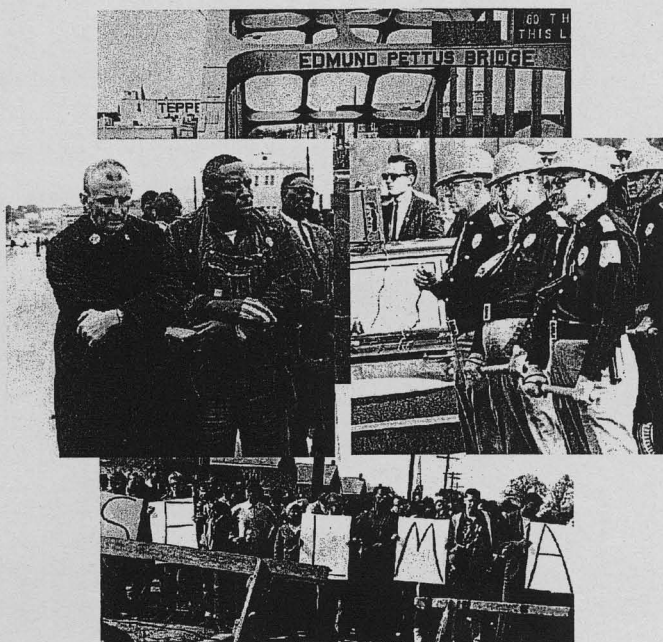


Freedom Wasn't Free:

Alabama Department of Public Safety
Photographs of
the Selma—Montgomery Marches
March 7th-25th, 1965



Curators: Bernadette A. Lear, Martha Sachs, and Harold B. Shill

2005



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A Companion to the
40th Anniversary Exhibit

Penn State Harrisburg Library
351 Olmsted Drive
Middletown, PA 17057
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Introduction

Selma: The Alabama Department of Public Safety Photographs

Three civil rights marches in Selma, Alabama, galvanized the nation in March 1965 and led directly to the passage of the landmark Voting Rights Act of 1965. The marches were an outgrowth of unsuccessful voter registration efforts in Selma and surrounding areas earlier that year.

Widely covered on network television, the March 7th ("Bloody Sunday") march resulted in the hospitalization of 50 marchers who had been beaten and gassed by state and local policemen. A second, symbolic march two days later stopped peacefully at the Edmund Pettus Bridge.

The third (March 21th-25th) march started with 3,000 individuals walking from Selma under Federal protection and ended 60 miles later with 25,000 persons converging on the Alabama State Capitol for a triumphal voting rights rally.

Images of the Selma marches have been seen widely in recent weeks as the 40th anniversary of the Selma marches is observed. However, the Alabama State Police photographs of the three marches have not been available for public viewing prior to this exhibit.

Visitors should be aware that these photographs were taken as surveillance photos, not for news or historical coverage. Their purpose was to intimidate participants and to document their involvement for later prosecution. Given their candid depiction of police actions, these photos add a new perspective to historians' understanding of these events.

Professor Jack Rabin of Penn State Harrisburg's School of Public Affairs secured copies of 375 Alabama Department of Public Safety photographs documenting the Selma marches in 1975, while teaching at Auburn University-Montgomery. The originals were later destroyed to comply with laws prohibiting retention of photographs of individuals not under active investigation.

Dr. Rabin donated these photographs and other civil rights documents to the University Libraries in September 2003. The collection is housed at University Park, where the Special Collections Department is organizing and preserving it for eventual public access. It is considered a joint collection of the Penn State Harrisburg Library and the Special Collections Department.

By eliminating literacy tests and other measures used to deny the franchise to Southern African Americans, the Voting Rights Act enabled them to participate more fully and influentially in civic life. As a direct result, many African American mayors and other officials have been elected at the local, state and national levels. In 2000, Selma voters elected their first African American mayor, James Perkins, Jr.

This selection of Selma March photographs is being made available to commemorate the 40th anniversary of a seminal event in recent American history and to add to public understanding of those events. The full Alabama Civil Rights Collection will be available for researchers and the general public when current organization and preservation efforts are completed.

A Freedom Song

Keep Your Eyes on the Prize

Paul and Silas bound in jail,
Had no money for their bail,
Keep your eyes on the prize,
Hold on, hold on.

Hold on, hold on.
Keep your eyes on the prize,
Hold on, hold on.

Paul and Silas begin to shout,
The jail door open and they walked out.
Keep your eyes on the prize,
Hold on, hold on.

Freedom's name is mighty sweet,
Soon one day we're gonna meet.
Keep your eyes on the prize,
Hold on, hold on.

Got my hand on the Gospel plow,
I wouldn't take nothing for my journey now.
Keep your eyes on the prize,
Hold on, hold on.

The only chain that a man can stand,
Is that chain of hand in hand.
Keep your eyes on the prize,
Hold on, hold on.

The only thing that we did wrong,
Stayed in the wilderness a day too long.
Keep your eyes on the prize,
Hold on, hold on.

But the one thing we did right,
Was the day we started to fight.
Keep your eyes on the prize,
Hold on, hold on.

We're gonna board that big Greyhound,
Carryin' love from town to town.
Keep your eyes on the prize,
Hold on, hold on.

We're gonna ride for civil rights,
We're gonna ride both black and white.
Keep your eyes on the prize,
Hold on, hold on.

We've met in jail and violence too,
But God's Love has seen us through.
Keep your eyes on the prize,
Hold on, hold on.

Haven't been to Heaven but I've been told,
Streets up there are paved with gold.
Keep your eyes on the prize,
Hold on, hold on.

Source: The African American Book of Values: Classic Moral Stories, edited by Steven Barboza. (New York: Doubleday, 1998. E185.86.B35 1998). pg. 349-350.

A Timeline: Voting Rights for All

1668	Virginia enacts law denying equality to freed African Americans
1721	South Carolina limits vote to free white Christian men
1762	Virginia law restricts vote to white men
1780	Massachusetts abolishes slavery; African American taxpayers demand right to vote
1787	U.S. Constitution adopted, treating African Americans as 3/5 of a male of another race for purposes of representation
1802-05	Ohio abolishes slavery, passes Black Laws prohibiting African Americans from voting and restricting other rights
1821	Missouri disenfranchises African Americans; New York restricts black male voting
1838	Pennsylvania ends voting rights for African Americans
1847	New Jersey removes African American voting rights
1863	Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation frees slaves in states rebelling against the Union
1866	First Civil Rights Act passed over presidential veto, granting citizenship to freed African Americans

1868	14 th Amendment adopted, giving African Americans full citizenship and equal rights
1870	15 th Amendment provides universal male suffrage
1875	Civil Rights Act extends equal rights for African Americans
1883	Supreme Court rules unconstitutional the 1875 Civil Rights Act, saying it invaded states' authority
1890	Mississippi requires test of "understanding" to restrict African American voting
1896	Supreme Court rules that "separate, but equal" facilities are constitutional (Plessy v. Ferguson)
1898	Louisiana enacts "grandfather clause," limiting voting rights to males whose grandfathers could vote on or before January 1, 1867
1905	Niagara Movement (NAACP predecessor) founded in New York to improve conditions for African Americans
1915	Supreme Courts declares grandfather clauses to be unconstitutional
1920	19 th Amendment gives women the right to vote
1926	African American women in Birmingham, AL, beaten while trying to register to vote
1944	Supreme Court rules that African Americans cannot be excluded from primary elections

1948	President Truman ends segregation in Armed Forces by Executive Order
1954	Supreme Court rules that segregated schools are "inherently unequal" (Brown v. Topeka Board of Education)
1955-56	Rosa Parks refuses to give seat on Montgomery, AL, bus to white man, resulting in her arrest; year-long African American boycott of Montgomery buses leads to court integration order
1957	African American students begin sit-in movement at Woolworth's lunch counter in Greensboro, NC Little Rock, AR, Central High School integrated with Federal troops sent by President Eisenhower
1960	CORE Freedom Riders test desegregation of interstate transportation; bus bombed and riders attacked, but 1000 riders participate during summer
1961	James Meredith first black student to enroll at University of Mississippi; violence causes President Kennedy to send Federal troops
1963	NAACP official Medgar Evers murdered in Mississippi while leading voter registration campaign Birmingham, AL, church bombing kills four African American girls; use of police dogs and fire hoses against civil rights demonstrators stirs national sympathy Civil Rights March on Washington and Dr. Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream" speech

1964	Three civil rights workers murdered in Mississippi 24 th Amendment outlaws poll tax Civil Rights Act of 1964 outlaws discrimination in schools, lodging, public places and employment
1965	March 7 th — "Bloody Sunday" police attacks send 50 Selma marchers for voting rights to hospital March 9 th — Second voting right march ended at Edmund Pettus bridge March 21 th -25 th — Selma-to-Montgomery march takes place with Federal protection; 25,000 marchers enter Montgomery and rally at State Capitol August 6 th — Voting Rights Act of 1965 enacted, outlawing literacy tests and other measures used to prevent African Americans from voting
1966	Sen. Edward Brooke of Massachusetts becomes first African American member of U.S. Senate since Reconstruction Barbara Jordan becomes first African American to serve in Texas State Senate since 1883
1971	26 th Amendment to the Constitution extends voting rights to all American citizens age 18 and older Supreme Court upholds busing as legitimate means for public school desegregation in South and North

1978	Unita Blackwell becomes first African American woman mayor in Mississippi
1988	Rev. Jesse Jackson wins 13 Democratic primaries and caucuses, finishes second in campaign for Democratic presidential nomination Gen. Colin Powell becomes first African American Chief of Staff for U.S. Armed Forces
2000	Colin Powell becomes first African American U.S. Secretary of State James Perkins, Jr., a computer consultant, is elected as the first African American mayor of Selma, AL.

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The President Sends a Message to Congress

Excerpts from Lyndon Baines Johnson's "We Shall Overcome" Speech, March 15th, 1965

Mr. Speaker, Mr. President, Members of the Congress:

I speak tonight for the dignity of man and the destiny of democracy.

I urge every member of both parties, Americans of all religions and of all colors, from every section of this country, to join me in that cause.

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.

There, long-suffering men and women peacefully protested the denial of their rights as Americans. Many were brutally assaulted. One good man, a man of God, was killed.

There is no cause for pride in what has happened in Selma. There is no cause for self-satisfaction in the long denial of equal rights of millions of Americans. But there is cause for hope and for faith in our democracy in what is happening here tonight...

Our mission is at once the oldest and the most basic of this country: to right wrong, to do justice, to serve man...

Rarely are we met with a challenge, not to our growth or abundance, our welfare or our security, but rather to the values and the purposes and the meaning of our beloved Nation.

The issue of equal rights for American Negroes is such an issue. And should we defeat every enemy, should we double our wealth and conquer the stars, and still be unequal to this issue, then we will have failed as a people and as a nation.

For with a country as with a person, "What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"

There is no Negro problem. There is no Southern problem. There is no Northern problem. There is only an American problem. And we are met here tonight as Americans—not as Democrats or Republicans—we are met here as Americans to solve that problem.

This was the first nation in the history of the world to be founded with a purpose. The great phrases of that purpose still sound in every American heart, North and South: "All men are created equal"—"government by consent of the governed"—"give me liberty or give me death." Well, those are not just clever words, or those are not just empty theories. In their name Americans have fought and died for two centuries, and tonight around the world they stand there as guardians of our liberty, risking their lives.

Those words are a promise to every citizen that he shall share in the dignity of man. This dignity cannot be found in a man's possessions; it cannot be found in his power, or in his position. It really rests on his right to be treated as a man equal in opportunity to all others. It says that he shall share in freedom, he shall choose his leaders, educate his children, and provide for his family according to his ability and his merits as a human being.

To apply any other test—to deny a man his hopes because of his color or race, his religion or the place of his birth—is not only to do injustice, it is to deny America and to dishonor the dead who gave their lives for American freedom.

Our fathers believed that if this noble view of the rights of man was to flourish, it must be rooted in democracy. The most basic right of all was the right to choose your own leaders. The history of this country, in large measure, is the history of the expansion of that right to all of our people.

Many of the issues of civil rights are very complex and most difficult. But about this there can and should be no argument. **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...

Experience has clearly shown that the existing process of law cannot overcome systematic and ingenious discrimination. No law that we now have on the books—and I have helped to put three of them there—can ensure the right to vote when local officials are determined to deny it.

In such a case our duty must be clear to all of us. The Constitution says that no person shall be kept from voting because of his race or his color. We have all sworn an oath before God to support and to defend that Constitution. We must now act in obedience to that oath.

Wednesday I will send to Congress a law designed to eliminate illegal barriers to the right to vote...

To those who seek to avoid action by their National Government in their own communities; who want to and who seek to maintain purely local control over elections, the answer is simple:

Open your polling places to all your people.

Allow men and women to register and vote whatever the color of their skin.

Extend the rights of citizenship to every citizen of this land.

There is no constitutional issue here. The command of the Constitution is plain.

There is no moral issue. It is wrong—deadly wrong—to deny any of your fellow Americans the right to vote in this country.

There is no issue of States rights or national rights. There is only the struggle for human rights.

I have not the slightest doubt what will be your answer...

This time, on this issue, there must be no delay, no hesitation and no compromise with our purpose...

We have already waited a hundred years and more, and the time for waiting is gone.

So I ask you to join me in working long hours—nights and weekends, if necessary—to pass this bill... For from the window where I sit with the problems of our country I recognize that outside this chamber is the outraged conscience of a nation, the grave concern of many nations, and the harsh judgment of history on our acts.

But even if we pass this bill, the battle will not be over. What happened in Selma is part of a far larger movement which reaches into every section and State of America. It is the effort of American Negroes to secure for themselves the full blessings of American life.

Their cause must be our cause too. Because it is not just Negroes, but really it is all of us, who must overcome the crippling legacy of bigotry and injustice. **And we shall overcome...**

This is one Nation. What happens in Selma or in Cincinnati is a matter of legitimate concern to every American. But let each of us look within our own hearts and our own communities, and let each of us put our shoulder to the wheel to root out injustice wherever it exists...

In Selma as elsewhere we seek and pray for peace. We seek order. We seek unity. But we will not accept the peace of stifled rights, or the order imposed by fear, or the unity that stifles protest. For peace cannot be purchased at the cost of liberty...

Beyond this great chamber, out yonder in 50 States, are the people that we serve. Who can tell what deep and unspoken hopes are in their hearts tonight as they sit there and listen. We all can guess, from our own lives, how difficult they often find their own pursuit of happiness, how many problems each little family has. They look most of all to themselves for their futures. But I think that they also look to each of us.

Above the pyramid on the great seal of the United States it says—in Latin—**"God has favored our undertaking."**

God will not favor everything that we do. It is rather our duty to divine His will. But I cannot help believing that He truly understands and that He really favors the undertaking that we begin here tonight.

President Lyndon Baines Johnson at the signing of the Voting Rights Act, nearly 5 months after the "We Shall Overcome" speech, August 6th, 1965. Courtesy Lyndon Baines Johnson Library and Museum, A1029-11A



The Voting Rights Act

Excerpts from P.L. 89-110, "An Act to Enforce the Fifteenth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States, and for Other Purposes." Signed into law by President Lyndon Baines Johnson, August 6th, 1965.

... **SEC. 2.** No voting qualification or prerequisite to voting, or standard, practice, or procedure shall be imposed or applied by any State or political subdivision to deny or abridge the right of any citizen of the United States to vote on account of race or color ...

... **SEC. 3.** ... the court shall authorize the appointment of Federal examiners by the United States Civil Service Commission in accordance with section 6 to serve for such period of time and for such political subdivisions as the court shall determine is appropriate to enforce the guarantees of the fifteenth amendment ...

... **SEC. 4. (a).** To assure that the right of citizens of the United States to vote is not denied or abridged on account of race or color, no citizen shall be denied the right to vote in any Federal, State, or local election because of his failure to comply with any test or device in any State ...

... **(c)** The phrase "test or device" shall mean any requirement that a person as a prerequisite for voting or registration for voting (1) demonstrate the ability to read, write, understand, or interpret any matter, (2) demonstrate any educational achievement or his knowledge of any particular subject, (3) possess good moral character, or (4) prove his qualifications by the voucher of registered voters or members of any other class ...

... **SEC. 8.** ... the Civil Service Commission may assign, at the request of the Attorney General, one or more persons, who may be officers of the United States, (1) to enter and attend at any place for holding an election in such subdivision for the purpose of observing whether persons who are entitled to vote are being permitted to vote, and (2) to enter and attend at any place for tabulating the votes cast at any election held in such subdivision for the purpose of observing whether votes cast by persons entitled to vote are being properly tabulated ...

... **SEC. 10. (a)** The Congress finds that the requirement of the payment of a poll tax as a precondition to voting (i) precludes persons of limited means from voting or imposes unreasonable financial hardship upon such persons as a precondition to their exercise of the franchise, (ii) does not bear a reasonable relationship to any legitimate State interest in the conduct of elections, and (iii) in some areas has the purpose or effect of denying persons the right to vote because of race or color. Upon the basis of these findings, Congress declares that the constitutional right of citizens to vote is denied or abridged in some areas by the requirement of the payment of a poll tax as a precondition to voting ...

... **SEC. 11. (a)** No person acting under color of law shall fail or refuse to permit any person to vote who is entitled to vote under any provision of this Act or is otherwise qualified to vote, or willfully fail or refuse to tabulate, count, and report such person's vote.

(b) No person, whether acting under color of law or otherwise, shall intimidate, threaten, or coerce, or attempt to intimidate, threaten, or coerce any person for voting or attempting to vote, or intimidate, threaten, or coerce, or attempt to intimidate, threaten, or coerce any person for urging or aiding any person to vote or attempt to vote, or intimidate, threaten, or coerce any person for exercising any powers or duties under section 3(a), 6, 8, 9, 10, or 12(e) ...

(c) Whoever knowingly or willfully gives false information as to his name, address, or period of residence in the voting district for the purpose of establishing his eligibility to register or vote, or conspires with another individual for the purpose of encouraging his false registration to vote or illegal voting, or pays or offers to pay or accepts payment either for registration to vote or for voting shall be fined not more than \$10,000 or imprisoned not more than five years, or both ...

... SEC. 12. (a) Whoever shall deprive or attempt to deprive any person of any right secured by section 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, or 10 or shall violate section 11(a) or (b), shall be fined not more than \$5,000, or imprisoned not more than five years, or both ...

... SEC 13. (c) (1) The terms "vote" or "voting" shall include all action necessary to make a vote effective in any primary, special, or general election, including, but not limited to, registration, listing pursuant to this Act, or other action required by law prerequisite to voting, casting a ballot, and having such ballot counted properly and included in the appropriate totals of votes cast with respect to candidates for public or party office and propositions for which votes are received in an election.

(2) The term "political subdivision" shall mean any county or parish, except that, where registration for voting is not conducted under the supervision of a county or parish, the term shall include any other subdivision of a State which conducts registration for voting ...

... SEC. 17. Nothing in this Act shall be construed to deny, impair, or otherwise adversely affect the right to vote of any person registered to vote under the law of any State or political subdivision ...

Source: Our Documents: 100 Milestone Documents, by the National Archives and Records Administration and others.
<http://www.ourdocuments.gov>

After the Voting Rights Act

Percentage of Registered Voters among the Black Voting-Age Population, 1960 and 1971

State	1960	1971
Alabama	14%	55%
Arkansas	37%	81%
Florida	39%	53%
Georgia	29%	64%
Louisiana	31%	57%
Mississippi	5%	59%
North Carolina	38%	44%
South Carolina	16%	44%
Tennessee	59%	66%
Texas	35%	68%
Virginia	23%	52%

Source: The African-American Odyssey, 2nd edition, edited by Darlene Clark Hine and others. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson, 2005. E185.H553 2005). pg. 537.

To Learn More ...

Selma, the Civil Rights Movement, and After: A Bibliography of Resources in the Penn State University Libraries*

*For availability of these and other titles, check the CAT, Penn State University Libraries' catalog, at <http://cat.libraries.psu.edu/>

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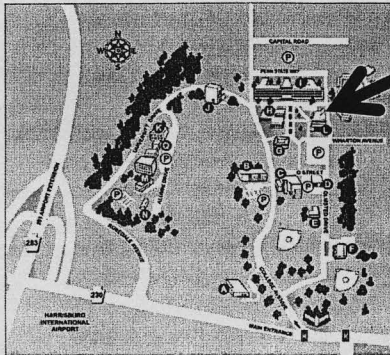
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