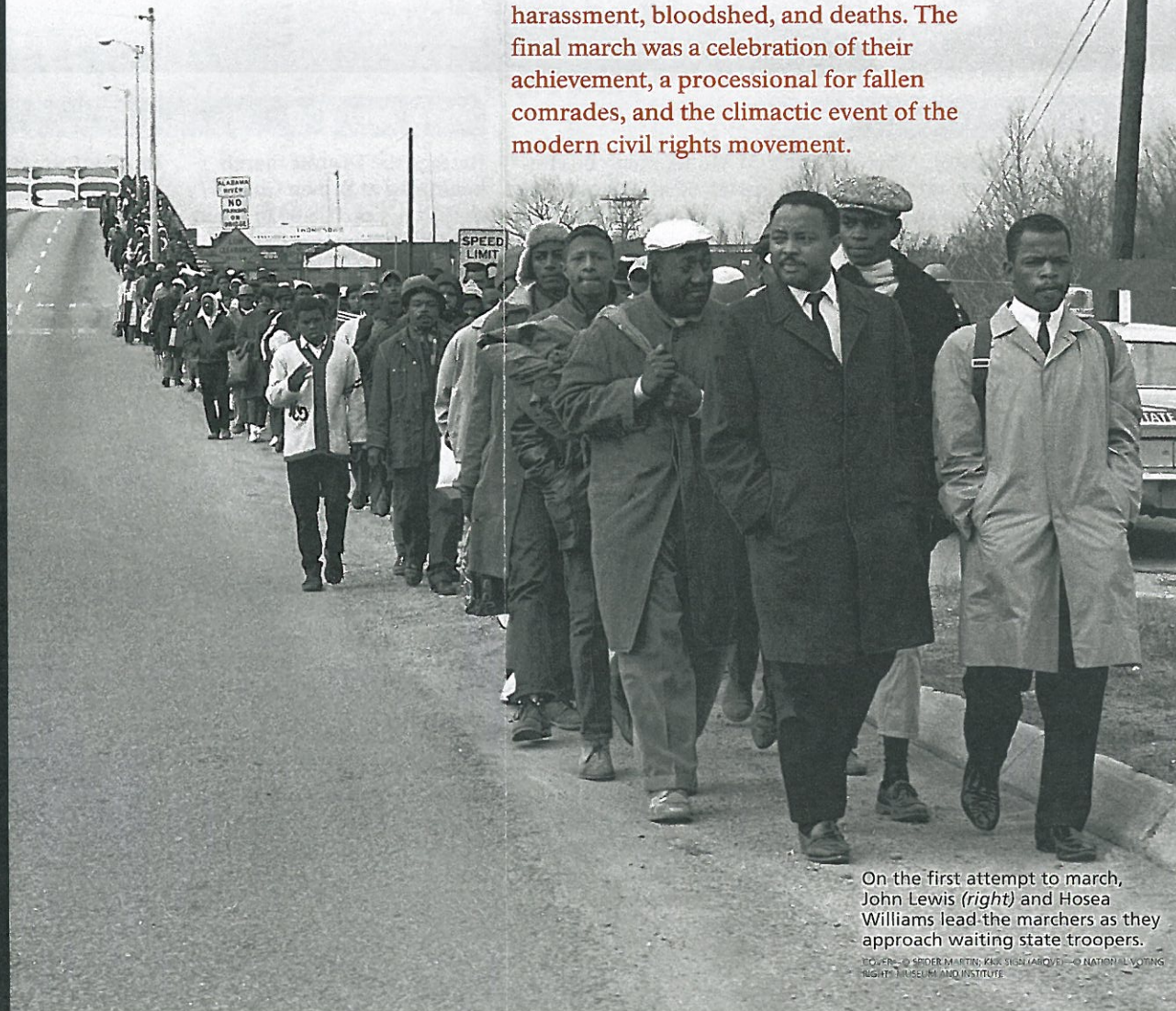


Selma to Montgomery

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
National Historic Trail
Alabama



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

TOP: SPIDER MARTIN; KLAN: SELMA (ARQVET) © NATIONAL VOTING RIGHTS MUSEUM AND INSTITUTE

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 courageous citizens, local leaders, and civil rights groups had been demanding that right for months. They had endured harassment, bloodshed, and deaths. 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 by unfair laws. They were also harassed by the Ku Klux Klan.

I am 65 years old, I own 100 acres of land that is paid for, I am a tax payer and I have six children. All of them is teachin', workin'... If what I done ain't enough to be a registered voter... then Lord have mercy on America.

—African American man in Alabama on being told he could not register to vote



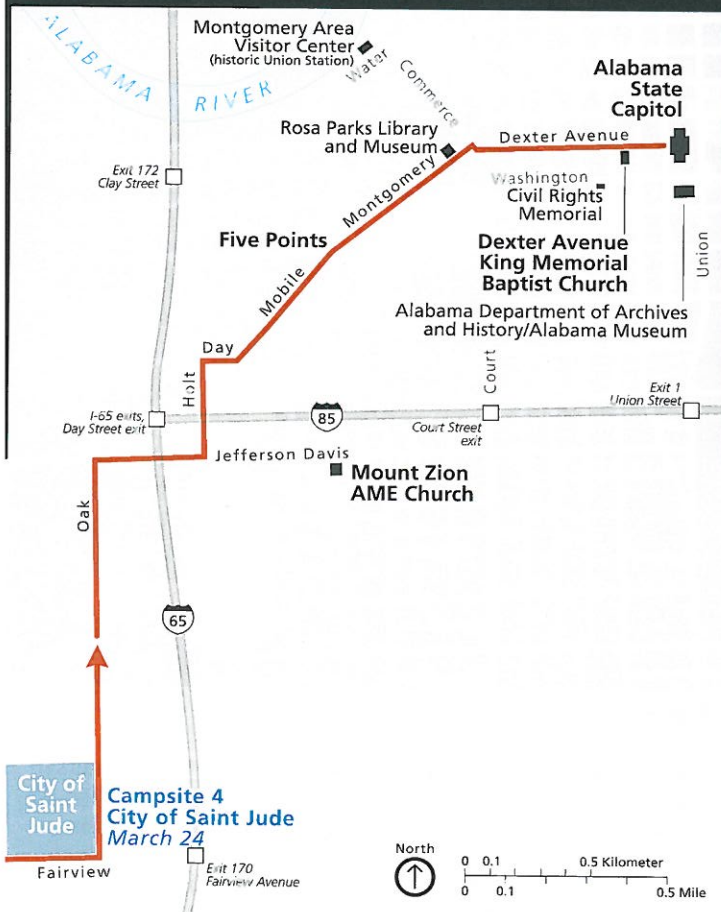
WHY SELMA?

How did the old cotton port of Selma, Alabama, the seat of Dallas County, become the national focus of the voting rights movement? In 1950 African Americans made up about half of Dallas County's voting-age population. But the county and state had been denying them the right to vote since 1901 through literacy tests, poll taxes, and intimidation. Only 156 of the county's 15,000 voting-age African Americans were registered to vote in 1961.

The county's dismal record led the US Justice Department to request records from county registrars, but it was denied 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 help with the voting clinics. When African Americans came to the county courthouse to register, county sheriff Jim Clark and his deputies harassed them 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.

Montgomery

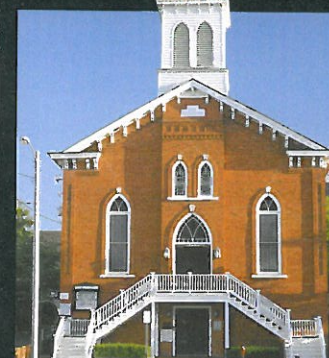


The last leg of the march, from City of Saint Jude to the Alabama State Capitol, is almost five miles long on busy city streets. If you wish to follow the march route in Montgomery, we recommend that you drive it.

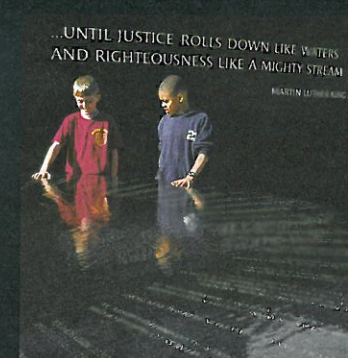
US 80 is a National Scenic Byway, Alabama State Scenic Highway, and All-American Road. The Alabama Department of Transportation and Federal Highway Administration donated funds for this brochure and the Lowndes Interpretive Center. Built on the site of Tent City, it is open 9 am to 4:30 pm daily.



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



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.

Montgomery: Resistance and Change

Alabama State Capitol After Jimmie Lee Jackson was killed, some people wanted to carry his body to the capitol as a protest. Instead, leaders organized the memorial march from Selma to Montgomery. State troopers barred marchers from the capitol steps, so speakers stood on a truck to address the crowd.

City of Saint Jude In the 1930s the Catholic Church established a health and education complex open to everyone, which was unheard of in the segregated South. It offered space for the march's last campsite and the "Stars for Freedom" rally. Performers included Harry Belafonte, Joan Baez, Mahalia Jackson, Sidney Poitier, Sammy Davis Jr., and the trio Peter, Paul, and Mary.

Dexter Avenue King Memorial Baptist Church Known then as Dexter Avenue Baptist Church, it was the staging area for the final rally at the capitol. It had been the headquarters of

the 1955 Montgomery bus boycott organized after Rosa Parks was arrested for refusing to give her seat to a white man.

Related Sites

Alabama Department of Archives and History and Alabama Museum Exhibits place the civil rights movement in the context of the state's history.

Civil Rights Memorial Center (at the *Southern Poverty Law Center*) Exhibits and a memorial by Maya Lin honoring those slain from 1955 to 1968.

Rosa Parks Library and Museum Exhibits document her courageous civil disobedience that led to the 1955 Montgomery bus boycott.

Trenholm State Archives Gallery (at *Trenholm State Technical College Library*) Exhibits about the civil rights movement.

About Your Visit

Retrace the 54-mile march beginning at Brown Chapel in Selma. Take US 80 to Montgomery; follow signs to the Alabama State Capitol.

Stop at the two interpretive centers in Selma and White Hall (see maps). View a film and exhibits, and visit the bookstore. Both are open Tuesday–Saturday, 9–4:30; closed Thanksgiving, December 25, and January 1.

Safety and Regulations

Wear comfortable walking shoes. • Watch for snakes, poison ivy, and fire ants. • Drink plenty of water. • For firearms regulations check the park website.

Accessibility

We strive to make our facilities, services, and programs accessible to all. For information call or check the park website.

More Information

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

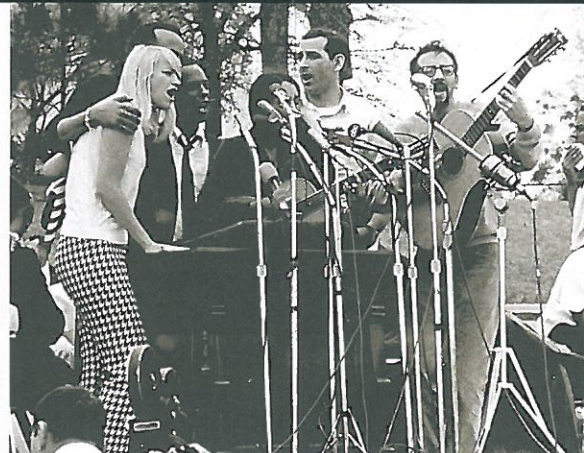
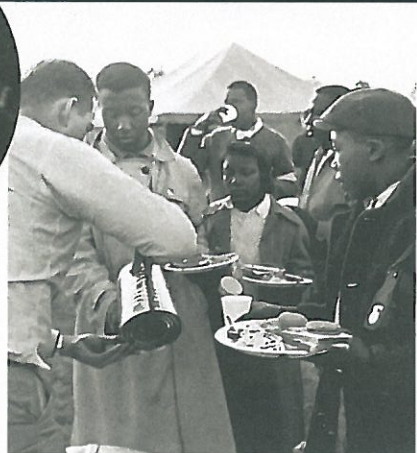
In 1996 Congress established Selma to Montgomery National Historic Trail. To learn more about National Park Service programs in America's communities, visit www.nps.gov.

National Park Foundation.
Join the park community.
www.nationalparks.org

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Viola Liuzzo
COURTESY PENNY LIUZZO HERPINGTON



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.

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

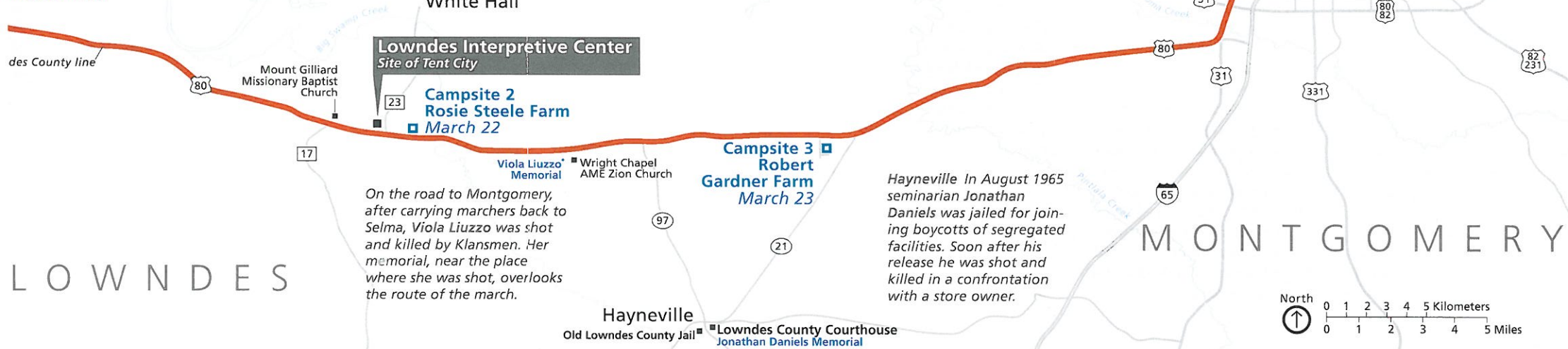
and because the narrow, rural road through the county would be the most dangerous part of the march. Three hundred people would be much easier to guard than 4,000.

Tent City In Lowndes County, white landowners retaliated against tenant farmers who registered, voted, or engaged in any voting rights activities by throwing them off their land. The Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and Lowndes County leaders helped 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." Residents were often harassed and shot at, but they persevered for nearly two years as they searched for jobs and permanent housing.

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

Montgomery Historic Trail



Campsite 4
City of Saint Jude
March 24

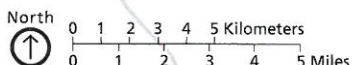
Montgomery
See detail map at right

H. Council Trenholm
State Technical College Archives

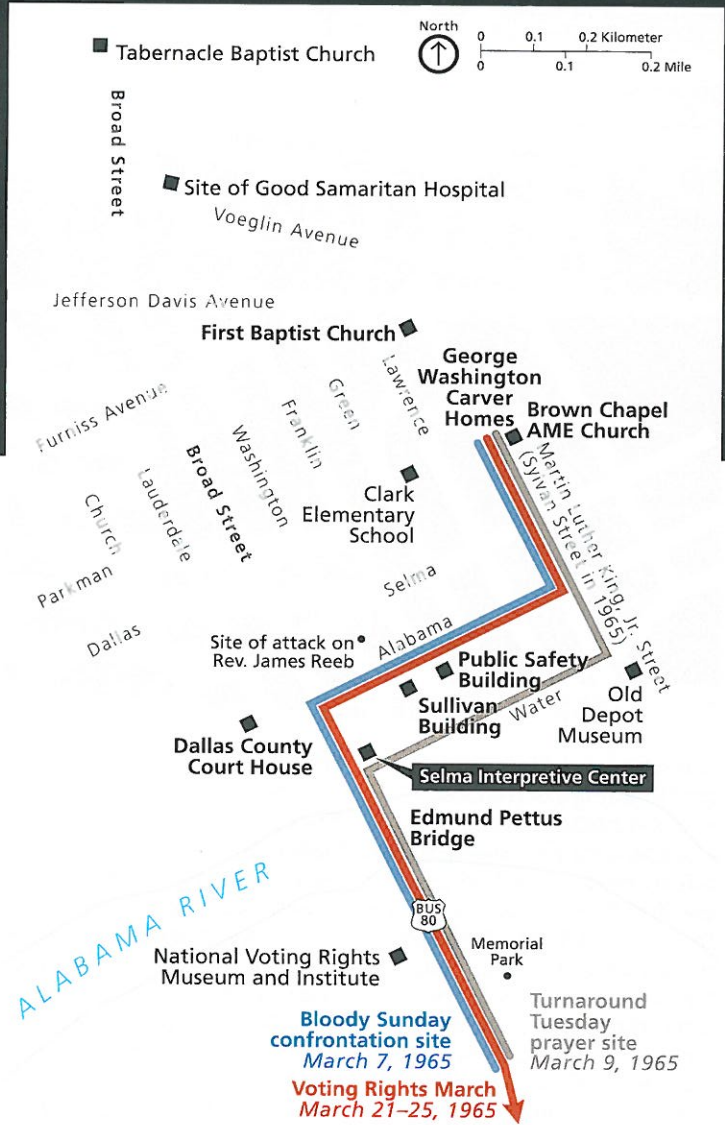
On the road to Montgomery, after carrying marchers back to Selma, Viola Liuzzo was shot and killed by Klansmen. Her memorial, near the place where she was shot, overlooks the route of the march.

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 store owner.

Hayneville
Old Lowndes County Jail
Lowndes County Courthouse
Jonathan Daniels Memorial



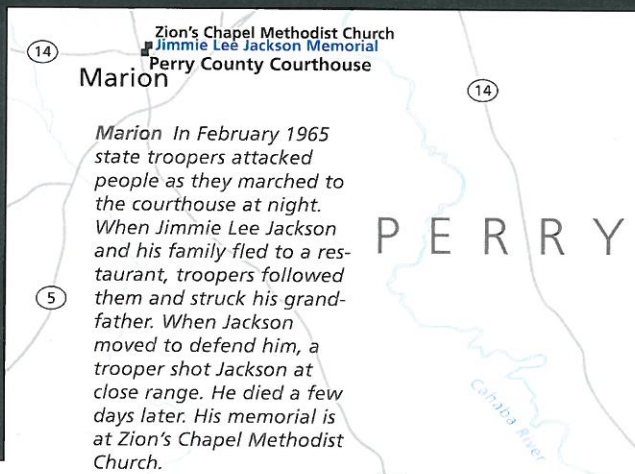
Selma



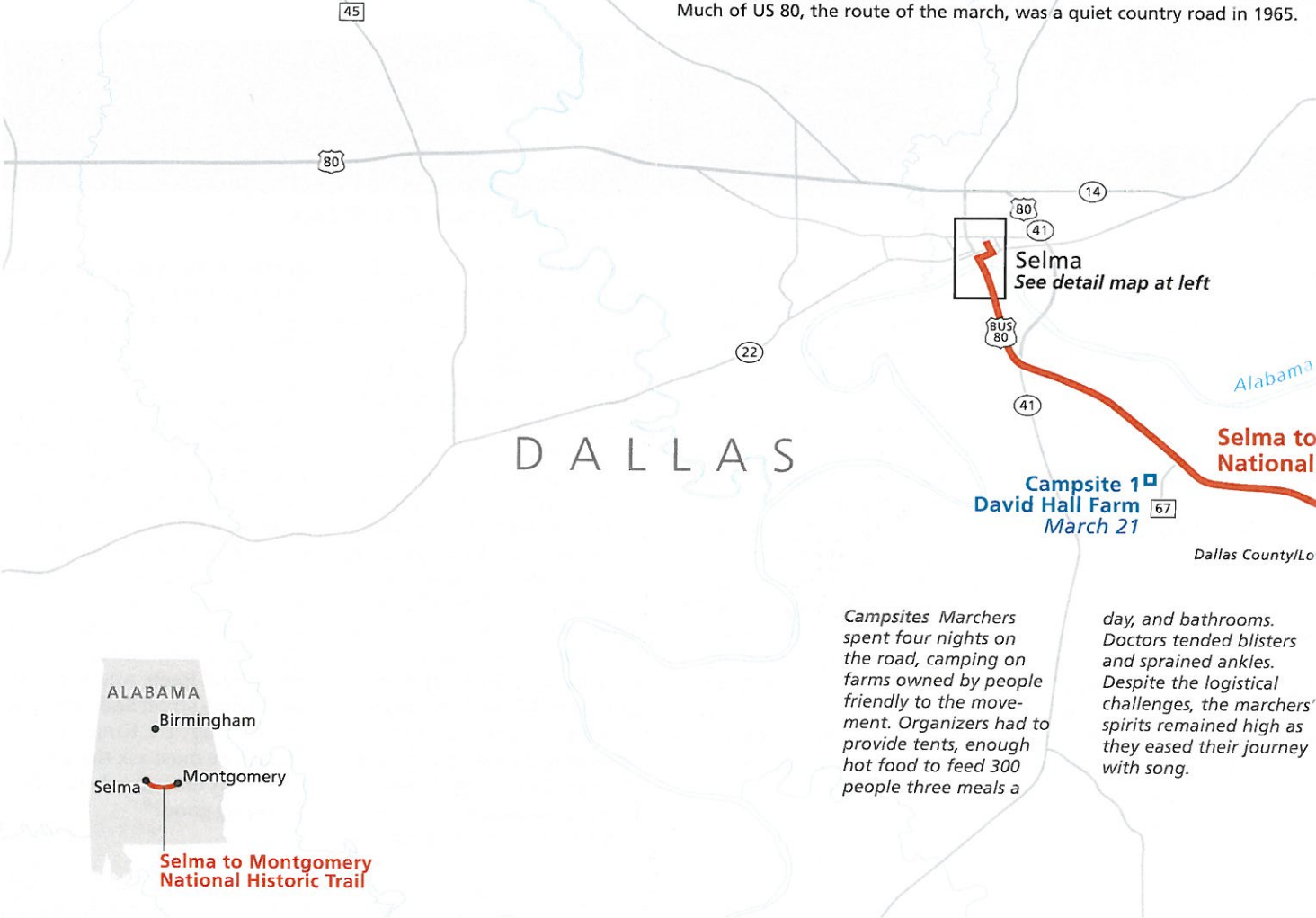
On the first attempt and on the final march, marchers took the same route from Brown Chapel AME Church over the Edmund Pettus Bridge (blue and red lines). The red line here and on the large map shows the final route along US 80. The second attempt followed a slightly different route (brown line).

- March 7, 1965
Bloody Sunday
- March 9, 1965
Turnaround Tuesday
- March 21-25, 1965
Selma to Montgomery Voting Rights March

Selma to Montgomery National Historic Trail



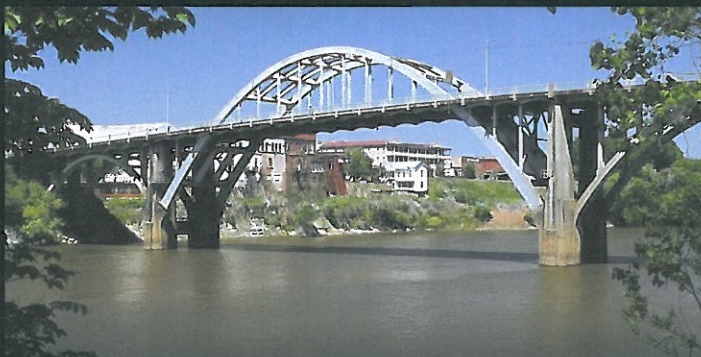
Much of US 80, the route of the march, was a quiet country road in 1965.



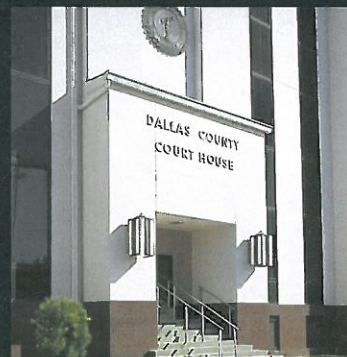
Campsites Marchers spent four nights on the road, camping on farms owned by people friendly to the movement. Organizers had to provide tents, enough hot food to feed 300 people three meals a

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

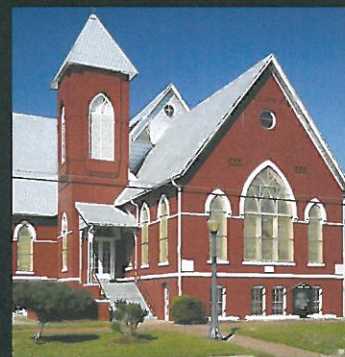
Following the Trail



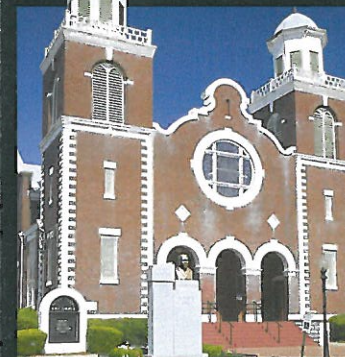
Edmund Pettus Bridge



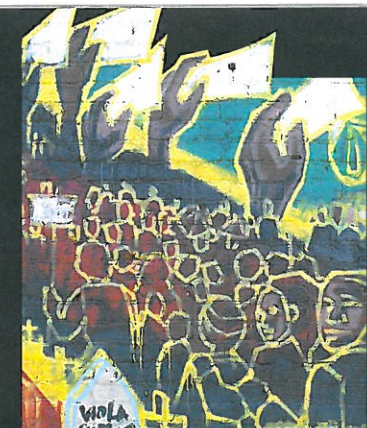
Dramatic confrontations during the voting rights campaign took place at the Dallas County Court House.



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



Brown Chapel AME 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.

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 five 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. We suggest you start your visit at the **Selma Interpretive Center** at the corner of Broad and Water. Park rangers can answer questions and provide historical context for the story. Then follow the self-guiding tour of major sites connected with the voting rights drive.

“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 Large groups of people met in this church in the early days of the voting rights campaign. It was also the staging point for marches to the county courthouse and for the final march to Montgomery.

Cecil C. Jackson Public Safety Building Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. and other marchers

were incarcerated here after the march on February 1, 1965.

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

Edmund Pettus Bridge On March 7—“Bloody Sunday”—marchers crossed this bridge as they left Selma; on the other side they were beaten back by state troopers blocking US 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 (SNCC) to use the church as its 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 SNCC and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) directed their local voting rights activities from this building.

To make the most of your time:
If you have two hours: Take the Martin Luther King, Jr. Street Historic Walking Tour and see the Bloody Sunday confrontation site.
If you have half a day: Take the Martin Luther King, Jr. Street Historic Walking Tour (Brown Chapel AME Church, First Baptist Church, Carver Homes) and see the Dallas County Court House and 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 films 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, 1963.

We affirm the philosophical or religious ideal of nonviolence as the foundation of our purpose, the presupposition of our faith, and the manner of our action.

—Statement by the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC)

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

... but we'll never turn back
SUPPORT:
Rev. L. L. Anderson
COME TO A
Mass Meeting!
AT
TABERNACLE BAPTIST CHURCH
BROAD AT MINTER
TUES. NIGHT, May 14, 1965
AT 7:30 P. M.
GUEST SPEAKER:
MR. JAMES FORMAN,
Executive Secretary of Student Non-Violent
Coordinating Committee of Atlanta, Ga.
Sponsored by Delta Co. Voters League.
"GOD IS ON OUR SIDE"

JANUARY 1965



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



NEVER

FEBRUARY 1965



We was infuriated to the point that we wanted to carry Jimmie's body... and dump it on the steps of the Capitol.

—March participant
Albert Turner

500 people wait to sign the "appearance book" to determine the order of registration. Jimmie Lee Jackson (left) was shot by a state trooper during a night march. He died a few days later.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

ALL IMAGES NPS UNLESS OTHERWISE CREDITED

The voting rights movement drew on the roots of religion, nonviolence, and music for guidance and for moral and physical courage. Many southern communities prohibited African Americans from gathering in large groups except in their churches, so that is where they met. African American leaders risked economic reprisal in these communities unless they were preachers, who were beholden only to their congregations. Clergy enjoyed moral authority in their communities and could speak persuasively before large groups, so they emerged as the movement's natural leaders. Dr. King, the most famous of these leaders, believed deeply in the principle of "nonviolent direct action" as

the most effective and morally justified strategy for social change.

Earlier nonviolent reform movements, especially the one for India's independence led by Mohandas Gandhi, inspired SNCC and SCLC. The two groups organized sit-ins, rallies, and marches to protest racial discrimination. Such nonviolent protest required profound bravery by participants, who faced jail and injury. They used music for solidarity, to endure long vigils, and to build courage for impending confrontation. Sam Cooke's soaring, gospel-tinged "A Change Is Gonna Come" was a hit in early 1965 and became background music to the struggle in Selma.

A GATHERING OF FORCES

The push for voter registration in Selma picked up momentum when SCLC joined forces with SNCC and DCVL. On January 2, 1965, Dr. King defied an injunction against large gatherings to address a mass rally at Brown Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church. On the 18th some 400 people joined the first voter registration march from the chapel to the county courthouse. Sheriff Clark directed the marchers to an alley, then allowed no one to register. The next day, marchers refused to stand in the alley. Clark ordered them to move. When DCVL's Amelia Boynton responded too slowly, Clark grabbed her collar and shoved her towards a patrol car. Then he arrested 67 other marchers.

When a photo of Boynton's mistreatment appeared in major newspapers, national media turned its eye on Selma and the voting rights movement.

DCVL's president, Rev. Frederick D. Reese, led 105 teachers to the courthouse on January 22. Clark and his deputies pushed them from the steps twice, jabbing them with nightsticks. These courageous teachers inspired their students and others who had been afraid of becoming involved. As more marches and more arrests ensued, Sheriff Clark's excessive responses upset Selma's mayor and public safety director, who were concerned about the city's image and ability to attract industries.

THE CONFLICT TURNS DEADLY

In February, SCLC and SNCC made a tactical move to force the arrest of Dr. King and dramatize the campaign. King and 250 marchers violated a parade ordinance by marching to the courthouse. They were joined by 500 students and hundreds of other supporters. Clark and his men arrested more than 3,000 people, using nightsticks and cattle prods. Many of the marchers were held in prison camps outside town.

During his incarceration, Dr. King wrote his "Letter from a Selma Jail" detailing obstacles facing African Americans who wanted to vote. It was published in the *New York Times* the day he was released. He then joined Congress and the National

Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) to press President Lyndon Johnson and the US Department of Justice to finish drafting promised voting rights legislation.

On February 18th, people were marching at night in Marion, Alabama, northwest of Selma. They were attacked by state troopers. A young demonstrator, Jimmie Lee Jackson, was fatally shot while defending his grandfather. A call to carry Jackson's body to Montgomery evolved into a memorial march from Selma to Montgomery—a march that Governor George Wallace vowed to stop.

MARCH 7, 1965



State troopers beat the leaders of the march with nightsticks, then donned gas masks and released tear gas to further terrorize the marchers. It was all recorded by major news media.

BLOODY SUNDAY

On a bright Sunday afternoon in early March, 600 marchers moved slowly up the Edmund Pettus Bridge rising over the Alabama River. SNCC's John Lewis and SCLC's Hosea Williams led them. They 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"—Alabama state troopers blocking US 80. Sheriff Clark's posse waited on horses. The marchers stopped a few yards short of the troopers, asking to speak to their leader. They were given

two minutes to return to their "homes or church." When the marchers did not move, the troopers advanced, hitting marchers with their nightsticks, kicking any who went down. The posse rode into the panicking marchers. Donning gas masks, troopers released clouds of suffocating tear gas. News cameras captured the troopers attacking the blinded and gagging marchers. The demonstrators began running back to the bridge, stumbling over each other and trying to ward off blows. The troopers and posse continued to use nightsticks, whips, and rubber tubes to drive the marchers through the streets of Selma.

MARCH 9, 1965



LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

© CORBIS



Marchers pray at the Edmund Pettus Bridge before returning to Selma. Unitarian minister James Reeb (left), in Selma for the march, was attacked that night and died two days later. His assailants were acquitted.

TURNAROUND TUESDAY

As state troopers continued to beat marchers past 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 retaliation could only hurt the movement. They had to keep the sympathy they had earned. News stations brought their efforts into the national spotlight by televising images of troopers beating unresisting marchers. 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 a

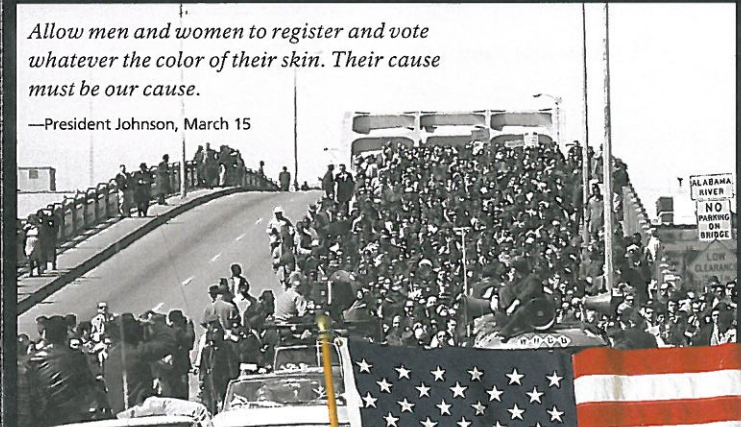
hearing could take place. King, reluctant to defy the court, agreed to march only to the other side of the bridge.

On March 9, approximately 2,000 marchers approached the state troopers at the site of Sunday's violence. The leaders knelt to pray, then turned around. It was an unpopular decision, but a marcher noted that otherwise they would have been "beaten up with the court's approval." That night a clergyman who had marched, Rev. James Reeb, was attacked on a Selma street and later died. In his eulogy Dr. King said, "Again we must ask the question: Why must good men die for doing good?"

MARCH 21-25, 1965

Allow men and women to register and vote whatever the color of their skin. Their cause must be our cause.

—President Johnson, March 15



4,000 people began the march on March 21. This time no state troopers blocked the way. A marcher carried an American flag (right) to Montgomery, where the Confederate flag flew over the capitol.

WITNESSES FOR FREEDOM

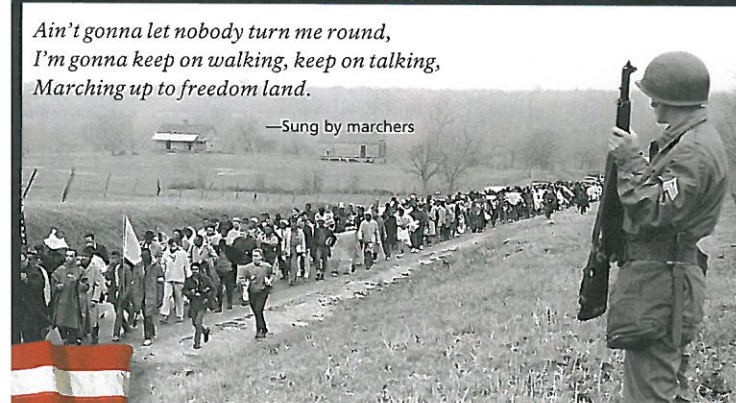
A week later the long-sought goal finally appeared close. President Johnson called on Congress to pass a voting rights bill; on the next day Judge Johnson lifted the injunction against the march in Selma. Jubilation replaced fear, but local resistance remained fierce. That same day marchers in Montgomery 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. The president federalized 1,900 Alabama national guard troops and sent 2,000 soldiers and dozens of FBI agents and federal marshals.

On March 21 some 4,000 marchers set out from Selma. They marched until US 80 (Jefferson Davis Highway) narrowed to two lanes; then the march was restricted to 300 people. Most of this core group marched all 54 miles, stopping at four campsites. As they approached the Alabama State Capitol in Montgomery, their numbers swelled again to a jubilant 25,000. The hard-won fight and the march honoring it had given meaning to the promise made a century earlier in the 15th Amendment: "The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude."

Ain't gonna let nobody turn me round,
I'm gonna keep on walking, keep on talking,
Marching up to freedom land.

—Sung by marchers



© SPIDER MARTIN



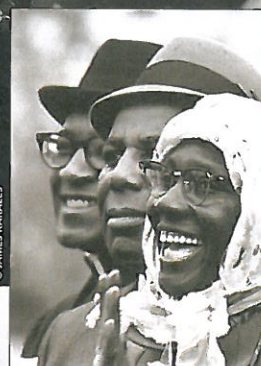
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© JAMES KARALES



© CHARLES MOORE / BLACK STAR



© JOHN F. PHILLIPS

1965–1966



© CORBIS / RUP SCHULKE

Many newly registered voters (above) voted for candidates of the Lowndes County Freedom Party. Voters in Dallas County voted Sheriff Clark out of office in 1966. "Tent city" residents (left).



Let us march
on ballot boxes until brotherhood becomes more than a
meaningless word in an opening prayer, but the order of the
day on every legislative agenda. Let us march on ballot boxes
until all over Alabama God's children will be able to walk the
earth in decency and honor.

—From the speech by Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.,
on March 25 at the Alabama State Capitol

Marchers endured racial slurs and threats from onlookers, and some of the federalized Alabama national guardsmen barely concealed their hostility. But nothing could hide the joy on the faces of those who watched from fields and front porches as the marchers passed—25,000 strong when they reached the Alabama State Capitol.

IN THE WAKE OF THE MARCH

After the triumphal march, the movement met tragedy again that night. Viola Liuzzo had come from Detroit to help. After she had carried marchers back to Selma, members of the Ku Klux Klan sped alongside her car and shot her. (See map on other side.) Resistance to change would die hard.

SNCC continued to work with African Americans in Alabama, organizing the Lowndes County Freedom Organization. This evolved into a political party, the first to adopt a black panther symbol. On August 6th President Johnson signed the Voting Rights Act, which suspended literacy tests, called for the appointment of federal election monitors, and directed

the US Attorney General to challenge the use of poll taxes by states.

But laws cannot end bigotry. That month Jonathan Daniels, an Episcopal seminarian helping desegregation efforts in Hayneville, Alabama, was shot and killed. Lowndes County landowners evicted tenants who registered. In December SNCC and Lowndes County leaders helped several evicted families set up a "tent city" off US 80, then helped them find jobs, permanent housing, and new lives. In the end the hard work bore fruit: By 1966 the number of registered African Americans in Alabama was four times the number of 1960.