THE SELMA CIVIL RIGHTS TRAIL

50 Landmarks for a 50th Anniversary
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In the summer of 1965, Congress passed and President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Voting Rights Act, one of the most momentous civil rights laws in American history. Events that had happened in Selma earlier that year pushed Congress to create this landmark law. African American citizens took courageous actions that not only changed their lives and communities but that also reshaped the United States, giving all citizens a new taste of freedom and equality.

This driving tour of landmarks associated with Selma’s Civil Rights Movement includes 50 properties—some well recognized from the events of 50 years ago but many others that speak to the deeper story of the struggle for civil rights. All of these places help tell the whole story of what the Civil Rights Movement meant to Selma, to Alabama, and to the nation.

Many places welcome visitors but others remain private. Visitors should respect property rights and only view those buildings from the city sidewalks.
1. National Voting Rights Museum and Institute
6 U.S. Highway 80
www.nvrmi.com
Open daily from Monday to Thursday and on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday by appointment. Admission charged.
This museum focuses on the stories, people, and events of the 1960s and the conflicts such as Bloody Sunday on the adjacent Edmund Pettus Bridge and the resulting Selma-to-Montgomery March.

2. Selma-to-Montgomery March Memorials
5 U.S. Highway 80
On the north side of the highway across from the National Voting Rights Museum are interpretive markers and commemorative sculptures about the Selma-to-Montgomery March and leaders such as John Lewis, Hosea Williams, Amelia Boynton Robinson, and Marie Foster. A pedestrian walkway also leads to views of the Edmund Pettus Bridge.

3. Edmund Pettus Bridge
U.S. Highway 80
This National Historic Landmark was the location of the Turn Around Tuesday and Bloody Sunday conflicts of March

(continued)
1965 between Alabama officers and peaceful civil rights demonstrators. The charge of officers and other armed men against the demonstrators was broadcast across the world, and the horrific images turned public opinion in favor of African American voting rights. The Selma-to-Montgomery March took thousands across the bridge for the trek to the State Capitol.

4. Selma Interpretive Center
2 Broad Street
www.nps.com/semo
Open Monday–Saturday; closed on Sunday. No admission charge.
The National Park Service operates this museum, which focuses on the Selma-to-Montgomery National Historic Trail. From the center, you can follow the actual route of the Selma-to-Montgomery March to where it started a few blocks away on Martin Luther King Jr. Street at Brown's Chapel A.M.E. Church, First Baptist Church, and the George Washington Carver Homes.

5. Sullivan Building
Corner of Alabama and Franklin Streets
Private. Exterior view from public sidewalk.
This imposing brick office and commercial building was the location of the insurance business of civil rights activists Sam Boynton and Amelia Boynton Robinson, who also used their offices for meetings of the Dallas County Voters League and other civil rights groups in the 1950s and 1960s. Here was one of the South’s most important strategy centers for the Civil Rights Movement.

6. Clark Elementary School
323 Lawrence Street
Public. Visits may be arranged at the offices of the city school board.
At the turn of the 20th century, educator and early civil rights leader Dr. Richard B. Hudson led the development of public schools for African Americans in Selma. He moved Clark Elementary to this location in 1894
and managed to improve and expand it over the decades. In January 1965, local teachers gathered here before marching to the Dallas County Courthouse to register to vote. The “teachers' march” was a courageous stand by vulnerable public employees. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. said, “The protest of Dallas County teachers carried us miles down the road in the protest of injustices.”

Rights Movement. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Rev. Ralph Abernathy of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference were the most prominent of many civil rights activists who were jailed here during the 1960s demonstrations.

officials and the state government to use New Deal support for an African American community center in downtown Selma. Completed in 1937, the building, funded by the Works Progress Administration, had restrooms, an auditorium, and office space for agricultural extension workers. On the second floor of the building, artist Felix Gaines painted murals that were later moved to the nearby Old Depot Museum. The auditorium hosted many events and concerts, with music presented by Duke Ellington, Nat King Cole, and Fats Domino, among others.

full range of Selma's history from prehistoric settlement to the modern era. It includes exhibits about the town’s momentous civil rights history and features Felix Gaines’s 1930s murals that were once in the George Wilson Community Building.
10. Shiloh Baptist Church
1416 Selma Avenue
Private. Open for tours by appointment with the church.

This historic congregation shaped East Selma for over 100 years before moving into its current Colonial Revival-style building on Selma Avenue. From 1954 to 1963 Rev. J. E. Noble was an important civil rights leader. The church next called Rev. R. L. Flowers to be pastor, and he encouraged the congregation’s activism during the difficult months before 1965. Annie L. Cooper, an important activist, joined the church in 1962.

11. Brown’s Chapel A.M.E. Church
410 Martin Luther King Jr. Street
Private. Open for tours by appointment with the church.

This National Historic Landmark was a strategy center and mass meeting location of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee as they worked with Rev. W. T. Minefee and members to fight for voting rights in 1965. The twin towers of this Gothic-style church became beacons for blacks and whites who came to Selma to join the Civil Rights Movement. Such prominent national leaders as Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., Rev. Ralph Abernathy, Rev. Fred Shuttlesworth, and Malcolm X spoke in the sanctuary. The church was one of the starting points for the Selma-to-Montgomery March.

12. George Washington Carver Homes
500–600 blocks, Martin Luther King Jr. Street
Private. Exterior view from public sidewalk.

Between Brown’s Chapel A.M.E. Church and First Baptist Church is this large public housing project, which dates to 1952 and is administered by the Selma Housing Authority. Many civil rights activists stayed with families who lived in the homes before Bloody Sunday and the Selma-to-Montgomery March. Activists also organized demonstrators.
in the playground and open courtyard of the homes before the march to Montgomery began.

13. First Baptist Church
709 Martin Luther King Jr. Street
Private. Open for tours by appointment with the church.

The oldest African American Baptist congregation in Selma and the third oldest in Alabama, First Baptist Church is a striking red brick 1894 building designed by church member David West and is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. A sometime meeting place for the Dallas County Voters League, the church also was a pivotal strategy center for mass meetings in 1963 and 1965 and the site of addresses by national leaders like Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Marchers injured in the Bloody Sunday attack of March 1965 received treatment in the church basement. Two weeks later, physicians used the basement to check the medical condition of hundreds who participated in the Selma-to-Montgomery March. The church was another starting point for the march.

14. Clinton Chapel AME Zion Church
615 Green Street
Private. Open for tours by appointment with the church.

This mid-1970s interpretation of Colonial Revival style is home to one of Selma’s oldest African American congregations. A member of the Dallas County Voters League and NAACP activist, the church’s Rev. C. C. Hunter was one of the Courageous Eight. The church was the first in Selma to host voter education workshops, according to Amelia Boynton Robinson.
15. Green Street Baptist Church
1220 Green Street
Private. Open for tours by appointment with the church.
This mammoth Victorian-style church, together with its more utilitarian education wing built in the 1950s, served as a mass meeting location. In July 1964, Rev. Ralph Abernathy spoke to a huge gathering here in support of the Civil Rights Act; as the crowd left the church they were attacked by members of a deputized posse under the direction of Sheriff Jim Clark. In March 1965, church members provided lodging and meals for activists who came to Selma to join the Selma-to-Montgomery March, feeding the marchers in the education wing.

16. Second Baptist Church
2809 Hardie Avenue
Private. Open for tours by appointment with the church.
Established in 1869, Second Baptist Church has been a leader in East Selma for almost 150 years. Rev. D. G. Garrett became pastor in 1957 and led the church during the push for voting rights.

17. Mt. Ararat Missionary Baptist Church
120 S. Division Street
Private. Open for tours by appointment with the church.
This East Selma institution had many unsung civil rights activists, such as Marie Jemison Kemp, a voting rights leader, among its members. Now led by Rev. L. L. Ruffin, the church continues to host community meetings, such as a 2014 gathering to discuss how all sections of the city could better work together.

18. St. Timothy Lutheran Church
3000 Magazine Avenue
Private and closed. Exterior view from public sidewalk.
This little gold brick sanctuary dates to 1954. It served African American Lutherans and quietly hosted integrated services and meetings among black and white ministers to discuss possible solutions to integration in the 1950s and 1960s.
19. Annie Lee Cooper Huff House
3115 Annie Cooper Avenue

Private. Exterior view from public sidewalk.

Annie Cooper Huff was a native of Selma who moved to Pennsylvania before returning to town in 1962. In January 1965, she received national media coverage when she struck back at Sheriff Jim Clark after he poked her with a cattle prod while she stood in line to register to vote at the Dallas County Courthouse. She also owned the Torch Motel, which served African Americans who were denied service at segregated motels.

20. Elmwood Cemetery
Race Street

Public.

This historic African American cemetery on the eastern boundary of the historic city dates to the mid-19th century. It is the final resting place for many notable civil rights leaders in Selma, from Dr. David V. Jemison to Annie Lee Cooper Huff. Immediately adjacent on Race Street are the town's historic Jewish and Catholic cemeteries, also originally established in the 19th century.

21. Lannie's BBQ Spot
2115 Minter Avenue

Private. Open during normal business hours.

This classic East Selma restaurant served both black and white patrons during the civil rights activities of the 1960s, becoming a neutral ground when so much of Selma was in turmoil.
22. Ebenezer Baptist Church
1548 Dr. F. D. Reese Street
Private. Open for tours by appointment with the church.
This Colonial Revival–style brick sanctuary dates to 1974 and represents the new face of Selma’s African American churches in the early 1970s. Nearby Philpot Avenue was the earlier location of the church. Ebenezer’s pastor, Dr. Frederick D. Reese, had a long career as an important local educator, community leader, and civil rights activist as president of the Dallas County Voters League. Dr. Reese followed Rev. A. B. White, who opened up the earlier church building for mass meetings in the 1960s.

23. Little Canaan Primitive Baptist Church
1326 Eugene Street
Private. Open for tours by appointment with the church.
This c. 1933 frame building, which received a brick remodeling in 1985, is typical of the small congregations that strongly supported the Civil Rights Movement in Selma. Rev. S. B. Acuff led the congregation in the 1960s.

24. Louretta Johnson Carter House
1423 Eugene Street
A member of First Baptist Church, Louretta Johnson Carter was one of many behind-the-scenes workers for voting rights in Selma. A domestic worker for a local judge, she
took her daughter Louretta to the courthouse in 1957 and successfully registered her to vote. Louretta Carter Wimberly continued as a voice for civil rights into the 21st century. In 1964–65, Carter cooked for and lodged demonstrators. She also joined the 1965 March to Montgomery, walking as far as Craig Air Field.

25. Temple Gate Seventh Day Adventist Church  
1601 Franklin Street,  
Private. Open for tours by appointment with the church.  
The congregation built its Franklin Street church in 1959, and it also supported civil rights activism in the 1960s under the leadership of Elder F. O. Jones.

26. Northern Heights Presbyterian Church  
1575 Marie Foster Street  
Private. Open for tours by appointment with the church.  
This mid-20th century church was a center for civil rights activism led by Rev. Ernest M. Bradford, who arrived in 1962 and served until 1970. Bradford and his congregation participated in the 1965 March to Montgomery, hosted a citizenship school, and provided leadership in the local war on poverty in Selma.

27. Good Samaritan Hospital  
1107 Voeglin Avenue  
Closed. Exterior view from public sidewalk.  
Opened in December 1964 by the Edmundite Brothers and Sisters of St. Joseph, this modernist-styled and fully equipped four-story hospital served whites and blacks hurt on Bloody Sunday. Of those weeks in early 1965 historian Amy L. Koehlinger said: “The sisters who staffed the hospital emergency room saw the worst of Selma’s racial violence.” After his shooting in nearby Perry County, activist Jimmie Lee Jackson was brought to the hospital for treatment but died there on February 26, 1965.
in 1922, the college was renamed in 1981. It trained and employed African American leaders in Selma including James Gildersleeve and Ulysses Blackmon of the Courageous Eight. Rev. Walter H. Ellwanger led this Lutheran institution for most of the civil rights era, resigning in 1964 when Varnes J. Stringer became president. As part of its community outreach, the school supported the St. Timothy Lutheran Church and School on Magazine Street.

29. Tabernacle Baptist Church
1431 Broad Street
Private. Open by appointment with the church.
This National Register–listed church, built in 1922, is a landmark Classical Revival–style building, significant for its education, religious, and civil rights history. Civil rights leader Dr. David V. Jemison was active with the church from 1902 to 1954. Rev. L. L. Anderson led the congregation during the Civil Rights Movement and hosted the city’s first mass meeting in 1963, after which the church continued to work closely with civil rights organizer Dr. Bernard LaFayette in pushing the agendas for civil rights and voting rights for all. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. spoke here numerous times, the last coming in February 1968 a few weeks before his assassination.

30. St. Edmund’s Memorial Chapel
(St. Elizabeth’s Catholic Church is its historic name)
1417 Broad Street
Private. Open for tours by appointment with the church.
Fathers Francis Casey and John Paro of the Fathers of St. Edmund, a Catholic order, arrived in 1937 to establish the Edmundite Southern Missions, where they worked with the African American community long before other white churches. Edwin Moss, the mission’s production manager, became a key civil rights leader and negotiator. Father Maurice Quellet, pastor of St. Elizabeth’s from 1961 to 1965, encouraged communication between activists and
moderate whites in Selma and supported the Selma-to-Montgomery March.

31. R. B. Hudson Middle School
1701 Summerfield Road
Public. Open by appointment at the school office.
The school opened in 1949 as Selma’s first modern public high school for African Americans, part of the city’s and state’s belated efforts to comply with the separate-but-equal doctrine in public education. Administrators, faculty, and especially students participated in the mass demonstrations of the 1960s. SNCC activists such as James Bevel recruited heavily among the students, and educator Dr. Frederick D. Reese emerged as a key statewide education and civil rights leader.

32. Pollard-Brown House
1609 Lapsley Avenue
Private. Exterior view from public sidewalk.
Dr. Robert Thomas Pollard was president of Selma University from 1916 to 1929, and his wife, Eliza Pollard, led the Baptist Women’s State Convention. Both were respected early 20th-century leaders in education and religion among the African American middle class.

33. Richard B. Hudson House
1420 Lapsley Avenue
Private. Exterior view from public sidewalk.
Dr. Richard B. Hudson (1866-1931), the city’s most important civil rights leader in the first third of the 20th century. Dr. Hudson was a former president of the Alabama State Teachers Association and served as Clark Elementary School principal for decades.
34. Sullivan Jackson House
1416 Lapsley Avenue
Private. Exterior view from public sidewalk.
This National Register–listed bungalow was initially built by Richard B. Hudson and later became home to Sullivan Jackson, an African American dentist. Sullivan moved to Selma in the 1950s, became active in the local civil rights movement, and allowed the house to be used as a strategy center for the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, for which it gained national significance. SCLC leaders Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Rev. Ralph Abernathy, and Rev. Andrew Young regularly stayed at the house. Here they negotiated with the U.S. Justice Department about the events surrounding Bloody Sunday and the 1965 March to Montgomery. Dr. Jackson’s wife, Richie Jean Sherrod Jackson, wrote about these years in her memoir, *The House by the Side of the Road* (2011).

35. Selma University
1501 Lapsley Avenue
Private. Open by appointment with the university.
The center of African American Baptist life in Alabama, Selma University began in 1878. By encouraging black pride, identity, and achievement, it has produced generations of religious leaders who became active in the Civil Rights Movement from the late 19th century to today. Prominent ministers and graduates associated with the university include C. O. Boothe, David V. Jemison, Charles S. Dinkins, William H. Dinkins, Robert T. Pollard, M. C. Cleveland, Fred Shuttlesworth, Nelson H. Smith, L. L. Anderson, and Frederick D. Reese.
36. Boynton House
1315 Lapsley Avenue
Private. Exterior view from public sidewalk.
Sam Boynton and Amelia Boynton (later Robinson) were the most significant individuals in the fight for civil rights in Selma. The Boyntons both worked for the U.S. Department of Agriculture: he was the county extension agent for blacks, she served as the home demonstration agent for local African American women. They facilitated the construction of a black community center (the Wilson Building) during the New Deal, were leaders of the Dallas County Voters League, and helped launch the court case for their son, Bruce Carver Boynton, that led the U.S. Supreme Court to rule in *Boynton v. Virginia* (1960) that segregation in interstate transportation facilities was unconstitutional. Their house long served as a strategy center for the Civil Rights Movement, and when Sam died in 1963, a memorial service at Tabernacle Baptist Church became the city’s first civil rights mass meeting. In 1964, Amelia became the first African American woman to run for the U.S. Congress in Alabama. On Bloody Sunday in March 1965, she was one of the demonstrators clubbed and injured on Edmund Pettus Bridge. This landmark awaits restoration.

37. West Trinity Baptist Church
310 L. L. Anderson Street
Private. Open for tours by appointment with the church.
Located a block behind the Boynton House, West Trinity Baptist Church was a very active congregation throughout the Civil Rights Movement, especially after the congregation called Rev. I. Clifton Ravizee to be its pastor in 1947. Ravizee led the congregation in building the present church in 1952. By the end of the decade, he was leading another stalwart institution for civil rights: the 22nd Avenue Baptist Church in Birmingham.

38. Burwell-Dinkins-Anderson House
700 L. L. Anderson Avenue
Private. Exterior view from public sidewalk.
This two-story Craftsman-style residence is associated with accomplished middle-class leaders L. L. Burwell and William H. Dinkins in Selma’s fight for civil rights throughout the first half of the 20th century. Burwell was a pharmacist; Dr. Dinkins was an educator and president of Selma University. Dinkins’s daughter, Pauline, married Rev. L. L. Anderson, the pastor of Tabernacle Baptist Church and a key civil rights leader in the 1960s.
39. Mt. Zion Primitive Baptist Church
1306 Union Street
Private. Open for tours by appointment with the church.
This beautiful Gothic-style building dates to the turn of the century. In 1950 Rev. B. F. McDole became pastor, and he led the congregation in civil rights activities until 1964, with mass meetings taking place here.

40. St. Paul CME Church
808 Minter Street
Private. Open for tours by appointment with the church.
St. Paul CME Church has been a place for civil rights meetings since 1963. A new minister in 1964, Rev. T. R. Harris, brought renewed energy to the struggle. Even though he left for another church late in 1965, the congregation continued to host meetings, including one by SCLC in March 1966.

41. Ward Chapel AME Church
811 Philpot Street
Private. Open for tours by appointment with the church.
Ward Chapel was the leading AME church of West Selma and developed with support of the earlier Payne Institute, a Methodist college for African Americans. Rev. M. S. Hasty supported the movement and allowed the church to be used for mass meetings, a role that it also played some 20 years later. The New York Times reported that a mass meeting about local elections and the lack of elected African American officials was held here in 1984.

42. St. Elizabeth’s School
1211 Church Street
Private. Exterior view from public sidewalk.
Here the Edmundite Brothers established an elementary school for African American children in 1940, and added a grade a year until 1948. In 1952 they built the present building, which is now used for Head Start programs. Rachel Nelson, active in the events of 1965 as a child, attended St. Elizabeth’s. She was a co-author of the famous account Selma, Lord, Selma.
43. Reformed Presbyterian Church and Knox Academy
627 J. L. Chesnutt Avenue
Private. Open for tours by appointment with the church.
In 1874, the Reformed Presbyterian Church created Knox Academy, and by 1881 students attended a large brick Victorian-style building (not extant), which continued to serve black students into the 1930s. The church supported the school as a mission but also as an educational outreach since its leadership was appalled at the official indifference to African American education. Rev. Claude C. Brown, who became the church’s minister in 1942, worked with the community to establish the Ralph Bunche Club, which met in the church basement and later became the African American section of the local YMCA. The church was frequently used for mass meetings.

44. Morning Star Baptist Church
409 Buckeye
Private. Open for tours by appointment with the church.
At this large, impressive red brick sanctuary, Rev. I. C. Acuff’s fiery sermons led his congregation to support the movement for civil rights and voting rights in the 1960s and beyond. SNCC organizers recognized the congregation for its support of the voting rights movement.

45. Old Live Oak Cemetery
110 West Dallas Avenue
Public.
This historic cemetery is the final resting place for several prominent 19th-century civil rights leaders, including Benjamin S. Turner, a freedman who became the town’s first elected member of the U.S. House of Representatives in 1870.

46. Lincoln Cemetery
500 Oak Street
Private. Open to the public during daytime hours.
Bordering Medical Center Parkway, this historic African American cemetery dates to 1925. It is the final resting place of such important community leaders as J. L. Chesnut, Louretta Johnson Carter, and Pauline Dinkins Anderson.
47. Memorial Stadium
108 W. Dallas Avenue
Public.
Built in 1949, the stadium was the location of several mass meetings of the White Citizens Council, which resisted integration in the late 1950s and 1960s.

48. Federal Building
908 Alabama Avenue
Public.
This downtown landmark was headquarters for the many federal officials involved in the city’s civil rights issues. It was also the scene of demonstrations and protests about the federal government’s unwillingness to intervene in voting rights disputes.

49. Dallas County Courthouse
105 Lauderdale Street
Public.
Ground zero for the voting rights demonstrations of 1963–1965, this modernist-style courthouse was where African Americans lined up in an often-futile attempt to register to vote. Many demonstrations took place on the sidewalks and street along the eastern side of the courthouse.

50. Selma and Dallas County Centre for Commerce
912 Selma Avenue
Open to the public during business hours.
In 1963 SNCC’s Bernard Lafayette directed students here in an attempt to desegregate the town’s historic Carnegie library; library staff bravely allowed the students to use the facility. After Selma’s mayor pressured the library board to remove tables and chairs so blacks and whites could not mingle, librarian Patricia S. Blalock convinced her board to let her issue library cards to African American patrons.
Other sites of interest

Slavery and Civil War Museum
1410 Water Avenue
Open Tuesday–Saturday.

Sturdivant Hall
713 Mabry Street
Open Tuesday–Saturday.

Vaughan-Smitherman Museum
109 Union Street
Open Tuesday–Saturday.

This guide was prepared by the Center for Historic Preservation at Middle Tennessee State University in partnership with the City of Selma, the Alabama Black Heritage Council, and the Alabama Historical Commission. All photographs, unless otherwise noted, are courtesy of the Center for Historic Preservation. Special thanks goes to Louretta Wimberly for her guidance and assistance throughout this project.