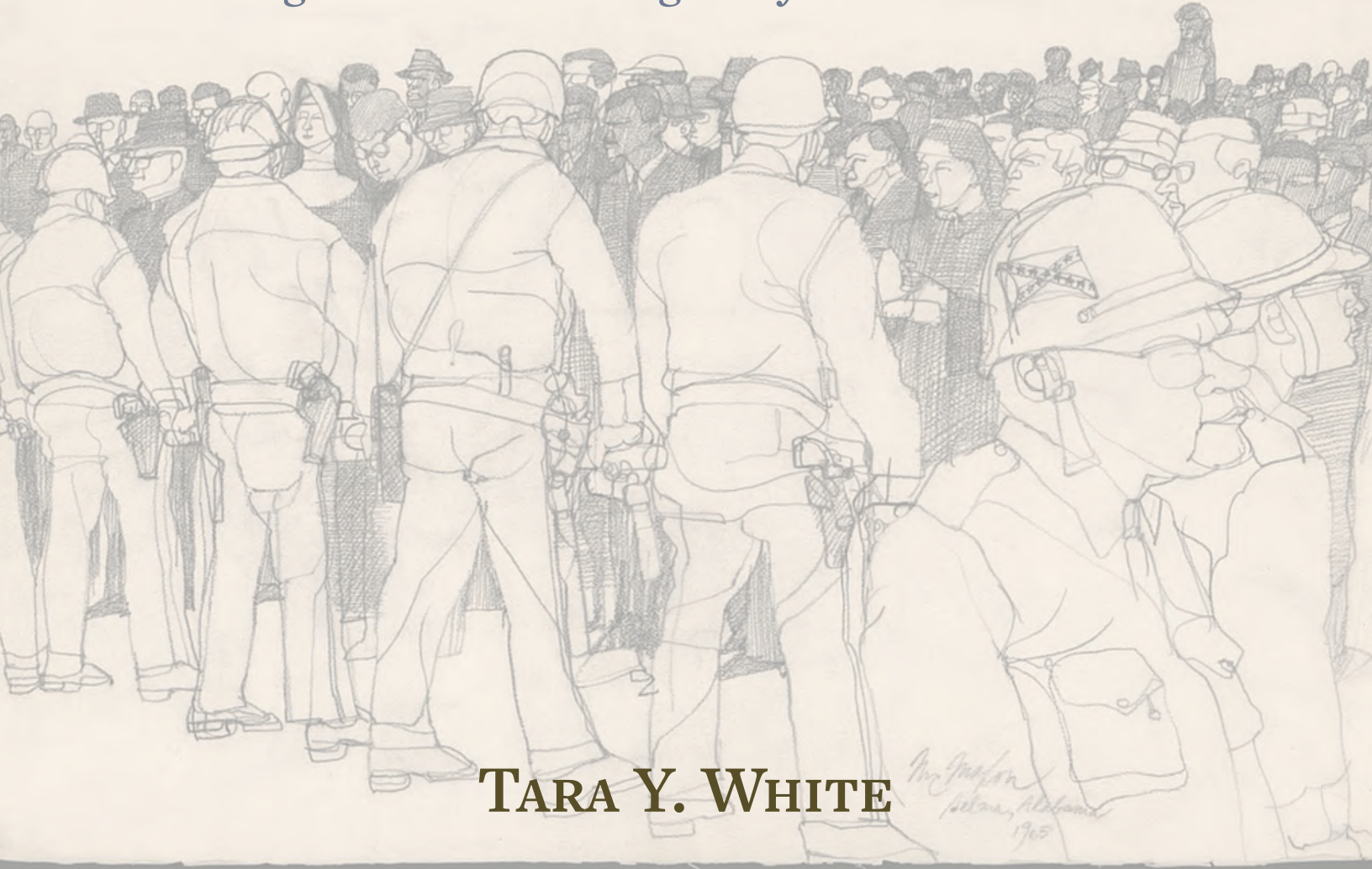


OLD BATTLES ARE NEW AGAIN:

Revisiting the Selma to Montgomery National Historic Trail

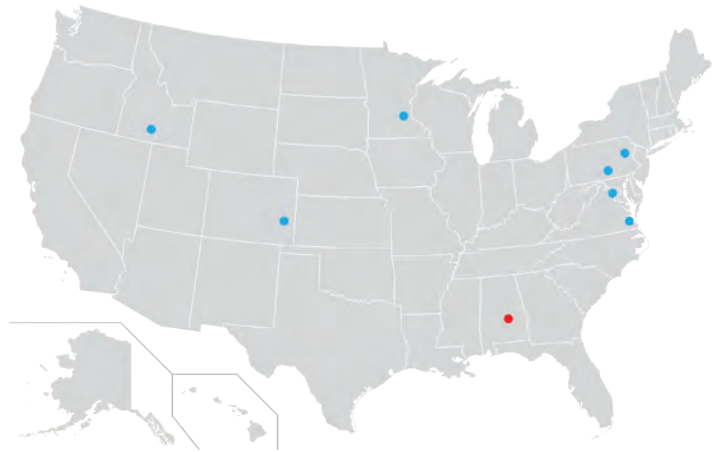


TARA Y. WHITE

On June 8, 2023, the US Supreme Court issued its decision in *Allen v. Milligan* that Alabama's recently drawn congressional maps violated Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 by diluting the political power of Black voters and thereby denying them an equal opportunity to participate in the political process and elect candidates of their choice. In spite of this decision, the Alabama Legislature created a new map that disregarded the guidance offered in the Supreme Court's decision.¹ This case represents a long history of discrimination against Black voters by Alabama officials. From the violent resistance to Black political participation during Reconstruction, to the disfranchisement movement of the early 20th century, to resistance to voter registration in the 1950s and 1960s, to the cases that led to the consequential *Allen v. Milligan* decision in 2023, Black Alabamians have mounted an ongoing challenge to voter discrimination. Alabama has not been an outlier in disfranchising Black voters; this was prevalent in states across the South, and not uncommon nationally, especially after the White supremacy movement emerged in the late 19th century. However, Alabama's African American population has been consistently strident in its opposition to disfranchisement, from Reconstruction

to the current day.² Black Alabamians have a long history of dissent that has had an impact on the movements for equality and justice throughout the entire country.

In 1965 Americans watched Alabama state troopers launch an unprovoked attack on African Americans who had gathered on the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma to begin a dramatic march to Montgomery, the state capital. There, the marchers planned to present a vociferous demand for voting rights to Governor George C. Wallace and also protest the murder of fellow activist Jimmie Lee Jackson during a similar march the month before in nearby Marion. State troopers and a citizen posse on foot and on horseback armed with black jacks, billy clubs, and tear gas, attacked unarmed African American citizens, an act caught on film and televised across the nation on the evening news.³ The brutality and sheer violence perpetrated on these defenseless Black protestors, many of them young men and women of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), shocked the world and garnered international sympathy for their cause.⁴



It also secured President Lyndon Baines Johnson’s commitment to push for a more substantive voting rights law. In a speech to Congress a week later, Johnson placed the voting rights movement on the same plane with the nation’s founding fight for freedom from Great Britain:

At times history and fate meet at a single time in a single place to shape a turning point in men’s unending search for freedom. So it was at Lexington and Concord. So it was a century ago at

Edmund Pettus Bridge, Selma, Alabama, 2010. CAROL M. HIGHSMITH/THE GEORGE F. LANDEGGER COLLECTION OF ALABAMA PHOTOGRAPHS IN THE CAROL M. HIGHSMITH ARCHIVE, LIBRARY OF CONGRESS, PRINTS AND PHOTOGRAPHS DIVISION



Tara Y. White is assistant professor in the Department of History at the University of North Carolina Wilmington. • whiteta@uncw.edu

Appomattox. So it was last week in Selma, Alabama. There, long-suffering men and women peacefully protested the denial of their rights as Americans. Many of them were brutally assaulted. One good man—a man of God—was killed.⁵

A week later, from March 21 through March 25, the Selma-to-Montgomery March commenced. This time, sympathetic marchers from all walks of life came from around the nation and joined the original marchers on the 54-mile, five-day trek from Selma to the state capitol in Montgomery, stopping to camp each night at various places across three counties in cold, rainy weather. When the marchers arrived at their destination on March 25, Governor Wallace refused to meet with them and prohibited them from coming onto the capitol grounds. Not to be outflanked, march organizers set up a temporary stage on a flatbed truck, positioned on the public street just in front of the capitol steps, where speakers, including Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., addressed the tens of thousands of people assembled. Months later, on August 6, Congress passed the Voting Rights Act of 1965, a testament to the effectiveness of the march and the century-long agitation for Black voting rights.

Over 30 years later, in 1996, Congress created the Selma to Montgomery National Historic Trail to commemorate the historic march of 1965.⁶ The only African American site in the entire National Trail System, Selma to Montgomery represents the historical tension between the ideals of American democracy, where all citizens have equal protection and equal rights by law, and the reality of the fight waged by Black voters against discrimination in America. Further, the trail represents the struggle to preserve the history and memory of civil rights sites of conflict as a part of the nation's historical landscape. Finally, the trail represents the symbolic battle, in real time, of the voting rights movement (which some characterize as “a relic of the past”) in the face of ongoing tangible assaults on voting rights in the 21st century.

COMMEMORATING THE VOTING RIGHTS MARCH FROM SELMA TO MONTGOMERY

Congressional authorization of Selma to Montgomery National Historic Trail followed a decade of related efforts to commemorate the people, events, and places associated with the greater Civil Rights Movement, beginning with designation of the Martin Luther King, Jr., birthplace as a national historic site in 1980.⁷ In 1989, Representative John Lewis, former member of SNCC and a leader of the 1965 march on the Edmund Pettus Bridge that became known as Bloody Sunday, introduced legislation in Congress to fund a Department of the Interior study to determine the eligibility and feasibility of a new historic trail that preserves the Selma-to-Montgomery March route under the National Trail Act of 1988.⁸ Lewis saw the trail concept as a way of stringing together disparate places along the route, which covered three counties and two municipalities in Alabama's Black Belt region. Using historical research, oral history interviews,

Official Selma to Montgomery National Historic Trail signage. CAROL M. HIGHSMITH/THE GEORGE F. LANDEGGER COLLECTION OF ALABAMA PHOTOGRAPHS IN THE CAROL M. HIGHSMITH ARCHIVE, LIBRARY OF CONGRESS, PRINTS AND PHOTOGRAPHS DIVISION



and community focus groups, as well as the input of local and state government officials, local preservation and civil rights organizations, and the state's preservation agency, National Park Service historians worked over the course of four years to create a report, completed in 1993.⁹

Additionally, the Alabama Department of Transportation, Alabama Historical Commission, Alabama Tourism Department, and the Federal Highway Administration worked together to designate the route as a Scenic Byway/All-American Road, which has a recreational and scenic function, while the National Park Service designation of the national historic trail recognizes the historic nature of the route.¹⁰ While these developments were taking place, veterans of the Selma Movement along with Attorney Faya Ora Rose Toure (Rose Sanders) founded the National Voting Rights Museum and Institute (NVRMI) in Selma, which opened in 1993 to commemorate the voting rights struggle in Selma. The NVRMI became a critical part of the historical and commemorative landscape for the Selma Movement, helping to elevate the history and experiences of civil rights activists in Selma by developing a local community-empowered museum and illuminating stories that had not been heard, especially the stories of women's participation in the voting rights movement.¹¹

The National Park Service report was the first step toward the vital work of developing connections between the routes' various constituencies and gaining support from each group to work with their respective municipalities, county governments, and state agencies to make the trail viable. It was extremely difficult, as each constituency had its own focus and ideas. Each county formed its own friends/advocacy group early in the project: the Selma/Dallas County Friends of the Trail, the Lowndes County Friends of the Trail, and the Montgomery Friends of the Historic Voting Rights Trail. All three groups were headed by folks who were directly involved in the Selma Movement: "Courageous Eight" member Rev. Fred Douglass Reese led the Selma/Dallas County Friends; former SNCC member and Bloody Sunday marcher Bob Mants led the Lowndes County Friends; and former SNCC leader Gwendolyn Patton led the Montgomery Friends.¹² These groups had very different goals, as their communities' needs were different. However, the main concerns for each group included recognition of this important event and the potential for an economic boost to local economies. The latter was more important to constituencies in Lowndes County and Selma, which are more rural in character than Montgomery, the capital city. Importantly, each constituency helped to identify associated historic sites along the march route, many of which were directly associated with the larger Civil Rights Movement in Alabama, and the voting rights movement specifically. Site identification informed later efforts to nominate historic places to local and state historic registers. Most of the associated sites along the march route, especially the African American churches, have since been added to the National Register of Historic Places under a multiple-property nomination. Although all the initial leaders of the three friends groups have since died, committed members continue to collaborate to preserve the legacy of the voting rights movement, as well as for the annual Bridge Crossing Jubilee. In 2019, the Selma Friends group exhibited an art show featuring members of Selma's "Courageous Eight" at the National Center at Alabama State University (ASU), collaborative partner with Selma to Montgomery National Historic Trail for programming at the Montgomery Interpretive Center.¹³

Although portions of the trail route are along neighborhood and downtown streets within the cities of Selma and Montgomery, most of the route proceeds along a very busy portion of US Highway 80 in Dallas County, just outside of Selma, through very rural Lowndes County, and a small portion of Montgomery County just before entering the city of Montgomery. US Highway 80 is a major highway that runs from Georgia's Atlantic coast, along the southern United States, to its western end at Dallas, Texas. Most of the trail's route is not safe for walking, but does have beautiful trees and creeks as well as places of archaeological, cultural, recreational, and historical value. Driving tours and bus tours allow visitors to enjoy the scenic and natural beauty that they encounter on the mostly rural portions of the trail.

Three interpretive centers along the route—the first in Lowndes County, the next in Selma, and the last in Montgomery—provide up-to-date exhibitions that interpret the history of the voting rights movement in the Black Belt. Placing the first one in Lowndes County was a great strategy; theirs was a story not well known to people in the region or to civil rights historians. Lowndes County provided fertile ground for voter registration and organizing, where SNCC organizers were able to assist local Black leadership with demonstrating political power through party mobilization. Although this strategy was not successful in Mississippi with the Mississippi



Lowndes Interpretive Center sign. JIMMY EVERSON, DVM / CC BY-NC-ND 2.0

Freedom Democratic Party, it did find success in Lowndes County, where organizers decided to form a third party instead of working within the Democratic Party apparatus. The Lowndes County Freedom Organization, later the Lowndes County Freedom Party, did not win any of its political contests during the first election. Within five years, however, the Lowndes County Freedom Party had elected its first Black official. This lesson was not lost on SNCC organizer Stokely Carmichael, who by this time was a proponent of Black power through independent Black political organizations. The emblem of the Lowndes County Freedom Organization, the black panther, was adopted later that year by the Black Panther Party in Oakland, California, a Black nationalist organization inspired by the example of independent Black political action. Historian Hasan Kwame Jeffries' work on the movement in Lowndes County helped make this first interpretive center much more popular and placed Lowndes County into the larger context of the Alabama and national civil rights histories.¹⁴ Using well-written text labels, seldom-viewed images, original artifacts, and a compelling opening film with first-person testimony of participants, the Lowndes County Interpretive Center provides a solid anchor for the three centers. In addition, the size of the Lowndes County Interpretive Center accommodates large groups with many tour buses, and allows it to have a bookstore, gift shop, and picnic and camping areas. It has become a welcome rest stop for people traveling along US Highway 80.

The Selma Interpretive Center has a prime location, on the righthand corner just over the Edmund Pettus Bridge when entering Selma. The initial center was very small, had structural issues, and could not accommodate the large groups that often visit the trail. Closed for renovation and expansion in 2019, once the Selma Interpretive Center is



Selma Interpretive Center. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

remodeled, with state-of-the-art exhibitions, a new theater and film, more visitor space new stations featuring local activists' stories, and a new interpretive focus on voting and citizenship, it will bring additional life to the trail.

The final interpretive center to open is located on the campus of ASU, not directly on the trail. Locating the Montgomery Interpretive Center at Alabama State garnered a lot of criticism from the community, especially those who were involved in the movement as ASU students and in Montgomery. During the voting rights march, due to funding threats ASU leaders did not openly support the Civil Rights Movement or student involvement in the protest. However, many ASU students participated, along with students from Tuskegee Institute, Selma University, and Concordia College. They were the student members of SNCC supporting the Selma-to-Montgomery March. Their stories are prominently featured in the Montgomery Interpretive Center exhibitions and are a major part of



Montgomery Interpretive Center. DAVID CAMPBELL, ALABAMA STATE UNIVERSITY

the story that is told specifically in Montgomery. Whereas the centers in Lowndes County and the city of Selma focus interpretation on their local communities' efforts to fight for voting rights, the Montgomery Interpretive Center focuses on the students in all three areas who were crucial on the ground, going door-to-door to register voters, holding community meetings and rallies, engaging the youth in the movement, and putting their bodies on the line to make real change in the Alabama Black Belt and across the South.

CONFLICTING COMMUNITY MEMORY OF THE SELMA VOTING RIGHTS MOVEMENT

Since 1993, the annual Bridge Crossing Jubilee has perhaps become the most public and widely publicized interpretive element associated with Selma to Montgomery National Historic Trail. This event also has exposed

festering racial tensions that fuel the current polarization felt throughout American society. Held the first weekend in March, the Jubilee includes events common to local festivals, such as street vendors, choir concerts, history-related programs, musicals, and plays. In the past, it also featured speakers, such as Lewis and fellow activists Hosea Williams, Bernard LaFayette, Albert Turner, Bob Mants, and others who were central to SNCC and Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) organizational work in the 1960s. These and other “foot soldiers” gave testimonials at an annual Foot Soldiers Breakfast, were inducted into the NVRMI Hall of Fame, and honored at a gala reception. On Sunday, in contrast to the violence of the 1965 event on the Edmund Pettus Bridge, marchers, linked arm-in-arm, walk unmolested across the bridge together in a show of unity. Past displays of unity included former segregationists: Selma Mayor Joseph Smitherman and Governor George C. Wallace, both now deceased, appeared at celebrations and marches atoning for past racially discriminatory rhetoric, policies, and behavior.¹⁵

After the 20th anniversary commemoration of Bloody Sunday and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 in 1985, a few years passed before another major commemorative event was held. The event itself also changed from a commemoration led by civil rights veterans reflecting on their past activism and the progress made in American society, to a celebration of African American political successes. Both John Lewis and SCLC were key players and planners in the early anniversary recognitions, which sought to illustrate mainstream acceptance of the goals of the Civil Rights Movement and the subsequent political ascendancy of African American leaders in the late 20th century.¹⁶ After Lewis was elected to Congress from Georgia’s 5th Congressional District in 1986, he became one of many of the former civil rights vanguard now serving in elected office or in important political positions. By the early 1990s, a series of policy and legislative defeats, including President George H.W. Bush’s veto of the Civil Rights Act of 1990 and his nomination of Clarence Thomas to the Supreme Court to replace revered civil rights champion Thurgood Marshall, convinced civil rights leaders that they were facing a retreat by the federal government in civil rights enforcement and equal protection. This sparked a renewed vigilance among civil rights veterans as well as younger activists.¹⁷

This new national vigilance began to change the tone and tenor of the local commemorations of Bloody Sunday and the Selma-to-Montgomery March during the 1990s and early 2000s. Representative Lewis had less time to devote to planning commemorative events. The newly founded NVRMI stepped into the void and launched the first Bridge Crossing Jubilee in 1992 in collaboration with its soft opening; during its formal opening in 1993, the museum made the Bridge Crossing Jubilee an annual event.¹⁸

However, not everyone in Selma supported the Jubilee as it clashed with another major annual historical event: the re-enactment of the 1865 Battle of Selma campaign during the Civil War.

Since 1987, many White Selmans had looked forward to the re-enactment annually in April, which they touted as an educational experience for schools and part of the “true history” of Selma. Although event planners

45th anniversary of the Civil Rights March from Selma, Alabama, to Montgomery, Alabama, 2010. L-R: Annie Pearl Avery, Jesse Jackson, Faya Rose Toure, Winnie Mandela, and Juanita Abernathy, among other marchers. CAROL M. HIGHSMITH/THE GEORGE F. LANDEGGER COLLECTION OF ALABAMA PHOTOGRAPHS IN THE CAROL M. HIGHSMITH ARCHIVE, LIBRARY OF CONGRESS, PRINTS AND PHOTOGRAPHS DIVISION



worked to preserve the history of the battle, it was also not without strong Lost Cause influences, celebrating General Nathan Bedford Forrest and the Confederate army's war effort. The local chapter of the United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC) worked directly in the planning and event sponsorship. In addition to several days of battle re-enactments, planners held an antebellum-era style ball in a local historic house with costumes and entertainments reminiscent of *Gone with the Wind*. Likewise, Selma promoted itself as a historic place because of its importance in the Civil War as a Confederate ammunition repository as well as the site of one of the last battles of the Civil War. In fact, throughout the latter half of the 20th century, the Selma-Dallas County Chamber of Commerce had based its tourism campaigns on the city's Civil War history.

The presence of the Jubilee as an annual event posed a major problem for many White Selma residents who resented the "outside agitators" that had descended on their city in the 1960s and the changes brought on by the Civil Rights Movement. Further, many White Selmans believed that the presence of this annual event would stir up racial resentment and cause strife between Black and White citizens where they believed none existed. Some White citizens in Selma felt that they had struggled to live down the images of racial violence and resulting bad publicity from the past and feared that the Jubilee would revive this reputation nationwide. They also saw a potential for future conflict regarding funding, as the Battle of Selma re-enactment enjoyed generous financial support from the city government and from public school districts across Alabama that sent scores of school buses on field trips to the event each year.¹⁹ Many White residents did not deem the Civil Rights Movement historic enough to be commemorated. As the Jubilee grew in popularity, it struggled to capture a steady local White following, and many local White residents left town during Jubilee weekend. While the Battle of Selma event is facing declining visitation, now mostly by private school and homeschool students, the Jubilee is garnering more diverse attendance, including from international visitors, although its appeal is lagging among some Selma residents.

In the early years of the 21st century, NVRMI and the Jubilee event became the primary vehicles for educating visitors about the Selma-to-Montgomery March and the voting rights movement in Selma. As the Selma-Dallas County Chamber of Commerce slowly embraced the Jubilee as a commemorative event, NVRMI and affiliated sites assumed responsibility for local civil rights tourism and vigorously promoted the Selma Movement, its leaders, and its "foot soldiers." The annual Jubilee became a political test for state and national candidates trying to connect with the legacy of the voting rights movement and African American political participation. Coming to Jubilee became a badge of solidarity with African American voters, and Selma became a mecca for those seeking elective office. Presidential aspirants from the past two decades or more have made the pilgrimage to Selma to meet voters and connect with the history of democratic political participation that Selma and the national historic trail represent.

Civil Rights Memorial at the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, Alabama, featuring Amelia Boynton Robinson and Marie Foster (sponsored by S.C.L.C./W.O.M.E.N.), 2010. CAROL M. HIGHSMITH/THE GEORGE F. LANDEGGER COLLECTION OF ALABAMA PHOTOGRAPHS IN THE CAROL M. HIGHSMITH ARCHIVE, LIBRARY OF CONGRESS, PRINTS AND PHOTOGRAPHS DIVISION



Lewis also returned in the first two decades of the 21st century with a bipartisan convoy of his congressional colleagues, visiting all of the primary and secondary sites along the trail, in an effort to persuade them to embrace his vision of a more democratic electorate that Selma represented. Visitors from around the world see the Jubilee and Selma to Montgomery National Historic Trail as symbolic, a place where the connection to the democratic ideals of America can be shared with thousands of other people. Visitors now see the trail as a place that connects them, as American citizens, to a story that is central to their understanding of democracy. Many visitors have come to see the right to vote as sacred and Selma to Montgomery National Historic Trail as sacred ground.²⁰

NEW MEANING FOR AN OLD BATTLE SITE

A new conservative majority on the Supreme Court, reflected in the 2013 *Shelby County v. Holder* decision that all but eliminated the preclearance section of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, has revived anew the concerns about voting restrictions not seen since the 1960s. Voter ID laws, voter roll purges, and other restrictions, such as fewer polling places, reduced early voting, restraints on absentee balloting, and laws forbidding water or assistance in lines where voters must wait for hours to cast a ballot, have kindled a renewed vigilance. The Selma to Montgomery National Historic Trail has taken on a new meaning among younger activists; they have come to identify with the hard-won battle for voting rights that this site represents. They see the trail as more than a relic of the past, and the voting rights movement more than just old news. Younger activists see the power of the determined collective, the resilient strength of grassroots organizing, and the patient optimism that was necessary for long-term social and political change in America, especially in the Deep South. According to Marla Moore, a young civil rights activist and Selma resident, “The Selma to Montgomery Trail represents the foundation of our struggle. They [civil rights activists of the 1960s] did all of the hard stuff—took the beatings and arrests, came up with the strategies, so now we can run. We got information from our Elders who were participants, and that helped. We have the easier part—advocating for voting rights, organizing, making things happen because we have the ingredients from that generation. But the work is not done.” These young activists are heartened to know that in places like Selma, Lowndes County, and Montgomery, voting rights became reality against odds that seemed incredible to Black voters and Black political leaders in the 1940s and 1950s. The Selma to Montgomery National Historic Trail points them to the past but also suggests a more powerful future.

ENDNOTES

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3. Bloody Sunday footage was broadcast during primetime by ABC News on the evening of Sunday, March 7, 1965. For a retrospective, see “Selma50: What the Media and Hollywood Got Wrong About ‘Bloody Sunday,’” NBC

News, March 8, 2015, <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/nbcblk/media-studies-selma-n319436>.

4. To learn more about the Selma Movement, see Amelia Boynton Robinson, *Bridge Across Jordan: The Story of the Struggle for Civil Rights in Selma, Alabama* (New York: Carlton Press, 1979); J.L. Chestnut, Jr. and Julia Cass, *Black in Selma: The Uncommon Life of J.L. Chestnut, Jr.*, (New York: Farrar, Strauss, and Giroux, 1990); Charles Fager, *Selma 1965: The March that Changed the South* (Kimo Press, 2005); David J. Garrow, *Protest at Selma: Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Voting Rights Act of 1965*, revised edition (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015) ; Robert A. Pratt, *Selma's Bloody Sunday: Protest, Voting Rights, and the Struggle for Racial Equality* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2017); Fred D. Gray, *Bus Ride to Justice: The Life and Works of Fred D. Gray* (Montgomery: NewSouth Books, 2002); and J. Mills Thornton III, *Dividing Lines: Municipal Politics and the Struggle for Civil Rights in Montgomery, Birmingham, and Selma* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2002).
5. Lyndon Baines Johnson, "Special Message to the Congress: The American Promise," March 15, 1995, RG 46, Records of the United States Senate, National Archives and Records Administration.
6. Public Law 104-333 Omnibus Parks and Land Management Act of 1996.
7. The Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historic Site was established by Public Law 96-428, 96th Congress on October 10, 1980. Preservation of civil rights history continued in the 1980s with designation of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday as a national holiday in 1983 and production of *Eyes on the Prize* documentary in 1987. Commemorations of big civil rights anniversaries started in the 1970s and 1980s with anniversaries of the Montgomery Bus Boycott (1955), the March on Washington (1963), the Selma to Montgomery March (1965). For more information on these early commemorative events, please see Thomas A. Johnson, "55 Bus Boycott Marked," *New York Times*, December 8, 1975; *Pittsburg Courier*, Saturday, December 13, 1975; Alice Bonner, "The 20th Anniversary March on Washington," *Washington Post*, August 28, 1983; Lena Williams, "20 Years Later, A Voter Project is Revived," *New York Times*, July 29, 1984; William E. Schmidt, "Mississippi Collects Memories of Rights Struggle in a Museum," *New York Times*, December 7, 1984; "Selma to Montgomery, 20 Years Later," flyer for the 20th Anniversary of the Voting Rights Act, 1985, Voter Education Project Organizational Records, Atlanta University Robert W. Woodruff Library.
8. Public Law 101-321, 104 Stat. 293, "Selma to Montgomery National Trail Study Act of 1989," July 3, 1990.
9. National Park Service, "Selma to Montgomery National Trail Study: A Study of the Voting Rights March of 1965," April 1993, <http://npshistory.com/publications/semo/trail-study.pdf>.
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12. For more information on Rev. Fred D. Reese, see Frederick D. Reese and Kathy M. Walters, *Selma's Self-Sacrifice* (Selma: Reese Enterprises, Inc., 2019); for more on Bob Mants, see Hasan Kwame Jeffries, *Bloody Lowndes: Civil Rights and Black Power in Alabama's Black Belt* (New York: New York University, 2009); for more on Gwendolyn Patton, see Gwendolyn Patton, *My Race to Freedom: A Life in the Civil Rights Movement* (Montgomery, AL: NewSouth Books, 2020). The "Courageous Eight" were the eight leaders of the Selma Movement who were also members of the Dallas County Voters League (DCVL): Amelia Boynton (Robinson), Ulysses Blackmon, Rev. Fred D. Reese, Ernest Doyle, Marie Foster, James Gildersleeve, Rev. J.D. Hunter, and Rev. Henry Shannon. These eight leaders actively encouraged Black citizens in Selma and Dallas County to register to vote. The DCVL had been in existence since the 1920s, when it was founded by C.J. Adams, who also founded the local NAACP chapter in Selma.
13. "Master Plan," 1999; National Register for Historic Places, "The Civil Rights Movement in Selma, Alabama, 1865-1972," 2013.
14. For more information on Black political parties and the Black Power movement, see Hasan Kwame Jeffries, "SNCC, Black Power, and Independent Political Party Organizing in Alabama, 1964-1966," *Journal of African American History* (2006), 171-193, and *Bloody Lowndes: Civil Rights and Black Power in Alabama's Black Belt* (New York: New York University Press, 2009); Stokely Carmichael and Ekwueme Michael Thelwell, *Ready for Revolution: The Life and Struggles of Stokely Carmichael* (Kwame Ture) (New York: Scribner, 2003).
15. Jules Loh, "Mayor: 'I've Walked Tightrope Long Enough'," *Selma Times-Journal*, Sunday November 25, 1990; "3,000 rally at the Capitol," *Selma Times-Journal*, Friday, March 8, 1985.

16. SCLC, co-founded by former King assistant and Alabama native Rev. Joseph Lowery, reflected on the mood of the times, which changed over the next decade. Lowery's wife, Evelyn, founded S.C.L.C./ W.O.M.E.N., Inc. in 1979 as a way to keep women engaged in the work of SCLC by focusing on issues related to Black women, children, and families. In 1987 Mrs. Lowery also initiated the Evelyn G. Lowery Civil Rights Heritage Tour, an annual two-day bus tour, to teach young people about the sacrifices of civil rights activists of the 1960s and to place markers at historically significant civil rights sites in Alabama that had been forgotten or not marked for preservation. SCLC/W.O.M.E.N., Inc., "Our History," https://sclcwomeninc.com/our_history/, accessed August 27, 2023.
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GARY E. DAVIS