



18 - Africatown Bridge / Clotilda Landing



7 - Mural of the Clotilda



14 - Africatown Freedom Bell



Africatown - C.H.E.S.S. Clean, Healthy,  
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# AFRICATOWN HISTORIC ROOTS WALKING TOUR



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# Africatown Historic Roots Tour

## 1 Africatown Welcome Center

Known as Graveyard Alley for years, this site is where former slaves were paid a small wage and The Meaher Family built houses and rented them to the former slaves. When a nearby road was widened to 4 lanes the government purchased (took) the land from those that lived along the highway and moved them out. Later, it was purchased by a local company, who donated it and plans were made to raise money for an official Community Welcome Center. With proceeds from the fines on the BP spill, supporters qualified for \$3.450 million to build a brand new Africatown Welcome Center.

## 2 Africatown Cemetery

This is the final resting place of those transported to America aboard The Clotilda and settled in Africatown. It dates back to 1876, sixteen years after The Clotilda arrived. As you face the cemetery, the left side is known as the old cemetery because most of those buried on the left side died before the year 1980. The other side contains newer graves. Tombstones on the left face towards the east to honor the last shipment of slaves who always wanted to go back home to Africa (in the east). The tallest tombstone in the cemetery is a monument to Cudjoe Lewis.

## 3 Union Baptist Church

First known as The Old Baptist Church and established in 1872 (2 years after The Africatown Township was incorporated) The Union Baptist Church became the first church established and built by the former slaves after being set free. The Rev. Henry McCready was its first leader.

## 4 Bust of Cudjoe Lewis

Cudjoe Lewis was one of the last persons to die in The United States that was a human cargo transported over The Transatlantic Slave Trade Route, dying in 1935 at the age of 95. He was a human cargo aboard The Clotilda, that arrived in Mobile, Alabama the night of July 8, 1860.

## 5 Former Slave Quarters

Originally known as "The Slave Quarters", Green Alley is the place where the 35 slaves that formed Africatown settled to live after they were freed.

## 6 Historic Elk's Lodge

Located in what was once considered "Downtown Africatown", The Elk's Lodge has served as the primary social gathering spot for Africatown residents and others for over 90 years.

## 7 Mural of the Clotilda

The slave ship, "The Clotilda", was the last ship that was recorded to bring slaves from Africa into the US on July 8, 1860, transporting a human cargo of 110 souls ranging in age from 5 to 23 years.

## 8 Slavery Era Fireplace

Located on the land owned by the first tribal leader of Africatown, Peter Lee "Gumpa", the fireplace remains of his original house is the only structure still standing from the original slavery era.

## 9 Community Center

On land given to The Mobile County School System by descendants of The Clotilda for the express purpose for education and recreation of the children of Africatown, the original Whitley Elementary School was built here but fell into disrepair and was torn down and rebuilt in the city of Prichard after desegregation in the 1970s. In the 1990s the city of Mobile leased the land from the school system and built a community center.

## 10 Heritage House

A museum to share the long untold story of the Clotilda slave ship with artifacts from the ship as well as other history of city of Mobile.



\* Start on Bay Bridge Road (between Telegraph Road and S Magazine Road/- Tin Top Lane), turn and head south on Bay Bridge Cutoff Road. **The Welcome Center** location is across the street from the entrance to the Historic Africatown Cemetery, before Chin Street.

## 11 Cleon Jones Homestead

Africatown's Cleon Jones has often been referred to as "the greatest all around athlete in the history of Mobile County." He ran for 1,800 yards and 22 touchdowns in football, averaged 21 points, 12 rebounds and 10 assists in basketball. Hit for an average of over .800 and was 5-0 as a pitcher in baseball and ran a 9.2 in the 100 yard dash and never lost a race in track. In MLB he batted .340 and was the third leading hitter in the National League as he led his New York (Miracle) Mets to their first World Series Title in 1969.

## 12 County Training School

Formed in 1880 at The Union Baptist Church, it was certified by the state of Alabama as Mobile County Training School (MCTS) in 1910, making it the first training school for blacks in Alabama. In 1915 it burned down and was rebuilt. Julius Rosenwald and Booker T. Washington worked together and built over 5,000 schools in the region to educate former black slaves and their descendants. This is the only one that remains active and is still educating black children through the public school system. Certified in 1935, it was the only public school in the city of Mobile for blacks that went through all 12 grades until 1950.

## 13 MCTS Alumni 'Den' Museum

Originally, the shop department for "County" when it was a high school, it was seldom used after that. In 2012 it was used as a meeting place for The MCTS Alumni Association. Over the years, MCTS graduates and Africatown residents have donated items that serve as a reminder of the historical significance of the school and the community.

## 14 Africatown Freedom Bell

The Africatown Freedom Bell is said to be the only thing salvaged from The Clotilda before it was burned and sank. The Clotilda slaves carried the bell with them and eventually placed it in The Union Baptist Church. Later, it was moved to the school and rang in the morning to begin classes and in the evening to end the school day. In the 1990s, employees of The Mobile School System maintenance crew removed the bell to "repair it" and never brought it back. In 2017 The MCTS Alumni Association purchased and installed a new bell to reestablish The MCTS and Africatown Freedom Bell tradition.

## 15 Community Gardens

This area was originally known as "New Quarters" and occupied by rental homes owned by The Meaher Family. In the early 1970s, The Meaher Family moved everyone out of those houses, tore them down and sold the land to Alabama Power. In the mid 1970s, residents of the community began to plow up the area underneath the power lines and plant crops. In 2014, Alabama Power Company deeded the entire 6 acres of land to The Africatown Community, making it the largest Community Gardens in the state of Alabama.

## 16 Hog Bayou Hunting Grounds

Hog Bayou is the area north of Paper Mill Road that the slaves off The Clotilda used for hunting and fishing to help feed themselves.

## 17 Africatown Hall

The Africatown Hall and Food Bank serves as a vital community hub, dedicated to supporting residents and preserving the spirit of unity that defines Africatown. A spacious warehouse with built-in shelving provides ample storage for food supplies, and a convenient drive-thru allows residents to easily pick up food without leaving their vehicles.

## 18 Williams Motel

A small motel first owned by a black man, Mr. John Williams, that is located near The Mobile River, on the east side of Africatown. Built in the 1940s, rooms could be rented by the month, week, day or hour.

## 19 Clotilda Landing

Although The Clotilda did not officially land, this area is referred to by locals as the Clotilda Landing because it is next to the area where the slaves off the ship originally settled.

## 20 Railroad Turn Bridge

This is one of the few turn bridges that remains in the US. Once you leave the River and pass the turn bridge, you are in Africatown's Hog Bay. If you walk north past the turn bridge there are miles of marsh land for hunting and fishing.

## 21 Happy Hills Housing Project

After the Africatown Community voted to annex to the City of Mobile in 1960, the city decided to build a public housing project in the happy hills section of Africatown. The Josephine Allen Housing Project was constructed and consisted of about 250 housing units and about 1,500 people. The housing project was shut down and the last family was moved out in 2015.

## 22 Lewis Quarters

After Africatown had been incorporated in 1870, Charlie Lewis, brother of Cudjoe Lewis, moved his family west along the Three Mile Creek and eventually settled here. He purchased land in the area and relocated his close family members there.

## 23 Lewis Landing I & II

A small section of land utilized by locals as a fishing dock. The east side of the intersection is also used for fishing and entrance for canoes, paddle boards and jet skies into the creek.

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