

Contents

Introduction

 <i>McCrary's Five and Dime</i>	17
--	----

Part I Being Good: Individual Activism and Sacred Spaces

 <i>Black Lives Matter Memorials</i>	37
 <i>Visanska Starks House and Carriage House</i>	43
 <i>Freedom Riders Bus Museum</i>	61

Part II Building Good: Advancing the Common Good by Guarding Hallowed Grounds

 <i>Audubon Ballroom</i>	69
 <i>Modjeska Simkins House</i>	83
 <i>Robben Island Prison</i>	109

Part III Doing Good: Enriching the Civil Rights Information Landscape

 <i>Lorraine Motel</i>	117
 <i>Medgar Evers House</i>	129
 <i>Selma to Montgomery National Historic Trail</i>	151

Part IV Future Goods: Frontiers of Activism in Consecrated Sites

 <i>Mother Emanuel AME Church</i>	185
--	-----

Sources, Bibliographical References	213
--	-----

Index	225
--------------	-----

Reading List	231
---------------------	-----

Additional Civil and Human Rights Sites

 <i>Selected Historical Markers</i>	239
 <i>National Register of Historic Places</i>	240
 <i>National Historic Landmarks</i>	242
 <i>National Park Service Sites</i>	243
 <i>UNESCO World Heritage Site</i>	
 <i>Selected International Sites of Conscience</i>	
 <i>Resource Organizations</i>	246

INTRODUCTION

Part I – Being Good

This section tells the stories of landmark events at three sites, describing ways in which individuals personified good during their interactions with those historical spaces. It seeks answers from the standpoint of learning how these stories demonstrate human goodness, how they inspire goodness and action in us, and how these processes of learning and doing are sustained in the context of the sites over time. The places in this telling are **Visanska Starks House and Carriage House**, a lesser known site in Columbia SC; **Freedom Bus Riders – Greyhound Bus Station** in Montgomery where victory was snatched from the jaws of fear; and locations I call **#blacklivesmatter** sites, where the shooting deaths of unarmed African Americans by local law enforcement in 2014 were marked with memorials, launching a new chapter in social movements.

Part II – Building Good

This next book segment offers a view of some ‘Sustainers’ in activist mode; workers whose commitment insured that physical locations connected to the Movement were forever preserved. They “built good” by transforming their surroundings into challenging social and political institutions. The stories told in this segment offer proof that preserving the sites is an **extension** of the civil rights movement, is in itself a civil rights **action**. The places in this telling are the **Modjeska Simkins House** in Columbia SC; the **Audubon Ballroom** where Malcolm X was assassinated in New York City, and **Robben Island**, where South Africa’s revolutionary, Nelson Mandela, was imprisoned.

Part III – Doing Good

Here in this segment, the good works of those who sacrificed are examined, along with how these works inform our lives, and how the sites capture and continue to reflect their energy. The focal points are the **Medgar Evers House** in Jackson, Mississippi where Evers died and woke the nation; the **Lorraine Motel** in Memphis where Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. the

dreamer was assassinated; and the **Selma to Montgomery March** National Historic Trail of triumph.

Part IV – Future Goods

This closing discussion, with the focus on the Mother Emanuel AME Church in Charleston, South Carolina, examines ways that this space, now venerated by a global audience, has advanced and expanded definitions of doing good. It also examines the limits and the frontiers of being good and doing good in these historical places. It asks if the money and energy invested in them have been better used in a more ‘traditional’ and direct social action? Would change under direct social action be a more authentic version of doing good? This section provides some answers to the challenges posed by activists and others. Finally, it explores ways that sites must:

- *Expand the strategies and goals of social and political movements;*
- *Move beyond discussion of rights, justice, equality and freedom concepts to political action and advocacy;*
- *Revitalize the public sphere, the arena in which extended occasions for thought and action can be developed;*
- *Provide space for generating unity through discourse, and space for deliberative, strategic and political ground work/grassroots organizing work.*



Group shot from the colloquium, ‘The Sustainers’, l to r: Rita Daniels, her sister and mother, descendants of Harriet Tubman; Dr. Vernon Burton, Kenneth Childs, and D’Army Bailey, at the Palmetto Club.

This book is the outgrowth of an event bringing these warriors together for the first time in Columbia, South Carolina for a colloquium entitled, ‘The Sustainers: Builders and Preservers of Civil Rights Sites’ held in October 2013. One inspiration for the colloquium was the 2012 announcement at the National Press Club in Washington that six Southern cities would hold the Civil Rights 50th Anniversary Commemoration. The Mayors of Birmingham, Alabama; Columbia, South Carolina; Jackson, Mississippi; Memphis, Tennessee; Washington, DC; Selma, Alabama, Mayor George Patrick Evans; and Montgomery, Alabama, Mayor Todd Strange, would host commemorative events in their cities.

As such, this work focuses primarily on the sustainers and sacred spaces which were part



David Agnew, White House liaison to mayors, and Mayors Stephen K. Benjamin of Columbia, S.C.; William A. Bell of Birmingham, Ala., and Harvey Johnson, Jackson, Miss., announce the Civil Rights 50th Anniversary Commemoration, January 20, 2012. Scripps Howard Foundation wire photo by Jordain Carney.

of those events geographically, along with a few additional sites. While the inclusion of all such sites is beyond the scope of this work, this is a place where the reader can share the stories of a few who ensured that hallowed grounds were transformed into landmarks, and can encounter those who retain the memories of heroic acts and personal sacrifices through moving image and re-enactments. For all of these

actions constitute ongoing activism.

The purpose of the book is to share these stories with lovers of politics, culture, history and the arts, and with those who have a hunger to advance civil rights, human rights and other social justice movements *forward*. The hallowed grounds of our struggles draw actors, scholars, filmmakers, and activists who reshape the stories for new generations. This book welcomes the general and the specialized audience by including themes, topics and theories of

global interest. While it is not a book targeted toward the academic and the scholarly audience, it welcomes their part of the story.

These publics, taken together, can generate the support and political will critical not only to saving civil rights sites, but also to ensure that the sites promote political engagement and social uplift of those most injured by discriminatory practices. The book presents the argument that civil rights, human rights and social movement sites, through preservation, through creative inclusion in film and television, through re-enactments and through specific types of onsite activities, CAN and MUST advance the achievement of a just and equitable present.