The Help Tours
Jackson, Mississippi

The best-selling novel, The Help, by Jacksonian Kathryn Stockett, is set in Jackson during the Civil Rights era of the 1960’s. Recently made into a major movie, the story meanders through the city-as it once existed- with many of the sites still intact. These sites are indicated in the attached self-guided tour itineraries. Some locales were used during the filming of The Help, the movie.

Many fine restaurants and hotels, as well as museums and other Jackson attractions are found throughout the tour routes. Check in with www.visitjackson.com for details. Be sure to check “Events” on the web site for a myriad of changing, seasonal festivals, concerts, exhibits, and much more to do while you are in Jackson, city with soul. For more information, call the Jackson Convention & Visitors Bureau, 1-800-354-7695, or 601-960-1891.

Contents:

1. The Help in Belhaven Neighborhood Tour, sites 1-18, map and driving directions included

2. The Help in Jackson, Part 2, sites 19-30, with driving directions

3. A Google Map has been created for these tours. Scan the QR code to the right with your smart phone to access the mobile Google Map while driving. QR Reader apps can be downloaded free of charge on all smart phone app stores.

The view map online, see http://bit.ly/oCGRIJ or access the maps through our online The Help itineraries on www.visitjackson.com.

Enjoy your tour and your stay in Jackson, city with soul!
Kathryn Stockett, a native of Jackson, used the Greater Belhaven neighborhood extensively for the setting of her bestselling novel, *The Help*, published in 2009.

Greater Belhaven is one of Mississippi’s most intact historic neighborhoods. It is where Stockett was born, where her grandparents lived, and where she spent a great deal of time in her childhood. The story of *The Help* takes place in 1963, at the height of the Civil Rights struggle in Mississippi.

Scenes are set in downtown Jackson and other neighborhoods as well as Greater Belhaven.

**1 Fairview Inn, 734 Fairview Street**

“I was thinking next year we might do a *Gone With The Wind* theme for the Benefit,” Hilly says, “maybe rent the old Fairview Mansion.”

This was the home of William J. Simmons, founder of the White Citizens Council of Jackson. It was opened as a bed and breakfast by the Simmons family. The house has the graceful architecture and landscaping of early Jackson. Today it is a successful and popular inn, owned by Peter and Tamar Sharp, featuring gourmet dining for an enthusiastic multi-ethnic clientele.

**2 Bailey Magnet High School, 1900 N. State**

“My favorite photograph is of the three of us (Hilly, Elizabeth and Skeeter) sitting in the football stands in junior high, all jammed together, shoulder to shoulder.”

Belhaven’s junior high school during the era of *The Help*, today it specializes in training for health-related professions and draws students from the entire city. To the east is the football field that still serves Bailey and Murrah High Schools.

**3 805 Riverside Drive**

*Headquarters of the Junior League of Jackson*

“The Jackson Junior League Annual Ball and Benefit is known simply as “The Benefit” to anyone who lives within a ten-mile radius of town.”

The Junior League of Jackson has been an effective community service organization since its founding as the Junior Auxiliary in 1927. Incorporated as the Junior League of Jackson in 1941, it is now one of the largest in the nation. Today it is non-discriminatory in its membership and has a broad outreach to minority constituents.
4 1120 Riverside Drive  
Power Elementary School  
“Hilly and Elizabeth and I have been best friends since Power Elementary.”

This school was formerly Power Elementary School, the grammar school for the Belhaven neighborhood. It became Power APAC in 1990 (Academic and Performing Arts Complex) and draws children in grades 4-12 from all over the city.

5 Riverside Drive  
“Outside in the dark, I walk all the way up to Riverside, about ten minutes away, where they run a late bus for the nighttime water-plant workers.”

The northern boundary of Belhaven dead ends at the Municipal Water Plant and Riverside Park (renamed Le Fleur’s Bluff State Park). Today the park contains the Mississippi Museum of Natural Science, the Mississippi Children’s Museum, a Municipal Golf Course, and public playgrounds. It is a well-used space, the scene of family picnics, softball practice, and Easter egg hunts.

6 Myrtle and Devine Streets  
“Come on, Baby Girl”, I (Abileen) say after awhile, “Let’s take a walk, find out what’s going on”. We walk up Devine, turn left, then left again, and up Miss Hilly’s street, which is Myrtle.”

In the novel, Hilly Holbrook lives on Myrtle Street and Elizabeth Leefolt lives on Devine Street. This northeast section of Belhaven attracted young married couples to its smaller and less expensive houses. In 1963, Belhaven was not edged by the interstate. During the construction of I-55 in the late 1960s, the eastern-most street, Enterprise, with thirteen houses, was destroyed by eminent domain, leaving Myrtle and Devine nestled closer to the freeway.

7 1123 Pinehurst Street  
“When Kathryn was born, Demetrie, dressed in her white, starched uniform, carried the baby from the hospital after our five-day stay, leading me and a host of our family members... like a procession...to our home.”

This was the home of Kathryn’s parents, Ruth and Robert Stockett, Jr., when Kathryn was brought home from Baptist Hospital. Kathryn was Eudora Welty’s neighbor for only two months before the family moved to the Fondren neighborhood, north of Belhaven.

8 1073 Manship Street  
“I lean a minute against the counter, wishing Constantine was here like it used to be. How I’d love to share every single thing about my day with her.”

This was the home of Robert and Caroline Stockett, Kathryn’s grandparents. Kathryn Stockett spent a great deal of time after school and during the summers in this house with Demetrie, who worked for the family for three generations. She appears as Constantine in the novel, although Stockett has said that Abileen represents Demetrie’s characteristics.
Belhaven Heights was one of the earliest residential areas in Jackson. It began spreading north from downtown in the 19th century. Belhaven University, founded as Belhaven College in 1883, started here at 942 Bellevue Place. Bellevue Place became known as “Judges’ Hill” because of the large number of prominent judges building their homes there. (Refer to the Greater Belhaven Architectural Tour for more details about Judges’ Hill.)

High Street marks the southern end of Belhaven Heights. Medgar Evers’ assassination in Jackson in June of 1963 was a pivotal event both locally and nationally in the Civil Rights Movement. High Street was the gathering spot for the large number of black mourners marching. Near the Pearl River levee, at the end of High Street, was Stockett Stables, owned by Kathryn Stockett’s grandfather, Robert Stockett, Sr. Kathryn said in an interview, “It was just heaven for a kid, you had horses and there were people who'd catch them for you and saddle them up... there was tons of land to explore.” Remnants of the stables still stand.

North State Street was once the main artery of Jackson. Prior to the construction of I-55, it serviced in-town traffic as a section of Highway 51. Beginning in the 19th century, North State Street was the premier address for wealthy Jacksonians who built their mansions from the downtown area to Riverside Drive. Few of the large houses remain; by the 1950s commercial establishments began to move in and residents began a flight to the suburbs. The largest number of single-family homes remaining are found in the 1500 block. This beautifully preserved block gives a glimpse of the glory that was North State Street.
“Separate but equal,” Miss Hilly say back to Miss Leefolt. “That’s what Governor Ross Barnett says is right, and you can’t argue with the government.”

This was the home of Ross Barnett, governor of Mississippi from 1960-64. He sold his house when his family moved to the Governor’s Mansion in downtown Jackson. Barnett, one of the most militant of the Southern anti-integration governors, is primarily known for blocking James Meredith’s admission to Ole Miss in 1962.

“Mayor Thompson come on the radio, say how sorry he is for the Evers family. I look at the open back door and get that watched feeling again, with a white man’s voice in the room.”

Allen Thompson was the mayor of Jackson from 1949-1969. A progressive mayor for most of his long tenure, Mayor Thompson diligently upheld the state’s policies of racial segregation and became nationally known in the 1960s for the famous Thompson Tank, used in the arrests of demonstrators and Freedom Riders.
Each site is numbered. The tour starts on and returns to Fairview Street.

Start At

1. The Fairview Inn, 734 Fairview St. Drive west from the Fairview Inn to North State St. Turn right on State St.

2. Bailey Magnet High School. 1900 North State St. Turn right on Riverside Dr.

3. Junior League of Jackson Headquarters, 805 Riverside Dr.

4. Power Elementary School (APAC), 1120 Riverside Dr.

5. Riverside Dr. to Highland Dr. Continue driving on Riverside Dr. to Highland Drive. Turn left on Highland Dr. U-turn in front of the LeFleur’s Bluff Park entrance gate. Return on Highland Dr. to Riverside Dr. Turn right on Riverside.

6. Turn left on Devine St. Turn left on Laurel St. Turn left on Myrtle Street. Left on Belmont, left on Howard St. Right on Laurel St. Left on Greymont Avenue, right on Pinehurst Place.

7. 1123 Pinehurst Place. Turn left on Peachtree St., Left on Poplar Blvd., right on Monroe St., right on Manship St.

8. 1073 Manship St., left on Kenwood Place, left on Carlisle St. Right on Whitworth St., right on Fortification St.

9. McDade’s Market, 904 East Fortification St.

10. Continue on Fortification St., turn left on Jefferson St.

11. Enter Belhaven Heights. Turn left on Morningside Dr. Right on Madison St., right on Bellevue Pl., 942 Bellevue. Turn left on Jefferson St.

12. Right on High St., right on North State St.

13 -14. Continue on North State St.

15. Baptist Hospital, 1225 North State St, continue driving north.

16. The First Presbyterian Church, 1390 North St. Street, Continue driving north, turn right on Euclid Ave. right on Peachtree Street, right on Fairview Street.

17. 904 Fairview St. Turn left on Hazel St., right on Fairview St.

18. 810 Fairview St, continue on Fairview St.

End at Fairview Inn.
(Continuing from Belhaven Tour)
Go south on North State Street and take a left on High Street.

19. Carter Jewelers
711 High Street
“You remember that time Miss Walter make you pay for the crystal class you broke? Ten dollars out a your pay? Then you find out them glasses only cost three dollars apiece down at Carter’s?” pg. 227

Carter Jewelers is one of the oldest names in jewelry in the Jackson area. Not only does Carter specialize in diamonds, but also in crystal. During the 1960’s, most of the women from the Junior League would have received their crystal from Carter’s, especially as wedding gifts.

Continue driving east. Turn right at the Fairgrounds entrance.

20. Coliseum
Mississippi State Fairgrounds
While dining with Stuart’s family and his father, a senator, Skeeter hears about a bill being passed to build the coliseum. A 6,500 seat, multi-purpose arena, the Coliseum was built in 1962 and is used for concerts, sporting events, trade shows, and livestock shows under a nearly 2.5 acre, umbrella-shaped roof.

Backtrack on High Street until you reach the Capitol on your left.

21. Mississippi State Capitol
400 High Street
Designed by architect Theodore Link and completed in 1903, the Mississippi State Capitol, patterned after the nation’s capitol in Washington, D.C., exemplifies the Beaux Arts Classical style of architecture and today serves as the working seat of state government. Often referred to as the “New Capitol,” the building boasts exceptional examples of stained glass, faux finishes, and marble from around the world. This is where Stuart’s father would have been as a senator. The state capitol is available for tours Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Admission is free. Reservations are required for all groups. Please contact 601-359-3114.

Continue to Lamar Street and turn left.

22. Sun and Sand Hotel
401 N. Lamar Street
“The Sun and Sand Bar is closed and I go by slow, stare at how dead a neon sign seems when it’s turned off.” Pg 351

Naming the hotel after the landmark Mississippi Gulf Coast hotel he owned, R.E. Dumas Milner opened the Sun and Sand Motor Hotel in October 1960. Because of it’s close proximity to the state capitol and moderate prices, the Sun and Sand Hotel became popular after the King
Edward Hotel closed in 1965. As Skeeter mentions in The Help, the hotel had a bar and was one of the first bars to open in Jackson after anti-liquor laws were repealed in 1965. The hotel closed in 2001.

Continue south on Lamar to Griffith.

23. Robert E. Lee Hotel
North Lamar at Griffith Streets
“We take William’s Oldsmobile to the Robert E. Lee Hotel.” pg 117

The Robert E. Lee Hotel was home to many social events throughout The Help, including the infamous Benefit. The building was built in 1930 as a luxury hotel and was advertised as one of the finest hotels in the South. The hotel offered private baths, efficient telephone service, ceiling fans, and individual radios in all of its 300 guest rooms. The twelfth floor featured a convention hall and roof garden, creating a popular social gathering place for visitors and Jacksonians. It was converted into a state office building in 1969.

Continue on Lamar to Capitol Street and turn left. The Governor’s Mansion is on the left and the Lamar Life Building is directly across the street.

24. Governor’s Mansion
300 E. Capitol Street
“She backtracks to her first job at thirteen, cleaning the Francis the First silver service at the governor’s mansion. She reads how on her first morning, she made a mistake on the chart where you filled in the number of pieces so they’d know you hadn’t stolen anything.” Pg 150

Bordered by a high iron and brick fence, the Mississippi Governor’s Mansion occupies an entire city block south of Smith Park. Completed in 1841, the mansion was designed by state architect William Nichols in the Greek Revival style. Having served as the official residence of Mississippi’s first family since January 1842, the mansion is the second-oldest continuously occupied gubernatorial residence in the United States. In 1975, the mansion was designated a National Historic Landmark. The Governor’s Mansion is open for tours Tuesday-Friday, 9:30-11 a.m., on the half hour. Admission is free, call 601-359-6421 to confirm availability.

25. Lamar Life Building
317 E. Capitol Street
“I coast past the tall Lamar Life building, through the yellow blinking street lights.”

Built in 1924-25 to serve as the headquarters for Mississippi’s oldest home-based insurance company, this ten-story building was hailed at the time as Jackson’s first “skyscraper.” The building was designed with Gothic motifs and high crenellated clock tower to complement the style and form of St. Andrew’s Cathedral.

Sanquinet, Staats and Hendrick, the Texas firm who designed the building, also concurrently designed the home of Christian Welty, father of author Eudora Welty and senior officer at Lamar Life Insurance Company, on Pinehurst Street in Belhaven.
Take a left on North State Street and drive north past the University of Mississippi Medical Center to where the street forks. Bear right (Old Canton Road) and turn left at the third traffic light on to Duling Avenue.

26. Brent’s Drugs
655 Duling Avenue
Brent’s Drugs with soda fountain was opened in 1946 by pharmacist Alvin Brent. The local drug store in Fondren is where Skeeter picks up products and prescriptions for her mother. This is also where she is confronted by Elizabeth and Lou Anne Templeton after Skeeter’s book is published.

Scenes from the motion picture of The Help were filmed inside the store, as well as outside the surrounding strip. Evidence of the film remain in the mural of “the happy shopper” in between Brent’s and McDade’s Grocery store. Brent’s still operates as the soda fountain of its heyday. Stop by for a hamburger, egg and olive sandwich, or limeade made to order Monday through Saturday 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. or Sunday 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Turn left on North State Street.

27. Fondren, North State storefronts
North State Street, from Hartsfield to Mitchell Avenue
This strip of Fondren store fronts along North State Street from Hartsfield to Mitchell were used for various scenes filmed for the motion picture. Some signs and paint from the film remain, including the white gas station, now Butterfly Yoga studio, and Jackson Shoe Repair signs. While you’re in the neighborhood, stop for lunch or dinner at one of many fine restaurants, and shop the charming local boutiques.

Return by State Street to Woodrow Wilson and turn right.

28. Woodrow Wilson Bridge
“Six days a week, I take the bus across the Woodrow Wilson Bridge to where Miss Leefolt and all her white friends live, in a neighborhood call Belhaven. Right next to Belhaven be the downtown and the state capital” pg 12.

This bridge, as Aibileen describes in the first pages of The Help, crosses the border between West Jackson and North Jackson.

Veer right on Medgar Evers Blvd.

29. Freedom Corner
Intersection of Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd. and Medgar Evers Blvd.
At the crossroads of two prominent, slain civil rights activists sits a memorial in their honor.

Take a right on Ridgeway Street and right onto first street on the right, Missouri Street. Left on Guynes St./Margaret Walker Alexander Dr.
30. Medgar Evers Home and Museum
2332 Margaret Walker Alexander Drive
“Medgar Evers, the NAACP officer who live five minutes away, they blew up his carport last night. For talking.” Pg 164
Evers was the first field secretary for the NAACP in Jackson at the time of his death, June 12, 1963. The small house and site of his assassination, and the neighborhood of similar houses that surround it, make palpable the very simple longings for freedom and opportunity that drove the Civil Rights Movement. As a museum and a house in a historic district, the renovated structure informs those who visit of the many sacrifices that took place in Jackson and in Mississippi, and presents a modern link in the succession of Mississippi landmarks that communicate the history of the state. The Medgar Evers Home is also a site on the Mississippi Freedom Trail and a marker stands in the front yard. The home is open for tours by appointment only. Admission is free. For more information, contact the Office of EDC at Tougaloo College at 601-977-7839 or the Office of Public Relations at 601-977-7842.

To return downtown, take a left onto Ridgeway Street from Missouri Street and left onto Medgar Evers Blvd.