



THE TOUR

An Experience Unlike Any Other

By AC Dunlap, Columnist | February 10, 2022

This was a great experience just for the traveling, but I wasn't ready for how deep the experience was, and how my life would change because of the Civil Rights Heritage Tour."

Fifteen-year-old Emmanuel is one of the most intellectual and passionate young men of his generation. With a zeal for knowledge and desire to create change, he takes every opportunity to increase his understanding, all fostering his desire to take his place in history.

His experience, as stated in the above quote, on the Civil Rights Heritage Tour of the South not only became a life-changing experience but also fueled a passion to learn more about his history and cultural heritage.

"Our first stop was on the Ohio, Kentucky border on the Ohio River, a place where slaves would go," stated Emmanuel. "That's when I really realized the history, my heritage, and the road of my ancestors. It became bigger

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than just a travel trip, but something that made me open my eyes to what people before me experienced.”

As a high school student at Columbus City Schools, Emmanuel has taken African American studies to learn more about his history. However, his experience on the tour

has taken him beyond stories on a page. It literally allowed him to step into history.

"Before going on the trip, I really feel like I was in my own little bubble. I can't wrap my head around slavery, but on the tour, I saw the examples of what it was like, right in front of me. From Louisville to Selma, things got deep. Seeing the oppression and struggle of what people

went through, people that looked like me, it made me angry, but stirred my passion as well."

Described as an 'in your face experience,' Emmanuel shared how the impact of each part of this trip was significant, pushing those we attend to return home differently and provoked.

"When something is in front of your face it is undeniable, and that is how I felt. You feel the pain and fight through every picture on the trip. It makes you passionate about who you are and where you came from. They always say that history repeats itself. 'I Can't Breathe,' 'Black Lives Matter,' Ahmaud Aubrey, and those others. You see people, who are victims of America now, then you look at the tour and see people who were victims of America then, and something changes inside of you. Anyone who goes on this tour will never return home the same."

Emmanuel shares that his experience with the tour is one unlike any other he has yet to encounter. One that brings individuals to a depth of understanding about the historic journey of African Americans in this country, enables tourists to get a glimpse of the struggle for civil and human rights, and provides an opportunity for social bonding and the formation of new relationships through an educational experience.

"This tour is something every person should experience. I went back in 2019 and then you step into the 1800s. It was a shock, but I feel it is necessary. It is something that does not only show Black history, but American history. If you don't know where you came from, how do you know where you're going? We've got to know."



EMMANUEL,
High School Scholar
Columbus City Schools