

Martin Luther King History

Connecticut Historical Commission



Description

During the summers of 1944 and 1947, Martin Luther King, Jr. harvested tobacco in the fields of central Connecticut. King was one of many African-American men recruited by summer work programs administered through southern colleges and high schools. These programs were designed to ease the dearth of labor brought about by World War II.. FHI was engaged by the Connecticut Historical Commission to compile a research report that identified places that were frequented by King for inclusion on Connecticut's Freedom Trail.

FHI explored King's time spent in Connecticut and evaluated the effect that it had on his decision to join the ministry and later champion the cause of Civil Rights. The project also focused on identifying and researching the communities created by the Great Migration of rural African-Americans to northern cities in the 1910s and 1920s. Demographics were drastically changed in Connecticut's cities and West Indian tobacco workers began new communities in the central valley of Connecticut. These men and women added their unique culture to the existing African-American community in Hartford.

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