



# HISTORY



## OUR HISTORY

The history of Mobile stretches all the way back to 1702, which – for those keeping score – is a full 117 years before the state of Alabama even became a state. As the oldest city in Alabama, we’re very proud of our three centuries of history ... and we like to share the stories of everyone who got us to this point. We boast a diverse legacy that started with the Native Americans who loved and cared for the land and water. As time went on, the national traditions of African, British, French, Greek and Spanish immigrants began to emerge, as did the influences of Catholic and Creole cultures. Throughout the city, you’ll find historic sites that honor our beautiful blend of people and traditions.

A great place to start your travel back in time is at the [History Museum of Mobile](#), which is right at home in the stately Southern Market/Old City Hall building. Its permanent collection of artifacts reveals the city’s rich history, including all the parts we want to brag about ... and then some parts we’re not very proud of. At the heart of it, we think it’s important to share all our stories – good and bad – so you can get a feel for who we are, where we came from, and how we all got to where we are today.



All around the city, you’ll find historic homes and districts, battlegrounds and battleships, all lovingly preserved and ready to be explored. Mobile is home to a variety of walking, driving and boat tours that will help you delve deep into our history, ideally finding part of YOUR story in the process. Many of our guests discover that they have connections to Mobile that they weren’t even aware of prior to their visit. That’s because over the years, a lot of paths have crossed here in Mobile.

A big part of the complete story of the people of Mobile is our African American heritage, the influences of which you can find around every corner. We’re quite proud of our [Dora Franklin Finley African American Heritage Trail](#), which takes visitors to more than 40 key sites ... and counting. The trail winds its way through our entire city, including schools and churches; places with ties to Civil Rights and desegregation; and Africatown, where survivors from the last slave ship to enter the United States landed in



1860. And THAT is a story that needs to be shared – widely and loudly. A new heritage site, set to open in late 2022, will be instrumental in that effort.

Among the historic homesites on the African American Heritage Trail is the [Hank Aaron Childhood Home and Museum](#), which beautifully traces the story of the Baseball Hall of Famer from his humble beginnings through his iconic career. Family items and baseball memorabilia, including items on loan from the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum and Negro League Baseball Museum, make this experience come to life. If you haven't seen what a 500th home run trophy looks like up-close and personal, here's your chance. (Fun fact: Mobile is home to four other members of the National Baseball Hall of Fame, too!)

Other historic homes show the grandeur for which Southern properties are known but also reveal the influences of several different cultures. The Italianate-style [Richards-DAR House Museum](#) has an amazing cast iron façade and is filled with Revolutionary-era décor; the [Condé-Charlotte Museum](#) features colonial and Confederate-era furnishings; and the [Bragg-Mitchell Mansion](#), built in the Greek Revival-style, withstood all kinds of drama during the Civil War. [Historic Oakleigh](#), a former cotton plantation, is now home to one of the last surviving structures built during Reconstruction after the Civil War; today the Union Barracks on the property tells the stories of post-Emancipation life in and around Mobile.

Shifting gears from homes to fortresses, our military history spans the Revolutionary and Civil Wars. [Colonial Fort Condé](#) is a reconstruction of a fort built by French explorers in 1723, and which acted as both Mobile's seat of government and its primary means of defense during the Revolutionary War. Fast-forward nearly 100 years later, when another stronghold, [Fort Gaines](#), played a key role in the Battle of Mobile Bay. It was during this battle that David Farragut uttered what have become perhaps the most famous words in U.S. Naval history: "Damn the torpedoes, full speed ahead!" Farragut was from Tennessee but served the Union, and he was victorious in Mobile. Today costumed guides at the fort recount the story of the battle ... but be sure the person in period dress you're following around is, indeed, a docent. The fort is reported to be haunted by many soldiers who continue to prepare for battle.

Speaking of the afterlife ... a lot of visitors are fascinated by our cemeteries, which reflect the diversity of religious beliefs and socio-economic conditions here in Mobile. Some of our cemeteries boast truly elaborate monuments and incredible sculptures, and it's easy to spend hours wandering among them – and wondering, too ... about the stories of the people who came here before you.





BORN TO CELEBRATE



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