

The Voting Rights Act of 1965

Public Law 89-110

Background: As of 1963 only **one percent** of Black voters were registered in Selma, Alabama.

In 1963 SNCC came to Selma, Alabama, to promote voter registration.

During **Freedom Summer 1964**, Andrew Goodman, James Chaney, and Michael Schwerner, who are participating in a state voter registration drive, disappear in Lawndale, Mississippi, while investigating the burning of a Black church.

In 1965 the general strategy focused on demanding Black voting rights and. in the process, the goal was to provoke violence that would get the attention of the nation and the federal government.

After Martin Luther King, Jr., received the **Nobel Peace Prize** in December of 1964, he decides to take the Civil Rights Movement to Selma in 1965.

After Black teachers in Selma march to the city courthouse to register and are turned away, Sheriff Clark is photographed beating a 53 year old Black woman, Annie Cooper.

Selma now becomes a major social movement with national attention.

Two weeks after Martin Luther King, Jr., and the SCLC arrive in Selma, Malcolm X arrives.

Violent protests continue: a) C.T. Vivian is struck in the mouth by the Sheriff
b) Jimmy Lee Jackson is murdered

New Tactic: The SCLC leader James Bevel suggests the 55 mile march from Marion to Selma to get national publicity.

Governor Wallace prohibits this march and launches the Pettus bridge barricade.

The **“Bloody Sunday”** march is aborted by a violent police attack. The second attempt, led by Martin Luther King, Jr., results in **“Turnaround Tuesday.”**

That evening, while plans are being made for the subsequent march, two white Unitarian ministers, Clark Olson and James Reeb, are attacked and Reeb is murdered.

Question: **So, what made the Selma march possible and on what basis is this march judged to be a political success? Who is Viola Liuzzo? And what did the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 contribute to Black suffrage rights?**