

COME VISIT US TODAY!

*No Tour Too Small*

**LOCATION**

9 Saint Catherine Street  
Natchez, Mississippi 39120

**HOURS OF OPERATION**

Tours are by appointment

**ADMISSION**

Adults: \$10  
Students ages 6-18: \$8

**PARKING**

On-street parking is located in front of the museum on Saint Catherine Street and on the west side of the museum on Abbott Street. A handicap ramp is located in the rear of the museum off Abbott Street.

**VISIT OUR WEBPAGE**

[www.visitnatchez.org/JohnBanks](http://www.visitnatchez.org/JohnBanks)

**OUR TELEPHONE**

601-442-5060

THIS PROJECT WAS MADE POSSIBLE BY A GRANT FROM THE MISSISSIPPI HUMANITIES COUNCIL, THROUGH SUPPORT FROM THE NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES. ANY VIEWS, FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, OR RECOMMENDATIONS DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT THOSE OF THE NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES OR THE MISSISSIPPI HUMANITIES COUNCIL.



JESSIE BERNARD

JOIN US ON THIS IMPORTANT JOURNEY THROUGH TIME.

*Become a partner!*

Help us share – and preserve – this vital piece of history! Make your donation today!

*Please mail to:*

The Dr. John Bowman Banks Museum  
P. O. Box 501  
Natchez, MS 39121

The Dr. John Bowman Banks Museum is operated by volunteers who are members of the Rose Hill Missionary Baptist Church, Natchez, MS. It is dedicated to the preservation, interpretation, and communication of the African American experience through the legacy of Dr. Banks and the Civil Rights Movement.

STEP INSIDE FOR  
A MOVING GLIMPSE  
OF THE PAST.

Photo courtesy of the Historic Natchez Foundation.



Dr. John Bowman Banks  
1862-1911

*The Dr. John Bowman  
Banks Museum*

9 SAINT CATHERINE STREET  
P.O. BOX 501  
NATCHEZ, MS 39121

[WWW.VISITNATCHEZ.ORG/JOHNBANKS](http://WWW.VISITNATCHEZ.ORG/JOHNBANKS)

The publication of this brochure was made possible by the editorial support of Visit Natchez and the Historic Natchez Foundation. The Dr. John Bowman Banks Museum is a 501(c)3 nonprofit. It is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Its story is featured on a Natchez Trails marker on St. Catherine Street, across from the museum. The house is also featured in the film, Black Natchez (1967).

*Designed by Catherine Murray  
Murray Printing, Natchez, Mississippi*

Home of Natchez's  
First Black Physician,  
Hub of the  
Civil Rights Movement



THE  
DR. JOHN BOWMAN  
BANKS MUSEUM

*Where History Meets You  
with Clarity and Pride!*

## WHO WAS DR. JOHN B. BANKS?

Dr. John Bowman Banks (1862-1911) was the first African American doctor in Natchez. He began practicing medicine in Natchez in 1889. Dr. Banks recruited the city's second African American doctor, Albert Woods Dumas. Together, Dr. Banks and Dr. Dumas founded the Bluff City Savings Bank, the only African American-owned bank in the city. Dr. Banks served as its president. In addition to serving the community as a physician and businessman, Dr. Banks worked as a prominent member of Zion Chapel AME Church in Natchez. The church was once led by Hiram Rhodes Revels (1827-1901), who became the first African American to serve in the U.S. Senate (1870-1871).

### A VIEW OF LOCAL HISTORY

The Dr. John Bowman Banks Museum, which is also known as The John Banks House, was established in 2020 to offer a perspective of Natchez history and community life during the early 20th century and to depict the civil rights movement during the 1960s.

Although solidified in Black History and rooted with a message for African Americans, the museum presents a story that is appealing to people of all races, cultures, and backgrounds.

### BUILT IN LATE 1800S

Constructed around 1892, the John Banks House is a charming, two-story frame structure that was first designed in the Queen Anne style. After about 1905, it was remodeled in the Colonial Revival style. The house, which is now a museum, is located at 9 St. Catherine Street in Natchez.



1890s ERA



Photo courtesy of the Historic Natchez Foundation.

**DR. JOHN BOWMAN BANKS (SECOND ROW, FAR LEFT) STANDS ON THE FRONT STEPS OF HIS ST. CATHERINE STREET HOUSE WITH BOOKER T. WASHINGTON (CENTER FRONT) IN 1904.**

### VISITED BY BOOKER T. WASHINGTON

The John Banks House has served as a doctor's office, a residence, and a boarding house. As a guest of Dr. Banks, the famous Booker T. Washington stayed at the house in 1904 and 1908, when he came to town for a lecture series.

### HUB OF CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

During the 1960s, the house served as the headquarters for the NAACP. Charles Evers, who served as the Mississippi NAACP Field Director, used the Banks House as a hub for the civil rights movement in Natchez. Evers was the brother of slain civil rights leader Medgar Evers.

Natchez NAACP President George Metcalfe occupied a downstairs bedroom in the house. In 1965, Metcalfe suffered serious injuries when his car was bombed by the KKK.

### SCENE OF STRONG WOMEN

In 1964, during Freedom Summer, Janet Jemmott, Dorie Ladner, and Annie Pearl Avery, all members of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), spent time at the house. Jemmott would later marry the respected civil rights leader, Bob Moses. Strong local women, like

Jessie Bernard, secretary of the Natchez Branch of the NAACP, played a major role in the success of the Civil Rights Movement in Natchez. Other local women included Mamie C. Mazique and Mary Lee Toles.

## SPECIAL EVENTS

In keeping with its aim of being an integral part of Natchez's culture, the Dr. John Bowman Banks Museum hosts special programs for the community that feature prominent guest speakers. Lectures, readings, workshops, and other public events are held throughout the year. A selected number of programs are featured on holidays, while others are created around notable dates in Black History.

In addition to the general subject of African American history in Natchez, particular emphasis is given to such topics as the medical and business contributions of Dr. Banks and the writings of Booker T. Washington.

One significant topic that is highlighted is the Civil Rights Movement, which holds an important place in Mississippi history. According to historians, the movement in Natchez was one of the most successful in Mississippi, and the Banks House played a major role in this success. Lance Hill, author of *The Deacons of Defense* (2004), has noted: "The Natchez campaign was the single greatest community victory for the Civil Rights movement in Mississippi."

The Dr. John Bowman Banks Museum is like no other place in Mississippi. It provides you with a unique and authentic piece of history about people of color in the beautiful city of Natchez. It is a place where the late 1800s, with all of its nostalgia, converge with the 1960s, and culminates in a moving experience that is wonderfully immersive and memorable.

In addition to being a critical source of history, the museum also has available space for special events, such as weddings. Please call for details.



## IMMERSIVE EXPERIENCE

Today, as a museum, this unique building exists to educate and inspire. Step inside for a moving glimpse of the past. Each room, whether upstairs or downstairs, captures the ambience of days gone by. With only a few seconds inside, you can see -- and feel -- the essence of the museum's history. Images and artifacts have been carefully selected and presented to shed light on the story of Dr. Banks and the Civil Rights Movement.

The museum has many wonderful features, which include:

- ◆ Text panels with stories that help with self-guided tours
- ◆ Exhibit of an early 20th century medical room, including replica of Dr. Bank's office
- ◆ Period furniture throughout the museum, including an 1890s-era bedroom
- ◆ Room dedicated to the Civil Rights Movement with the sound of Freedom Songs
- ◆ Photographs of Dr. Banks and his, wife Sarah A., the famous image of Booker T. Washington, and pictures of the civil rights activists and the dangers they faced
- ◆ Original documents, including actual medical prescriptions and other papers by Dr. Banks



Photo courtesy of the Historic Natchez Foundation.

**MISSISSIPPI NAACP FIELD DIRECTOR, CHARLES EVERS, AND LOCAL VOLUNTEER JESSIE BERNARD IN THE BANKS HOUSE.**