



IT ALL  
STARTED  
HERE.

WELCOME TO THE BIRTHPLACE.



# *How it all began...*

We all know about the meteoric rise to fame. We all know about the mansion called Graceland. We all know how it ended. This is how it began.

Elvis Aaron Presley was born in Tupelo, Mississippi on January 8, 1935 to Vernon and Gladys Presley. Born in a two-room house built by his father, grandfather and uncle, Elvis was one of identical twin brothers born to the Presleys. His brother, Jessie Garon, was still born. Elvis grew up in Tupelo surrounded by his extended family including his grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins.

Financially, times were hard on Vernon and Gladys, and they had to move out of the house where Elvis was born when he was two and a half years old for lack of payment. Vernon and Gladys worked various jobs while in Tupelo and moved several different times during the thirteen years they resided in Mississippi.

While in Tupelo, Elvis attended the Assembly of God Church with his family where he was first exposed to gospel music that influenced his musical style throughout his career. It was in Tupelo that Elvis was exposed to bluesmen in the Shake Rag community where he lived for a time. His family also listened to country music radio programs from which Elvis drew influence.





# THE HISTORY OF THE



In 1945, Elvis made his first public radio broadcast. At ten years old, Elvis stood on a chair and sang "Old Shep" in a youth talent contest at the Mississippi-Alabama Fair and Dairy Show at the Tupelo Fairgrounds. WELO Radio broadcast the talent show.

In 1946, Elvis and his mother went to Tupelo Hardware where Elvis wanted to purchase a .22 caliber rifle. Gladys persuaded Elvis to look at a guitar, which store employees allowed him to try out. Elvis decided that he wanted the guitar, which his mother purchased for him, and his pastor taught him how to play it. Elvis could often be seen around town with his guitar in hand. In 1948, Elvis played his guitar and sang a farewell tribute to his Milam Junior High class before moving to Memphis where his father hoped to make a better life for his family. Nine years later, Elvis returned to the fairgrounds and performed a benefit concert for the City of Tupelo. The proceeds were used to purchase his birthplace and make a park for the neighborhood children. The Elvis Presley Birthplace Park now consists of the Birthplace, Museum, Chapel, Gift Shop, "Elvis at 13" statue, Fountain of Life, Walk of Life, "Memphis Bound" car feature, Story Wall, and the Assembly of God Church.





## 1

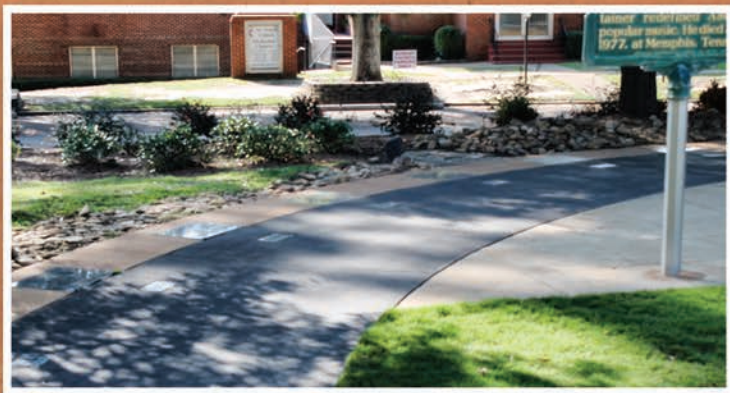
## START YOUR TOUR HERE



Tickets available inside for birthplace and museum.

## 2

## WALK OF LIFE

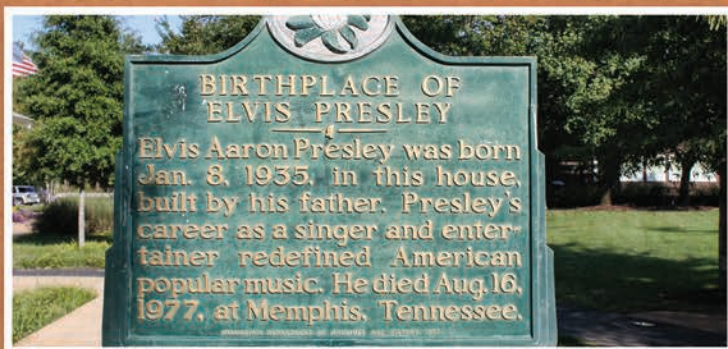


The "Walk of Life" is a scored concrete circle surrounding the house where Elvis was born. It contains dated granite blocks denoting each year of Elvis' life from the 1935 birth block at the front of the birthplace to the completed circle at 1977. The first 13 years are commemorated by granite markers containing an important fact about the year. The 1948 block marks the walkway to the "Elvis at 13" statue which memorializes Elvis, "the boy." The "Walk of Life" allows fans to walk through every year of Elvis' life, perhaps giving them an opportunity to stop and reflect on memorable events of Elvis' life, as well as their own.



# 3

## MISSISSIPPI HISTORIC SITE



The Elvis Presley Birthplace is designated as a historic landmark by the State of Mississippi.

# 4

## THE BIRTHPLACE



Vernon Presley, Elvis' father, with help from Jessie, his father and Vester, his brother, built this home in 1934 with \$180 that Vernon borrowed from his employer. It was in this humble, two-room house lit by a single light bulb in each room that Elvis Aaron Presley was born on January 8, 1935. Elvis was one of two children born to Vernon and Gladys. Elvis' identical twin, Jessie Garon, was stillborn. The City of Tupelo bought the home and surrounding property in 1957. Elvis wanted a park for the neighborhood children and donated the proceeds from a 1957 concert at the Tupelo Fairgrounds to further the cause. The property stands in its original location and has been restored to its original condition, decorated with period furniture, and is open to the public for tour.



## 5

## 1948 GRANITE BLOCK



The stone commemorates Elvis' 13th year and marks the walkway to the statue.

## 6

## "ELVIS AT 13" STATUE



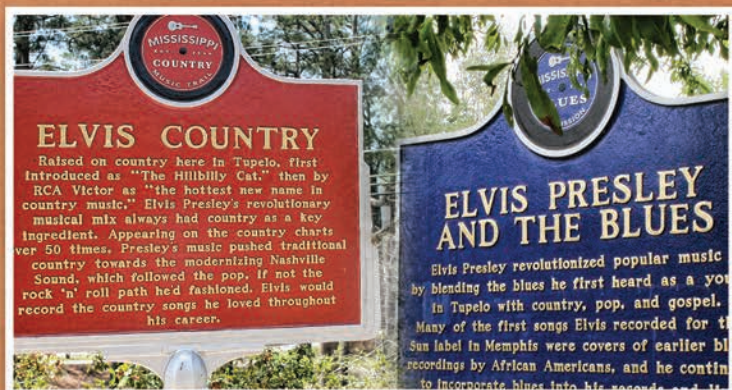
At the suggestion of an Elvis fan from Ireland, the Elvis Presley Foundation commissioned an impressionistic bronze likeness of Elvis at age 13 to be displayed at the Elvis Presley Birthplace Park. Elvis is portrayed in oversized overalls, a full open-collar shirt and plain shoes as evidence of the poverty and humbleness of those early years. The statue is life-size and displayed at ground level so that fans can more directly relate to Elvis as a person. The sculptor worked from photographs now displayed in the museum to determine Elvis' facial features, hairline and general body size. His height was calculated from a sixth grade class picture by comparing him to the height of another classmate in the picture and by measuring the brick and mortar in the background wall.



The sculptor envisioned Elvis walking to the Tupelo Overlook where he would sit and play his guitar and dream of a better life. The statue is positioned with the chapel on his right and the museum to his left symbolizing the strong spiritual values he learned in Tupelo and the challenge of materialism he would eventually face in the world. In August 2002, the statue was unveiled and dedicated to fans worldwide. It is one of the most popular photo opportunities at the Park.

# 7

## MISSISSIPPI MUSIC MARKERS



They are comprised of the historical markers with interpretive sites, located throughout the state, which recognizes the persons and influences of the Mississippi Blues and country on the State and American culture. Elvis Presley revolutionized popular music by blending the blues he first heard as a boy in Tupelo with country. The marker, located on the Birthplace Complex, honors his contributions in the expansion of this musical phenomenon and his talent for adapting musical genres.



## 8

## ELVIS' CHILDHOOD CHURCH

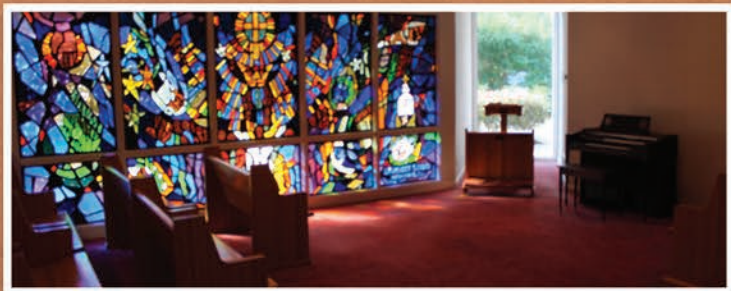


The actual building where the Presley family attended church services has been moved to the Elvis Presley Birthplace Park for visitors to see and enjoy. It was here that Elvis was first exposed to the rich, Southern gospel that became a staple of his musical repertoire. According to Assembly of God minister, Brother Frank Smith, Elvis was fascinated with music and the prospect of learning to play the guitar. Brother Frank taught Elvis how to make D, A, and E chords...all he needed to play "Ole Shep". Today visitors can experience the Assembly of God Pentecostal services of the 1940s through a multi-media presentation. The plain, humble, wood-framed structure will greatly contrast with the lively and intense nature of the sermons and the music. Guests will experience the preacher walking about, the choir filled with the spirit, and the congregation swaying to the rhythm of inspiring praises. It is here that Elvis sings his first gospel song - "Jesus Loves Me." Elvis never realized his dream of becoming a member of the Statesmen or the Blackwood Brothers gospel quartets, yet throughout the rest of his life, Elvis recorded many of the beloved songs of his youth, the emotional and uplifting music of the church.





## 9

ELVIS PRESLEY  
MEMORIAL CHAPEL

Elvis dreamed of having a "place of meditation" at the Elvis Presley Birthplace Park. Before his death, he shared that dream with friend Janelle McComb who envisioned adding a chapel to the Park. The fans made that dream a reality with their generous donations. The chapel was designed by Johnson and McCarty Architects, a Tupelo firm, and was dedicated in 1979. Laukhuff Studios in Memphis designed the stained glass windows specifically for the Elvis Presley Chapel, and the pews were purchased with funds provided by Elvis Presley Fan Clubs. The pulpit, where Elvis' bible rests, is the original pulpit from the First Assembly of God Church which donated it to the chapel. The chapel is a popular attraction and offers a time for meditation and a venue for weddings and special services.

## 10

## STORY WALL

Vivid portrayals of Elvis' life as a boy in Tupelo, as told by some of his childhood friends, are displayed on an eight foot "Story Wall" extending thirty feet on either side of the "Fountain of Life," and on the back outside wall of the gift shop. Storytellers range from the pastor who taught Elvis to play guitar to a lifelong friend. Presley family members also give a good perspective into the life of Elvis Presley as a boy in the larger Presley family. All of the stories are original and unedited.



# BIRTHPLACE MAP

1. Start your tour here
2. Walk of Life
3. Mississippi Historic Site
4. Elvis Presley Birthplace
5. 1948 Granite Block

6. "Elvis at 13" Statue
7. Mississippi Music Trail Markers
8. Elvis' Childhood Church
9. Elvis Presley Memorial Chapel
10. Story Wall





11. Fountain of Life  
12. Elvis Presley Museum  
13. Theatre  
14. Gift Shop  
15. Memphis Bound  
16. Event Center

17. Amphitheater  
18. Pavillion and Restrooms  
19. Reflections  
20. Bridge Over Troubled Waters  
21. "Becoming" Statue  
22. Large RV/Bus Parking

For more information scan  
the code:



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# 11

## FOUNTAIN OF LIFE



This feature also illustrates the years of Elvis' life with thirteen upper waterspouts representing the years that Elvis lived in Tupelo. These thirteen spouts spill water over granite, a very hard stone symbolizing the enduring power of strong values learned during his formative years. The 29 lower spouts symbolizing Elvis' life in Memphis flow over limestone, a soft stone symbolizing the softer, better conditions of Elvis' life as an entertainer. The circle is completed as the lower set flows toward the upper set as a symbol of Elvis' continuing reference to the character he learned as a boy in Tupelo. Those traits of humility and generosity flow together with the remaining twenty-nine years to form a complete circle, Elvis' "Fountain of Life."

# 12

## ELVIS PRESLEY MUSEUM



No trip to the birthplace is complete without a stop in the Elvis Presley Museum. The museum originally opened in 1992 and consisted mainly of the personal collection of Janelle McComb, a Tupelo resident and long-time family friend of Elvis and the Presleys. Completely renovated in 2006, the state-of-the-art museum still pays tribute to that friendships and displays new exhibits containing Tupelo artifacts, large photomurals and graphics and audiovisual presentations that focus on Elvis "The Boy."



## 13

## GIFT SHOP



Newly renovated and expanded, the gift shop offers a unique shopping experience just steps from the birthplace. With over 2,000 souvenir items for sale, the fan is sure to find just the right piece of Elvis memorabilia. Whether it's t-shirts, mugs, caps, prints, clocks or a host of other things you are looking for, the gift shop offers a wide selection. Please note there are souvenirs unique to the birthplace and sold only here, so don't miss this opportunity.

## 14

## MEMPHIS BOUND



This 1939 green Plymouth sedan is a replica of the car that the Presley family drove when leaving Tupelo headed for Memphis where Elvis made his transformation into the world's greatest entertainer. The car is parked on the grounds of the Elvis Presley Birthplace Park facing northwest in the direction of Memphis. The car was purchased by the Tupelo Automobile Museum and is leased to the Park for display.



# 15

## EVENT CENTER

### THEATRE

Full Stage. Lighting

Front or rear projection

Seats 126 people

### GREAT HALL

2,500 square feet

20 Tables with 8 chairs per table

Seats about 160

### MEETING ROOM

585 square feet

Lecture Seating about 60

U-shape about 40

Classroom about 25

### CONVENIENCES

Full catering kitchen

Board Room

Green Room

Audio-visual equipment

available at additional cost

Security

Post meeting maintenance









# REFLECTIONS



## REFLECTIONS

If Elvis were alive today and returned to the Birthplace to experience the venues, as his widow Priscilla has said, he would have been overwhelmed with appreciation. He would see that the purpose of the Elvis Presley Memorial Foundation was to create hope for others – for others to “Dream their Dream” as told through the life of Elvis. The power for us – as Tupeloans – is it happened here. It is our reality. Hopes and Dreams are available to all of us – it is a totally inclusive concept.

After experiencing the venues, perhaps Elvis would have wandered down to Reflections, a rus-

tic, natural, serene place perfect for meditation and metaphysical thinking. Sitting by the waterfall with the opening of the lake in view, Elvis would reflect upon those people and blessings that helped him become extraordinarily successful.

To each he would give thanks.

This story serves as an idea of Reflections’ purpose. It’s for anyone to sit by the falling waters in a serene setting and give thanks to all the people and circumstances that blessed them. After which, it’s with Hope that the next Dream will appear.

No trip is complete without a visit to the beautiful,  
serene setting provided by Reflections.

*How it all began...*







Elvis

# BECOMING



## THE OVERLOOK

The story has it that as a young boy, Elvis and his friends would run the hills and hollows of this 15 acres of property. After one of those days, near the end of the day, perhaps Elvis picked up his guitar and walked up to the overlook. His hair was mussed from play. A hole in his sock from wear. His clothes were several sizes larger than needed. All this symbolizing the poor circumstances of the Presley family. He sat on a milk crate, playing his guitar, then looked west toward the lights of the town. Perhaps it was here that Elvis "Dreamed the Dream" of a better life for himself and his family. Who's to know for sure? But we do know the rest of the story.

Standing atop the overlook for all to see, two statues known by one name—"BECOMING"

It symbolizes the transformation from Elvis, The Boy, to Elvis, The Entertainer.

Both statues represent a slice of life of the same person born on common soil that serves as a base for both statues.

Elvis became a larger than life personality with a revolutionary influence on music world wide, yet he always maintained his humble spirit in keeping true to his roots and formative values in East Tupelo.

Walk the trails that Elvis might have walked and visit this venue.

Visit the dramatic sculpture "Becoming"  
now featured at the Birthplace in Tupelo.

*How it all began...*





## QUOTES FROM VISITORS

“Thanks for being so friendly & helpful. Loved it.”

Sharon, from Massachusetts

“Experience of a lifetime. TCB.”

Louise, from Scotland

“It's so amazing to be here!! Where it all started.”

Perello, from France

“Dream come true!!! Love it.”

Nelia, from Philippines

“Great collection of his life.”

Judith, from Georgia

“I have no words. It's just beautiful.”

Kacey, from New South Wales

“Awesome stop along our road trip.”

Welch Family, from Colorado

“Visiting here makes our vacation complete.”

Dawn, from Scotland

“Very lovely place. Will tell my friends.”

Becky, from Utah





# BIRTHPLACE



## DRIVING DISTANCES

Memphis	100 miles
Birmingham	135 miles
Jackson	170 miles
Nashville	200 miles
Atlanta	310 miles
New Orleans	325 miles
St. Louis	340 miles
Biloxi	314 miles
Natchez	275 miles
Branson	412 miles

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