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Step Back In Time - Historical Places

Shelby County Museum and Archives

1854 N. Main Street
Columbiana, AL 35051

Let's start our Historic Itinerary in the county seat of Shelby County, Columbiana on Main Street.

The **Shelby County Museum & Archives** is located in the Old Shelby County Courthouse in the charming town of Columbiana, AL. This is the hub for those looking to do research on the history of the County. Built in 1854, the Old Shelby County Court House is a distinctive example of Jeffersonian Architecture and was designated a historic landmark in 1974 by the National Register of Historic Places. Within the walls of the courthouse, a world of information and artifacts has been meticulously preserved.

Maintained by the Shelby County Historical Society, Inc., the building is also home to a highly respected archive containing research material such as books, microfilm and U.S. Federal Census Records from 1790. In addition to many old and rare books are histories of Shelby County families, communities, schools and churches. Shelby County, created February 7, 1818, is older than the state of Alabama. Collection of Shelby County newspapers date from 1866 to current. For convenience there is microfilm of early records of other Alabama counties such a marriage certificates and newspapers.

The Museum displays many old Shelby County photographs and artifacts from the Indian Era through WWII, including such items as the bell from the Alabama, a well-known railroad engine during its time. Visitors can also see the contents of the cornerstone from the 1906 Courthouse, which was opened in 2006.

One room in the museum displays three chestnut wood cars and several feet of wood track that were found in 1974 in the forgotten Confederate Gurnee Coal Mine in west Shelby County. Another room features an 1884 Kimbrell organ that has been fully restored and a roll-top desk from the Shelby Iron Works Commissary that closed in 1922.

Leaving the Museum on 47 North/Main Street, we will take a left on West College/Hwy 70 for a very short drive to Lester Street and the **Karl C. Harrison Museum of George Washington**.



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Karl C. Harrison Museum of George Washington

50 Lester Street
Columbiana, AL 35051

The **Karl C. Harrison Museum of George Washington** in the quaint small town of Columbiana, Alabama, has a collection focusing on art and artifacts from the colonial period through 1865. The collection contains paintings, letters, furniture, porcelain, glassware, silver, jewelry, busts and more. Martha Washington's prayer book printed in New York in 1783, an original 1787 Samuel Vaughn sketch of Mt. Vernon grounds, writing instruments and tools from George Washington's survey case and an original tintype depicting Robert E. Lee in his uniform for the last time are just a few collection highlights.

The beauty and craftsmanship of 18th and 19th century furniture is evidenced by a number of carefully preserved pieces from the estates of the Washington family and their descendants. Coin-silver utensils used at Mount Vernon, a 207-piece set of Minton porcelain and an exquisite pair of Sevres vases, circa 1785, from the Augustin Washington estate, the half-brother of George, highlight the display.

As we continue down 70 West/22 west for approximately 19 miles before heading south on Hwy 119 for about a mile for our next destination of **The American Village**.

The American Village

3727 Highway 119
Montevallo, AL 35115

The American Village serves the Nation as an educational institution whose mission is to strengthen and renew the foundations of American liberty and self-government by engaging and inspiring citizens and leaders, with a special emphasis on programs for young people.

The American Village is a nationally-pioneering classroom and American history and civics education center that has engaged and inspired over a half million students from Alabama and Southeastern states since opening its campus in 1999.



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Discover the power and drama of America's journey for independence, liberty, and self-government through experience-based academic programs related to American history, civics, and government.

Included on the campus is the The National Veterans Shrine and Register of Honor, a website and database containing photographs, biographical sketches, and stories of America's veterans and active members of the United States Armed Forces.

We continue south on Hwy 119 for a five mile drive to **Aldrich Coal Mine Museum**. We will take Hwy 10 West until we reach Hwy 203 and the Museum.

Aldrich Coal Mine Museum

137 Hwy 203
Montevallo, AL 35115

The **Aldrich Coal Mine Museum** is a historical museum located in the former company store of Montevallo, Alabama. Aldrich was once a coal mining town, but is now a part of Montevallo. The museum contains historical photographs, artifacts, and displays from Aldrich's coal mine, churches, school, prison, stores, and post office. The museum is housed in the former Montevallo Mine Company commissary, and contains the original sales counter and cash register. The Montevallo Coal Mine Company Store is listed on the Alabama Register of Landmarks and Heritage.

We will head back down Hwy 10 East to begin our 16 minute drive to Calera, Alabama, taking highway 155/25 East, until we reach Hwy 31 and go south a block or so and then continue east on 9th street for the **Heart of Dixie Railroad Museum**.

Heart of Dixie Railroad Museum

1919 9th Street
Calera, AL 35040

The museum features operating standard gauge and narrow gauge trains, two restored depots, an indoor collection of railroad artifacts and memorabilia, and an outdoor collection of railroad cars, locomotives, and cabooses.



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The museum is dedicated to the preservation, restoration, and operation of historically significant railway equipment. Our exhibits, operating railroads, and educational programs function as both a unique means of tourism and recreation, and also a way to preserve the rich history of Alabama and our nation.

We hope you'll visit us to ride a train, look at our museum collection, and learn more about Alabama's railroad history.

Headed East on Hwy 25 and then East on Hwy 42 will take us on our 16 mile journey to the **Shelby Iron Works Park**.

Shelby Iron Works Park

10268 Hwy 42
Shelby, AL 35143

Incredible history can be found in the most unobtrusive places. Such is the story of the Shelby Iron Works in Shelby, Alabama off Highway 42. Located near the geographic center of Alabama, in the small, quiet town of Shelby, lies the remains of Alabama's largest charcoal blast furnace. These remains give scant evidence to the important role it played during the Civil War and Alabama's fledgling iron industry. Despite operating for over half a century, this landmark would have faded in memory without the preservation efforts of the Historic Shelby Association. Our museum showcases a wide variety of information about the Shelby Iron Works, and the heritage of the Shelby company town and community. Has a blacksmith shop, grist mill and other unique historical components that operate during their Fall Festival. Situated near the center of the Shelby Iron Park, a Confederate Monument commemorates Shelby Iron Company's vital contribution to the Confederacy's war effort, as well as Shelby County's Confederate soldiers, and honors them all, listed and unlisted.