shadyac in 2017, converts an unused building across from the Stax Museum into a center for rock climbing and other neighborhood recreational and health programs. The nonprofit organization One Family Memphias has led the project, which will include a 30,000-square-foot gym with walls as tall as 45 feet.

12. Snowden Art and Conversation House
883 Stafford Avenue
Open to the public by appointment.

Located in a historic neighborhood a block south of Memphis Rox is this two-story American Foursquare-style house that is now a community art hub. In 2011, Aaron Snowden purchased the house, and with financial capacity from Community Development Corp. and other Memphis nonprofit organizations use the home as their offices.

13. Centenary United Methodist Church
584 East McLemore Avenue
Private. Tours may be arranged by appointment with the church.

This congregation, established in 1865 by newly freed African Americans, began on 3rd Avenue in downtown Memphis. It moved into the Soulsville neighborhood in the early 20th century. During the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s and early 1970s, its minister, the Rev. James M. Lawson, was an important leader in the city, region, and nation. The church moved to its present building in 1967, and the following year Lawson and this congregation became some of the key organizers and supporters of the daily Sanitation Workers demonstrations. On the Sunday following the assassination of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in 1968, CBS television broadcast Lawson's sermon and service from Centenary across the nation. The congregation also sponsored the first African American Boy Scout troop and a kindergarten for African American children.

14. Roulhac Mansion Bed and Breakfast
810 East McLemore Avenue
Private business. Accessible to the public.

This Classical Revival-style house, built in 1914, is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The mansion was home to the family of Dr. Christopher Roulhac, a Memphis native and practicing physician who became the Queen of Soul music once her recording career launched in the 1960s. Her parents are credited with immersing young Aretha in a musically rich and supportive environment, beginning in this small, unadorned house in Memphis.

15. J.E. Walker House
1109 Mississippi Blvd.
Private. Visits may be arranged by contacting Soulsville Neighborhood Association.

This stylish bungalow was the home of Joseph Edison Walker and his wife, Lelia, were active in politics and promoted black-owned insurance companies. Walker and his Co., which became one of the nation’s largest African American insurance companies. Walker, together with A.W. Willis and Dr. anti-segregation leader C.L. Franklin. Her father was a famous pastor, gospel singer, and activist who pastored nearby New Salem Baptist Church until 1944. After he left for his ministry in Buffalo and then Detroit, Franklin became known as "the Man with the Million-Dollar Voice" for his powerful singing and sermons, which were often recorded and released to national audiences. A leader in the Civil Rights Movement, he co-organized the 1963 Detroit "Walk to Freedom," a march of over 30,000 people at which the Rev. Dr. Martin L. King Jr. delivered the first version of his "I Have a Dream" speech. Daughter Aretha grew up in Detroit and became the Queen of Soul music once her recording career launched in the 1960s. Her parents are credited with immersing young Areth in a musically rich and supportive environment, beginning in this small, unadorned house in Memphis.

This driving tour was prepared by the Center for Historic Preservation at Middle Tennessee State University as a public service project for the Soulsville USA Neighborhood Association and the City of Memphis in partnership with the Memphis Heritage Trail. Dr. Carroll Van West and Savannah Grandey led the project team, which included graduate students Kelli Gibson and Victoria Hensley. The center thanks the active involvement and insight provided by Rebecca Hutchinson, the Soulsville USA site director, and Jeffrey Higgs, executive director of the LeMoyne-Owen College Community Development Corp., in the preparation of the driving tour.