

THE CLAMSHELL

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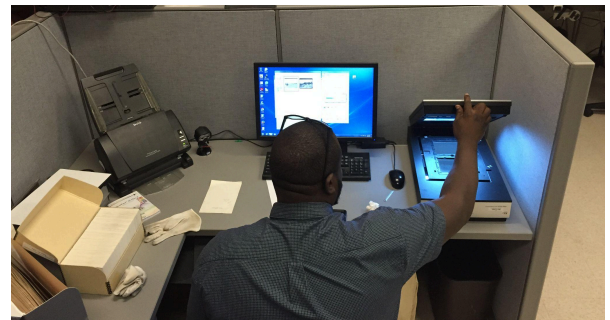
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Digitization - A Definition

Digitization is the process of converting hard copy paper records, text documents, art, photographs, microfilm/fiche, maps, newspapers, sound and film recordings, etc. into standardized computer data files. The MSA uses digitization to both preserve and make collection materials more widely accessible online. Digital files help to preserve items by allowing for a surrogate electronic copy to be circulated, rather than the original. Once created, a digital file still needs care and preservation, including migration to updated file formats and periodic checking for completeness and stability for permanent archiving.

Letter from the State Archivist



Elaine Rice Bachmann with statue of Rosa Parks, Montgomery, AL

When the opportunity to join the Institute for Common Power's Civil Rights Bus Trip came across my email, I immediately knew that it was important that I attend. Although I felt relatively well educated about the events of the American Civil Rights Movement, making my way through the reading list I realized how much I did not know—and had not been taught. Reading first person accounts of the dramatic events in Atlanta, Anniston, Montgomery, Birmingham, and Selma was illuminating, but being present where these events took place—and in the company of civil rights foot soldiers—was life changing.

The itinerary included many public monuments and memorials. I will not soon forget the feeling of walking through the Capitol in Montgomery—a shrine to the Confederacy filled with plaques and markers noting the presidential inauguration of Jefferson Davis in 1861. Or walking through the park in Birmingham where Black youths were sprayed with fire hoses

in 1963, yet the figural statues representing this horrific event lacked the presence of any perpetrators. Our interracial and intergenerational group shared how these monuments made us feel—what and who were they commemorating, and how, and why? As someone who interprets and facilitates the design and development of public memorials in Maryland, these discussions were engrossing and so informative, and a reminder to seek multiple and diverse perspectives when attempting to honor and memorialize people and events.

To me, the most impactful monument we visited was nothing more than a crumbling patch of concrete that constitutes the only remaining portion of the parking lot in Selma from which the Voting Rights marchers embarked on March 7, 1965, known as "Bloody Sunday." One of the youngest marchers at age 11 was JoAnne Bland. Ms. Bland walked with us to that slab and asked us each to pick up a rock—a pebble of concrete—and to keep that with us as a reminder of the importance of that march. She hopes to transform the area around that patch of chipped pavement into Foot Soldiers Park, a place that will uplift and inspire Selma's youth and all who come there to visit the Edmund Pettus Bridge. We walked across that historic bridge together on the last night of the trip.

I came home with tremendous gratitude that I live in Maryland, a state that embraces and supports the study of our true history. And with appreciation for the fact that I have spent my career in public history and had the opportunity to interpret our State House, a building that encompasses Maryland history from the colonial period of enslavement to the present day, where it is presided over by the only Black governor in the country. It is an enormous responsibility and privilege to present that history truthfully and to have the opportunity to educate and inspire visitors.

We must all strive to do our part to 'bend the arc of history toward justice.'

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "ERB".

Elaine Rice Bachmann, State Archivist

Staff Activities

James Watson, Director of Digital Acquisition, Processing and Publication at the Maryland State Archives, is serving as the Chairperson of the state-run Data Preservation Advisory Panel (DPAP). It is composed of representatives from Maryland Geological Survey (MGS), State Highway Administration (SHA), Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Maryland State Archives (MSA), and various federal agencies and private corporations. This group meets to advise the MGS staff on projects that they develop for federal grants. In these meetings, MSA provides recommendations on digitization methods/services and best practices in regard to data preservation.

Reference Archivists **Darby Nisbett** and **Danielle Smith** presented to Howard County Public Schools for their Social Studies Department Professional Learning Day on February 9, 2024. Danielle gave an introductory presentation on the Archives that included the *who, what, why, where, and when* of the Maryland State Archives, while Darby presented on records in our collections that are specific to the Civil War Era. The presentations were geared towards assisting teachers in incorporating primary sources into their lesson plans.

On February 17, 2024 Senior Research Archivist **Owen Lourie** gave a talk at the annual meeting of the Society of the Cincinnati of Maryland, a Revolutionary War heritage group. The topic was the Battle of Camden in 1781, a key battle during the American Revolution. Maryland's soldiers took heavy losses, but it proved to be a turning point in the war. The talk focused on the lives of some of the Marylanders who fought at the battle and their families, drawing from the research that Owen has done as part of [*Finding the Maryland 400*](#), his forthcoming book about the state's Revolutionary soldiers. The Society of the Cincinnati was particularly interested in seeing how that research makes use of the Rainbow Books. The group has made donations to support the digitization and placement of the Rainbow Books online as we approach the America250 commemorations.



Governor and First Lady Moore hosted a Black History Month event at Government House on Sunday, February 18, 2024. Staff of the MSA's Artistic Properties Department, Director **Chris Kintzel** and Curator **Robin Gower**, supported this event by mounting an exhibition of civil rights photography by African American photojournalist Paul Henderson which had recently acquired from the Maryland Center for History and Culture. In addition to providing the Henderson images for display, MSA staff

also assisted with the professional art handling needs for other pieces being brought together for the exhibition.

Research Archivist **Hannah Lane** presented a workshop on African American Genealogy at the Crofton Library in Anne Arundel County on February 22, 2024. Hannah gave a hands-on demonstration on how to use the MSA's website to connect to resources related to African American history and cultural heritage.

At the Maryland Society of Surveyor's Spring 2024 Technical Conference on March 1, 2024, Director of Reference Services **Rachel Frazier** taught a seminar entitled "Beyond Land Records: Digging Deeper through Equity and Probate." Through Rachel's workshop, attendees discovered the value of the Archives' collections of court records when dealing with challenges in property research.

Events and Outreach

Senator McCray Visits the Archives



On January 5, 2024 Senator Cory McCray visited our offsite facility. He had a chance to meet with MSA staff as well as the AFRO Charities, Inc. team who manage the archival collections of the Afro American newspaper currently housed at the Rolling Run location. The MSA is assisting AFRO Charities with storage space for their archives while they are rehabilitating the historic Upton Mansion that will be the future home to their collections.

Caption: Pictured left to right are AFRO Charities Executive Director Savannah Wood, Curator of Archives Deyane Moses and Communications Manager Bacarri Byrd, Senator Cory McCray, and Assistant State Archivist Corey Lewis.

Upcoming Virtual Lunch and Learn Events

Mayaisuwàk (They Speak in One Voice): The Oral History and History of Place of Maryland's Eastern Shore Tribal Communities and Remnant Descendants

Thursday, April 11, 2024 at 1:00 pm — Presented by Drew Shuptar-Rayvis

[Online Event](#)

Meet Drew Shuptar-Rayvis, who has worked as a research and preservation specialist to compile oral histories, life ways, traditions and regional memories of places with Maryland's Eastern Shore tribal communities and several who are or were in the bounds of the Eastern Shore. In this lecture, Drew will discuss his work and go into highlights from the oral history interviews, speaking of some of the joys and issues tribal communities still face, among them climate change and cultural erasure.

Writing the Biography of Frederick Douglass and the Bailey/Douglass Family: Scenes from the Archives

Meet Ezra Greenspan, Edmund and Louise Kahn Chair in the Humanities, Emeritus at Southern Methodist University, a literary, cultural, and media historian. This talk will survey selected sources for the writing of a comprehensive, historical biography of Frederick Douglass and the Bailey/Douglass family. It will proceed scenically in the manner of an illustrated historical panorama, matching documentary evidence (chosen mostly from Maryland archives) to central events in the history.

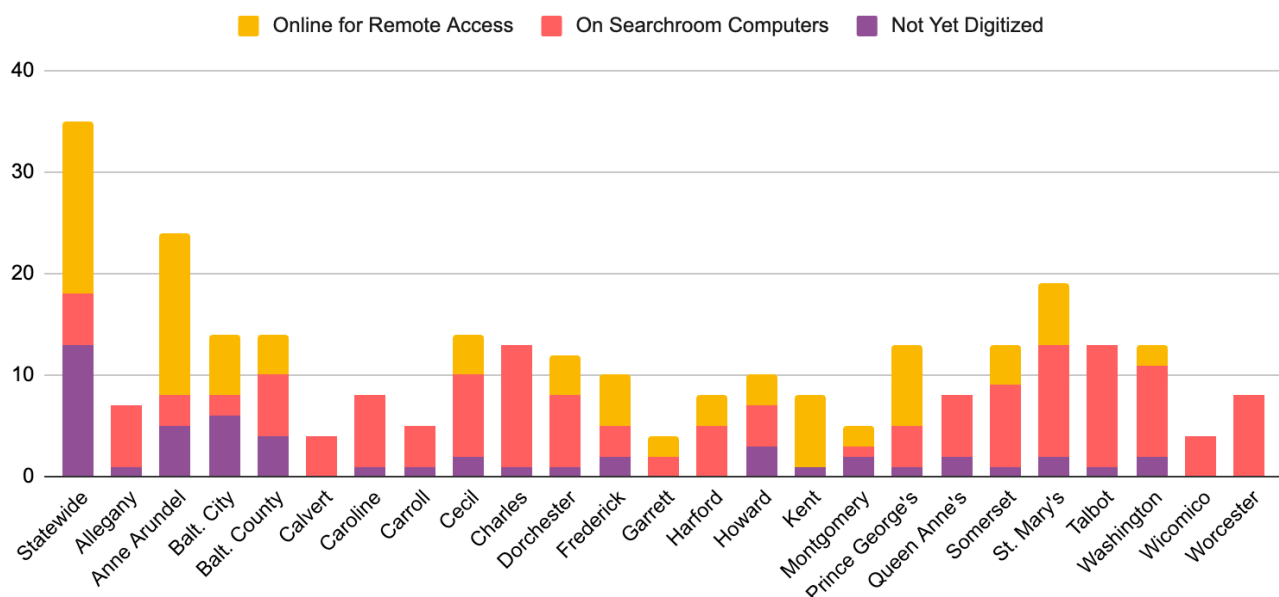
Maryland State Archives Digitization Priorities: 2024-2028

The Maryland State Archives (MSA) is committed to ensuring that our digitization efforts reflect the records of interest to patrons. The MSA's systematic approach to digitization has been guided by the collective input of patrons, government agencies and Archives' staff. While not every record can be made [openly accessible online](#), systematic digitization aids in the preservation of originals by limiting the circulation of physical records.

Recently, the MSA collected feedback from the public, in the form of a survey, asking what records our patrons would like to see digitized. Thank you to all those individuals who took the time to contribute their feedback. The results showed that vital records (marriages and deaths), land records, probate records and cemetery records were of the highest priority to the public. This was followed closely by newspapers, church records and naturalizations. Other types of records that were suggested included pre-1776 court records, military records (Revolutionary and Civil War), censorship board records, divorce records, business records, manumission records and Orphans Court records.

With this feedback in mind, we share with you the [Maryland State Archives Digitization Priorities for 2024-2028](#). The digitization of these targeted series will enhance the reach of Maryland's records and support our mission, to not only preserve records, but make them accessible.

2021-2023 Digitization Priorities

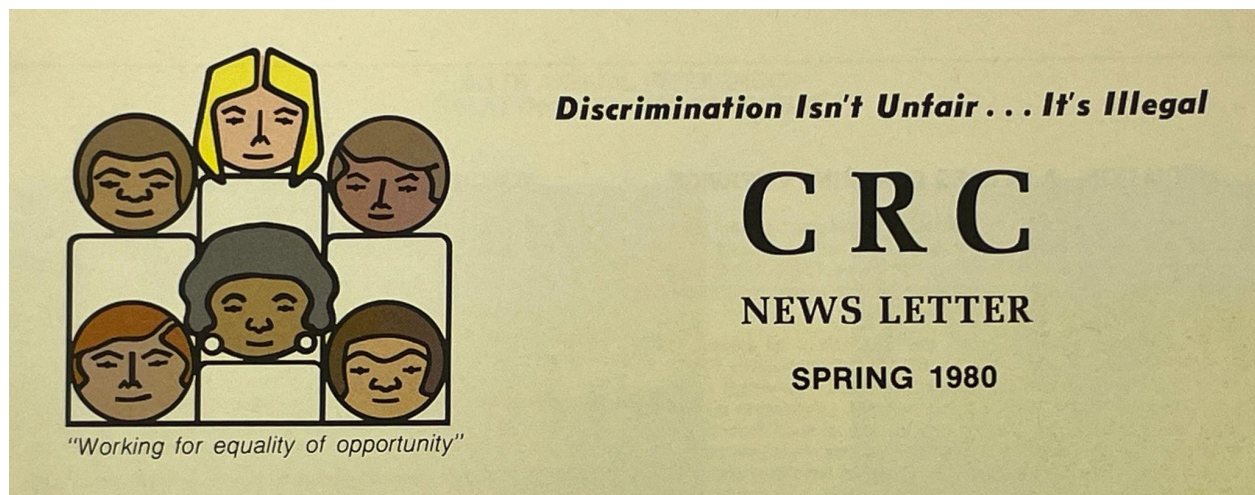


We have employed the same process that was successful in creating the Maryland State Archives 2021-2023 Digitization Priorities List which identified over 110 series including birth records, death records, estate docket, indexes, wills, inventories and administration accounts. Of these series over 80 have been digitized and are currently publicly accessible. This 3 year effort resulted in over 10 million images being produced. We look forward to the same progress as we work through the 2024-2028 list. Thank you for your assistance in helping to shape these priorities.

Collection Highlight

Baltimore City's Community Relations Commission [BRG84-1]

By Jeni Spamer, Deputy City Archivist, Baltimore City Archives



The Community Relations Commission (CRC), part of the Office of Equity and Civil Rights, was founded in 1956 as the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. The commission's ten appointed members are responsible for investigating citizens' claims of unlawful discrimination in employment, public accommodation, housing, education, and health and welfare services.

At the time of its founding, civil rights legislation was gaining support across the country, and this collection documents Baltimore's status, progress and setbacks during a momentous period of history. Several months prior to the passage of the Federal Civil Rights Act of 1964, Baltimore City Council passed Ordinance 103, "the most sweeping package of civil rights legislation enacted at one time by any major municipality within this nation." Mayor Theodore R. McKeldin signed the act sixty years ago, in February 1964. In a letter published as part of the CRC Annual Report that year, the Mayor questions the "moral responsibility" of those who challenge the constitutionality of such legislation.

In 2019, during the process of transferring case files from the City's Civilian Review Board, the historical records of the CRC were identified and accessioned as part of Baltimore City Archives. Annual reports, surveys and studies, newsletters and publicity materials spanning 1957-1994 were then digitized and [posted online via the Guide to Government Records](#), allowing the public to review and research some of this important material from home. The series also includes meeting minutes of

the Commission, other administrative records, and a collection of equity-focused local and national publications such as “Housing Discrimination and the Maryland Real Estate Commission,” (1970) and “City of Baltimore Urban Homesteading Program” (1975).

These records invite us to review the fundamental cooperation of activists and individuals within City government that put Baltimore on a track toward positive change in so many ways, but also provoke reflection on systemic problems that continue to hinder the cause of equity everywhere.

Research Reflections

Love’s Practitioners in the Long Civil Rights Movement

By Hannah Lane, Research Archivist, Maryland State Archives

All photos by Hannah Lane.

Introduction



Image Caption: Maryland State Archivist Elaine Rice Bachmann and Legacy of Slavery Research Archivist Hannah Lane at the John Lewis Hero Mural, Auburn Street, Atlanta, Georgia, October mural, October 26, 2023.

Hi! My name is Hannah Lane and I am a new Research Archivist at the Maryland State Archives. In my current role I work with the Study of the Legacy of Slavery in Maryland department, a program that I am very proud and humbled to support.

I have looked forward to sharing my thoughts about the time that State Archivist Elaine Rice

Bachmann and I, along with a unique group, comprised of members of the Maryland Lynching Memorial Project and others, shared in Georgia and Alabama in late October 2023. Admittedly, it has felt rather daunting to discuss (in a final or decisive way, like in a piece of writing) what I think of that amazing week. Three months later I am still processing so much about my experience, and how the different backgrounds of each person on the trip impacted the way they experienced it, too. I am still processing the different emotions I navigated as our guides discussed historical events, political actors, federal policies, etc. that directly and indirectly caused real grief, loss and catastrophe for my ancestors and elders, shaping the trajectories of people in my life today, and therefore the trajectory of my own. I am uneasily trying to reconcile the unclear future of social movements for human rights in the face of the mechanisms of necropolitics (power wielded by the state to assign different values to human life, ultimately dictating who lives and who dies). This emerged, for me, as a core theme of our Common Power trip.

While reflecting on the trip, I started reading *All That She Carried: The Journey of Ashley’s Sack, A Black Family’s Keepsake* (2021) by historian, writer, and Harvard University Garvey Professor of History, Tiya Miles. The centerpiece of the story is an unlikely artifact: a rough-hewn cotton bag dated

to the mid nineteenth century. Sometime, somewhere in nineteenth-century South Carolina an enslaved woman named Rose prepared for an unbearable loss. Her nine year old daughter, Ashley, was going to be sold at auction by their enslaver. Perhaps with only a few hours left, Rose gathered what she had and packed it into the cotton bag for her daughter to take with her.

One descendant, Ruth Middleton, would eventually stitch a message onto the very sack given to Ashley by her mother so that generations after her would know both Rose and Ashley in name and in act. The message read:

My great grandmother Rose, mother of Ashley, gave her this sack when she was sold at age 9 in South Carolina. It held a tattered dress, 3 handfuls of pecans, a braid of Roses[sic] hair. Told her 'It be filled with my Love always. She never saw her again. Ashley is my grandmother. Ruth Middleton 1921.¹

Miles shares a beautiful meditation on this short but powerful text in the introduction of *All That She Carried* titled "Love's Practitioners." It was in reading this introduction that I was finally moved to share about the Common Power learning trip. Miles writes, "[Ruth] preserved the memory of her foremothers and also venerated these women, shaping their image for the next generations [. . .] Through her embroidery, Ruth ensured that the valiance of discounted women would be recalled and embraced as a treasured inheritance." In their own way, each woman fought for one another. Pouring her love for Ashley into what may have been a final and defiant act of mothering, Rose took action as if to say, *you may take my daughter from me, but I am still her mother. I cannot stop this, but I will use every tool at my disposal to help her.* Ashley fought for her mother's memory, legacy, and for a sense of belonging and lineage for their descendants by passing down this story, no matter how painful it may have been to tell. I believe that it lives on, somewhere, in oral tradition.

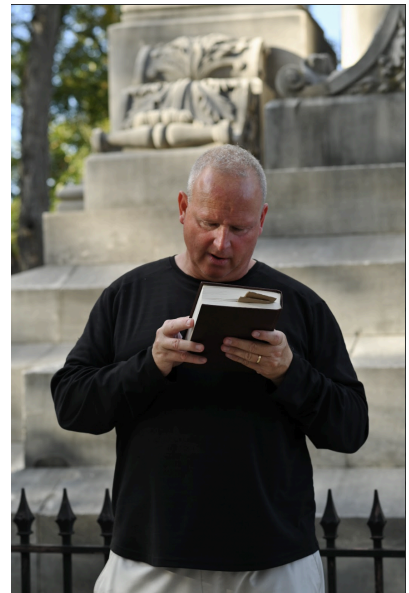


Image Captions: Dr. Terry Anne Scott and David Domke discuss Lost Cause ideology and the creation and dedication of Confederate memorials during the late 19th through the 20th centuries in Alabama. Alabama Confederate Memorial Monument, Alabama State Capitol. Montgomery, AL, October 27, 2023.

¹ Miles, Tiya, *All That She Carried: The Journey of Ashley's Sack, a Black Family's Keepsake*, Random House (New York, Random House, 2021), 5.

Reading *All That She Carried*, I cherished (even as my heart broke) the story of Rose's quotidian activism when she packed away those precious materials for her child. Black women of the Middleton Family, from Rose to Ruth, are dubbed by Miles as "Love's Practitioners": Black women engendering the survival of the next generation through the resistance of caring, of envisioning a better future, and organizing their efforts to bring those visions to life despite lack of tools, ways, or means. Enslaved and formerly enslaved people's defiance, care, preservation of kin and memory, and their imaginations of a different future were the integral seedlings of the Black Radical Tradition, a tradition that has necessarily been carried forth from one generation to the next. The wisdom of Frederick Douglass is reflected in every generation: "Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did, and it never will [...] The limits of tyrants are prescribed by the endurance of those whom they oppress."² In the United States, freedom for Black Americans has been characterized by an arduous process of rebuilding from the harms of slavery and of resistance to the ongoing devastations of structural and institutional racism. *All That She Carried* reminded me that passing down our stories has been another important characteristic: Stories of how our ancestors and grandparents fought on our behalf so that we might live in better times (and if not, carry on the work.) During the Common Power trip, storytelling and oral testimony were our "critical texts."

Sweet Auburn to Montgomery, Alabama



² From Douglass's August 3, 1857 "West India Emancipation" speech found in published pamphlet: *Two Speeches by Frederick Douglass; One on West India Emancipation . . . and the Other on the Dred Scott Decision*, 1857.

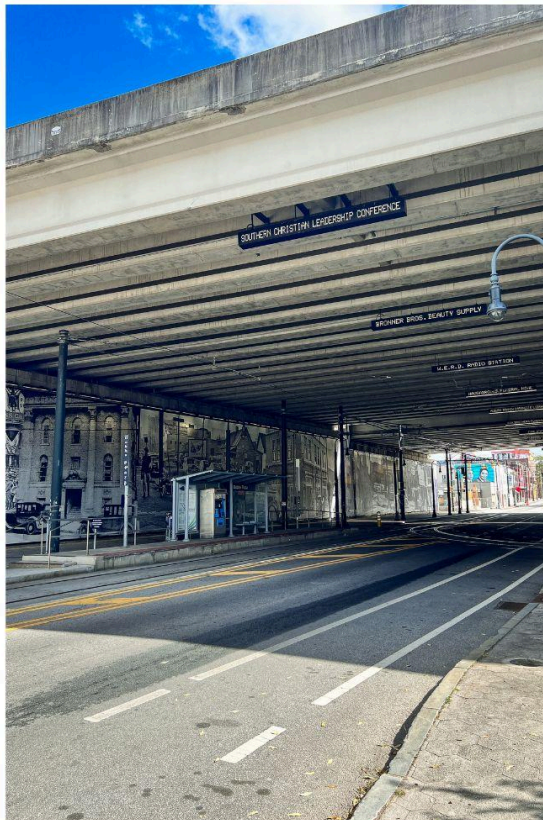


Image Captions: A selection of photos from our morning in Sweet Auburn including: A mural of John Lewis, a quote from John Lewis mural, a mural of Ella Baker, a commemorative mural for the women of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and Evelyn Gibson Lowery, and the underside of a highway overpass bearing signs of businesses and organizations that were once in Sweet Auburn. Like many historic Black communities in the United States, Sweet Auburn was subject to overt, violent racism from white residents in the state, and it was also negatively impacted by “urban renewal” and the expansion of the highway system. Sweet Auburn, Atlanta, GA. October 26, 2023.

After touching down in Atlanta, Elaine and I immediately rendezvoused with our tour group and guides. Together we spent a few hours in historic Sweet Auburn before departing for Alabama. By the evening we reached Anniston, where on May 14, 1961 a white mob, which included members of the Ku Klux Klan, attacked a group of Freedom Riders who were traveling through on a Greyhound bus. Anniston may be the quietest place I have ever visited. It was Thursday evening, but we seemed to be the only people around. It felt like a ghost town. The storefronts of Downtown Anniston included a photography studio that looked like it hadn't changed since the late nineteenth century and a fabric store that seemed too good—too bountiful and affordable—to be real in 2023. A few trucks rode by us, reducing their speed to take a look at our large tour group as we read a historical site marker near the Anniston courthouse. At least two police vehicles did, too. When they slowed down, the feeling coming through their tinted windows was more watchful than curious. It was an eerie introduction to Alabama.



Image Captions: State Archivist Elaine Rice Bachmann discusses the removal of confederate monuments in Maryland; Elaine Rice Bachmann seated on the steps of the state capitol of Alabama with a tote bag, bearing a quotation by Frederick Douglass, is in focus. October 27, 2023.



Image Captions: A selection of photos taken during our visit to Anniston, AL, including Downing & Sons fabric and sewing supply shop, the eerily empty streets and storefronts, and historic plaque at the Freedom Riders National Monument, October 26, 2023.

We visited the small Greyhound Bus station where the May 14, 1961 attack on the Freedom Riders began. In the exhibit outside of the station, we saw images of the bus— tires slashed, windows broken, filled with people— which was pursued by the mob and ultimately firebombed. We listened to oral history recordings of elders who were there that day. It was disturbing, heart breaking. I remember the silence that fell over our tour group after the recording ended. It was at once somber, and eerie. It was now dark, and some of us (myself included) were discomfited by the feeling of being strangers in that quiet, desolate place, and by the frequency with which the police passed our group (this continued during our time at the bus site). I think that this was especially uncomfortable for the Black elders in the group, who were children or teens during the 1960s. Most of us were *receiving as history* these stories of injustices and physical violence toward Black Americans. For the elders, the stories were *recalling memories from their own lived experiences*. I could see on their faces that it was challenging and frightening listening to those recordings.



Image Caption Left: This historical marker identifies the site where the Greyhound bus was run off the road and set on fire by white citizens in Anniston. Anniston, AL, October 26, 2023.

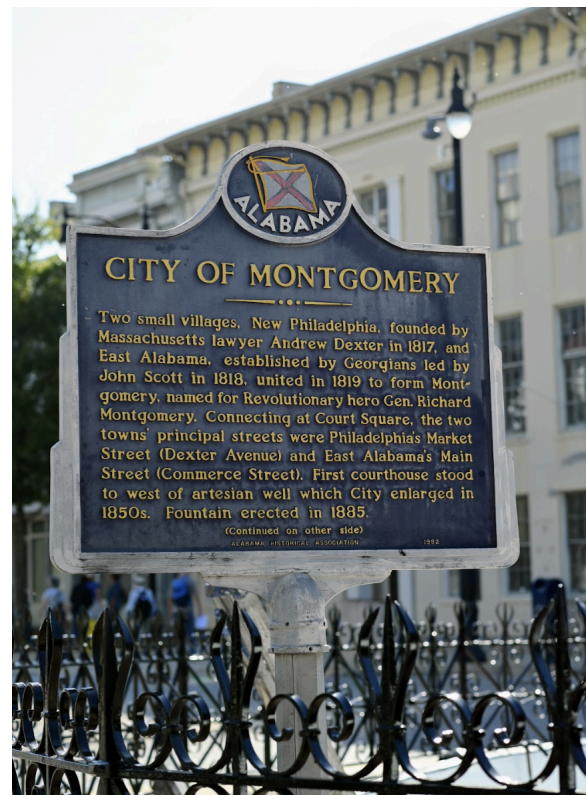


Image Caption Right: A site marker by the Alabama Historical Association about the founding of Montgomery, AL. October 27, 2023.

How do I begin to describe the deep concern that weighed in my chest as I realized that over these five days together, the Black elders in our group were going to carry the stress of remembering, and thereby partially re-experiencing, painful times from the past? What kind of physical and mental stress would this cause? The other younger Black women in our group were sensitive to this, as well. At the bus station, our eyes were cast protectively over these elders who lived through the Jim Crow period. Throughout the trip, we all took small actions to check in and communicate that we were thinking of them.

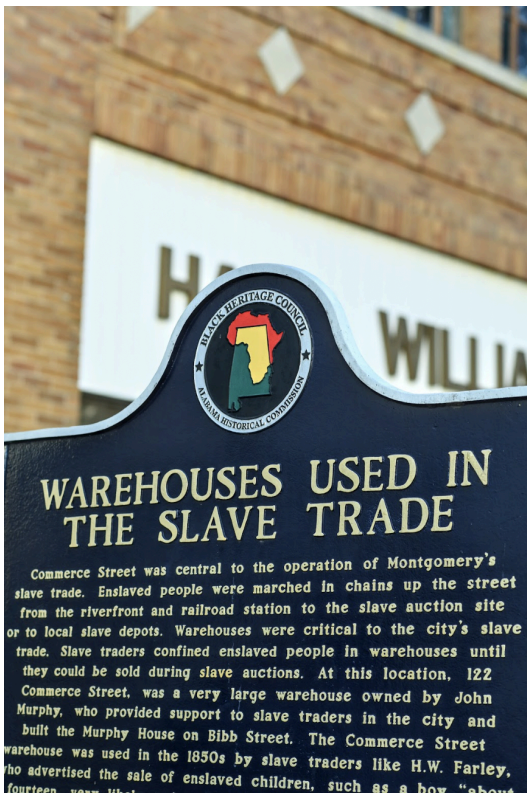
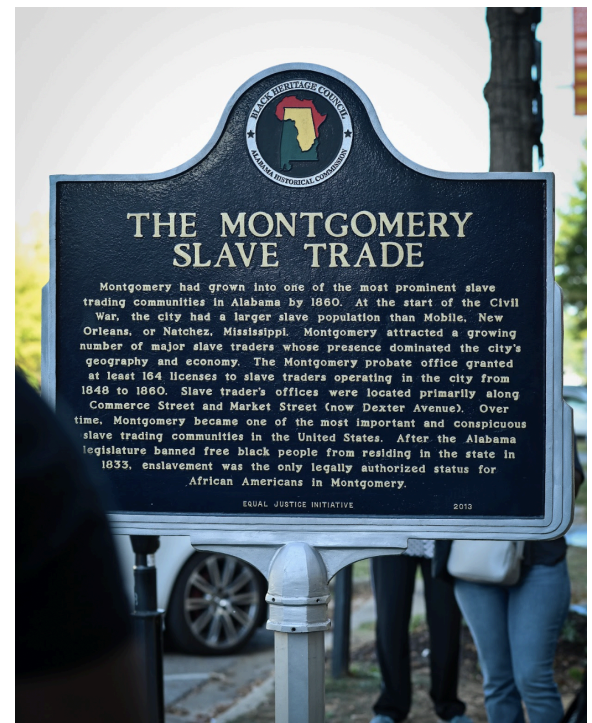


Image Caption Left: An Equal Justice Initiative (EJI) marker about the slave trade in Montgomery, Alabama. The sign reads: Commerce Street was central to the operations of Montgomery's slave trade. Enslaved people were marched in chains up the street from the riverfront and railroad station to the slave auction site or to local slave depots. Warehouses were critical to the city's slave trains. Slave traders confined enslaved people in warehouses until they could be sold during slave auctions. At this location, 122 Commerce St, was a very large warehouse owned by John Murphy, who provided support to slave traders in the city and built the Murphy House on Bibb Street. The Commerce Street warehouse was used in the 1850s by slave traders like H. W. Farley, who advertised the sale of enslaved children, such as a boy "about fourteen, very likely and sprightly." The warehouse remained in the hands of owners involved in the slave trade until the end of the Civil War. These markers are posted at the EJI office located at 122 Commerce St., Montgomery, Alabama." October 27, 2023.

Image Caption Right: An Equal Justice Initiative (EJI) marker about the slave trade in Montgomery, Alabama. This marker is posted at the EJI office located at 122 Commerce St. Montgomery, AL, October 27, 2023.



We traveled to Montgomery, Alabama after leaving Anniston. On our first morning, I woke excited for what we would do and see. For years I have thought of Alabama as a dangerous place— a repressive “wild west” of Klan rule, a mass grave of Indigenous North Americans and African Diasporans. Beyond these bleak impressions I did not know very much about Alabama (especially regarding what it is like today), though I understood its historical importance. I was excited to learn more, and to get to know the other members of our group. Civil rights activist Charles Mauldin, a survivor of the March 7, 1965 march on Selma’s Edmund Pettus Bridge, had joined our group. I was looking forward to speaking with him and the other elders of the group but was hesitant to approach them with *too* much excitement. Oftentimes in immersive education spaces, African American elders are treated as spokespersons for history, living artifacts, live-action edutainment. Mindful of this, in most cases I chose distance out of respect for their space, privacy, and energy.

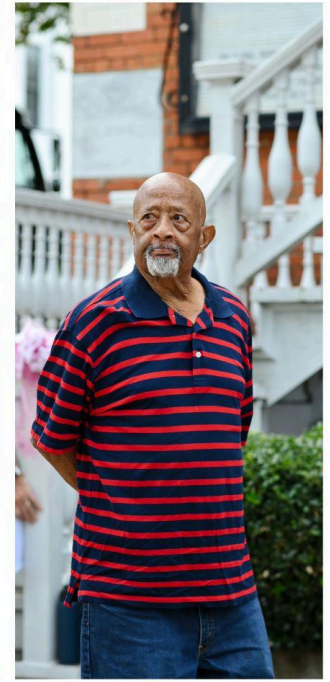
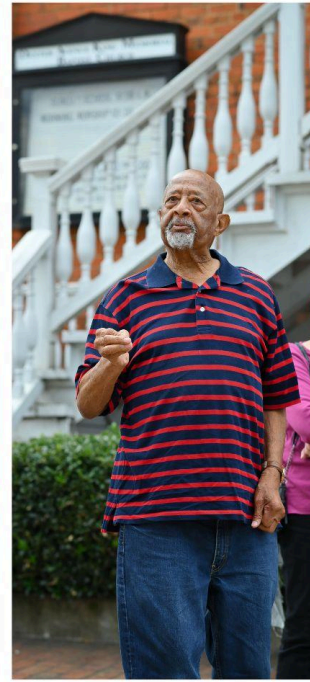
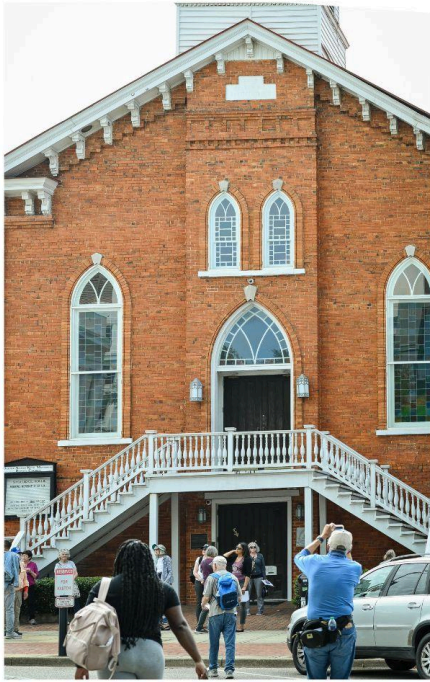


Image Captions: Dexter Avenue Baptist Church; Charles Mauldin speaks to our group in front of the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church, Montgomery, AL. October 27, 2023.

Our group leaders David Domke and Dr. Scott began the day by grounding it in the history of slavery in Alabama. How could they not? Montgomery was a major center of the domestic slave trade— a major center of the so-called Cotton Kingdom. Our hotel was on the same street as the former home of slaveholder and “cotton speculator” John Murphy.



Image Captions: Scenes from the Alabama riverfront: A train departs from the station; A riverboat, The Harriet, parked at the dock. This was the scene of the viral “riverfront brawl” that occurred at this location in August, 2023; Charles Mauldin exits the train station tunnel. Montgomery, AL. October 27, 2023.

We walked to the riverfront, where enslaved people were transported in two ways: by boat along the Alabama River and by train. From the riverfront we walked to Commerce St., whose name suggests the close connections between slavery, the slave trade, and the growth of Montgomery. Before we

left, we took a moment to perform a ceremonial act in the small tunnel beneath the train station. Joining hands, we made a circle and were asked to speak the name of someone we wish could be present to learn this history with us, or someone we were thinking of as we experienced this place. I spoke the name of my ancestor, Judah, a great grandmother who lived in Virginia. I spoke her name and thought of the many grandmothers who passed through Montgomery, en route to Virginia or elsewhere deeper into the maw of slavery.

The members of our group were, for the most part, white Maryland residents who did not have an enslaved ancestor's name to share (at least not one that they knew of.) But that didn't make this moment any less impactful. Some members named historical figures who were meaningful to them, or subjects encountered in research. Talking about the legacies of slavery is not only for the descendants of the enslaved. I appreciated that everyone in the group participated in this concrete action of personally engaging with the history of slavery and acknowledging its ongoing impact. Like respectful visitors or guests, we greeted the Alabama River and stated our intentions of honoring the multitudes of the enslaved and their descendants.

Love's practitioners in Alabama



Image Caption: Members of the Common Power tour, and a friend of one of the tour members, pose together in front of J. W. Beverett's Soul Food Restaurant. Left to right, Tim, Celestia, Dr. Terry Anne Scott, Nathaniel, Ngeri, Hannah. Montgomery, AL. October 27, 2023.

I like to think that our group were good guests (I certainly hope we were), because the welcome that we received in Montgomery was absolutely special. Some of my fondest memories in Alabama are from our group dinner at J. W. Beverette's Soul Food restaurant, owned by Teresa "Mother Teresa" Jackson. Ms. Jackson and her team prepared fried okra, fried catfish, salmon, fried chicken, two different kinds of cornbread, macaroni and cheese, collard greens, salad, peach cobbler and vanilla ice cream, and iced tea. There was so much! There was more than enough, and it was beautiful. By the time we left, I had a full container of leftovers and two containers of peach cobbler. I have only a few, precious images from this dinner. Sometimes I choose to leave my camera alone, as I did in this instance, when where I am feels too special to miss, or too sacred to record. (I later realized that J. W. Beverette's was indeed sacred: a sign on front door of the restaurant read, "Sanctified Soul Food & Seafood.")

We shared our meal with a former Equal Justice Initiative attorney, Laurel Hattix. Laurel discussed her work, which involved serving as legal counsel for people incarcerated in Alabama who are facing death sentences. It's difficult to describe how I felt during this conversation. I could not begin to imagine what it must feel to take on such a challenge. I remember asking her, "how do you take care of yourself?" She told me about her approach to self care through community care. Grieving, organizing, celebrating, and resting in community sustain her. "I would rather be part of a constellation, than be a star," she said. She also spoke about the hard work that is maintaining hope. Laurel shared that, to her, hope is a discipline— a muscle that requires training. I knew that she was referencing prison abolitionist and writer Mariame Kaba who said, on the subject of resisting the carceral state, that "Hope doesn't preclude feeling sadness or frustration or anger or any other emotion that makes total sense [...] Hope is not optimism. Hope is a discipline... we have to practice it every single day."³

Laurel Hattix and Teresa Jackson are truly practitioners (activists) of love through community care, to recall Tiya Miles. In their own ways, through their individual talents and unique capacities, these women take action in Alabama to feed, support, and fight for their communities. Laurel's message about the enacted practice of hope in the face of bleak adversity was timely, in light of all that our culture still grapples with today.

We continued to meet amazing Alabama activists. On October 29th, we met youth mentor, Alabama Civil Rights history educator, and local activist T. Marie King during a short visit in Irondale. T. Marie spoke with us about the lynching of William Wardley in 1896, the successes she's



Image Caption: A historical marker by the Equal Justice Initiative acknowledging the lynching of William Wardley, which took place in Irondale in 1896. Irondale, AL. October 29, 2023.

³ Kaba, Mariame. *We Do This 'Til We Free Us* Abolitionist Organizing and Transforming Justice. (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2012), 26-27.

seen through her work engaging students and parents in difficult conversations about Alabama history, and her love of concerts and music.



Image Captions: Activist T. Marie King speaks to the Common Power tour group. Common Power group members listening on the train platform. Irondale, AL. October 29, 2023. Photos by Hannah Lane.



After visiting the campus of Tuskegee University, we had the honor of meeting and dining with Kate Bulls Lafayette and Bernard Lafayette, Jr. at their church. Kate, a lifelong resident of Alabama, generously shared her grade-school yearbook, and spoke to us about her work as a youth advocate in Tuskegee and of her family's past experiences navigating Ku Klux Klan violence during the



Image Captions: Kate Bulls Lafayette; Kate Bulls Lafayette and Bernard Lafayette, Jr. Tuskegee, AL. October 28, 2023.

twentieth century. Ms. Kate was a passionate speaker, and quite possibly one of the most beautiful souls I have ever met. She listened intently as her husband, Bernard Lafayette, Jr. shared his story of surviving the attempt on his life—which was part of the larger tri-state conspiracy that ultimately killed NAACP field secretary Medgar Evers, and nearly killed minister and NAACP advisor Ben Elton Cox—in June of 1963. Listening to his account of such a frightening ordeal was unlike anything I’ve heard before. Mr. Lafayette’s sense of humor was a curious joy to witness, as was hearing him and Mr. Mauldin sing the tunes that the freedom riders made up to taunt the police during the time they were packed into a jail cell after being arrested and beaten. What an experience that dinner together was. I kept thinking how grateful I was that they hadn’t been killed, that they weren’t incarcerated in a state or federal prison, as a number of Civil Rights activists and Black Panthers were, or still are, or forced to flee the country (as some activists have had to do).



Image Captions: Bernard Lafayette, Jr., Kate Bulls Lafayette, and Charles Mauldin. Tuskegee, AL. October 28, 2023.

In Selma, we had the honor of meeting Ms. JoAnne Bland, a Civil Rights activist who has been an involved organizer in Alabama since the 1960s. As a preteen, Bland and other children in Selma collaborated with the Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). Bland was 11 years old when she and her older sister, Lynda, embarked on what would be the first of three historic events on Selma's Edmund Pettus Bridge: Bloody Sunday, March 7, 1965. It is a day that she remembers in painful detail.

JoAnne is a passionate advocate for the recognition, celebration, and memorialisation of the Foot Soldiers of the Civil Rights Movement, named and unnamed. Hers is a movement of the grassroots, not of great men, or a finite list of names or number of participants. To Ms. Bland, "Movements for social change are like jigsaw puzzles. Everyone is a piece. If your piece is missing, the picture is not complete. Why? Because you're the most important piece." The "jigsaw puzzle" of the Civil Rights Movement encompasses *all* who contributed, *all* who were impacted, all who were there whether or not we can name, see, or remember them. *The picture isn't complete if their piece is missing.*

I learned so much from JoAnne. I was inspired and moved by her activism model, which brings

together community outreach, personal storytelling, and local history to affect and hopefully mobilize social change. I do not know how many people JoAnne has shared her story with over the years, but I could see the impact in Selma. The Foot Soldiers Park and Education Center is under way, as is a new location for the Equal Justice Initiative where, for the first time, Ms. Bland will have a dedicated office space and headquarters for her organization, Journeys for the Soul. I am excited for her. I am grateful that I could thank her, in person, on behalf of my great grandparents (who were in their mid-30s when the Voting Rights Act of 1965 passed), of my grandmother, my father, and my siblings for fighting for Black Americans. In response, JoAnne took my hands and said, “We did what we could. Now, see how far you can take it.

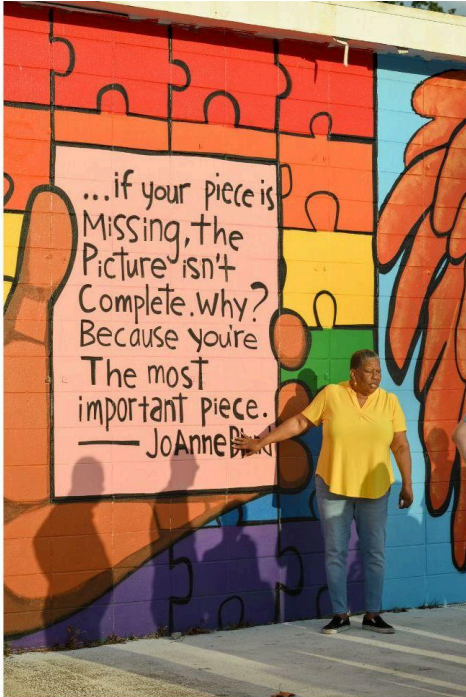


Image Caption: JoAnne Bland poses in front of the “puzzle piece” mural in Foot Soldier's Park and Education Center, Selma, AL. October 29, 2023.

JoAnne Bland seated on a bench in the “Confederate Memorial Circle” in the New Live Oak Cemetery. Selma, AL. October 29, 2023.



Image Caption: JoAnne Bland speaks with Lois Rosado and Common Power tour members in the New Live Oak Cemetery, Selma, AL. October 29, 2023.

Image Caption: Before taking our group to the Foot Soldiers' park, Ms. JoAnne showed us a chilling place: Confederate Memorial Circle, which lies in the center of the New Live Oak Cemetery. In addition to graves and confederate flags, we saw this bust and sign which praised Nathan Bedford Forrest, a confederate army general and the first "grand wizard" of the Ku Klux Klan. The circle is maintained by a confederate memorial group in Alabama.



Image Caption: Seated on the steps of the Brown Chapel AME Church, JoAnne Bland talks with Common Power tour members. While numbers and names are no replacement for the full story of a social movement, it was important to JoAnne that members of our tour remembered the names of four civil rights movement activists and allies who were killed in Alabama in August, 1965: Reverend James Reeb, Viola Liuzzo, Jimmie Lee Jackson, and Jonathan M. Daniels. Selma, AL, October 29, 2023.



Image Captions: The Brown Chapel A.M.E in Selma, AL. Common Power tour group members pose with JoAnne Bland in front of the Brown Chapel A.M.E in Selma, AL. October 29, 2023.

Conclusion

There are many moments from this trip that I didn't include: The walk I took with Ms. Susan (a frequent seatmate on the bus) to visit the Bayard Rustin Community Center; or my experience in the Legacy Museum, the conversation about family history that Mr. Tim and I shared on the way to Montgomery from Tuskegee; our visit in Birmingham; or the things I thought about and noticed as I walked besides Charles Mauldin on the Edmund Pettus bridge. There is just too much to say. And the more I try to describe my experience, the more the narrative shifts from my hold, changes, and even falters. I think I'll be processing this trip for the remainder of the year, at least.

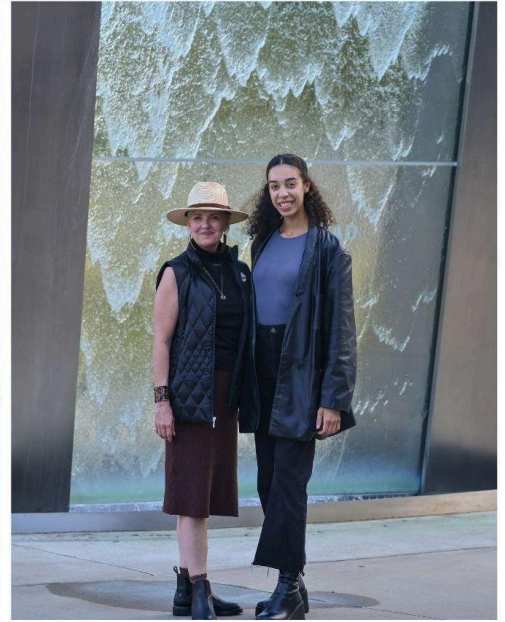
I am so dearly grateful to the Maryland State Archives and the Friends of the Maryland State Archives for connecting me with this experience and financially supporting my participation. I am also grateful to David Domke and Dr. Terry Anne Scott for all of their labor, care, reflection, and preparation for this impactful learning tour. I appreciate them for curating an experience and series of conversations that, otherwise, a number of our fellow travelers might never have had. I thank them for centering Charles, the Lafayettes, JoAnne— *people who were there*— and who are still alive to tell their stories. I thank them for telling this long story about the connectedness of the abolition of slavery, the civil rights movement, and the prison abolition movement today. From the generations of the enslaved and

formerly enslaved, to the first free generations, to the foot soldiers of the Civil Rights movement, to the activists and educators on the frontlines against mass incarceration, the kids and teenagers cornered at Mondawmin, the student demonstrators – they are all connected.



Image Captions: Selections of photos from Birmingham and Selma, including the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church (Birmingham, AL); members of the Common Power group viewing a memorial to the four girls who were murdered in the bombing of the Sixteenth St. Baptist Church; the Edmund Pettus Bridge; Charles Mauldin speaking to the Common Power Group in front of the Edmund Pettus Bridge; a Poem (writer unknown) posted to a community born in the By the River Center for Humanity (Selma, AL). October 29, 2023.

I am not comfortable writing in a positivist way about the Civil Rights Movement. To do so would be a betrayal of what I learned with the Common Power group, and of what was shared with us by the elders we met in Alabama. It would be a betrayal of my own family, and of millions of Americans whose quality of life suffers from the intertwined financial, health, and social legacies of Slavery, the Jim Crow period, and the ongoing injustices of over policing, undereducation, and mass incarceration. One thing, though, that I can affirm is how good it feels to have learned more about Alabama, and what is happening there in the fight for civil rights–human rights– now. Our trip was not only intended to be a meditation on the past, but to show us how that past is still present. Freedom is a constant struggle, to borrow from Audre Lorde. Each of the activists we met, from the eldest to the youngest, is still engaged. I am grateful that when I think of Alabama, it is the powerful experiences I had there, the care and commitment of contemporary activists, and the faces of Laurel Hattix, JoAnne Bland, Charles Mauldin, the Lafayettes, T. Marie King, and Teresa Jackson that come to mind.



Dr. Terry Scott, Tim and Hannah; and Elaine and Hannah at the National Center for Civil and Human Rights, Atlanta, October 30, 2023.



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