

MARCHING THROUGH SELMA

A SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT OF DOCUMENTS AND ANALYSIS

The White City

The county seat of Dallas County, Alabama, lying on the bluffs of the Alabama River, an important Confederate military depot in the Civil War, today the birthplace and stronghold of the Alabama White Citizens Council, is an ordinary town, a friendly, ordinary town. Listen to the people who should know:

"Selma is now a little country town that is typical of most small Southern towns." - Alabama Historian, M.B. Owen in Our State Alabama.

"The white and Negro races have lived together in Selma and Dallas County for many generations in a state of peace and tranquility ... We have enjoyed mutual confidence and trust between the races, and this will again prevail regardless of current unrest." - 23 Dallas County Business Leaders in a full page ad.

"There hasn't been a lynching around here for 50 years." - A Citizen.

"You can walk any place in Selma at any time of day or night without fear of being clubbed, which is more than you can say for Washington, D.C." -- The Mayor, Chris B. Heinz, also president of the Selma Citizens Council.

There is no Klu Klux Klan in Selma "because people put their trust in law enforcement." -- The Sheriff, Jim Clark.

The industries in Selma are small and based mainly on cotton. There is also the Craig Air Force Base, three miles away, the home of the Jet Qualification Course and Basic Instructors School. The financial and business ties of Selma to the North are important and will receive attention later.

The Negro City

There are also some Negroes in Selma. They account for over half of the urban population and 58% of the county's population. Of those eligible to vote, less than one percent are registered.

"Did the Sheriff strike at you?"

"He did."

"Did he miss you or hit you?"

"He hit me."

"How many times?"

"He hit me over the head three times, punched me in my stomach two times, punched me in my side once, and then kicked me in the chest." -- Testimony of Bosie Reese, registration worker, arrested at Dallas Co. courthouse. Quoted in John Fry's "The Voter Registration Drive in Selma, Alabama," Presbyterian Life, 1/15/64.

"MAIDS"

"With the minimum wage per hour being \$1.25, there are still hundreds of maids here in Selma working for \$15 per week. With hours varying from 7 am to 5 pm." -- Frederick Douglas Free Press, 1/15/65.

"Median family income in Dallas County is \$2,846 (compared to \$3,937 for the state), but median family income for Negroes is only \$1,393. Median school years completed in the county is 8.8 (compared to 9.1 for the state), but median school years completed for Negroes is 5.8" -- Jerry Demuth, "Black Belt, Alabama," Commonweal, 8/7/64.

Selma is an ordinary town in the Black Belt of America, whose counties are economically and socially among the worst in the nation.

Washington Winds Slowly O'er The Lea

The Justice Department has been active in Alabama since 1957. In April, 1961 they filed suit against the Dallas County Board of Registrars, seeking an injunction against discrimination in voter registration. The US District Court denied the injunction. The case was appealed to the Appellate Court, Judge Cameron presiding. In November, 1963, 30 months after the filing of the suit, the injunction was granted: it does not, however, touch the major varieties of discriminatory practice.

In June, 1963 the Department attempted to get the Federal District Court to keep the County officials and Sheriff Clark from intimidating Negro applicants. Judge Thomas refused to grant an injunction. The appeal failed. The Department finally got a hearing in October, 1963, but no injunction resulted. The case is still on appeal.

This sketch of legal redresses suggests the legal state of affairs in Selma and Dallas County: the impotency of the courts to relieve an inevitable situation.

"As early as 1961 ... the Justice Department filed suit against the Board of Registrars of Dallas Co. Four years and five more suits later effective relief is yet to be forthcoming, and the first voting referee is yet to be appointed. The extraordinary concentration of the legal resources of the Justice Department has been to no avail" -- Congressman Resnick of NY in the Congressional Record.

In nearby Perry County, where SNCC has also been conducting a voter registration

drive, the Justice Department was successful in obtaining a federal voting referee. However, between November 3 and December 18, 1964, the referee registered only 2 of 61 Perry County Negroes who tried to register. The Justice Department has challenged his rulings.

"Perhaps we need to charge the Justice Department with something more than a mindless mechanical approach to a vital problem. On January 21, 1965, Judge Thomas was petitioned by NAACP lawyers to issue an injunction against Sheriff Clark's repressive acts. Thomas granted this relief on January 23, saying:

Under the guise of enforcement there shall be no intimidation, harassment, or the like, of the citizens to register to vote, nor of those legally attempting to register to vote, nor of those legally attempting to aid others in registering to vote, or encouraging them.

On the scene was US Deputy Marshal Fountain, policing the Federal Judge's ruling for the Justice Department. He chose to enforce the ruling to its strictest letter, even denying registration drive leaders the right to speak to applicants in line or bring them food and water. Inspection of the statement of Judge Thomas' rule given above indicates this Justice Department man's sudden zeal for enforcement exceeded the bounds of court order. There were no complaints from Sheriff Clark, at whom the injunction was aimed.

And there have been no complaints from him since then." -- "Justice Department Activity in Selma, Alabama," Special SNCC Report, 2/25/65.

It should be noted that most of the Judges who frustrate Justice Department efforts at gaining voting rights were appointed by Democratic Presidents. Judge Johnson, whose recent order cleared the way for the Selma-Montgomery march, is an Eisenhower appointee.

The Agitators

"You're an agitator: that's the lowest form of life." -- Sheriff Clark

SNCC workers Bernard and Colia Lafayette, Frank Holloway and James Austin came to Selma in the early fall of 1962 to begin a voter registration drive. They set up a voter registration class in the house across the street from the county jail, then in some of the churches. They also made contact with the Dallas County Voters League, which has been operating in that area for 20 years.

As word of the SNCC project spread a call for help came in from a group of farmers in Wilcox County, where there has not been a registered Negro voter in 50 years. James Austin left Dallas County to aid them; a number were successful in filing applications, but none were registered. Wilcox County still has no registered Negroes.

Before it was necessary for the La-fayettes to leave Selma a year later, Bernard was successful in organizing a powerfully functioning youth organization, working with the students of Hudson High School. These students took over the job of canvassing the city for voters. In September, 1963, it was the high school students who spearheaded the street demonstrations. These demonstrations organized by SNCC and led by the Dallas County Voters League were the first in the county's history. Sit-in demonstrations against local downtown establishments met with stiff and often brutal resistance from municipal, county, and state law enforcement officials. SNCC Chairman John Lewis came to Selma to participate in the operations, which were continuing hard and fast, and which broke through the fear and apathy that was prevalent at that time among local Negroes.

Sheriff Clark, with a federal suit pending against him, was understandably nervous. He called for and received aid from State Public Safety Director, the notorious Colonel Lingo, in the form of 150 state troopers. He also organized what is now called "Clark's Posse," a band of 300 local citizens to help in quelling demonstrations.

A Freedom Monday was scheduled for October 7, 1963 (at that time the Registrar's Office was open only every other Monday), and the demonstrators pressed harder to arouse as many Negroes to register as possible.

Street by street canvassing was carried on. The week before Freedom Monday, Jim Forman arrived to join in the organizing. John Lewis and other SNCC workers being in jail. On the afternoon of October 7, 450 Negroes were lined up in front of the Court House. Sheriff Clark issued orders that no one could leave the line for any purpose. Two SNCC field secretaries were beaten and arrested when they attempted to pass out sandwiches and water to people on the line. Clark and three deputies drove away Forman, James Gildersleeve, president of the Dallas County Voters League, and the state senator from Maryland, Mrs. Welcasne, when they attempted to speak to people on the line.

About 14 Negroes were processed that day, but the events had shaken Selma, and work was accelerated, high school students canvassing in the city, and SNCC workers in the rural areas.

The fear and apathy had been enormous, but the break-through was equally great. By November, 1963, Bruce Gordon, SNCC

worker in Dallas County was able to add at the end of his field report, "While driving through a rural area returning to Selma after a day of canvassing I passed a Negro farmer, on a mule drawn wagon, singing 'We Shall Overcome' to himself."

A Few Words About Sheriff Clark

One of the strongest forces operating against the movement in Dallas County is Sheriff Clark and his Posse. (which, he claims, is used only for floods, fires, and civil defense). The Posse is not necessarily more brutal than the state troopers - it was the troopers who beat the movement to death in Gadsden, using cattle prods on people, beating women on the breasts, and men on their testicles. But Dallas County is the only county with such a posse, and it provides a concentration of brutality unexcelled elsewhere.

In December, 1963, Sheriff Clark, together with County Solicitor Blanchard McLeod and four policemen, raided the SNCC office - striking a SNCC worker, confiscating the office files and ripping the telephone from the wall. They then raided the SNCC Freedom House and arrested 9 persons.

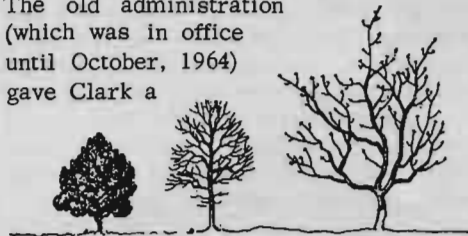
Clark has attended every mass meeting held by SNCC, the Dallas County Voters League, or the Dallas County Improvement Association, with his hand on his hip and frequently a cattle prod (which he describes as a "most humane instrument") in his hand. In September, 1963, SNCC worker Worth Long reported: "Selma is in a state of siege. Everywhere you look you see state policemen or members of the special posse brandishing clubs and cattle prods."

That's fall, 1963 - a year and a half before things erupted in Selma.

The Posse, used to hinder union activity as well as harass voter registration efforts, is a specially deputized group, empowered to carry weapons and make arrests. At least 100 wear old army fatigues, helmets, and boots. They work closely with the state troopers, and have travelled as far away as Birmingham, Tuscaloosa and Gadsden to quell civil rights activity.

Just before the events of Bloody Sunday, March 7, 1965, John Love reported,

"There seems to be some confusion and uncertainty in the white community over how to deal with us, and a possible split between the supporters of the brutal Sheriff Clark and the more moderate Commissioner of Public Safety, Baker. The old administration (which was in office until October, 1964) gave Clark a



completely free reign, and made no visible efforts to restrain him. The present administration seems more anxious to control him - though it is questionable whether this is possible ... (Ed. note: At 7 p.m., March 7, 1965, SNCC's Lafayette Surney reported from the Good Samaritan Hospital in Selma: "I just finished talking to Police Commissioner Baker. He said that State Troopers took over and just took it out of their hands.")

At this point it doesn't seem that the people of Selma have been turned around by Clark's brutality. The 300 people who were active in the first Freedom Day in October of 1963 are still with us."

Sheriff Clark's terror has served not only to keep the Negro in constant fear. As one white citizen of Selma said, "The trouble is, too many of our people fear the white man more than they do the Negroes."

The Eye Of Hurricane

By summer of 1964 things had subsided: "The county got an injunction prohibiting assemblies of three or more persons in any public place. Named in the injunction were fourteen organizations, including SNCC and SCLC, and forty-one individuals.

The combination of arrests, intimidation, violence and the injunction brought civil rights activity to a temporary halt in mid-July. But it did not bring to a halt the determination to create change in this old Southern city, although the past as well as the present in Selma has not created a situation in which change is easy." -- Jerry Demuth, "Black Belt, Alabama."

An important step was taking place during this time of calm. At the same time that Mrs. Fannie Lou Hamer, Mrs. Victoria Gray and Mrs. Annie Devine were challenging the regular Democratic officeholders in Mississippi, a Selma woman, Mrs. Amelia Boynton, qualified to oppose veteran Representative Kenneth A. Roberts in Alabama's May primary.

She was the first Negro to run for Congress from Alabama since the Reconstruction, and the first woman ever to try for the office. An insurance agent and employment office operator, and resident of Selma since 1930, Mrs. Boynton ran a vigorous campaign, and of course lost. There are 860,073 white voters in Alabama, and 66,009 Negro voters.

One problem was made clear to SNCC workers after the Boynton campaign: they would have to dig deeper into the community with their work. Their own experience, combined with the nearby Mississippi model, indicated to the SNCC staff that they had much work to do before the Dallas County movement would reach the poorest Negroes in the area. At this point the movement was led by only a few local people; the full participation of many local Negroes in every level of decision-making remained an unrealized goal.

Bloody Sunday

As seen through the reports coming from the South, events moved quickly toward Sunday, March 7, 1965. SCLC came to Selma as an organization in December 1964 and began to work with SNCC in voter registration. A Freedom Day was planned for four days in January. John Lewis and Martin Luther King were both in Selma for Freedom Day January 18, and led 500 Negroes to the courthouse. They were forced to stand in an alley all day, and then no one was registered. King was punched; Lewis pinned the attacker's arms to his side.

On January 19, Lewis, John Love, and Lafayette Surney of SNCC were arrested, together with SCLS's Hosea Williams and Mrs. Amelia Boynton. Day after day the people came back to the courthouse, on February 10, 600 students, on the 15th 2000 adults and 1000 students.

A boycott of downtown Selma merchants was begun, individually and spontaneously by local people, when they saw some of the merchants serving on the sheriff's posse. The latest report from John Love (March) says that the boycott is effective and spreading.

On February 20, the Dallas County White Citizens Council held its annual barbecue, at which Ross Barnett spoke. The place for the barbecue was the National Guard Armory in Selma. A telegram of protest was sent to Washington by SNCC over the use of Government facilities for the racist meeting.

On February 22, another march led by Lewis and King. The people were put through the process of signing an "appearance book" and were then told if they came back on March 1 they would be registered; if not they would be considered ineligible.

The following evening, 60 students, led by John Lewis, left Brown's Chapel (the headquarters of the demonstrations) to march to the courthouse in protest against Wallace's ban on night marches. They marched six blocks to the Coca Cola plant, where they were confronted with three times their number of city policemen. They knelt to pray, sang, and returned to the Chapel.

On March 4, high school students expelled for leaving school to attend the funeral of Jimmy Lee Jackson, murdered by State Troopers, urged their fellow students to boycott the school. The first day of the boycott was 99% effective. (On absence notes signed by their parents, the reason given for their absence was "brother's funeral").

At a meeting between the staffs of SNCC and SCLC in Selma on Friday the 5th, the SNCC staff expressed its opposition to the planned march from Selma to Montgomery. SNCC workers thought the danger to the people involved was greater than the objectives and any possible achievements of the march warranted. At the SNCC Executive Committee

meeting in Atlanta that day and Saturday, many members expressed their opposition, but it was decided that in view of their concern for and commitment to the local people, SNCC would provide the services already agreed on - radios, the WATS line, and the services of the Medical Committee on Human Rights. SNCC staff members would participate in the march on an individual basis.

Events in Selma were approaching a crisis. Wallace had ordered the troopers to use "every necessary measure" to stop the march. Martin Luther King was in Atlanta. The march, when it began, was led by John Lewis, SNCC worker Robert Mants, SCLS's Hosea Williams, and Albert Turner, head of the Dallas County Voters League.

The facts are well known.

Two to three thousand people were marching.

At a few minutes past 4 in the afternoon all hell broke loose in Selma. SNCC worker Lafayette Surney was at a phone booth near the bridge:

"4:15 p.m. State troopers are throwing tear gas at the people. A few are running back. A few are being blinded by tear gas. Somebody has been hurt -- I don't know who ... They're beating them and throwing tear gas at them.

4:16 p.m. Police are beating people on the streets. Oh, man, they're just picking them up and putting them in ambulances. People are getting hurt, pretty bad. There were two people on the ground in pretty bad shape ... I'm going to leave in a few minutes ... People are running back this way.

4:17 p.m. Ambulances are going by with the sirens going. People are running, crying, telling what's happening.

4:18 p.m. Police are pushing people into alleys. I don't know why. People are screaming, hollering. They're bringing in more ambulances. People are running, hollering, crying ...

4:20 p.m. Here come the white hoodlums. I'm on the corner of one of the main streets. One lady screamed, "They're trying to kill me."

4:26 p.m. They're going back to the church. I'm going too"

Who Is Responsible For Alabama Police Brutality?

This question is raised in a SNCC Special Report issued Monday, March 8. We quote in part:

"A clue to the answer is provided, ironically, on the same evening, March 7, The ABC network presented their Sunday Night Movie, "Judgement in Nuremberg." The movie is the story of the war crimes trials held in Germany after World War II. The trials attempted to fix the blame for the murder of 6 million Jews in the Nazi gas chambers. The movie points out that the best educated, most respectable, most prestigious and most powerful of Germany's indus-

QUESTION

Where am i
in our history books

i built the
ark that
saved you
from the sun

ERRATUM

and nursed
your babes
with black
milk laughter
everywhere

To the quote
"families that
pray together
stay together"

so where

please add
"in darkness"

am i

oh where

am i



W. W. Long

former SNCC Coordinator who worked in Selma -
reprinted from the Frederick Douglass Free Press

trial, political and financial elite must bear the major portion of the guilt, for they were the ones who could have stopped the massacre, and didn't.

We shall make no attempt to do a definitive analysis of the structure of economic power which lies behind, aids, abets, and approves such police brutality in Alabama. The evidence is so near the surface of everyday life in America that no definitive analysis is required.

On December 4, 1964, in the Municipal Stadium in Selma, "law enforcement officers from the state, city, and county... were guests of honor at a barbeque given by the Liberty National Insurance Company." -- Selma Times-Journal, 12/6/64.

These guests who were honored by the insurance company included "law enforcement officers" from Al Lingo's State Police, Sheriff Clark's deputies and Posse, and the Selma police department. Officials and employees of Liberty National, ... stood behind the serving counter's and loaded the plates of the hungry "law officers."

Who and what is the Liberty National Insurance Company? Our records do not indicate who owns the stock of the company. But we do have a list of the members of the Board of Directors, the governing body of the corporation, which determines all policy matters and must approve, ultimately, all expenditures, including the cost of paying tribute to the "law officers" of Alabama...

The Liberty National Board of Directors includes:

-- Walter Bouldin, President of the Alabama Power Co. and a director of Birmingham Trust National Bank. Alabama Power is a wholly-owned subsidiary of the Southern Company. The largest stockholders in the Southern Company

ASK YOURSELF THIS IMPORTANT QUESTION: What have I personally done to Maintain Segregation?

If the answer disturbs you, probe deeper and decide what you are willing to do to preserve racial harmony in Selma and Dallas County.

Is it worth four dollars to prevent a "Birmingham" here? That's what it costs to be a member of your Citizens Council, whose efforts are not thwarted by courts which give sit-in demonstrators legal immunity, prevent school boards from expelling students who participate in mob activities and would place federal referees at the board of voter registrars.

Law enforcement can be called only after these things occur, but your Citizens Council prevents them from happening.

Why else did only 350 Negroes attend a so-called mass voter registration meeting that outside agitators worked 60 days to organize in Selma?

Gov. Wallace told a state meeting of the council three weeks ago: "You are doing a wonderful job, but you should speak with the united voice of 100,000 persons. Go back home and get more members."

Gov. Wallace stands in the University doorway next Tuesday facing possible ten years imprisonment for violating a federal injunction.

Is it worth four dollars to you to prevent sit-ins, mob marches and wholesale Negro voter registration efforts in Selma?

If so, prove your dedication by joining and supporting the work of the Dallas County Citizens Council today. Six dollars will make both you and your wife members of an organization which has already given Selma nine years of Racial Harmony since "Black Monday."

Send Your Check To THE DALLAS COUNTY Citizens Council

SELMA, ALABAMA

YOUR MEMBERSHIP IS GOOD FOR 12 MONTHS

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

are the Trustees of the Massachusetts Investment Trust of Boston. These trustees include:

-- D. P. Robinson, Jr., of US Smelting and Refining Co., Illinois Central RR, and Texaco.

-- K. L. Isaacs of Southern Pacific RR and Phelps Dodge.

-- Thomas D. Cabot of Cabot Corp, First National Bank of Boston and Harvard University.

-- Paul F. Clark of Armour and Seaboard Airlines RR.

-- W. H. Claflin of United-Carr Fastner Corp and United Fruit.

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Other directors of Liberty National are:

-- E. A. Camp, Jr., a trustee of the University of Alabama.

-- F. E. Spain, general counsel of US Fidelity and Guaranty.

-- F. P. Samford, Chairman of the Liberty National board, and a director of the Birmingham Trust National Bank, 182nd largest in the U.S. He is also a director of AT&T's southern operating subsidiary and of the West Point Mfg. Co. On the West Point board, Samford sits with directors of the Coca Cola affiliated Trust Company of Georgia, largest stockholder of which is the First National Bank of Atlanta. The largest stockholders of First National Bank of Atlanta are nominees of the two Rockefeller banks in New York City -- Chase Manhattan Bank and First National City Bank

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100 - 1000	2¢

Individuals willing to send packages of food and clothing to the residents of Selma should mail their packages to

SNCC
31½ Franklin Street
Selma, Alabama

All packages should be insured, and return requested.

of New York, 2nd and 3rd largest banks in the United States.

Policy control of the Liberty National Insurance Co. is exercised by persons who are very much a part of the fabric of the topmost political and economic power in the US. (ed. note: The Hammermill Paper Company announced Feb. 4 that it would build a \$35 million plant in Selma, because, said the Chairman of the Board of Directors, of the "character of the community and its people." The Liberty National Life Insurance Company bought \$400,000 worth of industrial development bonds from Hammermill in order to finance the building of the plant.)

This tangled web of power reaches into Lyndon Johnson's White House and into the US House of Representatives (in the person of Congressman Howard Callaway, who sits on the board of the Trust Company of Georgia and Georgia Power Company, another operating subsidiary of the Southern Company

What hope is there for American Negroes, and for those who support their aspirations, when the President who appoints the judges and the US attorneys (who supposedly will enforce the civil rights act) is so closely tied in with the industrial and financial elite which sees fit to honor the murderous Alabama Police minions of Governor George C. Wallace and Sheriff James Clark?

And do not these honored and esteemed financial and industrial leaders hold the whips and clubs with which Selma Negroes were driven from the streets on March 7, in the same sense that the financial and industrial elite of Germany were found guilty of participating, by consent, in the massacre of 6 million Jews in Nazi Germany?

And what will the American people do about it?"