



Huntsville/Madison County Convention & Visitors Bureau

## “African American Heritage” Huntsville, Alabama

### Sample Itinerary

From its earliest days, Huntsville, the **first** city in Alabama to integrate its schools, has a history as a progressive city in a southern state, and local African Americans have played a vital role in creating that unique blend. Over the course of this three-day tour, you'll experience their heritage and their role in making this city great.

#### **Day 1**

2-3:30 p.m.

#### **OUR NATION'S MILITARY HERITAGE**

So many families have been touched by service in the military, and we all owe a debt of gratitude to those who have served. The **U.S. Veterans Memorial Museum** honors our nation's veterans in a unique venue displaying more than 30 historical military vehicles from World War I to the present, as well as tableaus, artifacts, and other memorabilia dating back to the Revolutionary War. Learn about history based on the museum's collection of unique 'one of a kind' vehicles, representative weapons, radios, uniforms and personal gear. Veteran volunteers will present fascinating first-hand accounts of America's most significant historic moments. The museum is dedicated to promoting the accomplishments of American military men and women.

Visit online at [www.memorialmuseum.org](http://www.memorialmuseum.org)

4-5 p.m.

Check into your hotel and enjoy some rest and relaxation before dinner.

7:15 p.m.

Enjoy dinner at one of Huntsville's unique dining establishments. If you need suggestions, the Convention & Visitor's Bureau will be happy to provide them.

#### **Day 2:**

Begin Day Two of your Huntsville stay with breakfast at the hotel and get ready for an early start to a packed day!

8:30-11:30 a.m.

#### **ALABAMA AGRICULTURAL AND MECHANICAL UNIVERSITY TOUR**

Start your day at **Alabama A&M University**, which the state legislature established in 1873 for the education of African American teachers. It opened on May 1, 1875 as the Huntsville Normal School. The first principal and president was William Hooper Council, an ex-slave. Today the school offers bachelors and masters degree's along with other professional programs. The

original campus is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. While visiting the campus tour the **State Black Archives Research Center and Museum**, which serves as a repository for material, documents and artifacts of the African American experience in Alabama from its earliest day to present. Permanent and rotating exhibits.  
Visit online at [www.aamu.edu](http://www.aamu.edu)

12-5 p.m.

### **BLAST OFF IN 3, 2, 1...**

A trip to the U.S. Space & Rocket Center is a highlight of any visit to the Rocket City, and this one is no exception. African American astronauts are local heroes in Huntsville – Mae Jemison High School and Ronald McNair Junior High honor their namesake astronauts. Jemison, in fact, hails from just down the road in Decatur. For just a moment, put yourself in her (space) shoes and imagine you're getting ready to board the Space Shuttle. It's your first flight. How are you feeling at this very moment? Are you nervous? Anxious? Scared? Excited? If you're like me, your adrenaline is pumping. These feelings and much more can be experienced at the **U.S. Space & Rocket Center**. Whether you're exploring the history of the U.S. Space program, taking a virtual journey inside a motion-based simulator, or experiencing three times the pull of gravity inside the centrifuge, you're sure to have an out of this world experience! Box lunches or lunch in the Mars Grill are available.

Visit online at [www.spacecamp.com/museum](http://www.spacecamp.com/museum)

5:30-6:30 p.m.

Return to the hotel, and enjoy some rest and relaxation before dinner.

7 p.m.

### **THE CIVIL WAR**

You'll finish your day at the **Huntsville Historic Depot** museum. Built in 1860, the depot served as a war hospital, quarters for white and black Union soldiers and a prison for Confederate soldiers. Later the depot was used as a major shipping point for the regional cotton industry. Experience Huntsville's history as you hear tales of the depot during the Civil War and beyond. Enjoy a favorite southern meal during your visit...Barbeque and Beans!

Visit online at [www.earlyworks.com](http://www.earlyworks.com)

### **Day 3:**

Another full day awaits you, so grab a quick breakfast at the hotel and get ready to get started!

8:15-11 a.m.

### **AFTER FREEDOM - A NEW BEGINNING**

There's a lot to see in Huntsville, and this morning, you're going to see a lot! A driving tour will take you on a journey through Huntsville's African American Heritage. Seeing several historical sites including the **Old Georgia Cemetery**, the burial grounds of early Huntsville slaves and a former site where church services were held by slave Bartley Harris; **Big Spring Park**, where hundreds of people were baptized by Rev. Harris before his death in the late 1800s; **Cavalry Hill**, the site where members of the 9th and 10th Cavalry, known as the Buffalo Soldiers, camped while recovering from malaria immediately following the Spanish-American War; **St. Bartley's Primitive Baptist Church**, the mother church of African-American Primitive Baptist Churches in Alabama; **Historic Glenwood Cemetery**, where early African-American pioneers are buried; and the

**Historic Home of Maria Howard Weeden**, an artist who became famous for her paintings of former slaves. (Step-on-guide)

11:15 a.m.-1 p.m.

### **ALABAMA'S BIRTHPLACE**

Your next stop will take you to where all of the State of Alabama's history begins: **Alabama Constitution Hall Park**. You'll experience what life was like for local residents 200 years ago as you hear the whir of the spinning wheel...learn from the blacksmith...turn the great wheel lathe in the cabinetmaker's shop...and visit with villagers busy with their daily tasks, seemingly unaware that nearly two centuries have come and gone. Alabama Constitution Hall Park dates back to 1819 and is the actual site where forty-four delegates gathered to forge the way for Alabama's Statehood. Become a part of Alabama's history as villagers dressed in period clothing take you through eight reconstructed Federal style buildings.

Catered lunch available.

Visit online at [www.earlyworks.com](http://www.earlyworks.com)

1:30-3:30 p.m.

### **ONCE A SLAVE PLANTATION**

After lunch, you'll visit **Oakwood University**, which began as an industrial school and was founded by the Seventh-day Adventist Church in 1896 to educate African-Americans in the South. The first structure built on the campus replaced the slave huts which housed the first eight male students who enrolled on the opening day of school. Dred Scott, the plaintiff in the famous Scott v. Sanford case, was brought to Huntsville in 1858 to live on the grounds of what is now Oakwood University. A slave, he sued for freedom, because he had been transported from Illinois and the Wisconsin Territory, both of which barred slavery. Visit the **Oakwood University Archives and Museum** to hear the story of Dred Scott, the Take 6 Group and others.

Visit online at [www.oakwood.edu](http://www.oakwood.edu)

4-5 p.m.

### **WHAT'S GROWING ON?**

Another must-see attraction in Huntsville is the **Huntsville Botanical Garden**, and now is the time to see it! Enjoy the NEW visitor welcome center designed after a historic Southern mansion and the serene Nature Center, the largest seasonal butterfly house in the nation. Galaxy of Lights, one of the American Bus Association's Top Events, is open nightly from Thanksgiving through New Year's. Dogwood Cafe serves delicious lunches and the Gift Shoppe is always filled with eclectic treasures. Several major festivals such as Huntsville Blooms, Green U, Scarecrow Trail plus many more, prove that at the Huntsville Botanical Garden – there's always something growing on!

Golf cart tours are available upon request.

Visit online at [www.hsvbg.org](http://www.hsvbg.org)

5:30-6:30 p.m.

Your Huntsville adventure is drawing to a close, so return to the hotel for some rest and relaxation before dinner and your final outing!

7-9 p.m.

### **THE HISTORIC WEEDEN HOUSE MUSEUM**

You saw the outside on the bus tour earlier, and now you'll get to experience the **Historic Home of Maria Howard Weeden**. Built in 1819, the Weeden House was home to the 19th century poet and artist, Maria Howard Weeden, who is remembered today primarily for her rare portraits of African Americans around the time of the Civil War, some of the best that exist from

the time period. This white, two-story brick house, located in the Twickenham Historic District, is distinguished by a remarkable leaded glass fanlight over the front door, and is preserved much as it was a century and a half ago when she lived there. Learn how Maria Howard Weeden used literature, dialect, tradition and values to contribute to the development and transmission of culture. View Weeden's exquisite portraits and learn how she captured the spirit of her models. Catered dinners are available. Visit online at [www.weedenhousemuseum.com](http://www.weedenhousemuseum.com)

**Tour guides available:**      **Jacque Reeves, Avalon Tours**  
   **William Hampton, Huntsville Revisited**  
   **Denise Swain, Scenethat Tours**

Book your **“African American Heritage”** tour TODAY!



Contact Pam Williams, Tourism Sales Manager  
800-SPACE-4-U • 256-551-2204 • [pam@huntsville.org](mailto:pam@huntsville.org)