

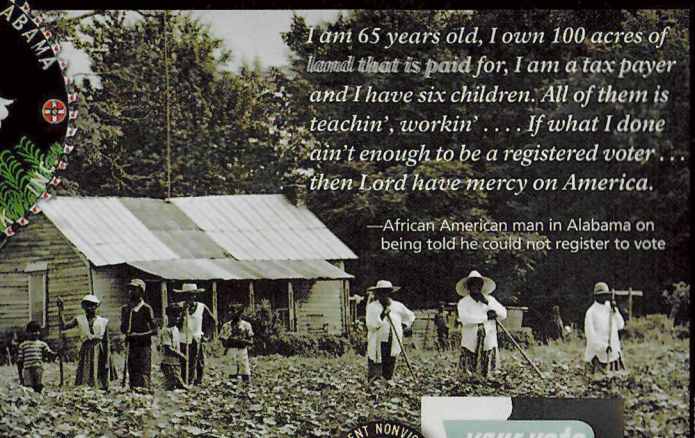


On the first attempt to march, John Lewis (right) and Hosea Williams lead the marchers as they approach waiting state troopers.

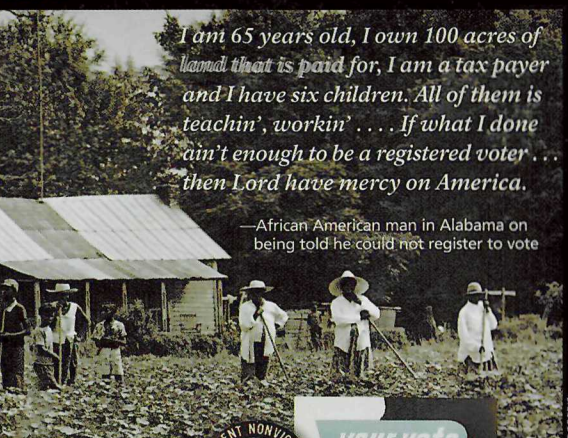
The 54-mile march from Selma, Alabama, to the state capitol in Montgomery in 1965 culminated a journey of a hundred years by African Americans to gain one of the most fundamental of American freedoms:

the right to vote.

The peaceful march was possible because in the preceding days courageous citizens, local leaders, and civil rights groups had, at the cost of harassment, bloodshed, and innocent lives, come together to demand that right. The final march was a celebration of their achievement, a procession for fallen comrades, and the climactic event of the modern civil rights movement.



African American farmers who worked the fields of Alabama's "black belt," named for its dark, productive soil, were denied the vote—thwarted by unfair laws and harassed by the Ku Klux Klan.



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WHY SELMA?

How did the old cotton port city of Selma, Ala., the seat of Dallas County, become the national focus of the voting rights movement? At mid-20th century African Americans made up roughly half of the county's voting age population, but since 1901 the county and state had systematically denied them the vote through literacy tests, poll taxes, and intimidation. In 1961 only 156 of the county's 15,000 voting age African Americans were registered to vote.

The county's dismal record led the Justice Department to request records from county registrars, but it was thwarted by an unsympathetic judge. The Dallas County Voters League (DCVL)

added a few voters to the rolls in the early 1960s through voter registration classes. In 1963 the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), an advocate of grassroots efforts like those of DCVL, sent representatives to Selma to help with the voting clinics. When African Americans assembled at the county courthouse to register, county sheriff Jim Clark and his deputies harassed people waiting in line and attacked SNCC workers. In December 1964 DCVL asked the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), headed by Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., to help. SCLC knew that Clark's violent ways would help draw national attention to the voting rights drive.



Statement by the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC)

... but we'll never turn back SUPPORT: **Rev. L. L. Anderson** COME TO A **Mass Meeting!** TABERNALE BAPTIST CHURCH (BROAD ST. & 10TH) TUES. NIGHT, MAY 14, 1963 7:30 P. M. GUEST SPEAKER: **MR. JAMES FORMAN**, Executive Secretary of Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee of America, Inc. (Room 10, 10th St., New York, N.Y.) **WALK TO OUR SIDE**

Demonstrators in Selma hold hands and sing. (Right) Flyer announces SNCC speaker. Churches were the safest places for such activities.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The voting rights movement drew on the wellsprings of religion, nonviolence, and music for guidance and for the moral and physical courage the struggle demanded. Many southern communities, fearing organization by African Americans, forbade them to gather in large groups—except in their churches. African American leaders were vulnerable to economic reprisal—except preachers, who were beholden only to their congregations. Because clergymen enjoyed moral authority in their communities and could speak persuasively before large groups, they emerged as the movement's natural leaders. The most famous of these preachers, Dr. King, believed deeply in the principle of "non-

violent direct action" as the most effective and morally justified strategy for social change.

Inspired by earlier nonviolent reform movements, especially the one for Indian independence led by Mohandas Gandhi, SCLC and SNCC helped organize sit-ins, rallies, and marches to protest racial discrimination. Since jail and often physical harm were the result, nonviolent protest required profound bravery by participants. They took to song for solidarity, to endure long vigils, and to build courage for impending confrontation. Sam Cooke's soaring, gospel-tinged *A Change Is Gonna Come*, a hit in early 1965, was background music to the struggle in Selma.



Sheriff Clark jabs teachers attempting to register—all caught on camera, a valuable ally to the movement. (Right) The "Never" button worn by Clark and Governor Wallace made their sentiments clear.

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A GATHERING OF FORCES

The push for voter registration in Selma picked up momentum as SCLC joined forces with SNCC and DCVL. On January 2, in defiance of an injunction against large gatherings, Clark addressed a mass rally at Brown Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church. On the 18th some 400 people joined the first voter registration march from Brown Chapel to the county courthouse. Sheriff Clark directed the marchers to an alley, then allowed no one to register. The next day, when the marchers refused to stand in the alley and DCVL's Amelia Boynton responded too slowly to Clark's order to move, he grabbed her by the collar and shoved her roughly towards a patrol car, then arrested 67 other



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THE CONFLICT TURNS DEADLY

In a tactical move by SCLC and SNCC to force the arrest of Dr. King and dramatize the campaign, King and 250 marchers violated a parade ordinance as they marched to the courthouse on February 1. When 500 students marched later that day, Clark and his men arrested them with liberal use of nightsticks and at times cattle prods. By the 5th more than 3,000 marchers had been arrested, many held in prison camps outside town.

The mass arrests and harsh conditions under which the marchers were held caused growing concern in Washington. On the day of Dr. King's release on the 5th, his "Letter from a Selma Jail" depicting the obstacles to voting



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BLOODY SUNDAY

On a bright Sunday afternoon 600 marchers, in ranks of two, moved slowly up the Edmund Pettus Bridge rising over the Alabama River. Leading were John Lewis and SCLC's Hosea Williams. The marchers had left Brown Chapel singing *Ain't Gonna Let Nobody Turn Me 'Round*; now they walked quietly. They could see only the calm river and the bare trees on the far bank.

Reaching the apex of the bridge, they saw below what Lewis described as a "sea of blue"—a phalanx of Alabama state troopers blocking U.S. 80. Behind the troopers Sheriff Clark's posse waited on horses. They stopped a few yards short of the troopers,



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TURNAROUND TUESDAY

As state troopers continued to beat marchers after they reached the Brown Chapel area, enraged onlookers called for retaliation. It was a pivotal moment in the voting rights campaign: the principle of nonviolence was being tested in the heat of attack. The leaders were able to convince those ready to fight that this could only undermine the movement. They had to keep the sympathy they had earned, and with the image of troopers beating resisting marchers televised nationally, the spotlight was on Selma. Dr. King called on the nation's clergy to come to Selma for another attempt to march. But Federal District Court Judge Frank Johnson issued an injunction against another march until



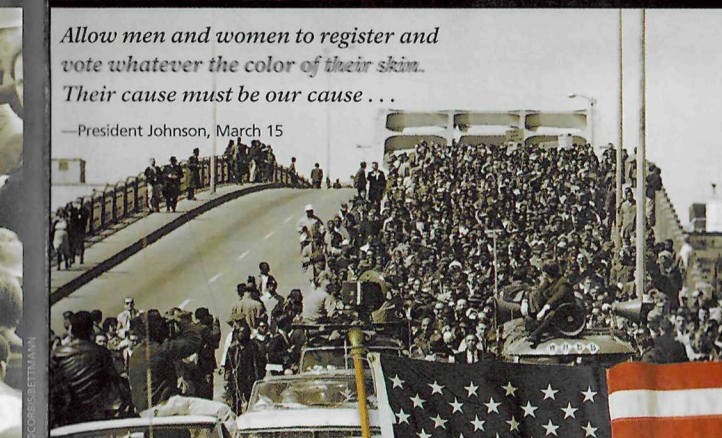
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WITNESSES FOR FREEDOM

A week later the long-sought goal finally appeared on the horizon. On the 15th President Johnson called on Congress to pass a voting rights bill; on the next day Judge Johnson lifted the injunction against the march. Jubilation replaced fear, but local resistance remained fierce. That same day marchers in Montgomery were brutally beaten, causing Dr. King to respond angrily, "the cup of endurance has run over."

Governor Wallace refused President Johnson's request for state protection of the marchers, so Johnson nationalized 1,900 Alabama national guardsmen and dispatched 2,000 soldiers and dozens of FBI agents and federal marshals. On March 21 some

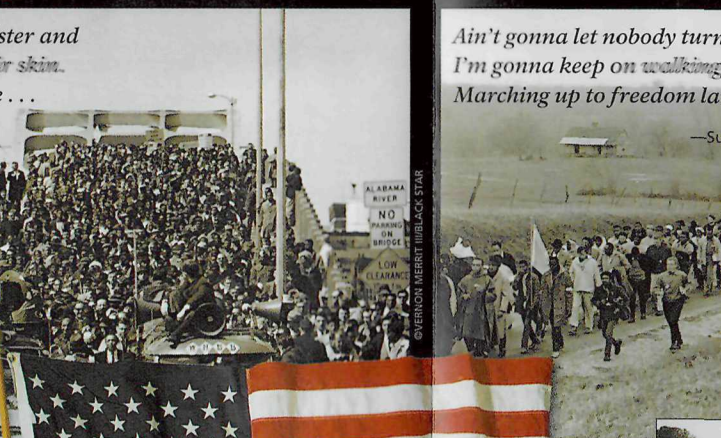


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IN THE WAKE OF THE MARCH

The triumphal march provoked another death that night. Viola Liuzzo had come from Detroit to help. After she had carried marchers back to Selma, Klansmen sped alongside her car and shot her. (See map on other side.) Resistance to change would die hard.



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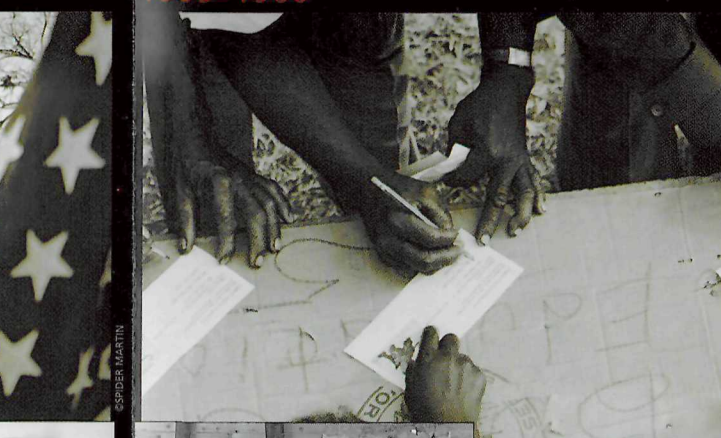


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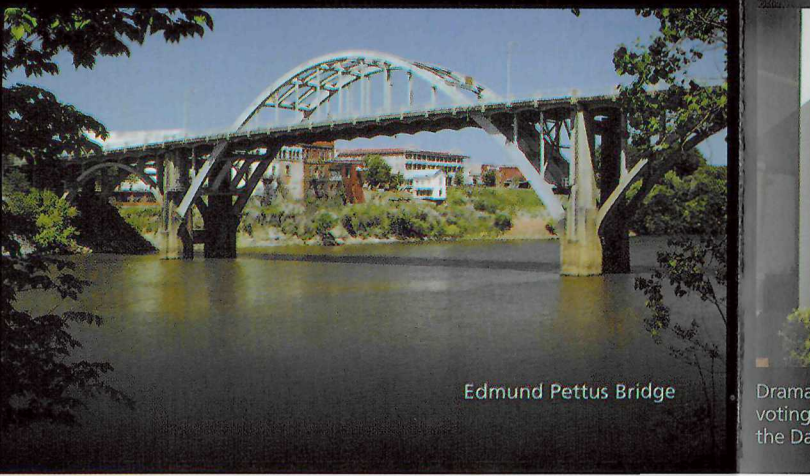
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Following the Trail



Edmund Pettus Bridge



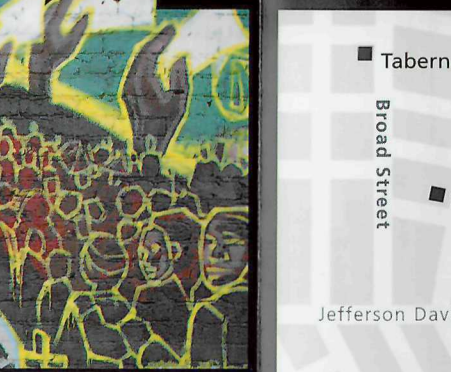
Dramatic confrontations during the voting rights campaign took place at the Dallas County Court House.



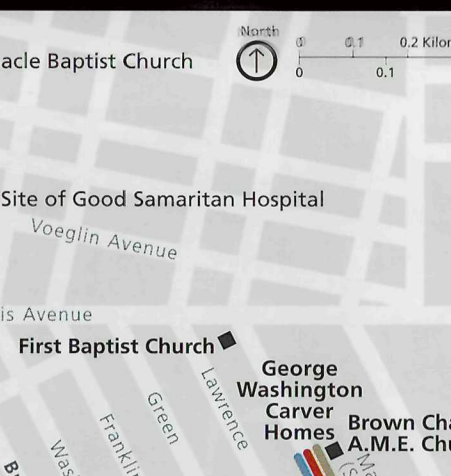
The First Baptist Church supported the Selma voting rights campaign before it became national news.



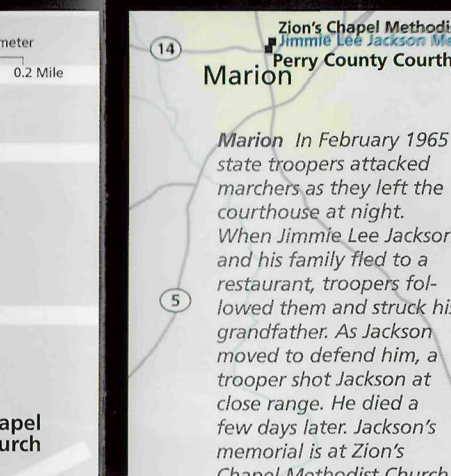
Brown Chapel A.M.E. Church became the command post and spiritual heart of the local voting rights movement.



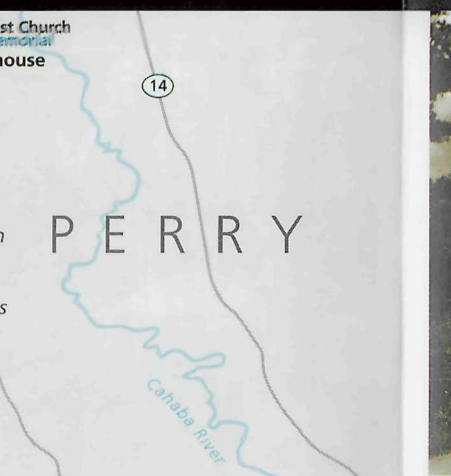
A mural (detail above) near where Rev. James Reeb was attacked portrays a people's trials and hopes for the future.



On the first attempt and on the final march, marchers took the same route from Brown Chapel A.M.E. Church and over the Edmund Pettus Bridge (blue and red lines). The red line here and on the large map indicates the final route along U.S. 80. The second attempt followed a slightly different route (brown line).



Marion In February 1965 state troopers attacked marchers as they left the courthouse at night. When Jimmie Lee Jackson and his family fled to a restaurant, troopers followed them and struck his grandfather. As Jackson moved to defend him, a trooper shot Jackson at close range. He died a few days later. Jackson's memorial is at Zion's Chapel Methodist Church.



Much of U.S. 80, the route of the march, was a quiet country road in 1965.



The Viola Liuzzo Memorial is near the place where she was shot.



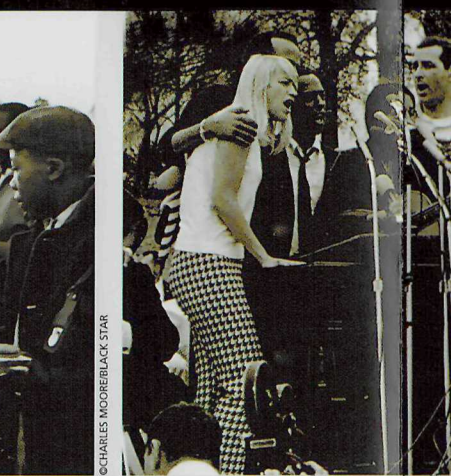
Feeding marchers after a long day on the road.



The "Stars for Freedom" rally at City of Saint Jude, March 24.



The Alabama State Capitol was the marchers' goal and site of the rally of 25,000 people. Just steps from the crowd was the spot where Jefferson Davis had been sworn in as president of the Confederacy a century earlier.



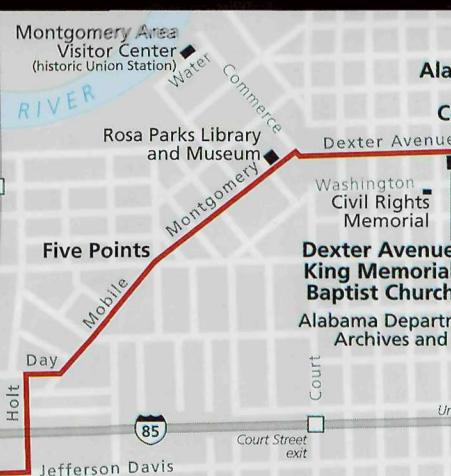
Dexter Avenue King Memorial Baptist Church is an icon of the civil rights movement.



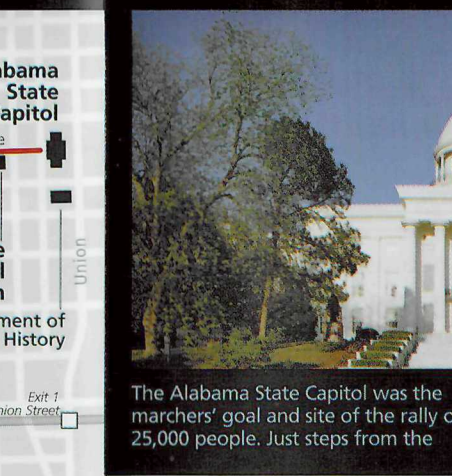
At the Civil Rights Memorial, water flows over the names of those slain in the civil rights struggle.



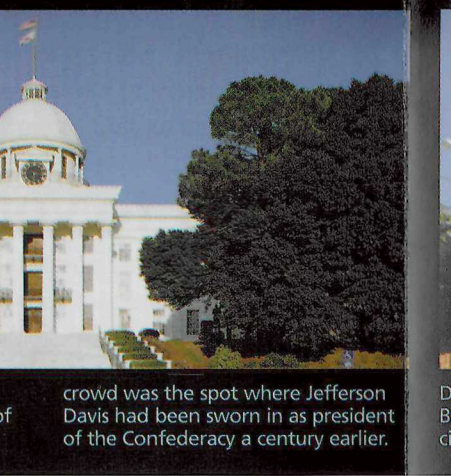
The last leg of the march, from City of Saint Jude to the Alabama State Capitol, is almost five miles long on busy city streets. If you wish to follow the marchers' route in Montgomery, we recommend that you drive it.



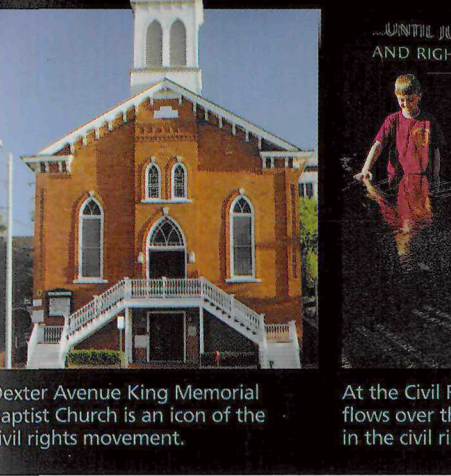
U.S. 80 has been designated a National Scenic Byway, Alabama State Scenic Highway, and All-American Road. The Alabama Department of Transportation and Federal Highway Administration donated funds for this brochure and the Lowndes Interpretive Center. The Center, built on the site of Tent City, is open from 9 am to 4:30 pm daily.



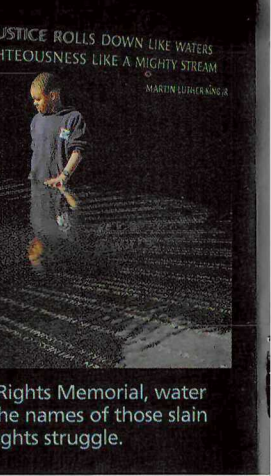
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Courage, hate, triumph, fear, hope—

powerful emotions are evoked by the sites related to the 1965 voting rights march from Selma to Montgomery. For those who had a role in the events, memories haunt these places. For others the experience is indirect but also deeply felt.

Because photographs and film of the events played so crucial a role in the struggle, these images and today's historic sites enrich each other: The streets and buildings, many virtually unchanged, help us engage more deeply with recorded scenes from four decades ago. At the same time the old images make the sites resonate with the passions of a stormy era. Standing before them is like watching an old newsreel, our imagination calling up the cries and confusion from that terrible, noble time.

Some of the sites inspire, as they summon again the idealism and purpose that drove the voting rights movement. Others make us uncomfortable—commemorating the death of an innocent, marking a place where people suffered bigotry and brutality—but this is why they are so important. These places will not let us forget.

Selma: Echoes of the Struggle

Selma remains a small, quiet town. In a day you can walk to the major sites connected with the voting rights drive. We suggest you start with the Park Contact Station at 816 Selma Ave. Park interpreters can answer questions and provide historical context for the story. You'll also find more literature there.

"Bloody Sunday" Confrontation Site Here Alabama state troopers and the county sheriff's posse halted, then attacked, marchers on March 7, 1965.

Brown Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church This was the site of early mass meetings in the 1960s voting rights campaign. It was also the staging point for registration marches to the county courthouse and for the final march to Montgomery.

Cecil C. Jackson Public Safety Building This building served as the Selma City Hall and as the

jail for both Selma and Dallas County in 1965. When Martin Luther King, Jr., and a number of marchers were arrested in February, many were incarcerated here.

Dallas County Court House This was the destination for most voting rights marches in Selma. Those trying to register here were confronted with bureaucratic obstacles or roughly removed from the premises.

Edmund Pettus Bridge This bridge over the Alabama River became symbolic of the first attempts to march from Selma to Montgomery. On March 7—"Bloody Sunday"—marchers crossed the bridge as they left Selma; on the other side they were beaten back by state troopers blocking U.S. 80.

First Baptist Church This church took the early lead in the voting rights struggle in Selma and Dallas County. Members

allowed the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee to use the church as its first organizational base and rallying point when it arrived in Selma in 1963.

George Washington Carver Homes Many participants in the Selma marches lived in this large housing complex. Marchers and civil rights workers from out of town were lodged here.

Sullivan Building The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference directed their local voting rights activities from this building.

To make the most of your time: If you have half a day: Take the Martin Luther King, Jr. Street Historic Walking Tour (Brown Chapel A.M.E. Church, First Baptist Church, Carver Homes) and see the Dallas County Court House and the Bloody Sunday confrontation site.

If you have two hours: Take the Martin Luther King, Jr. Street Historic Walking Tour and see the Bloody Sunday confrontation site.

Related Sites Clark Elementary School Teachers from this school marched to the county courthouse and attempted to register, inspiring others who had been reluctant to join the campaign.

National Voting Rights Museum and Institute Documents, artifacts, and videos trace the voting rights struggle and commemorate those who took part.

Site of Good Samaritan Hospital The primary hospital for African Americans during segregation and where most injured marchers were taken.

Tabernacle Baptist Church Site of the first mass meeting on voting rights in Selma, 1964.

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Campsites The marchers spent five days and four nights on the road, camping on farms owned by people friendly to the movement. Organizers had to provide tents, enough hot food to feed 300 people three meals a

day, and sanitary facilities. Doctors tended blisters and sprained ankles. Despite the logistical challenges, the marchers' spirits remained high as they eased their journey with song.

On the road to Montgomery after carrying marchers back to Selma, Viola Liuzzo was shot and killed by Klansmen. Her memorial, near the place where she was shot, overlooks the route of the march.

At the Lowndes County Line U.S. 80 narrowed from four lanes to two. The court order allowing the march stipulated that only 300 marchers could walk this part of the road, both to keep one lane open for traffic

and because the narrow, rural road through the county would be the most dangerous part of the march. Three hundred people would be much easier to guard than 4,000.

Tent City—White landowners in Lowndes County, retaliating against tenant farmers who registered, voted, or engaged in any voting rights activities, threw them off their land. The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and Lowndes County leaders worked to help families stay together and remain in the county.

They bought tents, cots, heaters, food, and water and helped several families build a temporary "tent city." Despite harassment—including shots regularly fired into the encampment—residents persevered for nearly two years as organizers helped them find new jobs and look for permanent housing.

City of Saint Jude, a Catholic institution with a hospital, school, and church, was the last campsite for the marchers and the site of a musical rally the night before the final leg of the march into Montgomery.

Montgomery See detail map at right

White Hall

Lowndes Interpretive Center Site of Tent City

Campsite 1 David Hall Farm March 21

Campsite 2 Rosie Steele Farm March 22

Campsite 3 Robert Gardner Farm March 23

Campsite 4 City of Saint Jude March 24

Hayneville In August 1965 seminarian Jonathan Daniels was jailed for joining boycotts of segregated facilities. Soon after his release he was shot and killed in a confrontation with a storeowner.

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Montgomery See detail map at right

U.S. 80 has been designated a National Scenic Byway, Alabama State Scenic Highway, and All-American Road. The Alabama Department of Transportation and Federal Highway Administration donated funds for this brochure and the Lowndes Interpretive Center. The Center, built on the site of Tent City, is open from 9 am to 4:30 pm daily.

Alabama State Capitol In the emotional aftermath of the shooting death of Jimmie Lee Jackson by an Alabama state trooper, some suggested protesting to Gov. George Wallace by carrying Jackson's body to the steps of the capitol building. Organizers decided instead to stage a memorial march from Selma to Montgomery. When the marchers reached the capitol, state troopers barred them from the steps, so SCLC's Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., SNCC's John Lewis, and other speakers stood on a flatbed truck in front of the capitol to address the crowd. Governor Wallace refused to receive a voting rights petition from a delegation led by Dr. King.

City of Saint Jude In the 1930s the Catholic Church established in Montgomery a nondiscriminatory religious, health, and educational complex that was far ahead of its time in the segregated South. It offered 36 acres for

the last encampment of the march. The "Stars for Freedom" rally, organized by Harry Belafonte, included Sammy Davis, Jr.; Sidney Poitier; Joan Baez; Mahalia Jackson; Peter, Paul, and Mary; and many others.

Dexter Avenue King Memorial Baptist Church This church, known then as Dexter Avenue Baptist Church, was a block from the Alabama State Capitol and the staging area for the rally in Montgomery at the end of the march from Selma. It was already a civil rights landmark: In 1955, when Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., was the new pastor of the church, local activists formed the Montgomery Improvement Association in response to the arrest of Rosa Parks for refusing to give up her bus seat to a white man. They asked Dr. King to head the group, and his church became the headquarters for the successful 1955–56 boycott of the Montgomery bus system.

Related Sites Alabama Department of Archives and History A photographic exhibit of the march from Selma to Montgomery is given a prominent place among the artifacts and documents of Alabama history.

Civil Rights Memorial (at the Southern Poverty Law Center) is a moving tribute in water and stone to those slain in the civil rights movement from 1955 to 1968.

Rosa Parks Library and Museum The courageous act of civil disobedience by Rosa Parks that led to the 1955–56 Montgomery Bus Boycott is powerfully documented.

H. Council Trenchholm State Technical College The library's collections include documents, images, and oral histories of the march and the voting rights movement.

About Your Visit To retrace the marchers' steps, start at Brown Chapel in Selma and follow signs to U.S. 80. Take U.S. 80 to Montgomery; follow signs to the Alabama State Capitol.

For Your Safety Wear comfortable walking shoes. Watch for snakes, poison ivy, and fire ants. During hot weather drink plenty of water.

More Information Selma to Montgomery National Historic Trail 7002 U.S. 80 West Hayneville, AL 36040 334-877-1984 www.nps.gov/semo

In 1996 Congress established Selma to Montgomery National Historic Trail. For more information on the National Park Service, visit www.nps.gov.