

“Bloody Sunday”: How a Single Day Changed the Future of Voting Rights

Joyce Essuman

Junior Division

Individual Paper

Paper Length: 2486

By garnering support and attention to the Civil Rights Movement, transforming the Edmund Pettus Bridge into a landmark in black history, and leading to the Voting Rights Act of 1965, “Bloody Sunday” revolutionized the state of America. Throughout the 1960s, African-Americans were beleaguered with a substantial conflict: voting. Jeered with steadfast bigotry, hand-in-hand with intimidation and scare tactics (*America’s Story from America’s Library*), not even a *quarter* of southern African-Americans eligible to vote were certified to do so (“The State of Black America in 1960”). Fueled by the indignation accompanying being the brunt of racially-institutionalized voting, many African-Americans chose to express their angst through peaceful protest (“Voting Rights”). These demonstrations, a part of the Voting Registration Campaign of 1965, were centralized in Selma, Alabama to bathe discriminatory voting practices in the limelight of national concern (History.com Staff. “Selma to Montgomery March”).

However, one of the most significant of these demonstrations occurred on March 7, 1965, and was later bestowed the name “Bloody Sunday.” The event was initially supposed to be a planned, peaceful march from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama (“Selma, Alabama”). However, the violence that ensued was anything *but* anticipated, nor amicable. As cameras captured the ghastly incident, “state troopers and deputies on horseback... teargassed 600 negroes and sent them reeling and bleeding under the lashes of clubs, bullwhips and ropes” (“1st Selma to Montgomery March in 1965”). When the footage was aired, ripples of aversion churned stomachs across the nation. Later, the event was addressed as “Bloody Sunday” because of how the demonstrators’ peaceful mannerisms were met with police brutality (Klein, Christopher). Correspondingly, a compromise was reached six months later: the Voting Rights Act of 1965 (“Eyewitness”). When President Lyndon B. Johnson signed this symbolic law, discrimination in voting was deemed illegal (Klein, Christopher). Due to this, “Bloody Sunday” is an essential event to remember because of how it served as a stepping stone for the advancement of rights for African-Americans while refashioning the future of America.

Throughout the 1960s, voting was a prevalent issue plaguing African-American communities (“The State of Black America in 1960”). In the South, not even *one-fourth* of African-Americans eligible to vote were verified to do so (“The State of Black America in 1960”). However, tension ran especially high in the heavily-oppressed city of Selma, Alabama, where over half the population was African-American, but only 2% of them were registered to vote (*America’s Story from America’s Library*). Selma was a small town in Dallas County, Alabama, with a lengthy record of resistance to African-Americans voting (“Selma, Alabama”). Consequently, only roughly 300 of the 1500 African-Americans in Selma could vote (History.com Staff. “Selma to Montgomery March”). This was due to the debilitating combination of Alabama Governor George Wallace’s aversion to desegregation merged with local county sheriff Jim Clark’s contradistinction to black voting registration drives (History.com Staff. “Selma to Montgomery March”).

Due to this, the SNCC (Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee) led a voting registration campaign from 1961 to 1964 centralized in Selma (“Selma, Alabama”). After facing vehement and constant resistance from county law enforcement officials, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and the SCLC (Southern Christian Leadership Conference) were encouraged by local activists to centralize their black voter registration campaign in Selma on January 2, 1965 (“Selma to Montgomery March (1965)”). Dr. King, the SCLC, and the SNCC were determined to make Selma’s discriminatory voting a national issue (History.com Staff. “Selma to Montgomery March”). In 1965, they led a series of demonstrations to the Dallas County Courthouse between January and February (“Selma, Alabama”). “Bloody Sunday” was originally supposed to be a 54-mile-long march connected to the 1965 Voting Registration Campaign (Klein, Christopher), and was primarily organized by Dr. King and John Lewis (“Selma to Montgomery March (1965)”).

However, many factors contributed to why the 600 demonstrators involved in “Bloody Sunday” chose to march in the first place. One significant reason was that protesters were being mistreated by

law enforcement. Generally speaking, in Selma, the local law enforcement was notorious for brutality under Sheriff Jim Clark, succumbing marchers to having their dreams crushed under the weight of a billy club or a nightstick ("Selma to Montgomery March (1965)"). Unfortunately, the arrests were meant to shackle down the hopes of those restless for a better future. Consequently, as the 1965 Voting Registration Campaign progressed, the mass arrests of protesters ensued ("Selma to Montgomery March (1965)"). Consequently, approximately 2,000 African-American demonstrators were jailed "for contempt of court, juvenile delinquency, and parading without a permit" by Sheriff Clark ("Voting Rights"). For example, on February 1, 1965, Dr. King and over 200 protesters were jailed following a voting rights march (King, Martin Luther, Jr.). In a statement to the New York Times, Dr. King wrote, "This is Selma, Alabama. There are more Negroes in jail with me than there are on the voting rolls" (Klein, Christopher). His words portray how African-Americans were often deemed as convicts instead of potential voters, their freedom of expression caged inside of rusted steel bars. Nevertheless, though these arrests attempted to cage outspoken minds into thick chains, it fueled the exacerbating fire brewing in the chests of communities.

Unfortunately, though violence was rare in the first month of the 1965 Voting Registration Campaign, law enforcement's brutality towards peaceful protesters began to increase during the second month of the campaign ("Selma to Montgomery March (1965)"). For example, in the nearby city of Marion, Alabama, police and state troopers clubbed peaceful demonstrators as they protested prejudicial practices in voting ("Selma to Montgomery March (1965)"). Unfortunately, the demonstration turned deadly when a state trooper fatally shot 26-year-old deacon and activist Jimmie Lee Jackson, who had been attempting to protect his mother from the brunt of a nightstick ("Selma to Montgomery March (1965)"). Jackson's death signified to many African-Americans that the lives of "colored" people were essentially inconsequential to law enforcement. The fact that the protesters' amicable motives were faced with law enforcement's intolerance sparked flames of acrimony in the guts of many. The toxicity

wedged between demonstrators and law enforcement not only displays the injustice civilians faced in attracting awareness to prevalent issues, but how law enforcement attempted to silence the brave voices of those enervated from incessant injustice.

In addition to protesting police brutality, “Bloody Sunday” was originally meant to objectify discrimination in voting. Through scare tactics and discrimination, challenging literacy tests, and forcing potential African-American voters to wait for hours in line, African-Americans were discouraged to utilize their right to vote (“Voting Rights”). Though President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act of 1964 the previous year--which diminished the use of voter literacy tests while signifying the end of employment discrimination and segregation in public places--African-Americans still faced eminent boundaries (History.com Staff. “Civil Rights Movement”). Not immune to the structural and institutional racism embedded in voting practices, voting was still a significant issue in African-Americans' lives. Eventually growing tired of constant neglect and oppression, many were empowered to protest injustice in order to further enforce the fifteenth amendment.

Finally, racism was a significant ember that fueled “Bloody Sunday.” Generally speaking, there are four types of racism--two on the interpersonal level (internalized and interpersonal) and two on the systemic level (institutional and structural) (Oppression Monitor). For starters, internalized racism is someone’s own exclusive beliefs and biases on race and racism (Oppression Monitor). Interpersonal racism is associated with how someone’s biases and racial beliefs affect how they interact with other people (Oppression Monitor). Furthermore, institutional racism promotes unfair policies and discriminatory actions in institutions and systems of power (Oppression Monitor). Finally, structural racism deals with factors such as history, culture, and interactions that cause racial biases across institutions and society (Oppression Monitor). Unfortunately, during this time, African-Americans primarily dealt with institutional and structural racism. However, becoming fatigued from being the brunt of discriminatory actions and racially-fueled hatred, many chose to express their apprehension through

demonstrations. Eager to make a change, many people utilized their right to protest in order to see a modification of the future.

To combat these demoralizing factors, “Bloody Sunday” occurred on March 7, 1965, when 600 demonstrators set out from Selma at Brown Chapel AME church (Klein, Christopher). Originally, the protesters planned to march to Governor George Wallace in Montgomery (Klein, Christopher) to push for legislation that reinforced the 15th amendment (History.com Staff. “Civil Rights Movement”). At the head of the march, John Lewis represented the SNCC and Hosea Williams represented the SCLC (“Selma to Montgomery March (1965)”), while Dr. King planned to lead the protesters out of Selma after a church morning service (King, Martin Luther, Jr.). However, since Governor George Wallace instructed state troopers to “use whatever measures necessary to prevent a major march” a few days prior to the demonstration, the protesters were unexpectedly stopped at the end of the Edmund Pettus Bridge (Klein, Christopher). At the end of the bridge awaited state-troopers and deputies under the command of Sheriff Jim Clark and Major John Cloud (“Selma to Montgomery March (1965)”). When the demonstrators were about 50 feet away from law enforcement, Major Cloud declared through his bullhorn, “I am Major Cloud, and this is an unlawful assembly. This demonstration will not continue. You have been banned by the Governor. I am going to order you to disperse” (“Eyewitness”). After being given a two-minute warning, protesters knelt down to pray while Hosea Williams was rejected twice with a request to have a word with Major Cloud (“Eyewitness”). Nevertheless, the demonstrators stood their ground (“Selma to Montgomery March (1965)”).

Unfortunately, before the two minutes elapsed, John Lewis recalled how “[Law enforcement] came rushing in, knocking us down and pushing us” (“Eyewitness”) Throwing cruel profanities at the protesters (“Eyewitness”), marchers were clubbed, spat on, whipped, tear-gassed, trampled by horses, and jeered by white bystanders (Eh52170). As the marchers’ cried out in pain, law enforcement pushed them back over the bridge (Spider, Martin). “I felt like I was going to die,” John Lewis remembered, who

was struck twice in the head with a billy club. "I thought I saw death" ("John Lewis Remembers Bloody Sunday"). However, despite the demonstrators' agony, "There was no act of violence or any type of retaliation, rather retaliatory acts, on the part of any of the demonstrators" ("Eyewitness") After the violence ensued, it was said that the Edmund Pettus Bridge "resembled a battle scene with abandoned bedrods, and clothing lying mingled with spent tear gas shells" ("1st Selma to Montgomery March in 1965"). Unfortunately, the protesters would have battle scars of their own--though no deaths occurred, 58 protesters had to be treated for injuries at a local hospital ("Eyewitness").

Fortunately, cameras captured the obscene event and sent the film to ABC in New York (Klein, Christopher). As a result, the incident was televised for the nation to view (Klein, Christopher). That night on ABC, at approximately 9:30 p.m., Frank Reynolds halted the airing of "Judgement at Nuremberg" to broadcast the footage (Klein, Christopher). Around 50 million people were watching as the video triggered outrage across the nation (Klein, Christopher). For once, Americans were presented proof of the strife African-Americans' endured to receive their basic rights. As brutal images flashed across black-and-white screens, the event was later named "Bloody Sunday" for the police brutality the nonviolent protesters endured.

As a result, "Bloody Sunday" left a trail of significant effects. For starters, beforehand, the injustices that African-Americans faced were simply swept under the rug and discounted for. However, "Bloody Sunday" displayed physical proof of the police brutality, racism, and prejudicial actions that African-Americans were too often the target of. No longer could Americans turn their cheeks at appalling headlines or recounted narratives--"Bloody Sunday" brought the prevalent issue of bigotry to millions of households across America. Even without sound, the footage from "Bloody Sunday" spoke volumes to the amount of intolerance, inequality, and maltreatment African-Americans faced throughout America on a daily basis, making it a *national* issue.

Additionally, "Bloody Sunday" propelled the Civil Rights Movement into the limelight of national concern. Within 48 hours, 80 cities held demonstrations in order to support the voting rights marches (*America's Story From America's Library*). Additionally, sympathizers held sit-ins, traffic blockades, and demonstrations across the nation (*America's Story From America's Library*). Furthermore, "Bloody Sunday" contributed to the Selma to Montgomery March. After being granted a federal order, Dr. King and Coretta Scott King led 3,200 marchers from Selma to Montgomery (*Selma-to-Montgomery March*). Beginning on March 21st, 1965 and lasting for four days, demonstrators dedicatedly walked 12 miles a day and slumbered in fields (*Selma-to-Montgomery March*). By the time the protesters reached Montgomery, the crowd had swelled to a group of around 25,000 people from a myriad of different backgrounds (*Selma-to-Montgomery March*). Unbelievably, the imagery of hundreds being beaten down managed to encourage people to stand up against inequity. "Bloody Sunday" compelled thousands of Americans to use their voices in order to seek change, placing pinpricks of conviction within the hearts of many.

Furthermore, "Bloody Sunday" transformed Edmund Pettus Bridge into a landmark in black history. Originally, the bridge was named after Ku Klux Klan leader and white supremacist Edmund Pettus, emulating a message of bigotry and prejudice (Klein, Christopher). However, after "Bloody Sunday," the structure renovated into a landmark in black history (*Selma-to-Montgomery March*). The bridge became a monument that signified unification and a stepping stone for African-Americans. Furthermore, it serves as a reminder of the valiant civilians who guaranteed the rights that African-Americans have today.

Finally, the most significant effect of "Bloody Sunday" was the Voting Rights Act of 1965. After "Bloody Sunday" occurred, national awareness clung to the issue demoralizing African-Americans throughout the nation. The shockwaves of "Bloody Sunday" were able to penetrate the voting system, leading to the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Congress passed the act six months following "Bloody Sunday"

("Eyewitness"), and on August 6, 1965, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed it into a law (Klein, Christopher). As a result, racial discrimination in voting was deemed illegal (Klein, Christopher). This law was the compromise to the conflict of discriminatory practices in voting. After it was passed, around 450,000 southern African-Americans were able to vote within that year ("Voting Rights"). Not only did this compromise make it significantly easier for African-Americans to vote, but guaranteed the basic rights that African-Americans have today.

Throughout history, African-Americans were forced to objectify injustice in order to receive their basic rights. They protested inequity in a conglomeration of ways--sometimes with their fists, sometimes with their voice, sometimes with peace. Through picking "Bloody Sunday" as my National History Day topic, I not only wanted to showcase the trials African-Americans faced to be regarded as basic citizens, but the power of peaceful protest. By simply rising above the people who kicked them down, the 600 demonstrators involved in "Bloody Sunday" contributed to the compromise that diminished discrimination in voting: the Voting Rights Act of 1965. "Bloody Sunday" taught me that utilizing my ability to advocate for my beliefs can cause a ripple in the vast melting pot of America. Not only did this topic string me back to the roots of my boundless ancestral tree, but it showcased the inspiring way that I received my basic rights, while proving that I can also create significant change.

All in all, "Bloody Sunday" revamped America by bringing national awareness to the Civil Rights Movement, morphing the Edmund Pettus Bridge into a landmark in black history, and contributing to the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Throughout the 1960s, as African-Americans were targeted with segregation, discriminatory actions, and intolerance, many people chose to use their voices and platforms in order to seek change. Across the nation, demonstrators sacrificed their freedom, livelihood, and lives in order for this generation to receive the basic rights they have today. After "Bloody Sunday" combated the conflict of discriminatory practices in voting, the compromise of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 guaranteed African-Americans the right to vote. Though African-Americans are still, at times, succumbed to racism or

police brutality, the 600 demonstrators in “Bloody Sunday” guaranteed this generation the opportunity to justify their beliefs. Due to this, “Bloody Sunday” should always be remembered for how it revamped the future of African-Americans, revolutionized the state of America, and remodeled voting rights forever.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

PRIMARY SOURCES

“1st Selma to Montgomery March in 1965.” *Timothy Hughes Rare and Early Newspapers*, 8 Mar. 1965, www.rarenewspapers.com/view/618182. Accessed 2 Apr. 2018.

When 600 demonstrators were walking down Edmund Pettus Bridge, they were stopped by Major John Cloud. After being told they had 2 minutes to disperse through a bullhorn, the demonstrators chose to stay, kneeling down to pray. As a result, state troopers and deputies teargassed, whipped, and beat 600 demonstrators. Afterwards, the event not only left the Edmund Pettus Bridge resembling “a battle scene,” but left demonstrators hospitalized with injuries such as broken arms and head injuries.

King, Martin Luther, Jr. “Chapter 26: Selma.” Edited by Clayborne Carson. *The Martin Luther King, Jr. Research and Education Institute*, Stanford University, kinginstitute.stanford.edu/chapter-26-selma. Accessed 3 Apr. 2018.

In Selma, less than 350 of the 1500 African Americans living there were able to vote due to discrimination and difficult literacy tests. The Voting Registration Campaign resulted in mass arrests, like the on February 1, 1965, after Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and 200 protesters were arrested for participating in a voting rights march. After Jimmie Lee Jackson died during a demonstration, “Bloody Sunday” was meant to be a march protesting his death. Dr. King planned to meet the marchers after a church service, but after it went awry, he organized and led the Selma to Montgomery March on March 25, 1965. Dr. King said the incident in Selma fueled the Voting Rights Act of 1965, which was signed on August 6, 1965.

Eh52170, editor. "Bloody Sunday, Selma, AL." *Youtube*, 23 Jan. 2014,

www.youtube.com/watch?v=P7vrrYVyN3g. Accessed 3 Apr. 2018.

After protesters refused to end the march when told, state troopers and deputies rushed into the crowd of demonstrators. They were shoved to the ground as law enforcement attempted to force them back over the bridge. Beaten by clubs and nightsticks, dense clouds of teargas engulfed the gut-wrenching scene. As screams pierced the air, some protesters ran from law enforcement as others were slumped on the bridge, unconscious.

"Eyewitness." *The National Archives*, www.archives.gov/exhibits/eyewitness/html.php?section=2.

Accessed 2 Apr. 2018.

During John Lewis' testimony, he recalled how he and the 600 demonstrators marchers stopped 50 feet away from law enforcement. After Major Cloud told them that the march was unlawful and they had to disperse, Hosea Williams asked to have a word with him twice, but was rejected. After a minute or so, Lewis recalled how the state troopers and deputies rushed into the crowd, knocking down the protestors. Though the demonstrators were beaten (including John Lewis, who was struck twice in the head with a club), cursed at, and exposed to nauseating tear gas, none of them fought back. As a result, "Bloody Sunday" led to the Selma to Montgomery March, and the Voting Rights Act of 1965, which was signed six months later.

"John Lewis Remembers Bloody Sunday." *DemocracyNow!*, 6 Mar. 2015,

www.democracynow.org/2015/3/6/i_thought_i_saw_death_john. Accessed 2 Apr. 2018.

In this interview, John Lewis recalled halting in front of law enforcement at the end of the Edmund Pettus Bridge. After being told to disperse by Major John Cloud, Hosea Williams attempted to speak with the Major before suggesting to pray. Afterwards, havoc descended on the crowd as state troopers and deputies attacked. Lewis remembered being hit in the head by a state trooper and suffering a concussion on the bridge, saying, "I felt like I was going to die. I thought I saw death." Consequently, President Lyndon B. Johnson addressed the nation and "condemned the violence in Selma," and a few days later, the Selma to Montgomery March successfully occurred. Growing to a crowd of almost 30,000, Lewis called it a "holy march" because of the different races, genders, and religions of the protesters.



Spider, Martin. 7 Mar. 1965.

This picture depicts how state troopers and deputies pushed down the crowd of protesters in an attempt to force them back over the bridge. In the front of the picture, a law enforcement officer is seen hitting John Lewis to the ground with a club. Around him, protesters are either fleeing or being shoved down to the ground by law enforcement.

SECONDARY SOURCES

History.com Staff. "Civil Rights Movement." *History.com*, A+E Networks, 2009,

www.history.com/topics/black-history/civil-rights-movement. Accessed 2 Apr. 2018.

"Bloody Sunday" occurred on March 7, 1965, after 600 demonstrators marched to enforce the 15th amendment and to protest the death of a black civil rights activist. After the protesters were beaten by police, the event was televised. As a result, many activists wanted to violently protest the injustice that occurred during "Bloody Sunday," but Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. pushed for a peaceful demonstrations following the event.

History.com Staff. "Selma to Montgomery March." *History.com*, A+E Networks, 2010,

www.history.com/topics/black-history/selma-montgomery-march. Accessed 3 Apr. 2018.

"Bloody Sunday" was part of the 1965 Voting Registration Campaign, which was led by the SCLC,

SNCC, and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. They made Selma their focus to make discriminatory voting practices a national issue, since only 2% of African-Americans could vote.

Unfortunately, during one these demonstrations, Jimmie Lee Jackson was killed by a state trooper. In order to protest his death, along with unfair voting, a march from Selma to Montgomery was arranged. However, when law enforcement unexpectedly harassed demonstrators it was called "Bloody Sunday." It led to the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and the Selma to Montgomery March.

Christopher, Klein. "Remembering Selma's "Bloody Sunday"." *History.com*, A+E Networks, 6 Mar. 2015, www.history.com/news/selmas-bloody-sunday-50-years-ago. Accessed 3 Apr. 2018.

In Selma, only 2% of African-Americans in Selma were registered to vote. The SNCC, SCLC, and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. coordinated peaceful demonstrations in early 1965 in order to bring awareness to discriminatory actions in voting, which resulted in mass arrests. However, in Marion on February 18, 1965, law enforcement turned violent when they clubbed demonstrators and shot Jimmie Lee Jackson dead. As a result, activists planned to march to meet Governor George Wallace in Montgomery from Selma, led by John Lewis and Hosea Williams. However, when Major John Cloud ordered the 600 protesters to turn around at the end of Edmund Pettus Bridge and they refused, the protesters were trampled, spat-on, beaten, and jeered by white bystanders. Cameras recorded the event and sent the footage to New York, where it was aired on ABC in front of millions of Americans. Outraged by the footage, demonstrations were held nationwide in support of the marches, and the Selma to Montgomery March ensued on March 25. Additionally, the event turned the Edmund Pettus Bridge in a landmark in African-American history and led to the Voting Rights Act of 1965, which deemed discrimination in voting illegal.

Oppression Monitor. "Four Types of Racism." *Oppression Monitor Daily*, 31 Jan. 2014, oppressionmonitor.us/2014/01/31/four-types-racism/. Accessed 3 Apr. 2018.

There are four types of racism: internalized (individual level), interpersonal (individual level), institutional (systemic level), and structural (systemic level). Internalized racism is someone's own private beliefs and biases on race and racism, and interpersonal racism is how those beliefs and biases affect how they interact with someone else. Institutional racism deals with the unfair policies and discriminatory actions in institutions and systems of power, while structural racism are the racial biases across institutions and

society.

“Selma to Montgomery March (1965).” *Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Global Freedom Struggle*, Stanford University,
kingencyclopedia.stanford.edu/encyclopedia/encyclopedia/enc_selma_to_montgomery_march/.
Accessed 3 Apr. 2018.

On January 2, 1965, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and the SCLC joined activists in Selma, where only 2% of African Americans were certified to vote. The activists hoped to attract national awareness to the discrimination embedded into Selma’s voting practices in order for a better voting rights legislation. In the first month, there was little violence but many mass arrests. However, that changed when Jimmie Lee Jackson was fatally shot by an Alabama state trooper while trying to protect his mother. In response, a protest march was planned that would stretch from Selma to Montgomery. As John Lewis and Hosea Williams led the march, they were met by law enforcement under Major John Cloud and Sheriff Jim Clark’s command on the Edmund Pettus Bridge. After demonstrators refused to turn around when Major Cloud told them to, protesters were harassed by state troopers and deputies as white onlookers cheered on the attack. After being televised, activists across the nation gathered in Selma for the Selma to Montgomery March. On August 6, in response to the marches, the Voting Rights Act of 1965 was passed.

“The State of Black America in 1960.” *Digital History*, 2016,
www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/disp_textbook.cfm?smtid=2&psid=3323. Accessed 2 Apr. 2018.

In the 1960s, African-Americans had very few rights. In some counties, not only were African-American prohibited from going to certain hotels, beaches, and restaurants, but couldn't serve on grand or trial juries. Additionally, during this time, not one-fourth of southern African-Americans to vote could do so. African-Americans had worse resources and facilities while facing discrimination and humiliation. However, they became more anxious to speak up as time passed.

"Voting Rights." *Digital History*, 2016, www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/disp_textbook.cfm?smtid=2&psid=3330. Accessed 3 Apr. 2018.

Though the 1964 Civil Rights Act was passed the previous year, African-Americans faced prevalent issues voting. To bring awareness to the issue, a voter registration drive began in 1965 and was centralized in Selma. As Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. brought African-Americans to the county courthouse to vote in a series of demonstrations, it resulted in almost 2,000 arrests. In order to diminish the chance of African-Americans voting in Selma, Sheriff Clark used tactics such as difficult literacy tests or making potential African-American wait for hours in line. After an African-American man was fatally shot during a demonstration, "Bloody Sunday" was a march that was meant to protest his death. However, when the march went awry, the Selma to Montgomery March ensued. On August 6, 1965, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Voting Rights Act of 1965. In that year alone, 450,000 more southern African-Americans were certified to vote.

"Selma, Alabama." *BlackPast.org*, edited by Jessie Kindig,

<http://www.blackpast.org/aah/bloody-sunday-selma-alabama-march-7-1965>. Accessed 3 Apr. 2018.

From 1961 to 1964, the SNCC led a voting registration in Selma. Selma was a small town in Dallas County, AL with a record to resistance to black voting. Due to this, the SNCC was met with constant defiance from county law enforcement officials. Due to this, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and the SCLC joined the SNCC, encouraged by local activists to make Selma's voting issue a national concern. Between January and February, Dr. King, the SCLC, and the SNCC led a series of demonstration to the Dallas County Courthouse. However, on February 17, 1965, one of these protests turned deadly when an Alabama state trooper killed Jimmie Lee Jackson. In response, a protest march was scheduled that involved 600 protesters. However, after the protesters were unexpectedly stopped and harassed by law enforcement, on March 21, Dr. King led a successful march from Selma to Montgomery to protest the injustice from "Bloody Sunday."