



AT THE LORRAINE MOTEL

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The National Civil Rights Museum Finalizing Renovation with Grand Reopening April 5

New design, new exhibits, larger exhibit floor, more films, interactivity and automation create an even more profound museum experience.

MEMPHIS, TN – (February 18, 2014) – The National Civil Rights Museum’s \$27.5 million renovation of the Lorraine Motel, is in its final stages. Grand reopening is slated for April 5, following a forum on the 50th Anniversary of the Civil Rights Act and candlelight vigil the evening of April 4.

The National Civil Rights Museum, a renowned educational and cultural institution that chronicles the American Civil Rights Movement, has been fully transformed with new and renovated exhibits. **The iconic elements will be retained -- The Montgomery Bus, the Sit-in counter, the Freedom Rides Bus and the Memphis Sanitation Truck -- but they engage the audience with archival films, touch screens and much more interactivity.**

What’s new is the creation of immersive environments that vicariously transport visitors back in time. Visitors can crouch into the confined space of the ship in the *A Culture of Resistance: Slavery in America 1619 – 1861* exhibit. They can sit in the courtroom and learn of the landmark Supreme Court *Brown v. Board of Education* decision. They can examine documents and materials used by grassroots organizers during the Mississippi Freedom Summer project in 1964. They can sing along with the protestors from the interior of an Albany, GA church and listen to music and poetry of the Black Power/Black Pride era of the mid 1960s through 1970.

There are 260 artifacts, more than 40 new films (including mini-documentaries highlighting unsung heroes and lesser known leaders of the movement), **oral histories and interactive media** (multi-touch, multi-user interactives), **external listening posts and a contemporary design that will guide visitors through five centuries of history, from the beginning of the culture of resistance during slavery, through the Civil War and Reconstruction, through the rise of Jim Crow, and the seminal events of the late 20th century that inspired people around the world to stand up for their rights and the rights of others.**

The renovation updates exhibition content and presents the “best and most recent scholarship on civil rights available today,” as attested to by scholar Dr. Clayborne Carson of Stanford University. Most importantly, it highlights important battles yet to be fought. The new museum will also add more tactile experiences and create a more poignant, powerful and transformative visitor experience.

“It’s been a long and challenging 18-month journey, but we can finally see the result of the hard work, long hours and tough choices that had to be made,” said Beverly Robertson, president, National Civil Rights Museum. “The Museum will be transformed into an even more compelling presentation of the iconic exhibits, oral histories of lesser-known civil rights foot soldiers and visceral, in the moment experiences. We’re counting the days to the opening when we showcase this new museum.”

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THE RENOVATION PROJECT TEAM

The National Civil Rights Museum staff collaborated closely with their **renovation design team and scholar review committee** to provide holistic advice, counsel for the development of this new museum. The renovation project team is comprised of **Howard + Revis Design Services**, exhibition design and project management; **1220**, exhibition fabrication and installation; **Self Tucker Architects**, architectural project management and design; **Electrosonic**, multimedia technical design and installation audio visual systems design and integration; **Cortina Productions**, media design and production; **Second Story**, media design and production; **Flintco Constructive Solutions**, building construction; and **JPA**, site design.

The **24-member National Scholar Review Committee** was tasked with interpretive plan development and review of the exhibits' content. Primary advising scholars were **Dr. Stephanie Shaw**, professor of History, Ohio State University, who specializes in 19th century and early 20th century history; **Dr. Hasan Kwame Jeffries**, associate professor of History, Ohio State University, late 20th century history specialist relating to the Civil Rights and Black Power Movements; **Dr. Earnestine Jenkins**, associate professor of Art History, University of Memphis; and **Daniel Kiel**, Law Professor, Cecil B. Humphreys School of Law, University of Memphis.

RENOVATION HIGHLIGHTS

New Lobby

The original 7,000 lb. bronze signature statue, *Movement to Overcome*, has been returned to the museum, prominently positioned in the new lobby in front of the new grand staircase. Sculptor Michael Pavlovsky was commissioned to create the statue for the museum's opening in 1991 and it has been synonymous with the struggle since the beginning. The second floor is opened up to reveal the lobby below, and flooded with light from the skylight ceiling above. The retail shop has moved to the second floor and is visible from the lobby.

New Exhibits

Throughout the new exhibitions, visitors will learn about more individuals; ordinary people who accomplished extraordinary things. Visitors may see themselves in this history. Following are some of the new exhibitions:

A Culture of Resistance: Slavery in America 1619 – 1861

A graphic representation of the global impact of slavery. As visitors enter the circular gallery they walk on a floor map indicating North and South America, Europe and Africa. Illuminated channels in the floor provide statistics and information on the Atlantic slave trade -- the massive number of people captured, goods cultivated and wealth created.

Rise of Jim Crow and I, Too, Am America: Combating Jim Crow 1896–1954

This exhibit includes a timeline of amendments and legislation that granted rights to African Americans, and then the sequence of laws and Supreme Court decisions that struck down these gains and established *Separate but Equal* as the law of the land. Visitors see, through historic photographs and text of segregation laws the vibrancy of the black community despite segregation. Oral histories provide first person accounts about life under Jim Crow.

Separate Is Not Equal: Brown v. Board of Education 1954

The battle for desegregation of public schools took place on two fronts: in the courtroom and the classroom. The exhibit examines the landmark Supreme Court decision, the long legal battle and the slow pace of desegregation in public education across the country. Features a multi-touch interactive "mapping desegregation" that explores how desegregation unfolded in states all over the country. Visitors learn about events in their home states.

The Year They Walked: Montgomery Bus Boycott 1955–1956

One of the original exhibits, it has audio that's triggered by visitors entering the bus. New 3-dimensional figures are positioned on the sidewalk, indicating the significance of the women of Montgomery, who sustained the boycott. Dr. King is highlighted as an emerging leader of the movement, with an audio of his speech delivered the first night of the boycott.

Standing Up by Sitting Down: Student Sit-ins 1960

The original lunch counter is here, along with the 3-dimensional figures sitting in at the counter, with hecklers at their side. A film is projected behind the protestors, indicating their nonviolent direct action training and then the protests and conflicts that ensued. A multi-touch, multi-user interactive that engages visitors in boycott stories from across the country is intended to spark interaction among visitors. Reveals footage of non-violent training and sit-in protests.

Strategies for Change

This exhibit examines the role of Malcolm X, as a way to explore the varying philosophies, strategies and tactics employed by various leaders in the movement for change. Here, Malcolm X is seen debating other movement leaders participating interviews with detractors, and delivering his speeches that made his stance on self-defense clear.

We Are Prepared to Die: Freedom Rides 1961

After the 1947 Journey for Reconciliation, the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) is highlighted for initiating a new Freedom Ride in 1961 following a 1960 Supreme Court decision outlawing segregation in bus and train terminals. The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) steps in and takes over the rides, sending hundreds of young people into the south. The Kennedy administration's reluctance to step into the conflict in this Cold War period is highlighted. Oral histories of six Freedom Riders who were imprisoned in Parchman Penitentiary in Mississippi are highlighted, telling of their experience in this notorious prison.

The Children Shall Lead Them: Birmingham 1963

The new exhibit includes immersive media. The original exhibit jail cell is enlarged for visitors to enter. An audio of Dr. King reading a portion of his *Letter from a Birmingham Jail* can be heard while the text appears on the cell wall. A multi-media wall illustrates the intense media coverage around the world and shows pivotal moments and speeches during the campaign, closing with President Kennedy calling for passage of a Civil Rights bill.

For Jobs and Freedom: The March on Washington

As visitors enter the March on Washington exhibit they are surrounded by large murals of the Washington Monument and Lincoln Memorial, with three-dimensional figures and signs to immerse them in the setting of the March. An excerpt from Dr. King's "I Have a Dream" speech is playing. Interactive tablets with audio of all the March participants can be heard by clicking the name of the presenter.

Is This America? Mississippi Summer Project 1964

A short documentary-style film interprets the many facets of the 1964 Mississippi Summer Project, from the recruitment of northern white college student volunteers; the murders of James Chaney, Michael Schwerner and Andrew Goodman; voter registration forms and handouts, passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act; and the efforts of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party to integrate the state delegation at the Democratic National Convention.

A Triumph for Democracy: The Voting Rights Act of 1965

The 1965 Voting Rights Act is celebrated in an expanded exhibition, utilizing previously unused space in the Lorraine Motel. Original research indicates the number of black elected officials at the state and federal levels peak soon after passage of the 15th amendment in 1870, then plunges and flatlines after Reconstruction, with incremental gains beginning in 1929. As numbers start declining in the early 21st century, the exhibit interprets President Obama's historic election.

How Long? Not Long: Selma Voting Rights Campaign 1965

An interactive light box explains just what African Americans were risking when they registered to vote, from the safety of their families, their jobs, or their congregations. A phone conversation between President Lyndon Johnson and Dr. King allows visitors to listen in on their efforts to work together for passage of the Voting Rights Act. As visitors cross the Edmond Pettus Bridge, they walk into a monumental-sized screen of film on the Bloody Sunday attack on peaceful protestors. Then visitors successfully march from Selma to Montgomery culminating with Dr. King's delivery of the "How Long, Not Long" speech from the Alabama state capitol steps.

I Am A Man: Memphis Sanitation Strike 1968

This gallery expands the story of the 1968 Memphis sanitation strike. New videos feature Rev. James Lawson and T.O. Jones who courageously waged the battle on behalf of striking sanitation workers. The iconic strikers with the "I Am a Man" signs and the garbage truck from the original exhibition are here. The garbage truck has film documenting the sanitation strike projected on it. Also new is the Mountaintop Theatre where visitors view the powerful "Mountaintop," the last speech Dr. King gave the evening before he died.

What Do We Want? Black Power

The "Black Power" exhibit tells the story of the rise and fall of one of the most influential, yet often misunderstood, movements in the civil rights struggle. Interpretation of the Black Power movement is expanded to explain it as a continuation of the Civil Rights Movement, rather than a radical new movement.

Say It Loud: Black Pride, 1966–1975

A new cultural renaissance is ushered in through the art, literature, poetry, music and fashion of the Black Arts Movement of the mid to late 1960s. Record bins allow visitors to flip through albums of the era, and listening stations provide ten tracks of music and poetry, including Amiri Baraka, The Temptations, Stevie Wonder, The Staples Singers, and James Brown.

Join the Movement

Using Smart Table technology, visitors take a stand on various issues and explore how these issues are still relevant today. Six topics are presented for exploration: Nonviolence, Women's Rights, War, Riots, Poverty, and Integration.

World in Transition

This video depicts the temper of the times and the dynamic changes taking place in America and around the world, such as the gay rights, women's rights, and farm workers' and American Indian movements and the Vietnam War protests.

About the National Civil Rights Museum

The National Civil Rights Museum located at the Lorraine Motel, the assassination site of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., chronicles key episodes of the American Civil Rights Movement and the legacy of this movement to inspire participation in civil and human rights efforts globally, through its collections, exhibitions and educational programs. The Museum is located in the historic arts district of downtown Memphis, Tennessee.

An internationally acclaimed tourist attraction, the Museum was voted third among *USA Today's* Top 10 Best American Iconic Attractions; Top 10 Best Historical Spots in the U.S. by *TLC's Family Travel*; Must See by the Age of 15 by Budget Travel and Kids and Top 10, American Treasures by *USA Today*.