



*At all these sites, music and singing played a role in inspiring, mobilizing, and giving voice to the Civil Rights Movement.* Music was more than “We Shall Overcome.” **Spirituals, gospel, and folk music all played a significant role in the movement.**

It motivated participants through long marches and provided strength in the face of brutality.

Listen for the songs that embody joy, sadness, and determination as you visit sites along this tour.



*The power of song served to unify the Black community during the movement.* That music was at the very heart of the struggle. Songs such as “Onward Christian Soldiers” and “This Little Light of Mine” radiated through **Kelly Ingram Park**, where demonstrators congregated in the 1960s to begin protest marches. It was in the park that march participants were met with police dogs and fire hoses in an effort to quell the protests.

Hymns sung in the **Sixteenth Street Baptist Church**, across the street from Kelly Ingram Park, included old-time favorites such as “Go Tell It on the Mountain,” forming the core of solidarity. The bombing that killed four little girls in the church basement on a September Sunday morning in 1963 gave rise to more freedom songs. Well known musicians like Sam Cooke and Bob Dylan took the message to the masses with recordings of “A Change is Gonna Come” and “Blowin’ in the Wind.” In 1964, Joan Baez penned and recorded “Birmingham Sunday,” a tribute to



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the girls who died and with the refrain “...and the choir kept singing of freedom.”



Though 16th Street Baptist Church is the most famous civil rights landmark, it was Birmingham’s **Bethel Baptist Church** that is credited with shaping the Civil Rights Movement here. Civil rights legend, the Rev. Fred Shuttlesworth, was pastor of Bethel Baptist from 1953 through 1961. The church often served as a gathering place for civil rights discussions.

On Christmas night in 1956, a bomb exploded under the church parsonage where Shuttlesworth and his family were asleep. It is a miracle that the family walked away unharmed from their destroyed home. The bombing cemented Shuttlesworth’s fiery determination to bring Birmingham to the center of the Civil Rights Movement.

Shuttlesworth remained a central figure in the movement even after he moved to Cincinnati in 1961.

*Visitors to Bethel can hear much of the music from the movement on tours of this historic church.*



# BIRMINGHAM

Greater Birmingham Convention & Visitors Bureau

Other sites in Birmingham’s Civil Rights District include the **Birmingham Civil Rights Institute**, an important repository for historical documents and music tied to the movement. Many exhibits in the institute are accompanied by music of that era.



**The Alabama Jazz Hall of Fame** in the Civil Rights District offers up a wealth of music tied to the state’s great performers. The jazz history held here often reflects the mood of musicians during the Civil Rights Movement that took hold in Birmingham. The museum was envisioned as a musical component to the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute.



*So, music enhances tours and visits to these and other places on this moving and important itinerary. Birmingham’s musical talent is extensive. Planners can book performances by area singers and choirs to enhance this experience and to bring the music of the movement on-site for tour participants.*

## TOUR PROFESSIONALS

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