This summer 2019, I was lucky enough to travel to the USA for three weeks, thanks to the University of Leicester Travel Scholarship.

The purpose of my trip was to discover and visit the landmarks of the Civil Right Movement in Dallas as a possible aid for my final year dissertation. This topic has always been a strong interest of mine, as a black woman. It is vital for me to understand how my ancestors lived and what they had to go through to be free. Therefore, going to a city like Dallas gave me an insight into their life and it was the perfect opportunity to learn more about African American history.

I departed on June 26th from Birmingham to Dallas, Texas. At my arrival, I was welcomed by my brother, aunt and cousins who live there. Due to the time difference and jet-lag, I preferred to spend quality family time the first two days, rest and start planning an itinerary of places to visit around the city.

I quickly discovered that Dallas is a very large city, with little to no public transport; this meant that everyone must have a car to get around the different districts. From Mansfield, where my auntie lived, to Downtown Dallas it was a 40 minutes’ drive. This journey was facilitated by the amazing road system and big connecting highway that runs through the state.

The places I visited are the principal landmarks of Dallas in relation to the African American culture. The first one I visited on 1st of July was the Millermore Mansion located in the Dallas Heritage Village. This was a great walk down the past, as there are different historical buildings to be seen. The village is situated in a place called Old City Park that has a collection of historic buildings and homes. One of those historic buildings is called the Millermore Mansion. In 1855, a man named William Brown Miller constructed the mansion and finished the completion just as the Civil War broke out. The mansion is named after the family that lived in the home for over one hundred years. In 1855, a man named William Brown Miller constructed the mansion and finished the completion just as the Civil War broke out. William Brown Miller was one of the most prosperous cotton planters and slave-owners in the Antebellum South. When I entered the two-story home, I felt the presence of the paranormal activity that the guide was talking about. The building was very well preserved and one of the most interesting things to see in Dallas.
Then, the Dallas Civil Right Museum was my favourite one. The museum has a collection of original speeches, books, spoken word, art, and artifacts reflecting the Civil Rights movement to inspire dream keepers and change agents. During my visit I learned how the enslaved used songs, visual codes in quilts to seek help from nearby countries. Furthermore, the significance of jellybeans and a bar of soap in seeking the right to vote and why the 28th of August 1955 is such an important date. The tour started with the Underground Railroad, then we moved to the Civil Right Movement and to finish off, the Black Wall Street and Trail of Tears. During this tour, I met some amazing kids and adults that actively volunteer at the museum.

On the 13th of July, we drove past the Freedman’s Memorial Cementery. It was interesting to find out that it was established as a burial ground for Dallas’ early African American population in 1861. The memorial was built in late 1990 to commemorate this important site and the significant contributions made by African Americans toward the growth and development of Dallas.
In addition, Hamilton Park and Fair Park were the perfect areas to explore African American culture and history. Experiencing these places, fulfilled the purpose of my trip, which was discover the neighborhoods and past of the black community in the USA. Dallas is a multicultural city, therefore in these places I got to see a lot of people with different backgrounds and ethnicities.

Furthermore, I had time to do fun activities in Dallas, such as going to Hurrican Harbour and Six Flags, which are theme parks. These days were filled with laughter, joy and a lot of sun. The weather during my entire stay was favourable, with extremely sunny days and high temperatures. Arguably, sometimes it felt like excessive heat, with temperatures reaching 42 degrees Celsius. Texas’ weather varies widely, from arid in the west to humid in the east.

To conclude, I want to outline an estimate of expenditure for this trip. The travel, which was a return flight from London Heathrow to Dallas Forth-worth, had a cost of £594. The accommodation and food were free, because I stayed at family members’ houses. The tourist visa to enter the USA cost me £28. In addition, a worldwide travel insurance cost me £40. Finally, an estimate of £50 on museums entrance fees. The approximate total expenditure for this trip was of £712. The University of Leicester awarded me £400, which means I only spent £312. I will always be grateful to the university for the opportunity to explore African American culture and history. African Americans hold a unique place in the history of Dallas, this trip enabled me to see, highlight the past struggles, and progress of African Americans. This will be certainly beneficial for my dissertation research as my topic will be revolved around slavery.