

Donate to the Emmett Till Interpretive Center

EMMETT TILL INTERPRETIVE CENTER

RACIAL RECONCILIATION BEGINS BY TELLING THE TRUTH

ETIC Staff Network at Association of African American Museums Conference



**ACKNOWLEDGING LEGACY, FOSTERING PROGRESS:
COMMEMORATING THE 60TH ANNIVERSARY
OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS ACT
AUGUST 13-16**

Staff from the Emmett Till Interpretive Center recently attended the annual conference for the Association of African American Museums. The theme for this year's conference, which ran from August 13-16 in Baltimore, was Acknowledging Legacy, Fostering Progress: Commemorating the 60th Anniversary of the Civil Rights Act. Among other topics, workshops, presentations, and discussions engaged with the Act's history and how museums and cultural institutions have upheld that legislation's spirit, contributing to ongoing progress internally and in their own communities.

In addition to providing a space to share knowledge and professional experience, the conference also offered practitioners from across the country working in the museum field the opportunity to connect with one another in person. Given the relatively small size of the museum profession in general and of those working in African American history specifically, finding ways to promote and support one another can be crucial to success.



ETIC staff members Dr. Daphne Chamberlain (far right), Jay Rushing (second from right), and Benjamin Saulsberry (middle) pose with presenters from a session on civil rights in the context of the National Park Service. Photo courtesy of Rome Withers Photography

Dr. Daphne Chamberlain, ETIC's Chief Program Officer, said she appreciated the conversations she had with firms supporting museum work and with experienced museum staff who shared insights about sustainability through marketing, fundraising, and expansion. She said she was particularly moved by the passion of Mrs. Dawn Moore, First Lady of Maryland and part of the first African American family in the Governor's Mansion. Mrs. Moore spoke about how she'd brought visual and performing arts and even history to the home in a way previous administrations had not, praising the conference attendees for their commitment to culture.

"What I most appreciated about the conference is that it is organized by an association that is truly devoted to cultural placemaking and ensuring that Black stories are not lost to political assault and rhetoric," said Dr. Chamberlain. "African American history is American history, and it is history that speaks to resilience, fortitude, and triumph."

Family Reunion Honors Fannie Lou Hamer's Legacy

Civil rights activist Fannie Lou Hamer was part of the Applewhite family, and they have continued her legacy for over 50 years with each iteration of their family reunion. Last week the family held their 65th family reunion, which included representatives from ETIC and Bridging Winona, an initiative spear-headed by Vickie Roberts-Ratliff to commemorate Hamer and the civil rights

activists. In Winona, Hamer and other civil rights activists were arrested and beaten. Nonprofit organization Land, Literacy, Legacy began Bridging Winona as a project to lift up that history to the local community, who wasn't fully aware of those events. In June of this year, a marker was installed near the Winona bus station as part of the Mississippi Freedom Trail, following a marker installed in 2022 at the Winona Jail where Hamer et al. were held. "Shedding light at the scene gives us the opportunity to heal," said Roberts-Ratliff.

The family reached out to Roberts-Ratliff to present some of the historical context, so the reunion included visiting the Winona historical markers and watching a recorded play adaptation of *Voice of Freedom*, an illustrated book on Hamer's life. Jessie Jaynes-Diming, ETIC's Special Projects Coordinator, attended the event and offered remarks about the work of commemoration and the history of Emmett Till. As with ETIC and Emmett Till, Bridging Winona and the Applewhite family are working to keep the story of Hamer and her fellow activists alive. Remembering history in this way, said Jaynes-Diming, can be a source of strength and understanding, connecting old and young, past and present.

Visit the Mississippi Freedom Trail's [homepage](#) to see all of the featured sites.



Photo courtesy of Jessie Jaynes-Diming

More News

Mississippi Today Details Falsifications in *LOOK* Magazine Piece

In 1956, Roy Bryant and J.W. Milam delivered a "confession" for Emmett Till's murder in *LOOK* Magazine. That article became the story of record for many, even into the present. Jerry Mitchell writes for *Mississippi Today*, showing how that story took root and the lies that enabled its publication. A number of ETIC partners are quoted, and documents mentioned in the article can be viewed in the [archives of Florida State University](#).

READ MORE

Register for August 31st Emmett Till Commemoration

The third annual memorial service for Emmett Till will be held on August 31st, 2024 in the Mississippi Delta. The program begins at 10 AM at Graball Landing and concludes with a luncheon in downtown Drew. If you plan to attend, please RSVP on [our Eventbrite page](#).



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