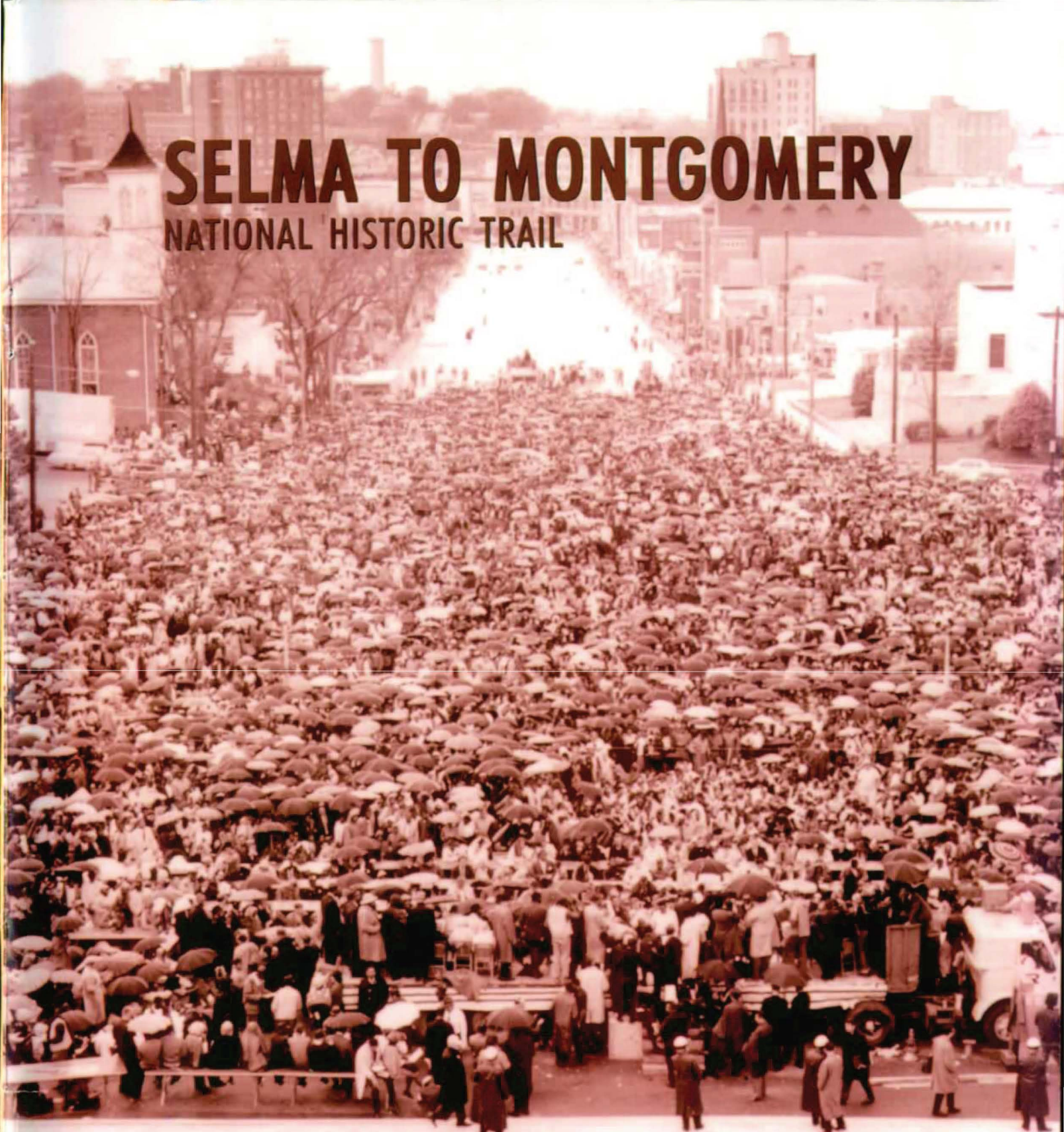


A large crowd of people, many holding umbrellas, fills a city street, stretching towards a distant city skyline. The scene is captured in a sepia-toned photograph, suggesting a historical event. The crowd is dense, filling the width of the street and extending far into the background. In the foreground, a line of people stands with their backs to the camera, looking towards the march. A white truck is partially visible on the right side of the street.

SELMA TO MONTGOMERY

NATIONAL HISTORIC TRAIL

Alternatives Summary

Comprehensive Management Plan

Selma to Montgomery National Historic Trail

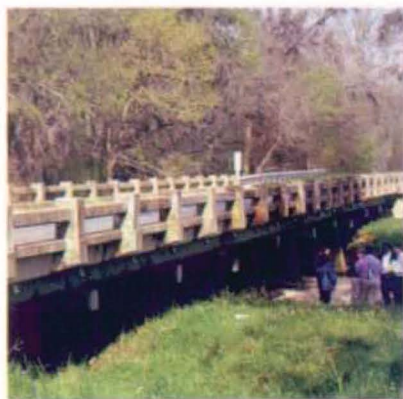
Features

3

History

The 1965 Selma to Montgomery voting rights march has been identified by historians and movement participants as one of the last great protests of the modern civil rights movement.

In many ways marking the end of an era, the fight for voting rights represents the peak of the nonviolent, interracial movement that characterized the civil rights struggle during the mid-twentieth century.

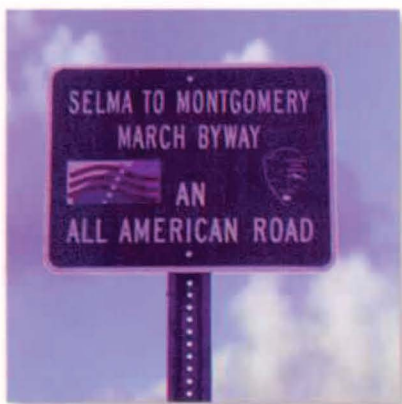


Contents

18

Themes

Interpretive themes communicate the significance of the National Historic Trail. They embody its stories, and connect trail resources to the larger processes, systems, ideas, and values of which they are a part. Interpretive themes are the building blocks upon which interpretation and education programs are founded.



On the front cover:

Marchers rally in front of Alabama State Capitol Building, March 25, 1965

On the back cover:

Poster illustration by Vincent C. Morgan

As the Nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has the responsibility for most of our nationally owned public lands and natural and cultural resources. This includes fostering wise use of our land and water resources, preserving the environment and cultural values of our national parks and historic places, and providing for the enjoyment of life through outdoor recreation. The department assesses our energy and mineral resources and works to insure that their development is in the best interest of all our people. The department also promotes the goals of Take Pride in America campaign by encouraging stewardship and citizen responsibility for the public lands and promoting citizen participation in their care. The department also has a major responsibility for American Indian reservation communities and for people who live in island territories under U.S. administration.



22

Alternatives

Three alternatives describe different ways of commemorating, interpreting, and preserving resources associated with the Selma to Montgomery voting rights march.

Alternatives:

- a 26
- b 30
- c 34

Contributors

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NATIONAL PARK SERVICE



IN REPLY REFER TO:

SER-D

5415
United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
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100 Alabama St., S.W.
Atlanta, Georgia 30303

FEB 2 2000

To: All Superintendents, Southeast Region
All Employees, Southeast Regional Office

From : Regional Director, Southeast Region

Subject: Alternatives Summary for Comprehensive Management Plan, Selma to
Montgomery National Historic Trail

After reading the attached brochure, I thought everyone should have an opportunity to see this outstanding example of work by our own staff and the park. Planning and future development of the Selma to Montgomery National Historic Trail is a major priority for the National Park Service and the Southeast Region.

This is one of the more difficult planning projects that NPS has attempted due to the volatility of the issues, interpretation of the history of the march and voting rights movement, agencies, and personalities involved. A very unique aspect of the project involves the U.S. Department of Transportation designation of the trail route along U.S. Highway 80 as a National Scenic Byway and All-American Road. The Alabama Department of Transportation is, therefore, involved in the administration of this program. In such a situation, the effectiveness of how we communicate information and ideas to the public becomes even more important than usual. The Alternatives Summary is a noteworthy example of the type of creativity our personnel are capable of, especially when we pull together the resources and talents of our various divisions and parks.

The team responsible for the project includes Project Manager Rick McCollough, Resource Education Specialist John Beck, Historians Jill Hanson, Christy Trebellas, and Barbara Tagger, Landscape Architect Tim Bemisderfer, Willie Madison, General Superintendent, Central Alabama Group, and Lee Edwards, Superintendent, Selma to Montgomery National Historic Trail. Tim Bemisderfer prepared the design and camera-ready layout for the brochure.

John Beck

Attachment

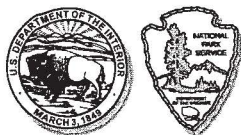
Supt *JB* Maint _____

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Admin Ranger *JB* Eastern File *JB*

Introduction

Fall 1999



Alternatives Summary

Dear Friends of Selma to Montgomery National Historic Trail,

On November 12, 1996, the U.S. Congress established the Selma to Montgomery National Historic Trail (NHT) through an amendment to the National Trails System Act (PL 104-333). Beginning at Brown Chapel AME Church in Selma, Alabama, the trail follows the route of the March 1965 Selma to Montgomery voting rights march, traveling through Lowndes County along U.S. Highway 80, and ending at the Alabama State Capitol in Montgomery. The legislation creating the trail directs the National Park Service (NPS), U.S. Department of the Interior, to complete a Comprehensive Management Plan (CMP) to guide trail management, visitor use, resource protection, and facility development. This brochure provides the public with the opportunity to review and comment on trail treatment issues prior to the development of the CMP.

A chief function of the CMP will be to build upon previous work completed by the Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) for the Selma to Montgomery National Scenic Byway/All-American Road, designations awarded to the route of the voting rights march by the U.S. Department of Transportation. ALDOT initiated work on a master plan for the road in 1997, requesting input from the public on the commemoration and interpretation of sites associated with the march. The draft master plan was released for public review and comment in the spring of 1999. Based on the findings of the ALDOT master plan, NPS has developed several alternative treatments for the march route that seek to unify the distinct goals of the National Historic Trail, National Scenic Byways, and All-American Road programs. These alternatives present ideas for management, use, and development of the march route, including possible options for the protection of historic resources, interpretation of the march story, visitor use of the trail, and development of tourism in the area.

This brochure presents the alternatives for treatment of the NHT along with a brief history of the Selma to Montgomery voting rights march and preliminary interpretive themes. The history provides a summary of the events immediately preceding the Selma to Montgomery voting rights march, the march itself, and a brief analysis of the impacts and aftermath of the march. The potential story to be told is much broader than the limited information provided here, however, and NPS plans to conduct an extensive amount of research in the future to ensure the history documented is as accurate and complete as possible. The interpretive themes identify the messages to be conveyed to visitors about the history of the march and drive the content, design, and production of exhibits, publications, and other media used to tell the march story.

NPS seeks public review and comment on the alternatives, history, and interpretive themes presented in this brochure. The alternatives reflect comments gathered through meetings held with NHT friends groups in Selma, Lowndes County, and Montgomery, and the NHT Citizens Advisory Council, a group of volunteer trail advisors appointed by the Secretary of the Interior. Government agencies, including the Federal Highway Administration, ALDOT, the Alabama Historical Commission, and others, also provided input to the alternatives.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Willie C. Madison'.

Willie C. Madison
Superintendent
Selma to Montgomery NHT

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Lee Edwards'.

Lee Edwards
Site Manager
Selma to Montgomery NHT

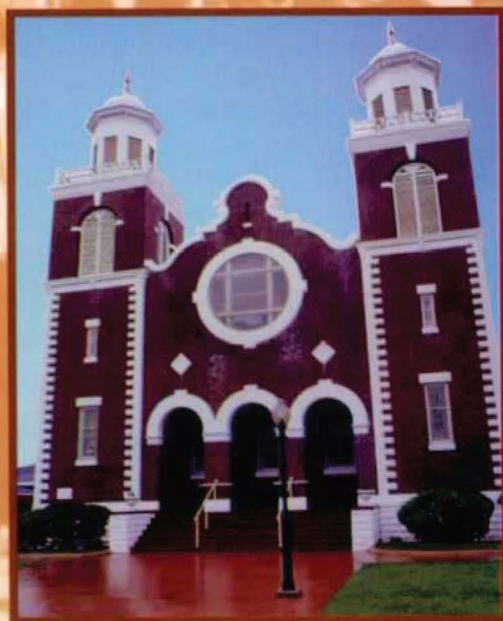
A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Richard V. McCollough'.

Richard V. McCollough
Planning Project Manager
Southeast Regional Office, NPS

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Dr. Frederick D. Reese'.

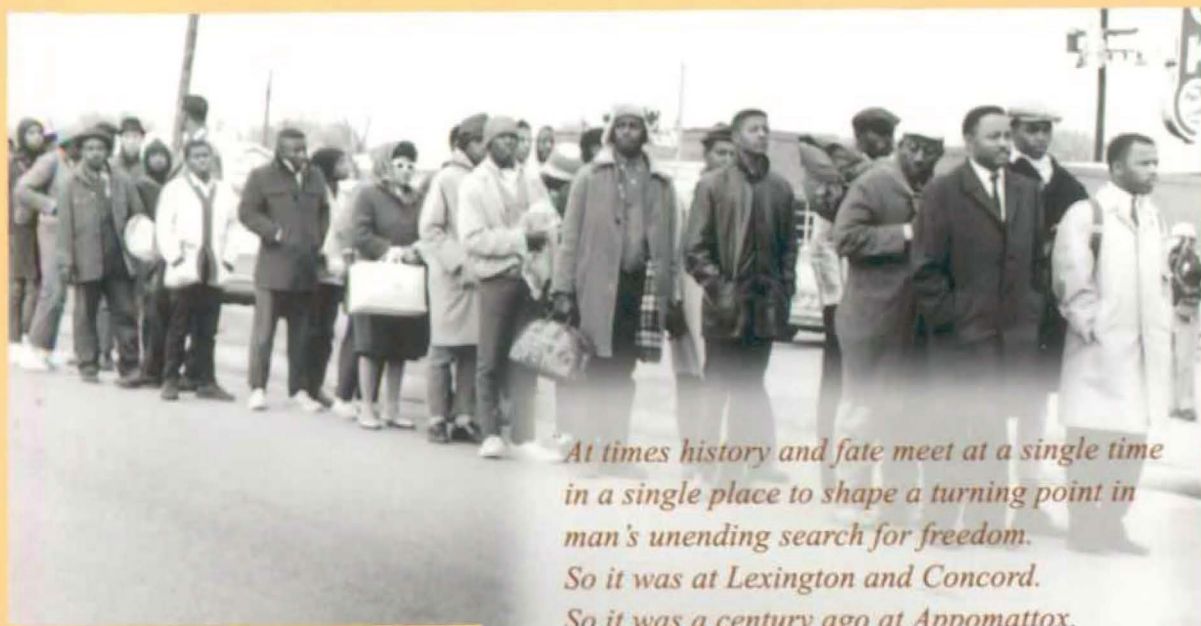
Dr. Frederick D. Reese
Chairman, Selma to Montgomery NHT
Citizens Advisory Council

History



"We will seek to arouse the federal government by marching by the thousands to the places of registration ... When we get the right to vote, we will send to the statehouse not men who will stand in the doorways of universities to keep Negroes out, but men who will uphold the cause of justice. Give us the ballot."

— Martin Luther King Jr., January 2, 1965



*At times history and fate meet at a single time
in a single place to shape a turning point in
man's unending search for freedom.
So it was at Lexington and Concord.
So it was a century ago at Appomattox.
So it was last week in Selma, Alabama."*

— President Lyndon B. Johnson, March 15, 1965

The modern movement for civil rights sought the attainment of full citizenship for African Americans in the United States. Specifically, the movement focused on efforts to gain political, social, and economic rights such as equal education, access to places of public accommodation and transport, equal employment and housing opportunities, and the right to vote and hold political office. Generally acknowledged as beginning in the mid-1950s with the *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas* Supreme Court decision and the Montgomery, Alabama, bus boycott, the movement gained full momentum during the late 1950s and 1960s. The civil rights

movement involved many players, at both the national and local levels. Primarily a grassroots effort involving thousands of ordinary people—men and women, adults and children, black and white—the

struggle drew both participants and leaders from existing organizations such as churches, labor organizations, and schools and colleges. Initially, national organizations such as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) sought equal rights through litigation that challenged racial discrimination in the courts and through the passage of legislation that promised equal rights for African Americans. Frustrated by the slowness of working within the legal system to gain civil rights, local activists and students formed groups such as the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), and the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) that favored direct action campaigns. CORE, SCLC, and SNCC led mass demonstrations to protest unequal treatment chiefly through the tactic of nonviolent civil disobedience. Nonviolent protest activities were

widely covered by the media, mainly when the efforts of civil rights protestors met with violent resistance. Through the national press, civil rights groups captured the attention of politicians and the American people, making widespread support for the passage of legislation improving the civil rights of African Americans possible. The 1965 Selma to Montgomery voting rights march has been identified by historians and movement participants as one of the last great protests of the modern civil rights movement. In many ways marking the end of an era, the fight for voting rights represents the peak of the nonviolent, interracial movement that characterized the civil rights struggle during the mid-twentieth century.

In 1901, Alabama, like most states of the former Confederacy around the turn of the century, adopted a new state constitution that used poll taxes and literacy tests to effectively disenfranchise African Americans who had

*Left: "Berlin Wall,"
Selma, 1965*

*Left inset: Brown
Chapel AME Church
today, Selma*

*Above: Marchers
halted by law
enforcement officers
on Bloody Sunday,
March 7, 1965*

"The local black leadership in Selma was really responsible for the Selma movement. Selma was not a place that we picked out. We did not choose them, they chose us."

— Andrew Young



Left: Potential voters wait outside Dallas County Courthouse to register, 1965

Below: Dallas County Courthouse today

Ernest Doyle, Marie Foster, James Gildersleeve, J. D. Hunter, Frederick Reese, and Henry Shannon, began organizing a local voting rights campaign in the county in the early 1960s. The chief method employed by the DCVL to reach out to potential African-American voters was a citizenship school. Classes taught by Marie Foster explained the complicated registration procedures and tutored applicants on how to answer questions about the Alabama and United States constitutions.³

Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) workers Bernard and Colia Lafayette moved to Selma to work with the DCVL's voter registration efforts in 1963. SNCC helped the DCVL with citizenship classes, led attempts to integrate white restaurants and theaters, and held mass meetings to build support for voting

gained suffrage during Reconstruction. These measures, combined with the fact that the major political parties permitted only white voters in their primaries, led to a drastic decline in the number of African-American voters in the state from more than 100,000 before 1900 to only 3,700 after 1901. In 1944, the Supreme Court case of *Smith v. Allwright* struck down the white primary, encouraging many civil rights

leaders to believe the suffrage was once again attainable. Although Alabama's Democratic party removed racial restrictions from its policies, the state continued to produce restrictive voting laws that resulted in de facto discrimination against African Americans, keeping the proportion of African-American voters to only 13.4 percent of the African-American

voting age population as late as 1962.¹

Barriers to African-American voter registration in Dallas County, Alabama, reflected those found throughout the black belt region.² The county voter registration office opened only two days each month, and registrars frequently came in late and left early. African Americans who gained access to the office were required to pass a long and difficult literacy test that



demanding an extensive knowledge of obscure aspects of the Alabama and United States constitutions.

A voucher system required a registered voter to sponsor each new registrant. In an effort to combat the obstacles to voting, the Dallas County Voters League (DCVL), under the leadership of several activists including Ulysses Blackmon, Sam and Amelia Boynton,

1. Steven F. Lawson, *Black Ballots: Voting Rights in the South, 1944-1969* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976), 12, 15, and 89-97; Pat Watters and Reese Cleghorn, *Climbing Jacob's Ladder: The Arrival of Negroes in Southern Politics* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, 1967), 376-77.

2. The black belt region was named for the dark, rich soil found in the flat landscape extending approximately 300 miles across central Alabama, northeast Mississippi, and into Tennessee. The area and its soil were once known for the cotton produced there. Charles Reagan Wilson and William Ferris, eds., *Encyclopedia of Southern Culture* (New York: Anchor Books, 1989), 2:281-82.

3. Juan Williams, *Eyes on the Prize: America's Civil Rights Years, 1954-1965* (New York: Penguin Books, Inc., 1987), 254; J. L. Chestnut and Julia Cass, *Black in Selma* (New York: Anchor Books, 1990), 134-35.

rights.⁴ By the end of 1964, registration rolls in the county listed just over 300 African-American voters; at that time, more than 15,000 African Americans of voting age resided in the county. In December 1964, the DCVL issued a formal invitation to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) to assist in its fight to gain the right to vote. On January 2, 1965, King arrived in Selma to kick off SCLC's voter registration campaign at a mass meeting held at Brown Chapel African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church, the first mass meeting held since a July 1964 injunction filed by Circuit Court Judge James Hare prohibiting public civil rights meetings of more than three people. Working with local organizations and SNCC, SCLC began a concentrated series of marches to the courthouse to register African-American voters, hoping to attract national attention that would in turn place pressure on Congress to pass federal voting rights legislation.⁵

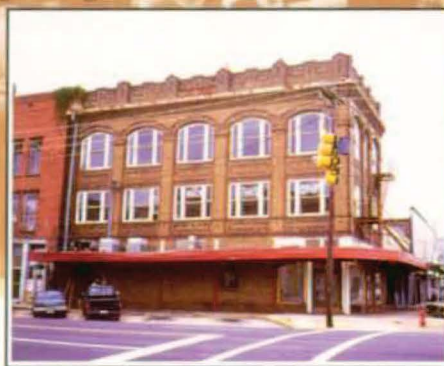
King and the SCLC chose to concentrate their voting rights campaign in Selma because of the ability to attract national attention through the media. Selma's discriminatory voter registration practices were enforced by Sheriff Jim Clark, a violent segregationist. Clark and his posse of deputized locals had been harassing SNCC workers and prospective voters from the beginning of their work in 1963. Selma Mayor Joseph Smitherman, elected in 1964, hoped to control Clark's violent actions and prevent negative publicity about the town in order to follow through on a campaign

promise of attracting new industries to the area. Smitherman created a new public safety director position, choosing the more moderate Wilson Baker for the job. Theoretically, Baker would have law enforcement jurisdiction over the city of Selma, and Clark would be responsible for the rest of Dallas County. Clark, however, refused to relinquish complete authority for Selma to Baker.⁶

On January 18, SCLC, SNCC, and DCVL sponsored a "Freedom Day" march to the courthouse to register voters and tested the public accommodations section of the 1964 Civil Rights Act by attempting to integrate a local restaurant and by registering King at the "whites only" Hotel Albert. Although Clark managed to control his violent tendencies as requested by Smitherman and Baker, he forced marchers to the courthouse to wait in

line in the alley behind the building all day without a single African American being allowed to register to vote. The next day, however, more than sixty protestors were arrested following Clark's rough treatment and arrest of activist Amelia Boynton. Television and newspaper reporters captured the action, and photographs of Clark's harassment appeared in the next day's newspapers including the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*.⁷

Throughout January and February, marches to the Dallas County courthouse continued and activists in sur-



Above: Former SNCC headquarters, Sullivan Building in Selma

Left: Potential voters wait outside Dallas County Courthouse to register, 1965

Background: Would-be voters line up to register at Montgomery County Courthouse, 1965



"Every American citizen must have an equal right to vote. There is no reason which can excuse the denial of that right. There is no duty which weighs more heavily on us than the duty we have to ensure that right."

— President Lyndon B. Johnson, March 15, 1965

4. SNCC's first mass voting rights meeting in Selma was held at Tabernacle Baptist Church, Chestnut and Cass, 162-65.

5. Charles E. Fager, *Selma 1965: The March that Changed the South* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1985), 8-9; Williams, 254-58; Watters and Cleghorn, 246; Chestnut and Cass, 174-76.

6. Fager, 18-19; Williams, 255.

7. Fager, 24-31; Williams, 259.

rounding counties began similar protests. On January 22, more than 100 school teachers marched in Selma. Led by Frederick Reese, the teachers' march was an important symbol to others who hesitated to join in the movement to gain voting rights. The teachers, employed by an all-white school board, risked losing their jobs by participating in movement activities. When the superintendent and chairman of the school board failed to persuade the teachers to leave the courthouse, Clark and his deputies pushed marchers off the front steps of the building. The teachers ended the confrontation with the sheriff by leaving the courthouse to reassemble

The following day's *New York Times* and *Washington Post* ran a photograph of Clark with his billy club raised above the woman's head as she was being held down by two other lawmen.⁹

During the last week of January, the SCLC planned for the arrest of Martin Luther King Jr. to draw even more attention to the voting rights movement. The arrest attempt was planned for a February 1 mass march to the courthouse in Selma in which marchers would violate the city's parade ordinance. On the day of the march, King urged the more than 250 marchers assembled to stay focused on the ultimate goal of voting rights and not

public safety director, Wilson Baker. Hearing the news of King's arrest, more than 500 students marched to the courthouse where they too were arrested. King and Abernathy refused to post bail, staying in jail until February 5, when the *New York Times* printed King's "Letter from a Selma Jail" soliciting support for the SCLC's work in Selma.¹¹

Marches continued in Selma and nearby Marion, Alabama, during the week of King's imprisonment, with student and adult protestors arrested and jailed in prison camps when the city's jail filled. As King noted in his letter from the Selma jail, in Selma "there are more Negroes in jail with

"This march by the teachers, the largest professional group in the city and the county, enlisted others to come and join the movement. There were all kinds of groups after the teachers' march. The undertakers got a group and they marched. The beauticians got a group and they marched. Everybody marched because the teachers had more influence than they ever dreamed in the community."

— Frederick Reese discussing the January 22, 1965, teachers' march to the Dallas County Courthouse

at Brown Chapel. The courage exhibited by the teachers inspired the participation of many other groups of employees vulnerable to economic discrimination, but also served to encourage the efforts of students and youth in the movement.⁸

Clark's violent tactics again became the subject of the national news during a voter registration attempt on January 25. When marcher Annie Lee Cooper stepped out of the voter registration line and was pushed and ordered to return by Clark, she punched the sheriff in the face at least two times before Clark's men wrestled her to the ground. Clark then struck Cooper on the head and arrested her.

be distracted by those who resisted their efforts: "If Negroes could vote, there would be no Jim Clarks, there would be no oppressive poverty directed against Negroes, our children would not be crippled by segregated schools, and the whole community might live together in harmony."¹⁰ Within blocks of their starting point, the marchers, including Dr. King and his SCLC associate Ralph David Abernathy, were arrested by the city's

me than there are on the voting rolls."¹² On February 4, Malcolm X arrived in Selma at the invitation of SNCC, delivering an address at Brown Chapel where he said the white leaders of Selma should thank Dr. King for "holding people in check," implying that other African-American leaders would not be willing to use nonviolent tactics. The same day, U.S. District Court Judge Daniel Thomas issued an injunction ordering the

8. David J. Garrow, *Protest at Selma: Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Voting Rights Act of 1965* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978), 44; Fager, 30 and 36-39; Williams, 260.

9. Fager, 45; Williams, 260.

10. Garrow, 47.

11. Garrow, 47-53; Fager, 47-56; Williams, 261-62.

12. Garrow, 52.

13. Fager, 58-59; Williams, 262; Garrow, 48-53.

14. Garrow, 52.

15. Fager, 58-59; Williams, 262; Garrow, 51-53.

Dallas County Board of Registrars to process at least 100 voter applications per registration day and directing them to discontinue use of the Alabama literacy test. The injunction, apparently created with the help of Selma's white leadership, did not meet the requirements of movement leaders, who realized that even with the court-ordered changes it would take several years for all eligible African-American voters in Dallas County to be registered. Marchers returned to the streets the next day. By the end of the week, more than 3,000 protestors had been arrested.¹³

While Judge Thomas prepared his injunction, President Lyndon B. Johnson held a press

conference indicating his support for voting rights for all American citizens. In his remarks he stated his hope that "all Americans will join with me in expressing their concern over the loss of any American's right to vote. Nothing is more fundamental to American citizenship and to our freedom as a nation and as a people. I intend to see that that right is secured for all our citizens."¹⁴ On Friday, February 5, fifteen U.S. Representatives visited Selma at the request of the SCLC, meeting with Mayor Smitherman, interviewing local African Americans, and speaking with King

following his release from jail earlier in the day. The visit convinced the representatives to intensify their efforts to obtain federal voting

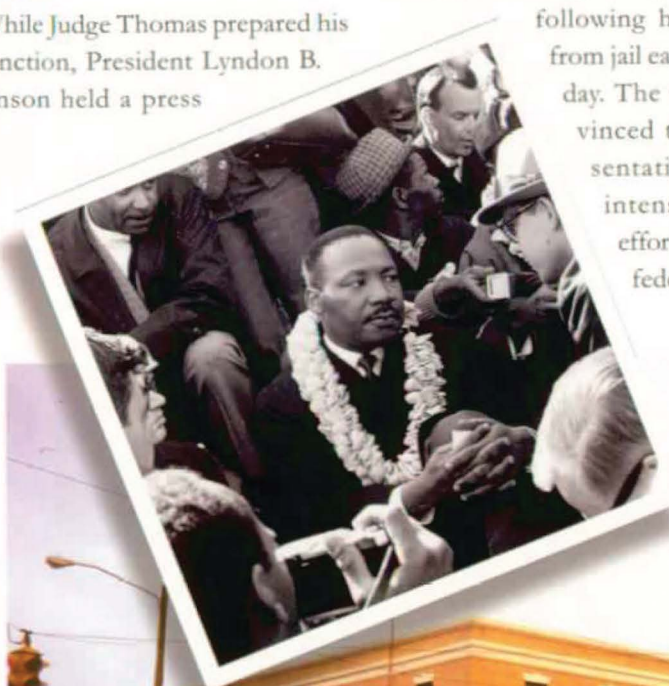
rights legislation.¹⁵

King made plans to meet with Attorney General Nicholas Katzenbach, Vice President Hubert Humphrey, and, if possible, President Johnson on Monday, February 8, to urge the administration to endorse voting rights legislation. The meeting was postponed to Tuesday, February 9, when developments in the war in Vietnam captured the attention of the White House. King instead attended a mass meeting and march to the county courthouse in Montgomery, Alabama. The march was relatively unsuccessful in drawing attention to the African-American voting rights cause. Only about 200 protestors

Left: Martin Luther King Jr. meets with reporters before march to Montgomery, March 21, 1965

Bottom: Cecil C. Jackson Jr. Public Safety Building, former Selma City Hall

Opposite: Student protestors, 1965



"This is Selma, Alabama, where there are more Negroes in jail with me than there are on the voting roles."

— from Martin Luther King Jr.'s "Letter from a Selma Jail," February 5, 1965



arrived to march to the courthouse and when they arrived at the voter registration office they found that the board had hired extra staff to process applications. Within an hour all of the potential voters had been registered.¹⁶

In Selma, SCLC staff member James Bevel led a group of activists to the courthouse to protest a new county voter registration policy. Claiming it was a concession to voting rights activists, local officials created an "appearance book" for eligible voters to sign when they came to the courthouse to register to vote, even on days when the registrar's office was closed. On the two days each month when the board of registrars processed applications, those citizens who had signed the book would have their applications processed in the order of signing. Despite local movement leaders' initial acceptance of the policy as a show of good faith, Bevel and other activists believed the book was simply another effort by the white community to delay compliance with their demands. On Monday, February 8, Bevel and about sixty protestors marched to the courthouse to boycott the appearance book. Once again, Sheriff Clark's temper could not be contained and the protestors were forced from the building by Clark and his deputies, who beat Bevel and others and arrested all of the activists.¹⁷

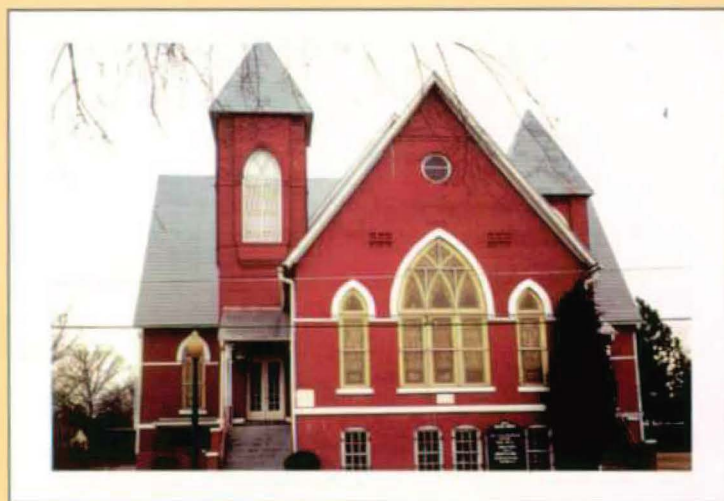
Throughout the movement in Selma and surrounding communities, leaders relied on the protest participation of students and youth. The influence of SNCC, started by college students, inspired many local young people to take an active role in the fight for voting rights. Young people could more easily take part in marches, mass meetings, and other

protests because of their relative freedom from economic reprisals. White employers frequently fired African-American employees or removed tenant farmers from their land when they participated in the movement. The increasing participation of children had the added effect of encouraging parents to become more vocal in their opposition to voter discrimination. By February 1965, the youth of Selma regularly took part in marches and even staged demonstrations of their own. After Bevel's arrest, groups of young people began a series of protests at the courthouse in Selma. On

a mass meeting held that night at Brown Chapel to call for the intervention of federal troops while King made an appearance at a concurrent youth rally held at First Baptist Church to reiterate the need for nonviolent tactics in the face of violent opposition.¹⁸

The harsh treatment of Selma's youth fueled movement activities in the area. On Monday, February 15, one of the few days the Dallas County voter registration office was open, several hundred protestors marched

Below: First Baptist Church, Selma



February 10, when nearly 200 teenagers showed up with signs taunting Sheriff Clark, the law enforcement official herded the youngsters out of town on a more than one-mile-long forced march to the outskirts of the city, using cattle prods and billy clubs to control the group. When the marchers reached open farmland they scattered and the sheriff let them go. SNCC workers organized taxis to retrieve the frightened and injured students. Enraged parents crowded

to the courthouse to register under the protection of a city permit that guaranteed no arrests. More than 500 adults signed the appearance book that day after movement leaders agreed to end the boycott of the book. The same day, similar numbers protested in Marion, in Perry County, and in Camden, the county seat of nearby Wilcox County. The following day, C. T. Vivian, an SCLC minister, was beaten by Clark and arrested when he led a small group of activ-

"You can't keep anyone in the U.S. from voting without hurting the rights of all other citizens. Democracy's built on this."

— SCLC staff member C.T. Vivian to Sheriff Clark and posse, February 16, 1965



Top: Zion's Chapel Methodist Church, Marion



Bottom left: Albert Turner at Jimmie Lee Jackson grave site, Marion



Bottom right: Lowndes County Courthouse, Hayneville

onstrators when they left the church after Vivian's speech and the mass meeting, beating activists as well as news reporters on the scene. Jimmie Lee Jackson, trying to help his grandfather escape a brutal beating, rushed into a cafe, followed by state troopers. When the troopers hit Jackson's mother who was also in the restaurant, Jackson fought back and was shot point blank by one of the troopers. Jackson died in the hospital seven days later. News coverage of the event, strengthened by testimony of beaten NBC reporter Richard Valeriani from his hospital bed, further publicized the need for federal action to end the violence and ensure the civil rights of protestors in Alabama.²⁰

ists to the courthouse who were refused entrance to sign the appearance book. Reporters filmed the incident and the violent encounter appeared on the evening news. The continuing violence and lack of change in voter registration practices in the region encouraged movement leaders to call for a stepped-up campaign, including the use of night-time marches, one of the most dangerous methods of nonviolent protest.¹⁹

On February 18, C. T. Vivian, released from jail the day before, spoke

about his confrontation with Clark at a mass meeting at Zion's Chapel Methodist Church in the nearby community of Marion. Following the meeting, a short night-time march from the church to the jail was planned. The previous day, white leaders in Marion had stepped up their resistance to voting rights by calling in state troopers to arrest SCLC representative James Orange and force an end to broadening demonstrations. Consequently, state troopers, policemen, and angry whites awaited dem-

Voting rights protests in Selma and Marion spread to other parts of the Alabama black belt. In Lowndes County, thirty-seven African Americans tried to register at the courthouse in Hayneville on March 1, the first to attempt registering in more than thirty years. King, who visited courthouses in Dallas, Perry, Wilcox, and Lowndes

16. Fager, 62-64; Garrow, 55-56.

17. Fager, 64-65; Garrow, 55-56.

18. Fager, 66-68; Garrow, 57-58.

19. Fager, 69-71; Garrow, 60-61.

20. Fager, 72-75; Williams, 265; Garrow, 61.

counties that day to lend support to African Americans attempting to register, confronted Lowndes County registrar Carl Golson about the fact that no African Americans were registered to vote in the county. Golson rebuked King and refused to allow the thirty-seven to register. Two weeks later, African Americans again tried to register and learned their applications were not being accepted at the courthouse, but at the county jail. Registrars, however, removed the voucher requirement for applicants and of the seventeen who completed applications, two successfully passed. On March 19, Lowndes County African Americans created their own civil rights organization with the help of the SCLC. The group called themselves the Lowndes County Christian Movement for Human Rights (LCCMHR) and named John Hulett as the first chairman.²¹

At a memorial service for Jimmie Lee Jackson on February 28 at Zion's Chapel Methodist Church in Marion, James Bevel called for a march from Marion to Montgomery to protest the killing of Jackson and the violence inflicted on African Americans and to deliver the plea for voting rights to Alabama Governor George Wallace. On the day of Jackson's funeral, March 3, the SCLC announced its intention to follow Bevel's plan on March 7. The march, however, would start in Selma instead of Marion. The day before the march, about seventy white Alabamians participated in a march to the courthouse in a show of support for the African-American voting rights movement. In general, opposition to the movement heavily outweighed visible signs of support from the white community. Protestors suffered constant discrimination



"He was murdered by the irresponsibility of every politician ... who has fed his constituents the stale bread of hatred and the spoiled meat of racism."

— Martin Luther King Jr. at Jimmie Lee Jackson's funeral in Selma

and threats of violence at the hands of white racist groups such as the Ku Klux Klan (KKK), the American Nazi Party, and others. The most serious physical threats often came from law enforcement officials, such as Sheriff Jim Clark and state troopers acting in the name of preserving order. In addition, White Citizens' Councils promoted the maintenance of segregation using nonviolent measures. At the state and national levels, civil rights activists became the subject of investigations by state sovereignty commissions, the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC),

and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). On the same day as the "concerned white citizens" march, Governor George Wallace announced his intention to prevent the march from Selma to Montgomery, stating that it would be a threat to public safety and inhibit the flow of commerce on the Highway 80 route. Wallace informed a reporter that state troopers were "to use whatever measures are necessary to prevent a march."²²

SCLC's planned march from Selma to Montgomery was opposed by SNCC. SNCC had been working in

21. The name "Lowndes County Christian Movement for Human Rights" was based on the Alabama Christian Movement for Human Rights, the Birmingham organization created by Fred Shuttlesworth when the NAACP was prohibited in the state in 1956. Ralph E. Luker, *Historical Dictionary of the Civil Rights Movement* (Lanham, Maryland: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1997), 10; Charles W. Eagles, *Outside Agitator: Jon Daniels and the Civil Rights Movement in Alabama* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993), 120-22; Fager, 83-84.

22. Fager, 82-88; Williams, 267-68; Garrow, 72; Government investigations and racist propaganda convinced many whites that the Communist Party organized and controlled the civil rights movement. The Alabama Legislative Commission to Preserve the Peace reported in June 1965 that SCLC was "substantially under control of Communists" and that SNCC, "an agent for the Communist conspiracy," was "an extremely dangerous, irresponsible group which tends to promote acts of violence to gain support for their goals," Eagles, 142-43.

Opposite: White Citizens' Council demonstrates against voting rights, March 20, 1965

Background: Tear gas disperses marchers on Bloody Sunday

Below: Troopers attack marchers on Bloody Sunday

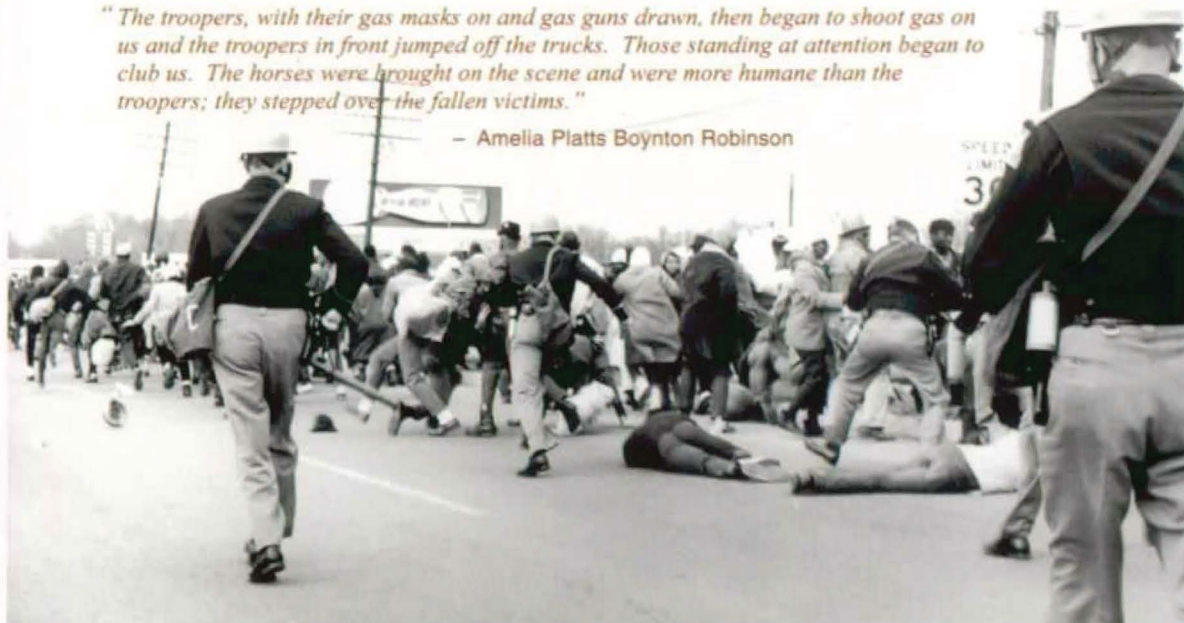
Selma and the black belt region of Alabama for several years, helping local leaders establish a solid base of support for civil rights movement activities in the area. Following much debate among SNCC members and between SNCC and SCLC, SNCC chairman John Lewis stated in a let-

tive Hosea Williams led the group with John Lewis marching next to him. King, either convinced that the march would simply end with mass arrests or heeding advice to protect his life, chose to stay in Atlanta to preach in his home church that day. The march left Brown Chapel on Sylvan Street, traveling to Alabama Avenue and then to Broad Street, which led out of town by crossing over the Alabama River via the Edmund Pettus Bridge. The marchers encountered no official resistance within the city limits of

marchers. Protestors were beaten and knocked to the ground. Sheriff Clark and his posse, all on horseback, charged into the crowd of marchers, chasing them back into Selma. Reporters captured the violence and chaos of the scene on film that appeared on the national evening news. From Atlanta, Dr. King sent telegrams to ministers across the country calling for another march on Tuesday, March 9. His request, paired with national media coverage of "Bloody Sunday," created an outpouring of support for

"The troopers, with their gas masks on and gas guns drawn, then began to shoot gas on us and the troopers in front jumped off the trucks. Those standing at attention began to club us. The horses were brought on the scene and were more humane than the troopers; they stepped over the fallen victims."

— Amelia Platts Boynton Robinson



ter to King the organization's conclusion that "the objectives of the march do not justify the dangers."²³ The group would not participate directly, but did offer support by supplying radios, cars, and medical assistance. Individual members of SNCC could choose to participate in the march, but not as official representatives of the group.²⁴

On Sunday, March 7, when about 600 protestors left Brown Chapel to begin the march, SCLC representa-

Selma. When they reached the peak of the Pettus Bridge they saw state troopers and mounted posse men waiting for them on the other side. As the troopers donned gas masks, Major John Cloud ordered the marchers to disperse and return to their church or homes. Hosea Williams asked to speak with Cloud, but the trooper ignored his request and ordered his men to advance. Using tear gas and billy clubs, the law enforcement officers fiercely attacked the

the march to Montgomery.²⁵

On Monday, March 8, lawyers acting for the SCLC asked U.S. District Court Judge Frank M. Johnson to prevent the state from interfering with the next day's planned march. Johnson refused to rule on the request until a hearing could be held, and enjoined the protestors from marching until

23. Williams, 268.

24. Fager, 92-93; Williams, 268-69; Garrow, 70-73.

25. Fager, 92-98; Williams, 269-73; Garrow, 73-77.

that time. King felt obligated to go through with the march, and hundreds of supporters from across the country had arrived in Selma to participate. Attorney General Katzenbach and Leroy Collins, the head of the Justice Department's Community Relations Service, unsuccessfully tried to dissuade King and eventually worked to prevent a repeat of the violent confrontation of Bloody

Sunday. On the day of the march, King led more than 1,500 marchers from Brown Chapel to the point of Sunday's encounter with state troopers. Once again met by state troopers, the marchers were allowed to kneel and pray and then return to Selma without violent intervention. Reportedly the result of a prearranged agreement between King, Leroy Collins, and state law enforcement officials, the abbreviated march was later dubbed "Turnaround Tuesday." Hoping for a quick hearing by Judge Johnson on the march request, King asked the ministers and other supporters who had arrived in Selma to march to stay in town for a few more days. Among those who stayed was Unitarian minister James Reeb. Reeb and two other ministers were attacked outside a Selma restaurant the night of Turnaround Tuesday; Reeb received a blow to the head that two days later proved fatal.²⁶

The increasingly violent reactions to the voting rights movement spawned sympathy protests and

marches throughout the black belt region of Alabama and in cities across the nation in the week following Bloody Sunday and Turnaround Tuesday. In Selma, Mayor Smitherman banned all marches in the city, and protestors vowed to hold a vigil until they were allowed to march. Public Safety Director Wilson Baker kept the protest in the neighborhood around Brown Chapel and the George Washington Carver public housing project, marking the line of his blockade with a barricade protestors dubbed the "Berlin Wall." Students from Tuskegee Institute and Alabama State College marched in Montgomery. In Washington, D.C., demonstrators marched outside the White House and gathered outside the attorney general's office. Federal buildings in Chicago, New York, Detroit, and other northern cities also became the sites of protests. Protestors sought federal intervention in Alabama to enable the entire march from Selma to Montgomery to take place.²⁷

By this time, the events of the vot-

same day, Alabama Governor George Wallace flew to Washington to discuss the Selma situation with President Johnson. Although Wallace had asked for the meeting, Johnson used the opportunity to try to persuade Wallace to use local and state law enforcement to protect civil rights activists in a march from Selma to Montgomery, in order to avoid federal intervention. Despite Johnson's efforts, Wallace returned to Alabama to announce that the march would only be allowed to proceed when a federal court order authorizing it had been issued. The following Monday on national television, the President presented the voting rights legislation to a joint session of Congress, stating that all Americans "must overcome the crippling legacy of bigotry and injustice"²⁸ by taking on the cause



"In focusing the attention of the nation and the world today on the flagrant denial of the right to vote, we are exposing the very origin, the root cause, of racial segregation in the Southland."

— Martin Luther King Jr., March 25, 1965

Left: "Berlin Wall," Selma, 1965

ing rights movement had pushed President Johnson to propose voting rights legislation. On Saturday, March 13, Attorney General Katzenbach reached an agreement with Republican congressmen on a formula for a voting rights bill and a draft was presented to the President. The

26. Fager, 101-105; Williams, 273-74; Garrow, 83-87.

27. Fager, 106, 112-18, and 138-39; Williams, 275; Robert J. Norrell, *Reaping the Whirlwind: The Civil Rights Movement in Tuskegee* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998 reprint), 172-74.

28. Williams, 278.

of voting rights. On Tuesday, March 16, following a protest march in Montgomery in which SNCC workers and students were brutally beaten by local law enforcement officials, the SCLC received word that Judge Johnson had issued a permit for the march from Selma to Montgomery and ordered state and federal law enforcement protection for the marchers.²⁹

The fifty-four mile march was scheduled to begin on Sunday, March 21, and would take five days to complete. Preparations for the march, undertaken by both the SCLC and SNCC, included planning for camp sites, equipment, food, water, toilets, medical services, and transportation for marchers. A SNCC staff member chose the 300 activists allowed to

march the entire route from Selma to Montgomery, concentrating on local activists who had been involved in earlier voting rights conflicts. Judge Johnson's order allowing the march limited participation to no more than 300 marchers in the two-lane portion of the Highway 80 route to Montgomery, the section of the road that ran through Lowndes County. Governor Wallace refused to provide security for the marchers, telling President Johnson that the state could not afford it. Johnson responded by federalizing 1,900 men in Alabama's National Guard, and assigning 2,000 regular army troops, 100 Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) agents, and 100 federal marshals to protect the marchers.³⁰

The march from Selma to Montgomery began early on the afternoon of March 21, with more than 4,000 participants leaving Brown Chapel on Sylvan Street, following Alabama Avenue to Broad Street, and heading out of Selma across the Pettus Bridge. National guardsmen lined the route

first day, the marchers hiked seven miles to the David Hall property just off Highway 80 to camp for the night, although many returned to Selma for the evening. The next day, the marchers crossed into Lowndes County where the four-lane highway narrowed to two lanes, and the number of marchers dropped to the required 300. The second night's camp site was on property owned by Rosie Steele. On the third day, marchers continued through rural Lowndes County, hiking up and down the rolling hills of the country highway and through swampy lowlands adjacent to the Alabama River. Marchers spent the third night of their journey on the property of Robert Gardner. On the fourth day, they crossed into Montgomery County, again reaching the four-lane roadway that allowed their numbers to increase. The fourth night was spent on the grounds of the City of St. Jude in Montgomery, a building complex with a hospital, school, and church run by the Catholic Church. On St. Jude's playing field, celebrity supporters of the march held a concert as part of a "Stars for Freedom" rally to celebrate the final leg of the march.³¹

Below: March 21 campsite, David Hall property

Bottom left: March 22 campsite, Rosie Steele property

Bottom right: March 24 campsite, City of St. Jude

Background: Sign marking Highway 80, 1965

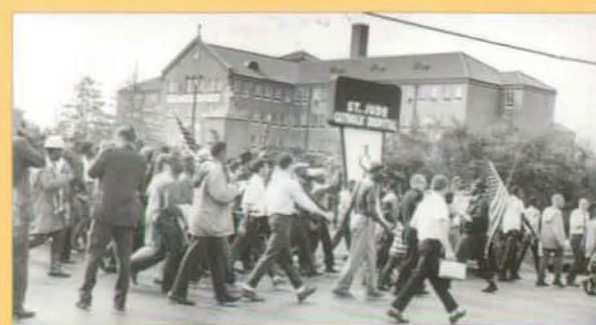
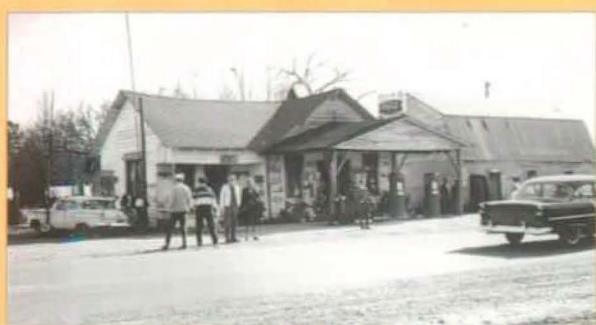


to protect the marchers from angry whites, who waved signs and Confederate flags, but did not try to attack the march participants. On the

29. Fager, 135-41; Williams, 278-79.

30. Fager, 145-49.

31. Fager, 150-59; Williams, 279-82.





On March 25, 25,000 marchers reached their final destination at the Alabama State Capitol. On the back of a flatbed truck near the steps of the heavily-guarded capitol building, civil rights movement leaders gathered for a rally including Martin Luther King Jr. (SCLC), John Lewis (SNCC), Roy Wilkins (The National Association for the Advancement of

Colored People), Whitney Young (National Urban League), A. Philip Randolph, Ralph Bunche, Bayard Rustin, and Rosa Parks. King gave one of his most inspiring speeches at the rally, summarizing the struggle for the right to complete the march when he said: "They told us we wouldn't get here. And there were those who said that we would get here only over their

dead bodies, but all the world today knows that we are here and that we are standing before the forces of power in the state of Alabama saying, 'We ain't goin' let nobody turn us around.'"³² Following King's speech, he and a small group of marchers attempted to enter the capitol to give a voting rights petition to Governor Wallace. Wallace refused to



Left: Marchers gathered outside Dexter Avenue Baptist Church, March 25, 1965

Top: View from steps of Alabama State Capitol during speeches following completion of Selma to Montgomery march

meet the group. At the end of the march and rally, thousands of participants made their way out of Montgomery using any means of transportation they could find. Troops called in to guard against violence during the march left the area, leaving marchers vulnerable to attack by angry whites. Viola Liuzzo, a Detroit housewife, served as a volunteer to shuttle marchers back to Selma. After making one trip to Selma she was driving back to Montgomery with march participant Leroy Moton to pick up more marchers when she was shot in the head by a Ku Klux Klansman in another car. The violence increased support for the Voting Rights Act, which was passed by the Senate on May 26, 1965, and by the House of Representatives on July 9.

President Johnson signed the bill into law on August 6, 1965.³³

The successful completion of the Selma to Montgomery march and the passage of the Voting Rights Act resulted in major changes in African-American voting patterns and political participation. As signed by Johnson, the Voting Rights Act banned literacy requirements and similar tests for registering or voting in states or counties where less than fifty percent of potential voters were registered to vote on November 1, 1964, or voted in the 1964 presidential election. The act authorized the attorney general to send federal registrars to register voters in those counties or states where such discrimination had occurred and required those jurisdictions to receive the permission of the Justice Department or the federal district court for the District of Columbia before making any changes in registration or voting methods. The

"They told us we wouldn't get here. And there were those who said that we would get here only over their dead bodies, but all the world today knows that we are here and that we are standing before the forces of power in the state of Alabama saying, 'We ain't goin' let nobody turn us around.' "

— Martin Luther King Jr., March 25, 1965

act's provisions affected twenty-six counties in the state of North Carolina and the entire states of Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, South Carolina, and Virginia.³⁴

In carrying out the provisions of the act, Attorney General Nicholas Katzenbach within three days of the act's approval designated nine counties to receive federal registrars, including Dallas County, Alabama. On August 14, only eight days following passage of the act, 381 African Americans registered to vote in Dallas County, a total larger than the number that had been able to register in the entire sixty-five years preceding the legislation. Federal registrars as-

32. James M. Washington, ed., *A Testament of Hope: The Essential Writings and Speeches of Martin Luther King, Jr.* (New York: Harper Collins, 1986), 227.

33. Fager, 160-63; Williams, 283-85.

34. Luker, 274-75; Rhoda Lois Blumberg, *Civil Rights: The 1960s Freedom Struggle* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1991), 132-33.

Top: Memorial service for slain victims of voting rights movement, 1965

Below: Jonathan Daniels memorial, Lowndes County Courthouse



signed to Lowndes and Montgomery counties also registered African-American voters at a rapid pace. By November 1965, approximately 8,000 African Americans had registered in Dallas County, more than 2,000 in Lowndes County, and approximately 7,000 in the city of Montgomery, Alabama. Comparing black and white

voter registration in the years 1964 and 1969 provides further evidence of the fact that African Americans quickly took advantage of the provisions of the Voting Rights Act. In Alabama in 1964, 69.2 percent

of eligible whites were registered to vote, but only 19.3 percent of voting-age African Americans were registered. By 1969, the state's white voter registration had reached 94.6 percent while the number of African Americans registered to vote had climbed to 61.3 percent.³⁵

Although African-American voter

registration soared following passage of the Voting Rights Act, many African Americans continued to experience discrimination and white resistance to registering and voting. In Lowndes County, Alabama, African Americans made up 85 percent of the population and not a single African American was registered to

vote in early 1965. Following the Selma to Montgomery march, SNCC organizers, led by Stokely Carmichael, began intensive efforts to register African-American voters in the county. When the Voting Rights

Act was passed in August 1965, SNCC had registered only about 250 African Americans in Lowndes. The August 10 arrival of a federal registrar under the provisions of the act had a significant positive impact on the rate of African-American registration, but the resulting increase aggravated white resistance to voter registration efforts.

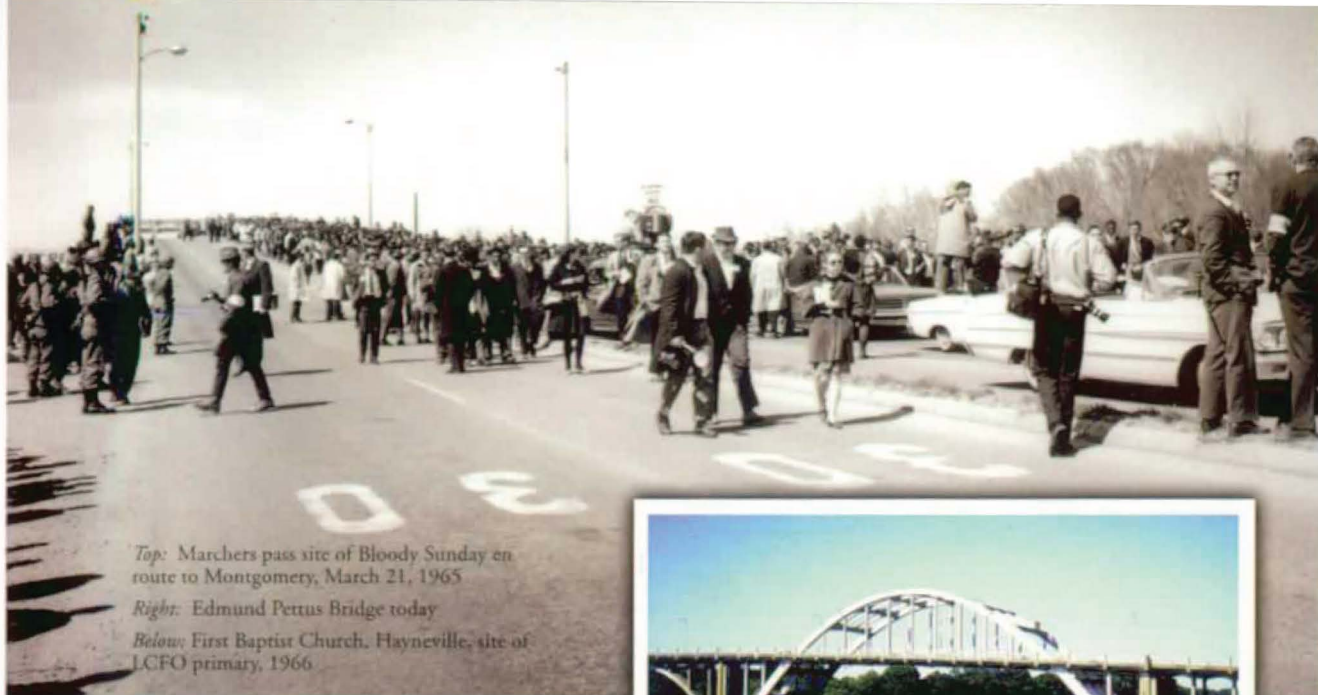


On August 20, a deputy sheriff shot and killed civil rights activist Jonathan Daniels, who had just been released from the county jail after serving a week-long sentence for participating in a civil rights demonstration. An all-white jury acquitted the deputy sheriff of the shooting. In addition, white land owners in Lowndes County retaliated against African-American efforts to vote and gain political office by evicting tenant farmers and their families from their land in December 1965. The majority of the African-American population in Lowndes County worked as farmers, most as sharecroppers or tenant farmers on white-owned land. When about twenty of the farm families were forced out of their homes, they established Tent City on an African American-owned plot of land on Highway 80; some families lived in tents for as long as two years.³⁶

Civil rights organizing in the black belt region of Alabama increased after passage of the Voting Rights Act, especially in Lowndes County where white backlash encouraged rather than deterred African-American political action. In the summer of 1965, SNCC workers discovered an Alabama law allowing the formation of political parties at the county level. Local residents created an independent party that would give African Americans more opportunities to hold local elected office than they would gain through access to the majority-white Democratic party. The new party,

35. Lawson, 329-31; Watters and Cleghorn, 245-47.

36. Clayborne Carson, *In Struggle: SNCC and the Black Awakening of the 1960s* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981), 164-65; Charles Denby, *Indignant Heart: A Black Worker's Journal* (Boston: South End Press, 1978), 215-18; Stokely Carmichael and Charles V. Hamilton, *Black Power: The Politics of Liberation in America* (New York: Vintage Books, 1967), 100-107.



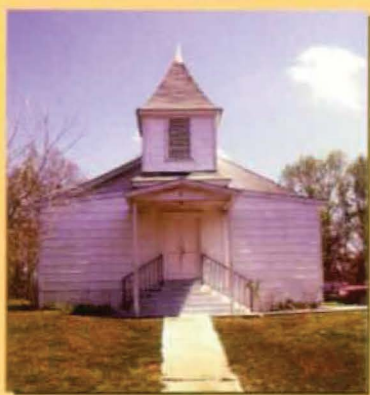
Top: Marchers pass site of Bloody Sunday en route to Montgomery, March 21, 1965
 Right: Edmund Pettus Bridge today
 Below: First Baptist Church, Hayneville, site of LCFO primary, 1966



"It was like a holy crusade, like Gandhi's march to the sea. You didn't get tired, you really didn't get weary, you had to go. It was more than an ordinary march. To me there was never a march like this one before, and there hasn't been one since. It was the sense of community moving there - as you walked you saw people coming waving, bringing you food or bringing you something to drink."

— John Lewis

officially known as the Lowndes County Freedom Organization (LCFO), chose the black panther as its symbol, making it a forerunner of the Black Panther Party established in Oakland, California, in 1966. In the November 1966 election, the LCFO sponsored seven African-American candidates for local offices including sheriff, coroner, tax assessor, tax collector, and three members of the Board of Education. Although none of the LCFO candidates was elected, their presence on the ballot was a major victory for African-American voting rights. In the 1966 Dallas County elections, no



African-American candidates were elected, but voters successfully ousted Sheriff Jim Clark from office, electing his more moderate white opponent, Wilson Baker.³⁷

By the late 1960s and 1970s, African-American candidates won increasing numbers of city, county, and state-level political offices. Voters in Selma elected Amelia Boynton, Frederick Reese, and three other African-American candidates to the city council in 1972 (constituting one-half of the council members). In Lowndes County, John Hulett, chairman of the LCFO, won the office of sheriff. By 1972, more than 2,600 African Ameri-

cans held political office in the United States, including Andrew Young and Barbara Jordan, the first African Americans from former Confederate states elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in seventy years. The political activity of African Americans represented by these office holders, and by the many others who have gone on to participate in the process in more recent years, is a tribute to the efforts of civil rights activists involved in the voting rights movement in Alabama and throughout the United States who helped expand democracy for all Americans.³⁸

37. Cleveland Sellers with Robert Terrell, *The River of No Return: The Autobiography of a Black Militant and the Life and Death of SNCC* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1973), 151-54; Carson, 162-66; Denby, 212-14; Luker, 28 and 164; Lawson, 337-38; Carmichael and Hamilton, 106-18.

38. Steven F. Lawson, *Running for Freedom: Civil Rights and Black Politics in America Since 1941* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1991), 118-19 and 143.

The civil rights movement and the concept of nonviolent protest and change

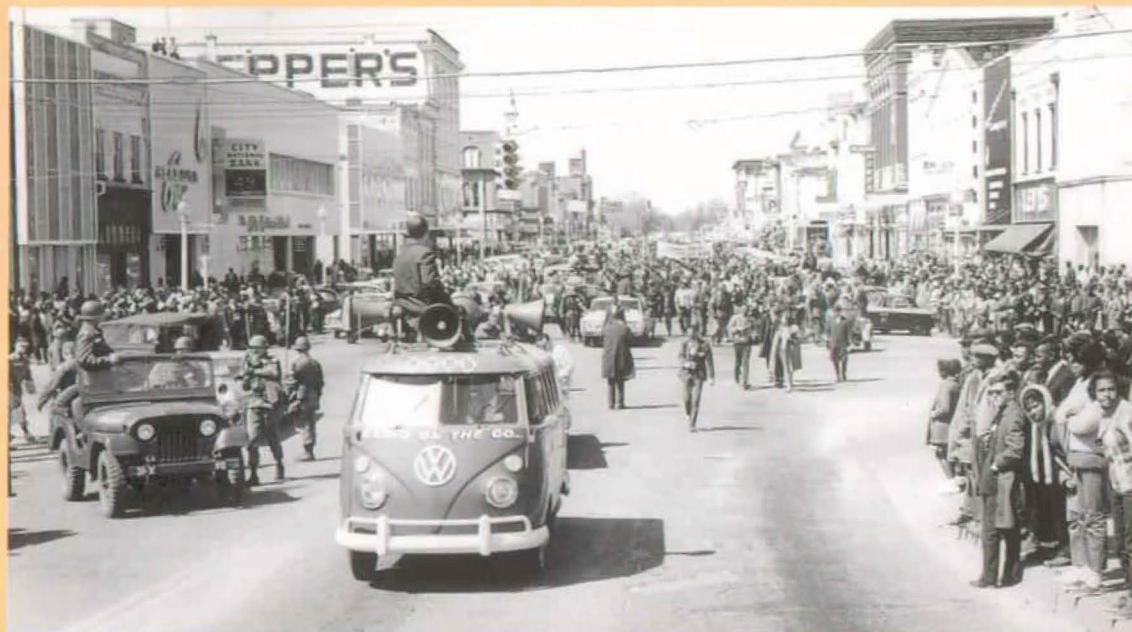
The voting rights march of 1965

Winning the vote

Individuals in community working for the common good

The power of national organizations

Selma to Montgomery National Historic Trail



Interpretive Themes

Interpretive themes communicate the significance of the Selma to Montgomery National Historic Trail. They embody the trail's stories, although they may not include everything we may wish to interpret. These statements connect trail resources to the larger processes, systems, ideas, and values of which they are a part. As keystones, these overarching stories that the resources have to tell are constant, no matter who the audience is or what means we use to communicate with them. Indeed, they are the building blocks—the core content—on which the interpretation and education programs are founded. The theme statements that follow are the key ideas through which the trail's significant resource values will be conveyed to the public.

THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT AND THE CONCEPT OF NONVIOLENT PROTEST AND CHANGE

The civil rights movement is one part of the story of centuries of struggle by African Americans for equal participation in American society. Thousands of ordinary people worked to mobilize and sustain the civil rights movement. Using tools such as grassroots organizing and mass protests, activists carefully planned and executed movement events. A legacy of activism and protest in the black belt of Alabama fueled civil rights organizing in the area. The Selma to Montgomery marchers remained true to the tradition of nonviolent civil disobedience, gaining the "high ground" to make their demands known to their community and nation. In the end, the Selma to Montgomery voting rights march became a landmark event in the long history of the civil rights movement in the United States. The modern civil rights movement and its use of nonviolent protest stood as an example for other democratic movements (Vietnam War opposition, the women's rights movement, and others). As our national experience evolves, people who continue to question authority and fight for change through nonviolent means build on the legacy of the movement.

THE VOTING RIGHTS MARCH OF 1965

The Selma to Montgomery voting rights march of 1965 was a civil rights protest that brought profound change to the political and social fabric of the American experience. The marchers moved the issue of voting rights to the forefront of the political and legislative agenda in the United States. The march and the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 generated both positive and negative results for the communities involved including an increase in voter registration, the organization of the Black Panther Party, the displacement of African-American tenant farmers who exercised the right to vote, and the out-migration of whites who feared increasing African-American political power. Today, the Voting Rights Act of 1965 continues to shape

the pattern of our national experience in response to the changing characteristics of our citizens.

WINNING THE VOTE

A little more than a generation ago, voting rights activists saw the right to vote not only as a privilege of American citizenship, but as a powerful tool to use in the future to correct race-based inequities in American society. In order to gain the right to vote, movement participants paid a high price, risking their jobs, families, homes, and lives. Racists and segregationists used legal power, tradition, and often violence to halt the efforts of activists. The cost, value, and meaning of each individual's responsibility to fully participate in the election process is exemplified in the story of the 1965 voting rights movement. The irony of the story rests in the indifference many Americans display toward the democratic ideal of voting.

INDIVIDUALS IN COMMUNITY WORKING FOR THE COMMON GOOD

The people and events associated with the Selma to Montgomery march embrace the concept that courageous and committed individuals, acting through local communities for a common goal, can bring vast change to the social and political fabric of American society. The civil rights activists knew they were not just protesting for themselves, but for the rights of others within their communities and for future generations. Group participation took many forms, but generally started at the local level. Women participated in groups and as individuals, filling the ranks for protest activities as well as leading local, state, and national-level civil rights organizations. Labor unions and employee groups risked being fired from their jobs by participating in and leading movement protests. Churches and church groups played a major role in recruiting movement activists and housing activities such as mass meetings. Students and youth provided energy, dedication, and idealism, as they led and sustained movement organizations.

THE POWER OF NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Many nationally known groups played critical roles in shaping political opinion and behavior at home and abroad during the march and its aftermath. National civil rights organizations, including the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the National Urban League, the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), and the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) played pivotal roles in both the voting rights and the broader civil rights movements. The national government, through executive direction, legislation, and judicial decision, responded to organized calls for civil rights. During the voting rights movement, President Lyndon B. Johnson reacted with strong executive actions, making nationally televised speeches in support of voting rights legislation and calling the National Guard into service to protect marchers. The

Congress approved legislation to change southern voter registration practices. The Supreme Court upheld or overturned civil and voting rights laws. Other groups, including the Ku Klux Klan (KKK), the American Nazi Party, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), and the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) of the U.S. Congress created barriers to the movement through organized resistance. Through it all, the national news media provided American and international audiences with widespread coverage of events during the civil rights movement, including Bloody Sunday and other acts of violent resistance. The public's reaction helped form national calls for action on voting and civil rights issues.



a.

The March Route

Alternative A tells the story of the voting rights march as defined by the events which occurred between March 7 and March 25, 1965, in Dallas, Lowndes, and Montgomery counties, Alabama.

b.

SELMA TO MONTGOMERY VOTING RIGHTS MARCH OF 1965

Alternative B builds on the story included in Alternative A, providing information on the broader 1965 efforts to gain voting rights by the African-American community in Dallas, Lowndes, and Montgomery counties, and the city of Marion, Alabama, prior to and during the march period. The Selma to Montgomery march attempts, the successful march from Selma to Montgomery, and the results and impacts of the march in Dallas, Lowndes, and Montgomery counties will also be explained for visitors.

c.

The Selma to Montgomery Voting Rights March & The American Civil Rights Movement

Alternative C includes the stories presented in Alternatives A and B and provides a national focus by interpreting the evolution of citizenship rights in the United States. African-American efforts to achieve voting rights at the local, state, and national levels would be discussed in the context of the civil rights movement and the larger national experience, including efforts in the cities of Marion and Tuskegee, Alabama. Providing such historical context would help visitors understand that the Selma to Montgomery march, rather than being an isolated event, was integral to the African-American quest for civil rights and the evolution of American democracy.

Selma to Montgomery National Historic Trail



Management Alternatives

The following section describes three suggested alternatives for historic resource and story treatments on the Selma to Montgomery National Historic Trail. It has been designed to provide for easy comparison of each of the alternatives. Actions common to all the alternatives are listed at the beginning of this section.

Alternatives are explored through narratives, maps, bulleted lists, and photographs focusing on Selma, Lowndes County, and Montgomery. Trail experiences are presented as statements from the points of view of several visitors from the future. The bulleted lists identify specific actions that can be linked to the map accompanying each list. Photographs help provide visual and emotional linkages for the reader.

Each alternative describes a different way of commemorating, interpreting, and preserving resources

associated with the Selma to Montgomery voting rights march.

Generally, the alternatives represent a progression toward interpretation of a broader story ranging from information about the march route to placing the march in the context of events associated with the struggle for voting rights and the civil rights movement in the United States.

For the purposes of this study, the march is defined as the entire route of the Selma to Montgomery march of March 21-25, 1965, as well as the two earlier march attempts on March 7 (Bloody Sunday) and March 9 (Turn-around Tuesday). Each alternative is introduced by a title, a general statement of scope, and a profile outlining character, treatment, visitor experience, and partnership roles.

Actions Common to All Alternatives

Comprehensive Cultural Resources Inventory

- prepared by the NPS with assistance from ALDOT and the Alabama Historical Commission
- will identify the lanes/portions of US Highway 80 used for the historic march
- will determine National Register of Historic Places and National Historic Landmark status of sites. NPS to provide information and technical assistance as appropriate
- will identify primary and secondary sites associated with the trail

Compliance with Historic Preservation Regulations

Any project work affecting a historic property (including structures built before 1965) must comply with local, state, and federal historic preservation regulations. The Alabama Historical Commission must be consulted in the identification, evaluation, and assessment of effects upon historic properties to avoid or reduce any harmful effects.

Identification and Certification of Primary and Secondary Historic Sites along the Trail Corridor

- based on the cultural resources inventory of the trail corridor and previous studies
- helps ensure that sites are managed to meet the preservation, interpretation, and recreation criteria established by the National Trails System Act and other guidelines to be established as part of the Comprehensive Management Plan for the Selma to Montgomery National Historic Trail
- Primary Sites:
 - directly related to the interpretive story along the National Historic Trail
 - interpreted by the NPS and Friends of the Selma to Montgomery National Historic Trail groups
- Secondary Sites:
 - indirectly related to the interpretive story of the trail
 - friends groups, local governments, the State of Alabama, and private property owners responsible for preservation and interpretation
 - technical assistance available from the NPS

Interpretation of the Story

- story of the Selma to Montgomery march of 1965 will be interpreted in each alternative
- some alternatives expand on this story by providing interpretation which places the march in the context of events associated with the struggle for voting rights and the civil rights movement
- number of primary and secondary sites depends on breadth of story

U.S. Department of Transportation/Federal Highway Administration Role

- NPS has limited funding to construct and/or operate interpretive facilities for NHT
- Scenic Byways program may fund rest areas, turnouts, interpretive centers, historical markers, signs, displays, exhibits, interpretive publications, audio and video tapes, etc.
- ALDOT may apply for Scenic Byways funds through the FHWA
- funding applications for development of the Tent City area and other proposed facilities along the trail which qualify under the Scenic Byways program have been prepared
- applications for future projects funded by the Scenic Byways program may be submitted



Technical Assistance from the NPS

- may increase as the story to be told for visitors broadens in the various alternatives
- to local, state, and federal agencies, friends groups, private organizations, and individuals—including private property owners
- includes information about preservation tools, historical research and assistance needed for the design of interpretive media, and services and guidance on the rehabilitation and adaptive use of historic buildings

Partnership Approach

All alternatives will depend upon strong partnerships throughout all phases of implementation, especially among state and local governments, friends groups, and private sector interests for developing and sustaining visitor services and operations

Safety and Security

- safety and security needs for visitors and resources will be the responsibility of local governments
- according to ALDOT, portions of US 80 do not meet current standards for highway safety at the existing 65mph speed limit. ALDOT is responsible for all safety improvements to US 80

Commemorative Sites

- defined as additions of non-historic features that memorialize persons, events, or places associated with the march and the voting rights movement
- number and character of commemorative sites vary according to each alternative
- NPS will encourage preservation of existing commemorative sites such as:
 - Viola Liuzzo Monument (US 80)
 - Jonathan Daniels Monument (Lowndes County Courthouse, Hayneville)
 - James Reeb Monument (Old Depot Museum, Selma)
 - Martin Luther King Jr. Monument (Brown Chapel, Selma)

Links to Other Resources

- information on other cultural, natural, scenic, and recreational opportunities in the vicinity of the trail will be made available to visitors
- compatible uses of the trail that do not conflict with the preservation of the historic scene will be encouraged



The March Route

Alternative A tells the story of the voting rights march as defined by the events which occurred between March 7 and March 25, 1965, in Dallas, Lowndes, and Montgomery counties, Alabama.

Profile

Trail Character

Trail character will be defined by the following elements:

- a self-guiding, pleasurable drive for motorists
- a drive generally following and interpreting the routes of the march attempts (March 7 and 9, 1965) and the complete march (March 21-25, 1965)
- a modernized, scenic parkway with tourism enhancements and improvements meeting all current standards for highway safety

Visitor Experience

Visitors will have opportunities for the following experiences:

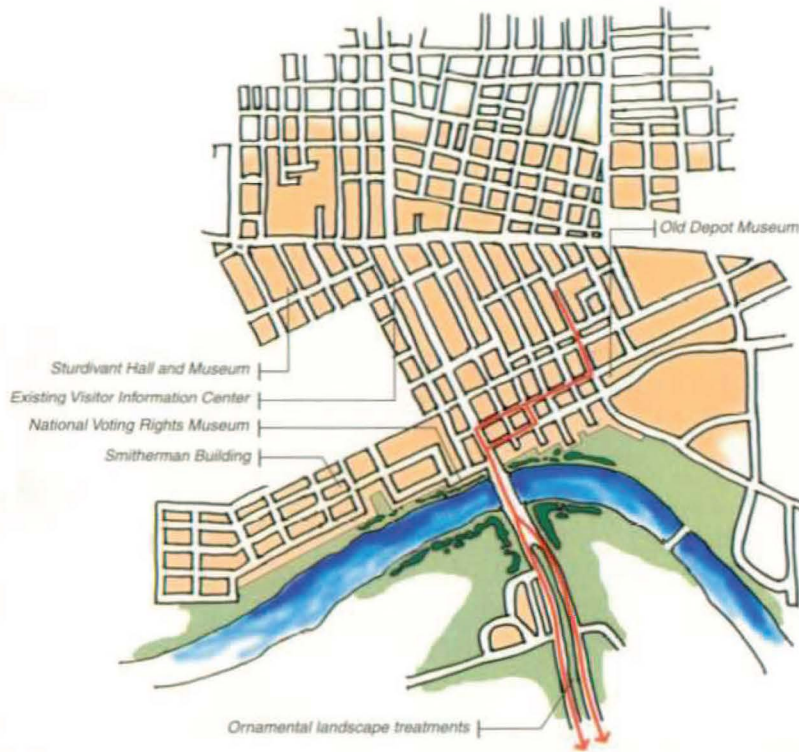
- to experience a representation of the original route used by the marchers
- to absorb the essence of the march story during their fifty-four-mile journey along the trail
- to understand some of the people, events, and places associated with the march in Dallas, Lowndes, and Montgomery counties
- to interact with the trail's resources in ways that have minimum impacts on those resources and provide safe, satisfying experiences

Treatment and Use of Historic March Route/Role of Scenic Byway and All-American Road

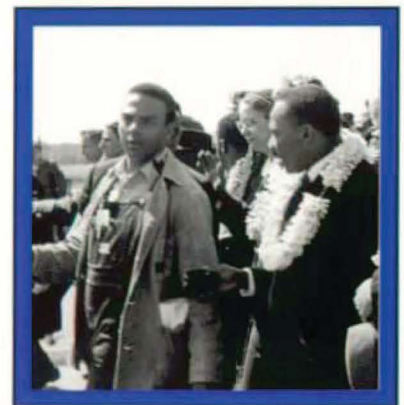
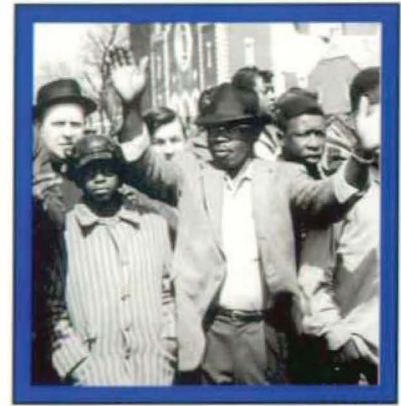
- the route will be marked for visitors
- US Highway 80 lanes used in the march will be preserved and used for pedestrian, bicycle, and other recreational use
- US Highway 80 will be developed as a scenic parkway with ornamental landscape treatments within the right-of-way in Dallas and Montgomery counties, and treatments preserving the rural, pastoral character in Lowndes county

Partnerships/Key Activities/Responsibilities

- rest area, interpretive center, and scenic parkway improvements to US 80 (property acquisition, funding, planning, design, and construction through the Scenic Byways program) - Alabama Department of Transportation, US Department of Transportation/Federal Highway Administration
- input on specific features of the proposed rest area/information center - Friends of the Selma to Montgomery National Historic Trail groups, Alabama Historical Commission, National Park Service
- input on specific features of the proposed interpretive/welcome centers and adjacent facilities - friends groups, local governments, Alabama Bureau of Tourism and Travel, Alabama Historical Commission, National Park Service
- design, purchase, and installation of historical markers - friends groups, Alabama Department of Transportation
- design and produce wayside exhibit panels and support structures, self-guided tour brochures, and audio message systems - friends groups, Alabama Department of Transportation
- safety and other improvements to US 80 and city and county roads including planning, design, and construction using other than Scenic Byways and All-American Road funds - local governments, Alabama Department of Transportation, US Department of Transportation/Federal Highway Administration
- existing and proposed commemorative site development - friends groups, local governments
- technical assistance to all partners for interpretive program and facility development on the trail - Alabama Historical Commission, National Park Service

**Selma / Dallas County**

- self-guided tour brochures will be available at existing tourist information outlets, including state and local visitor information centers and museums
- local friends groups may enhance existing commemorative sites and/or add new sites
- along US 80, wayside exhibits and low power radio broadcasts will provide visitors with information and interpretation about the march story and associated resources

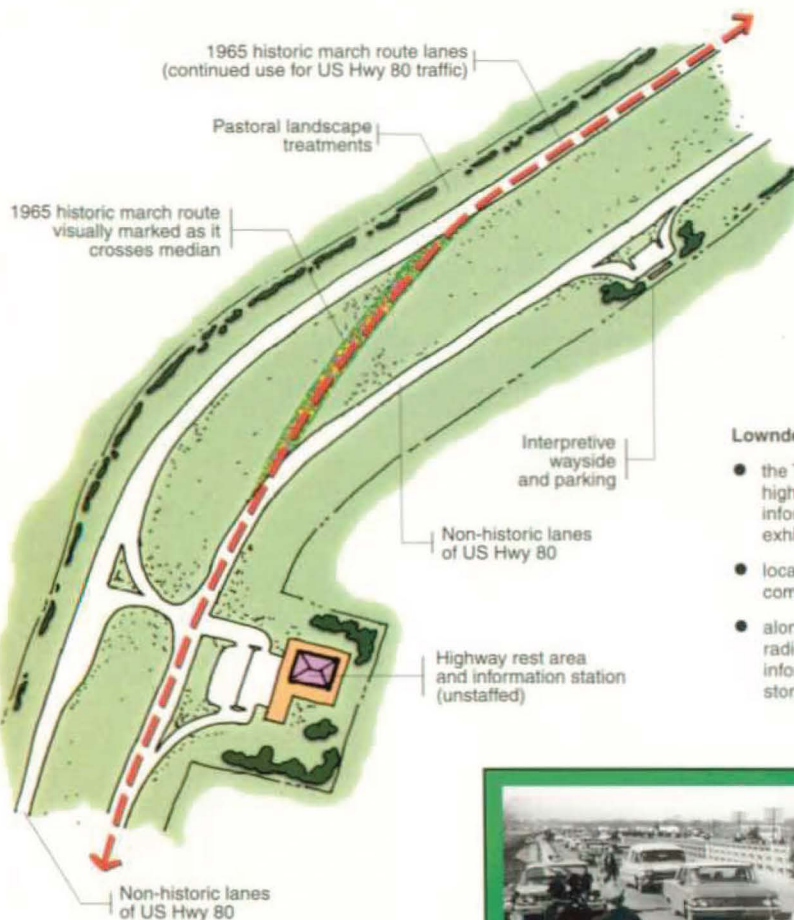
**Visitor Experience Narrative**

We were near Selma when we heard the first broadcast. A sign along U.S. 80 informed us that we were about to travel on the Selma to Montgomery National Historic Trail and could learn more by tuning to the trail's

information frequency. Our car radio suddenly became a source of information about the trail, its significance, and upcoming events along the fifty-four mile route. We crossed the bridge in Selma and

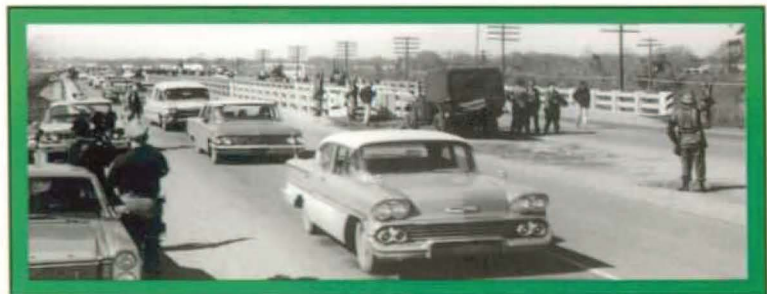
stopped at a wayside exhibit that told how the Edmund Pettus Bridge had become a symbol of struggle and hope in 1965. Heading east, the urban setting gave way to a pleasantly landscaped, modern parkway.

Alternative A Lowndes County



Lowndes County / Tent City

- the Tent City site in Lowndes County will feature a highway rest area and unstaffed visitor information center, with brochures, wayside exhibits, picnic tables, and rest rooms
- local friends groups may enhance existing commemorative sites and/or add new sites
- along US 80, wayside exhibits and low power radio broadcasts will provide visitors with information and interpretation about the march story and associated resources

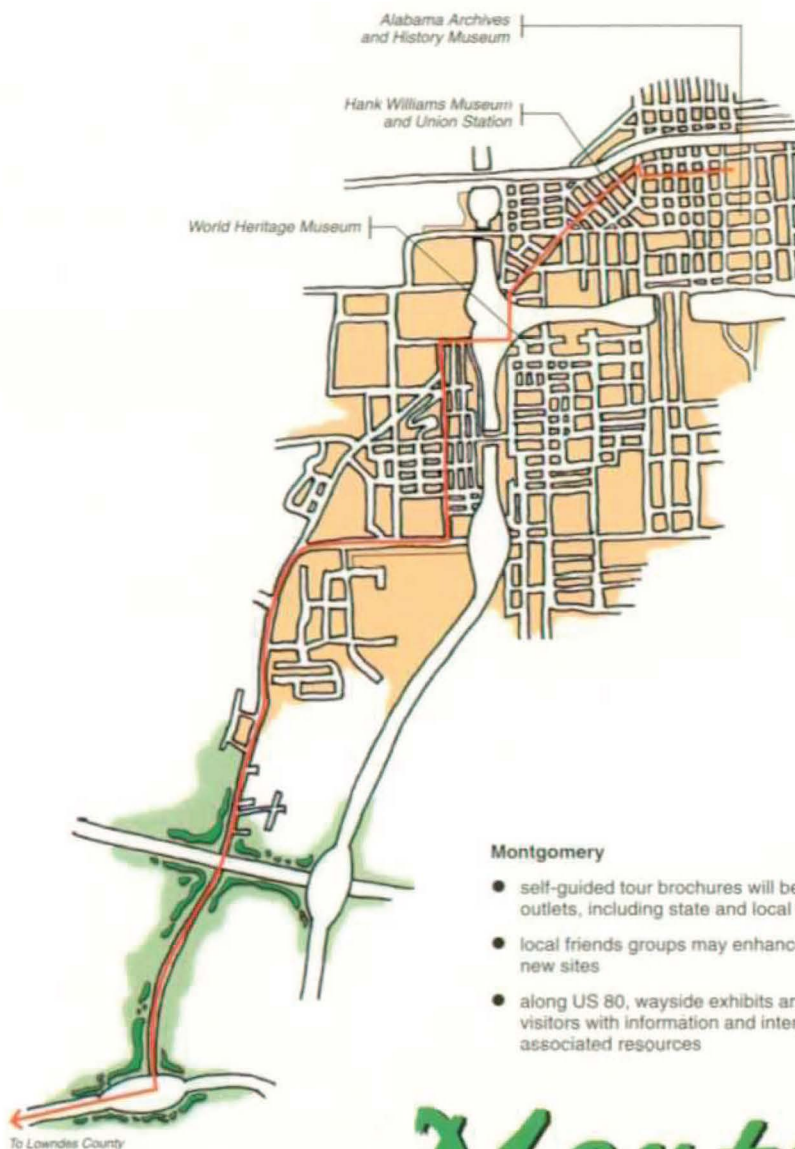


Visitor Experience Narrative

Not twenty minutes later, we came upon a beautiful rest area in Lowndes County. Actually, it was more like a state welcome center with brochures about nearby attractions, a large and well-maintained picnic area, and rest

rooms. A series of wayside exhibits along a short walking trail told us more about the march, the Voting Rights Act of 1965, and the social and political legacy of the voting rights movement. Back on the road, the series

of broadcasts continued the Selma to Montgomery story. There were several wayside pullouts along the parkway. We decided to stop at the monument honoring Viola Liuzzo, an ordinary American murdered during

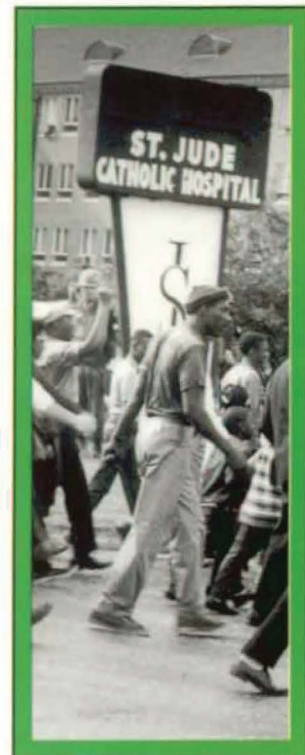


Montgomery

- self-guided tour brochures will be available at existing tourist information outlets, including state and local visitor information centers and museums
- local friends groups may enhance existing commemorative sites and/or add new sites
- along US 80, wayside exhibits and low power radio broadcasts will provide visitors with information and interpretation about the march story and associated resources

Montgomery

Alternative A



the march. How could such violence mar that pastoral setting? After a few minutes of conversation reflecting on those times and our own roles in American society, we returned to our van and continued east. Soon, the

landscape was dotted with more and more development. The parkway became a green ribbon in a maze of buildings.

We left the trail at the City of St. Jude and continued north on Inter-

state 65/85. As frequent travelers along this route, we found the national historic trail facilities to be convenient and informative and the parkway a safe, modern, attractive route.

SELMA TO MONTGOMERY

VOTING RIGHTS MARCH OF 1965

Alternative B builds on the story included in Alternative A, providing information on the broader 1965 efforts to gain voting rights by the African-American community in Dallas, Lowndes, and Montgomery counties, and the city of Marion, Alabama, prior to and during the march period. The Selma to Montgomery march attempts, the successful march from Selma to Montgomery, and the results and impacts of the march in Dallas, Lowndes, and Montgomery counties will also be explained for visitors.

Profile

Trail Character

Trail character will be defined by the following elements:

- preservation of portions of the original march route
- preservation of the historic scene, including historic buildings, structures, and sites associated with the march

Treatment and Use of Historic March Route/Role of Scenic Byway and All-American Road

- significant portions of the historic scene along the march route, including historic structures, cultural landscapes, streetscapes, and views, will be preserved through construction of a new vehicular road
- US Highway 80 lanes used in the march will be preserved and used for pedestrian, bicycle, and other recreational use
- US 80 lanes constructed after 1965 (Lowndes County area) and lanes not used in the march continue to handle vehicular traffic at reduced speeds
- entire march route from Brown Chapel (Selma) to the State Capitol (Montgomery) will be marked with discreet, unifying signage that does not detract from the historic scene
- tools and funding sources provided through the Scenic Byways and other US Department of Transportation programs will be used to encourage the preservation of the 1965 historic scene, including the purchase of scenic easements and billboard control

Visitor Experience

Visitors will have opportunities for the following experiences:

- to visit a portion of the original route used by the marchers
- to understand the march and its people, places, and events in the context of voting rights efforts in Dallas, Lowndes, and Montgomery counties in 1965

Partnerships/Key Activities/Responsibilities

- interpretive/welcome centers, rest area, parking lots, trails, and historic road corridor maintenance (property acquisition, funding, planning, design, and construction through Scenic Byways program) - Alabama Department of Transportation, US Department of Transportation/Federal Highway Administration
- museum exhibits, wayside exhibits and markers, and self-guided tour brochures (funding, planning, design, and production through Scenic Byways program) - Alabama Department of Transportation, US Department of Transportation/Federal Highway Administration
- input on specific features of the proposed interpretive/welcome centers and adjacent facilities - friends groups, local governments, Alabama Bureau of Tourism and Travel, Alabama Historical Commission, National Park Service
- facility staffing and operations - friends groups, City of St. Jude, local governments/Chambers of Commerce, Alabama Department of Transportation, Alabama Bureau of Tourism and Travel, National Park Service
- technical assistance - Alabama Historical Commission, Alabama Department of Archives and History, National Park Service

Visitor Experience Narrative

Good morning everyone. My name is Pat. I'm pleased to have you visit with us on the opening day of the Selma Welcome and Interpretive Center. In order to preserve the historic scenes and structures associated with the march, which occurred outside our door, we have rehabilitated and adapted this historic building for its new use. I'll be giving you an orientation to our center and other visitor attractions in Selma. Did any of you travel here over the preserved portion of the original march route in Lowndes County? All of us are extremely proud of being able to save that historic section for visitors. It is the closest representation of the 1965 scenes, landscapes, and views that we can experience today. And if you stay a little longer here in Selma, you can always take the high-speed bypass through Lowndes County on your return to Montgomery.

Let me tell you something about our center. The museum exhibits and audio-visual presentation will tell you about the Selma to Montgomery march in its historical context and the people, places, and activities related to it in Selma and Dallas County. Although you will not see a National Park Service ranger working behind the information desk, you need to know that the Service has provided us with technical assistance in the many phases of developing our services in Selma. Our information desk staff can tell you about many attractions in the area, including the National Voting Rights Museum. Many of you will want to take our guided tour of Martin Luther King Jr. Street. The guided tour includes Brown Chapel AME Church, First Baptist Church, our new series of wayside exhibits along the street, and other sites of interest. The shuttle bus for the tour leaves outside our doors on Water Avenue. If you don't have time for a guided tour, you're welcome to ride the shuttle on its loop through Selma, or you can use one of our self-guided tour brochures and

travel at your own pace. Either way, I think you'll find it very worthwhile.

If you want to take the shuttle, I would encourage you to leave your car in our deck behind the historic facade on Broad Street. It's a convenient way to forget driving for awhile, concentrate on enjoying your tour, and help

us keep traffic to a minimum along Martin Luther King Jr. Street. I hope you have enjoyed this brief introduction to the Selma Welcome and Interpretive Center here at the foot of the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma. Please come back again and bring a friend. Are there any questions?

Selma

Alternative B



Welcome and Interpretive Center

Information and orientation
Museum exhibits
Tour staging
Visitor parking

National Voting Rights Museum
Interpretive facility
Exhibits

Upgrade wayside exhibits
Self-guided tour brochures
Guided walking tours

Selma

- rehabilitation and adaptive use of a historic structure at the corner of Broad Street and Water Avenue as downtown welcome and interpretive center for orientation, shuttle service, and tour staging
- interpretive exhibits to provide historic context of the Selma to Montgomery march and related activities in the Selma/Dallas County areas
- visitor information to be provided on a variety of attractions available in Selma, including the National Voting Rights Museum
- exhibits and other visitor services to be coordinated using National Park Service technical assistance to complement the existing National Voting Rights Museum
- visitor parking to be constructed adjacent to welcome center (construct parking deck behind existing historic facade and use existing surface parking in city-owned lot for tour buses)
- facility to be owned by the city, and staffing/operation by city, county, and Chamber of Commerce
- Martin Luther King Jr. Street - upgrade wayside exhibits and provide guided walking tours using shuttle service from downtown welcome and interpretive center as well as self-guided tour brochures

Lowndes County

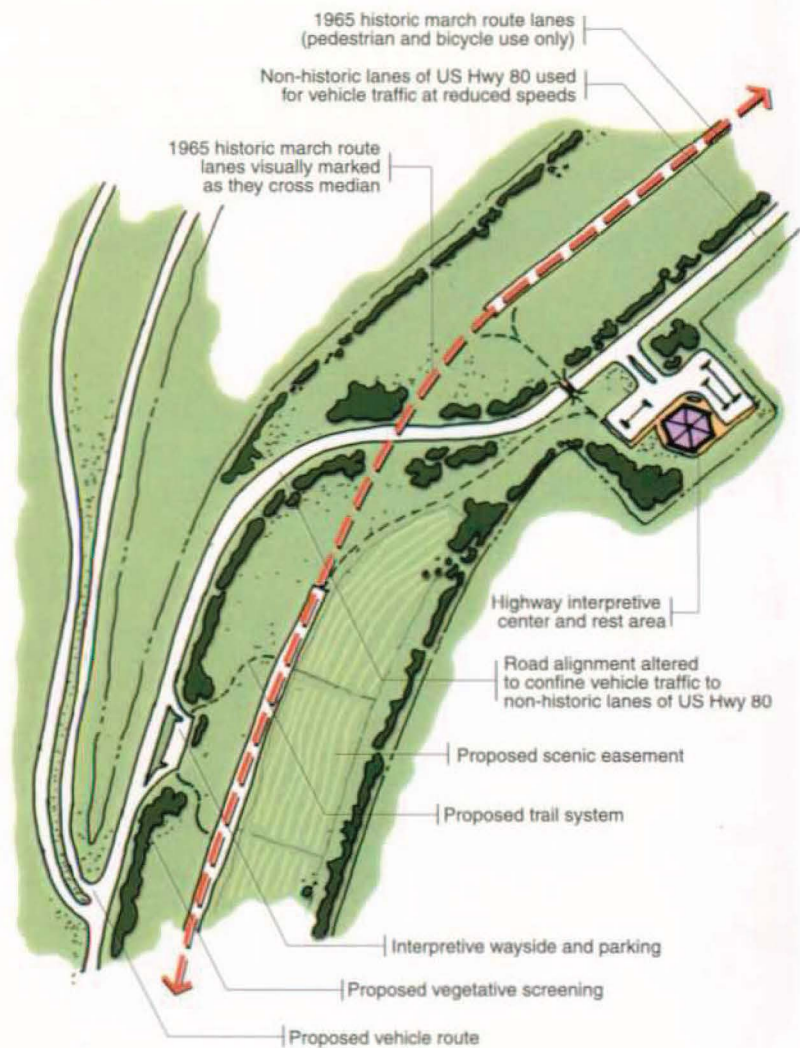
Alternative B

Visitor Experience Narrative

Hi. I'm a National Park Ranger stationed at the Lowndes County Interpretive Center and Rest Area on the Selma to Montgomery National Historic Trail. We're located just off the historic march route and can be reached by following the signs along the highway. You can't see our center from the march route. It's screened by those trees to protect the historic scene and landscape as much as possible. You can also reach the center from the high-speed bypass to the south. The bypass allows us to protect a long stretch of the original march route where little has changed over the past thirty-five years.

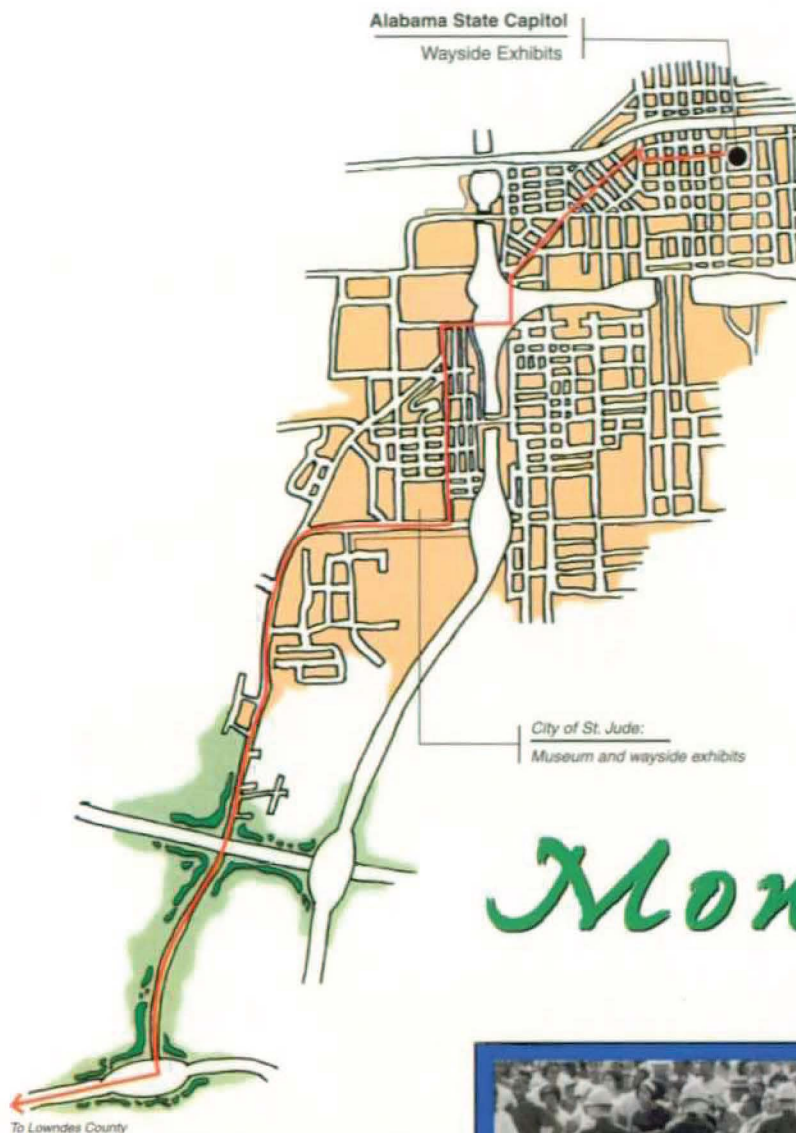
Our center tells the story of the grass-roots organizing efforts that took place here in Lowndes County as a result of the march. We also have museum exhibits and audiovisual presentations that tell about the march legacy. The center is the major access point for outdoor activities along the original route. You can bicycle along the original march route here. Visitors may walk quiet sections of the road and see some of the historic structures, landscapes, and views from 1965. It's an opportunity to think about the event and its place in American history.

If you're just passing through, the Lowndes County Interpretive Center and Rest Area provides a chance to simply stretch your legs, walk the dog, have a picnic, find some brochures on what to see and do in the area, and maybe even look over our exhibits. Whether you're a student of the 1965 march traveling on the historic route or traveling through the area on the south bypass, you'll find our center a convenient and informative place to stop.



Lowndes County / Tent City

- construct combined interpretive center/highway rest area screened from view of the historic march route
- interpretive exhibits and adjoining interpretive trail to focus on the story of grass roots efforts in Lowndes County area and relationships of those efforts to the march and to post-march civil rights organizing
- staffing/operation by the State of Alabama, National Park Service, and friends group volunteers



Montgomery

City of St. Jude:

- interpretive focus on roles of the City of St. Jude, the Catholic Church, and the adjacent neighborhood in the march
- interpretive exhibits will be located in a rehabilitated portion of the apartment building (original hospital)
- self-guided tours of the St. Jude grounds and adjacent neighborhood featuring wayside exhibits and markers
- staffing/operation by City of St. Jude and friends group volunteers

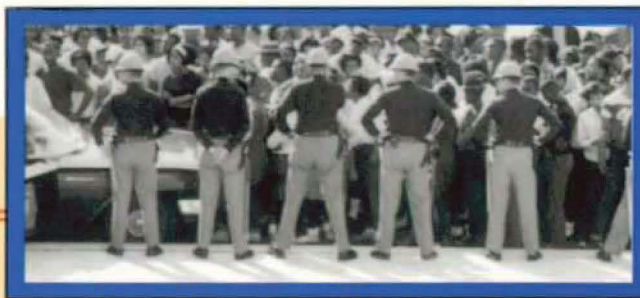
Alabama State Capitol:

- interpretive exhibits on building interior to focus on events in Montgomery leading up to the march and the march aftermath and impacts, including the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and social and political change in Montgomery
- wayside exhibit to focus on arrival of marchers at State Capitol
- exhibits will be unstaffed

Montgomery

Alternative B

Visitor Experience Narrative



Dear Grandma,

How are you? I am fine. My class took a trip to Montgomery this week. We had fun on the bus, too. Our teacher wanted to tell us about your famous march from Selma to Montgomery. There is a new National Historic Trail going from Selma to Montgomery. First, we stopped at a place called the City of St. Jude. The marchers camped there for one night and had a big concert with lots of famous people. I really liked the museum and video. We even saw your picture with the other marchers. You looked very young. We walked all over the grounds and saw many exhibits along the trails. We had a guide who took us into the Washington Park neighborhood. I wanted to know where you slept that night, but he said he only knew where the famous people stayed.

We had a picnic at the City of St. Jude and then followed the march route to the Alabama State Capitol. What a beautiful building. Everyone enjoyed the tour. I got to stand right where Martin Luther King Jr. gave his speech. We liked the museum exhibits, too.

Well, I have homework to do. Thank you for being on the march. I'm sorry the man didn't know where you stayed because I think you're pretty famous after all. Next time I come to Baltimore, maybe you can tell me more stories about your walk.

Love, Michael

The Selma to Montgomery Voting Rights March & The American Civil Rights Movement

Alternative C includes the stories presented in Alternatives A and B and provides a national focus by interpreting the evolution of citizenship rights in the United States. African-American efforts to achieve voting rights at the local, state, and national levels would be discussed in the context of the civil rights movement and the larger national experience, including efforts in the cities of Marion and Tuskegee, Alabama. Providing such historical context would help visitors understand that the Selma to Montgomery march, rather than being an isolated event, was integral to the African-American quest for civil rights and the evolution of American democracy.

Profile

Trail Character

Trail character will be defined by the following elements:

- two new lanes will be constructed near the existing lanes to provide a modernized, four-lane US Highway 80
- sections of the original march route with the highest level of historic integrity will be retained for commemorative purposes and made accessible for a broad variety of cultural, natural, and recreational uses

Visitor Experience

Visitors will have opportunities for the following experiences:

- to be immersed in the march story, both physically and emotionally, by walking, bicycling, and/or driving at low speeds along portions of the original route
- to understand the march and its people, places, and events in the context of the civil rights movement and the evolution of citizenship rights in the United States

Partnerships/Key Activities/Responsibilities

- specific activities and responsible parties are the same as those in Alternative B except for the addition of improvements, such as the use of landscape plant materials in the median to provide a scenic parkway experience based on rural character
- local, county, state, and federal agencies and organizations and individuals may partner to further develop the "nodes" along US 80
- the city of Montgomery and other interested organizations and individuals may partner to improve the community around Mount Zion Church
- responsibility for planning, design, and construction rests with the Alabama Department of Transportation using Scenic Byways funds from the US Department of Transportation

Treatment and Use of Historic March Route/Role of Scenic Byway and All-American Road

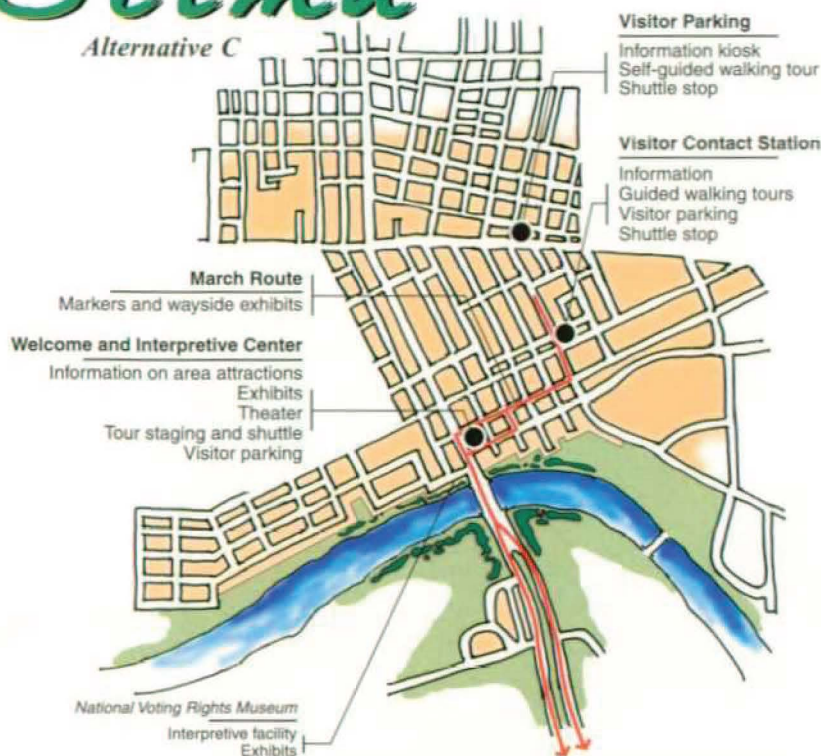
The following treatments to the US Highway 80 corridor will be based on a design study for the delineation and development of a series of "nodes." A node is a segment of the original march route to be set aside for preservation and recreation use. All of the work described herein would be funded through the Scenic Byways program.

Specific elements of this treatment include:

- construction of two new lanes near the existing lanes of US 80 (includes most of the road corridor in Lowndes, eastern Dallas, and western Montgomery counties)
- landscape plant material used in the median and other portions of the right-of-way will maintain the rural character and provide for low maintenance
- remaining portion of US 80 in Dallas and Montgomery counties would be upgraded to meet current safety standards with some improvements made to existing lanes of the original march route, including landscaping for a scenic parkway experience
- designation of nodes incorporating portions of the original march route for the preservation and interpretation of historic sites and features and compatible recreational uses, including hiking/walking, bicycling, picnicking, horseback riding, and motoring along sections of the original march route
- nodes may be expanded to include rest areas and opportunities for park and recreation development by local, state, or federal agencies
- within Selma and Montgomery, treatments focus on building and streetscape preservation and installation of banners featuring the trail logo along the march route

Selma

Alternative C



Visitor Experience Narrative

There it was. The gray-green arches of the Edmund Pettus Bridge appeared suddenly as we rounded the curve on U.S. 80 heading west. The brochure we picked up earlier in Montgomery told us we could spend at least a day in Selma exploring the sites associated with one of the most significant civil rights events in American history. As we drove over the bridge, the welcome and interpretive center, on the corner of Broad Street and Water Avenue, was an obvious first stop for us. A helpful sign directed us to the Broad Street parking deck, cleverly hidden behind the historic facade of a store.

The parking deck elevator doors opened to reveal a welcome and interpretive center filled with a variety of experiences for all kinds of visitors. A small tour group stood at the welcome center desk talking with two receptionists about tours and attractions in Selma and Dallas County. The group learned about Selma's historic downtown cemetery, shopping at nearby antique stores, and got an orientation to the historic sites associated with the march. Instead of a self-guiding tour of Selma, we chose a guided

tour, bought our tickets and moved into the museum exhibit across the gathering area from the information desk for some orientation. Nearby, a group of school children listened to a talk by a volunteer. We were pleased to see that young people could learn about the march and its place in American history.

The museum exhibit connected each of us with the Selma to Montgomery story. A brief introductory exhibit described events in the civil rights and voting rights movements leading up to March 21-25, 1965. A few more steps and we moved into quite an experience. It was 1965 again. There was news of America's first two-man venture into space, an anti-Vietnam War sit-in at the University of Michigan, and a picture of Jackie Robinson who had just become the first African American hired by a television network to broadcast baseball. We heard the marchers and the unsavory yells of anti-march protestors blaring from the speakers in the darkness behind the exhibits. Then the sounds of horses charging into screaming crowds, the faint smell of tear gas, and in the end,

continued on page 38

Selma / Dallas County

Downtown:

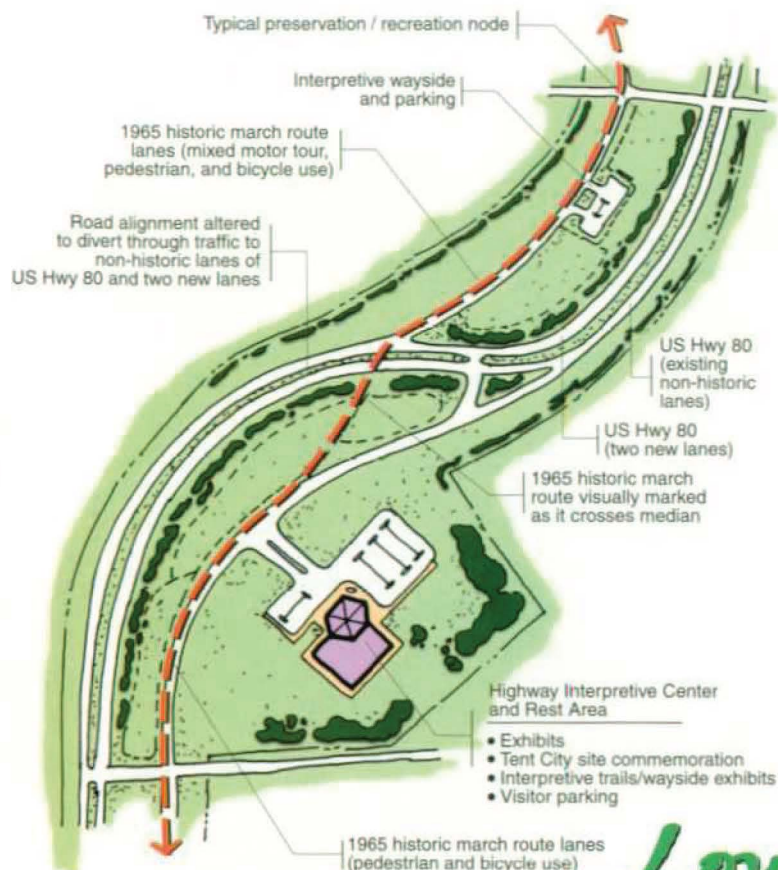
- welcome and interpretive center established at the intersection of Broad Street and Water Avenue through rehabilitation and adaptive use of historic structures
- welcome center to provide introduction to all tours and attractions in Selma and Dallas County and orientation to significant historic buildings/sites associated with the march
- interpretive center provides exhibits on the broad history of Selma and Dallas County
- overview of voting and other civil rights movement activities as context to help visitors understand why march began in Selma, Selma to Montgomery voting rights march, and all related events
- center to serve as staging area for shuttle and walking tours (guided and self-guided) to National Voting Rights Museum, Martin Luther King Jr. Street, Lapsley Street features (i.e. Jackson Home, Boynton Home, R. B. Hudson High School, etc.), and other Selma historic districts and attractions
- National Park Service to provide support and lead voting rights march tours from the center

Martin Luther King Jr. Street:

- visitor contact station between Selma and Alabama Avenue to provide:
 - orientation, information, and staging for walking tours of Martin Luther King Jr. Street neighborhood, including Brown Chapel and First Baptist Church
 - shuttle service to welcome and interpretive center
 - rest rooms
 - parking for cars
- potential sites for visitor contact station involving rehabilitation and adaptive use of existing historic buildings in consultation with Alabama Historical Commission include:
 - former Salvation Army property owned by the city of Selma. Site contains small paved parking area
 - existing residential structure at corner of Selma Avenue and Martin Luther King Jr. Street and portion of existing parking at 1705 Selma Avenue
 - two existing houses at 1513 and 1517 Alabama Avenue. Visitor parking across street at former Salvation Army property
- information kiosk and visitor parking area on northwest corner of Jeff Davis Avenue and Martin Luther King Jr. Street.
- orientation for self-guided walking tour and shuttle stop
- upgraded and expanded wayside exhibits along Martin Luther King Jr. Street
- facilities to be owned by the city of Selma and operated by the National Park Service and the Selma and Dallas County Friends Association

March Route:

- interpretive markers and wayside exhibits at historic buildings/sites along the march route



Lowndes County / Tent City

- combined interpretive center/highway rest area
- interpretive exhibits to focus on the evolution of citizenship rights in the United States, including voting rights efforts at the local, state, and national levels in the context of the civil rights movement
- expanded Tent City node to provide greater opportunities for recreational use including picnicking and loop trails from the interpretive center to nearby cultural resources
- Tent City site features interpretive trails, wayside exhibits, and symbolic treatment for the tent structures
- facilities owned by ALDOT. Operation/staffing by ALDOT, Alabama Bureau of Tourism and Travel, and the Lowndes County friends group

Alternative C Lowndes County

Visitor Experience Narrative

I was angry then. I'm angry now. In the spring of 1965, I was a soul in search of identity in what seemed a forgotten land. My parents had spent their entire lives working hard to keep us together as a family here in Lowndes County, but they had little to show for their efforts. White people owned the county and they intended to keep it that way. My parents showed little interest in the young people from the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee. But their children—five of us—listened intently. The beating and bloodshed in Marion and Selma early that year eroded our patience and fortified our hope. Things had to change.

My reflection stares back at me from the glass in the exhibit case. I'm standing in the museum inside the Lowndes County/Tent City Interpretive Center. If you want to learn something about the evolution of citizenship and voting rights in the United States, this is the place. The exhibits, in-

teractive media, videos, archives, and sales area provide information on the local, state, and national levels in the context of the civil rights movement. The staff on duty can answer general questions about travel in Alabama, give an excellent orientation and guided tour through the exhibits, or help you find sources for a term paper or thesis.

Outside the interpretive center, visitors can see an interesting, stylized representation of Tent City, a housing alternative for African-American tenant farmers displaced for voting after the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Trails allow visitors to walk into the site where they can stop at wayside exhibits. A fully equipped picnic area and longer walking and biking trails are available for those seeking more than a short rest stop. Other walking trails take visitors to nearby historic structures or sites associated with the grassroots organizing conducted by the Student Nonviolent

Coordinating Committee and other groups. A section of the original march route has been preserved for visitors who want the experience of driving, biking, or walking on it.

Yes. Things have changed. Congress can create law in an instant by passing legislation, but a society may take a century to change. Thirty-five years ago, I remember walking by this place on March 22 when it was little more than an open field. Today, it's a landmark for tourists and an incentive for economic growth and development. But there is so much to be done. The patience and hope, so much a part of my life, has softened the anger. But I'm still angry.

You know, I worked as an attorney for thirty years and never stopped talking. Now I'm retired and volunteering here. Still talk to everyone about people and law and what's best for Americans. In fact, I'll be leading the next museum tour. Would you like to join me?

Montgomery

Alternative C

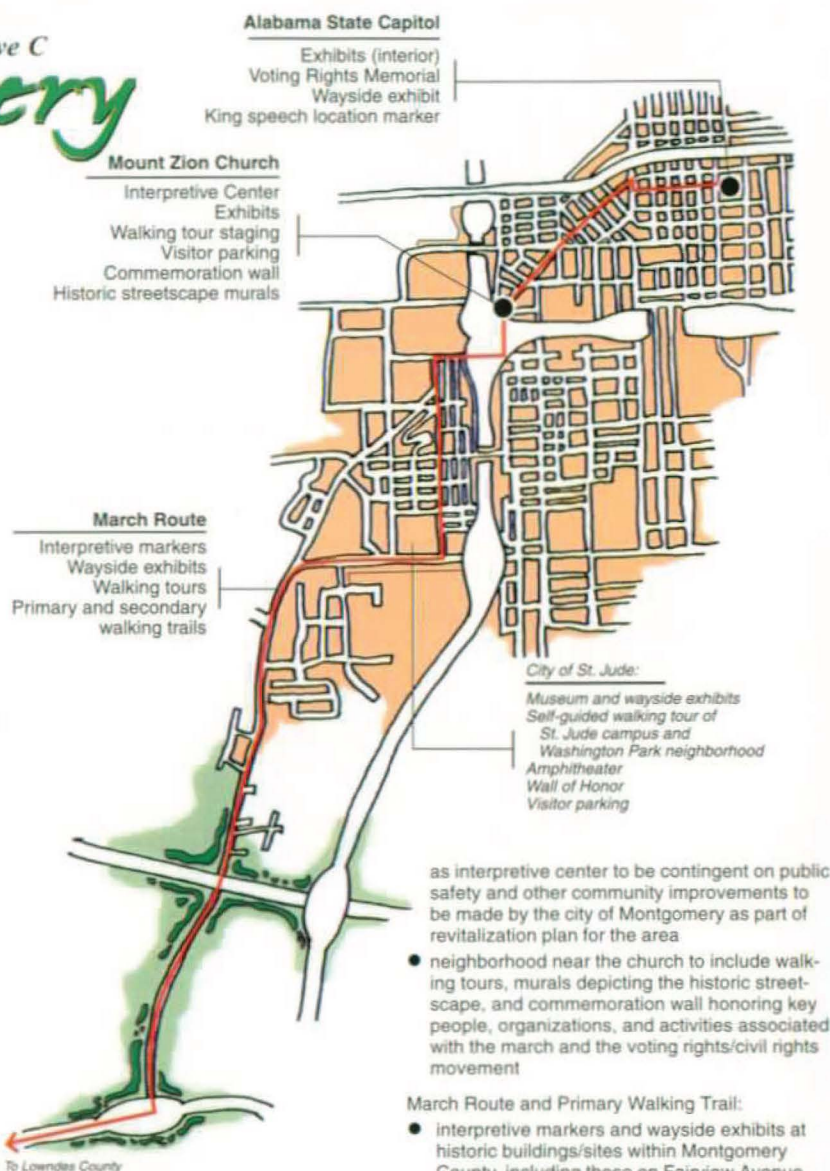
Several weeks before our field trip, I called the Montgomery Visitor Center at Union Station for information on the Selma to Montgomery National Historic Trail. My middle school curriculum calls for first-hand learning about some aspect of the political process. I thought a visit to the trail and its civil and human rights stories would be most appropriate. Indeed it was. Let me tell you more so you can plan a trip for your class.

We arrived at the visitor center, a turn-of-the-century structure pleasantly adapted for modern use. Inside, we picked up some additional details about our trip, looked at the orientation exhibit, and drove a few miles to the City of St. Jude as the first stop on our tour. The exhibit and video presentation in the old hospital—now an apartment building—gave us a world of information about the history of the St. Jude complex and the broader role of the Catholic Church in the human and civil rights struggle in the American South. We learned about the marchers arriving at St. Jude, the overnight camp on the grounds, and the marvelous Stars for Freedom Rally. Wayside exhibits at the complex and in adjacent Washington Park linked important sites and people in the story. Before leaving St. Jude, we stopped at the memorial wall honoring the marchers. The memorial site was quiet, but it evoked all of the energy surrounding the rally held on that very ground more than thirty years ago.

On our arrival at the Mount Zion Church Interpretive Center, my fellow teachers were surprised to see not only an attractive center, but also an improved, safe, and viable community. In the place of a depressed landscape, a neighborhood full of hopeful people now stood. Today, it is a pleasant place in which to live, work, and visit. For a late lunch, we stopped at one of the nearby cafes, enjoyed dessert, and found some souvenirs as well.

Everyone liked the museum exhibits about the grassroots organizing efforts that occurred in Montgomery. My students enjoyed hearing the stories from a very special volunteer, a member of the old Mount Zion congregation in the 1960s. We closed our visit there with a neighborhood walk where we saw murals recreating the historic streetscape and exhibits and memorials to the people, or-

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as interpretive center to be contingent on public safety and other community improvements to be made by the city of Montgomery as part of revitalization plan for the area

- neighborhood near the church to include walking tours, murals depicting the historic streetscape, and commemoration wall honoring key people, organizations, and activities associated with the march and the voting rights/civil rights movement

March Route and Primary Walking Trail:

- interpretive markers and wayside exhibits at historic buildings/sites within Montgomery County, including those on Fairview Avenue, Oak Street, Jeff Davis Avenue, Holt Street, Day/Mobile Street, Monroe and North Lawrence, Five Point Hill, and Montgomery Street to the Alabama State Capitol building

Secondary Walking Trails:

- include sites/locations of other related civil rights activities in Montgomery to complement the story of the march and voting rights movement
- interpretive markers and wayside exhibits utilizing a specially designed logo along Rosa Parks Avenue, Jackson Street, and Dericote Street

Alabama State Capitol:

- interpretive exhibits on building's interior to focus on the aftermath and impacts of the march, including the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and resulting social and political change
- wayside exhibit on Capitol grounds to interpret the story of the march at its terminus
- plaque to mark the location of Dr. King's speech
- voting rights memorial on Capitol grounds

Montgomery Visitor Center at Union Station:

- information and orientation exhibit and distribution of brochures focusing on NHT interpretive facilities

Montgomery

City of St. Jude:

- implementation of City of St. Jude master plan through a variety of funding sources
- museum and wayside exhibits focus on roles of City of St. Jude, the Catholic Church, adjacent Washington Park community, and Carver High/Junior High School in the march
 - Self-guided tour of grounds and neighborhood
 - "Stars for Freedom Rally" commemoration with amphitheater to provide site for reenactments and Wall of Honor listing march participants

- staffing/operation by City of St. Jude and the Montgomery friends group

Mount Zion Church:

- interpretive center with exhibits focusing on voting rights and civil rights activities in Montgomery
- visitor parking for cars and tour buses
- facility to be owned by the city of Montgomery with joint operation/staffing by the Montgomery friends group, National Park Service, and Alabama Bureau of Tourism and Travel
- commitment to provide Scenic Byways funds for rehabilitation of historic Mount Zion Church

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s eloquent speech at the capitol building in Montgomery. The exhibit filled us with emotion and empathy and we were well prepared to tour the march route through Selma.

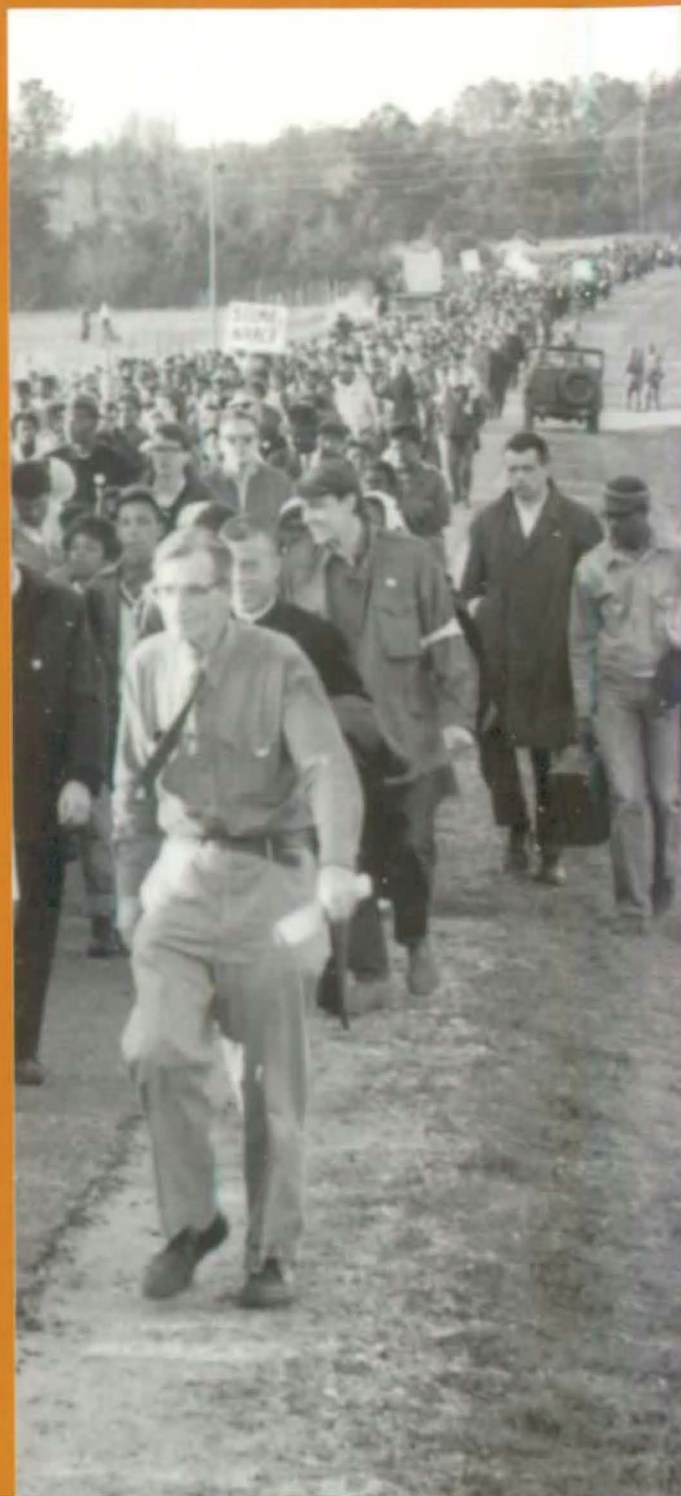
Our shuttle tour began just off the entrance to the interpretive and welcome center. The tour gave us a chance to make note of places to explore. From our comfortable mini-bus, we saw the National Voting Rights Museum building, Lapsley Street, a few historic districts, and Martin Luther King Jr. Street.

Martin Luther King Jr. Street filled us with expectation. We decided to walk from the information kiosk and shuttle stop at First Baptist Church and read each of the wayside exhibits along the way. We reached the visitor contact station near Brown Chapel AME Church and enjoyed talking with the National Park Service ranger on duty. Exhibits inside—photographs, documents, speeches, and television news clips—helped us understand more details about the events that occurred in the very street we walked. A friendly member of the congregation gave us a short guided tour of Brown Chapel AME Church. A shuttle arrived promptly to return us to the interpretive and welcome center. We ended our day at an enjoyable restaurant in town and decided to spend the night, as well. Early the following morning we crossed the bridge heading east thinking about those who had walked in five days what we were about to drive in one hour. We thought about their legacy, and about how their activism had made a difference for all of us and for the future of the nation. It reminded us that we, too, could do the same. Our trip ended with vows to return again with new friends who could help us keep the story of the Selma to Montgomery march preserved and understood for all time.

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ganizations, and activities associated with the movement in Montgomery. This broader view included Rosa Parks and the Montgomery bus boycott, Dr. King and Dexter Avenue Baptist Church, Day Street Baptist Church and the African-American business district, and many others.

By mid-afternoon, we arrived at the Alabama State Capitol where we saw a wayside exhibit at the march terminus and a plaque marking the location of Dr. King's speech. We toured the building and viewed more exhibits on the aftermath and impacts of the march, including the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, political empowerment, and examples of social change. Our last stop on the Capitol grounds was a quiet visit to the Voting Rights Memorial. My students had little to say. They looked at the bronze, touched the stone and water, and talked softly. It was a good sign. I think they learned something about political process. And something about themselves, too.



"Confrontation of good and evil compressed in the tiny community of Selma generated the massive power to turn the whole nation to a new course."

— Martin Luther King Jr., March 25, 1965

Notes

Notes

*“So it was at Lexington and
Concord.*

*So it was a century ago at
Appomattox.*

*So it was last week in Selma,
Alabama.”*

— President Lyndon B. Johnson, March 15, 1965



SELMA TO MONTGOMERY NATIONAL HISTORIC TRAIL

ALTERNATIVES SUMMARY