

Bridge Crossing Jubilee - Selma, Alabama

March 1 to 4, 2013

March 7, 2013 is the 48th anniversary of a pivotal event in United States History. On that day in 1965, 575 Americans led by Reverend Hosea Williams and now Representative John Lewis, walked silently in pairs from Brown Chapel in Selma, Alabama, across the Edmund Pettus Bridge, and over the Alabama River. On the other side, deployed by order of Governor George Wallace, waited Alabama State Troopers and mounted sheriff deputies. The marchers were protesting nonviolently for the right to vote, exercising their rights protected under the first amendment to the Constitution. They walked to the troopers and stopped. They were told to return to their churches. And then they were attacked. It was brutal. Troopers shot tear gas into the marchers then fell upon them with drawn clubs. Mounted sheriff deputies galloped onto the street and beat unarmed men, woman, and children. On the sidelines onlookers whooped and hollered and egged the police on. When it was over, broken and beaten bodies, mostly of young black men and women, littered the street a quarter of a mile back to the Bridge. This event became known as “Bloody Sunday”. It led to a series of two more marches across the Bridge, the second a 54 mile trek to Montgomery Alabama, and passage of a National Voting Rights Bill. Every year, these events are remembered with the Bridge Crossing Jubilee. The event honors the heroes and martyrs, who struggled in Selma in 1965 for the right to vote.



Friday, March 1 - Fly to Birmingham, Alabama

We will fly (early) from Grand Rapids to Birmingham International Airport. We will rent a van (s) at the airport. We'll head downtown, to tour the National Civil Rights Museum. We will visit Kelly Ingram Park, site of civil rights demonstrations of the 1960's and go to the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church which was bombed in the Fall of 1963. For dinner we'll head up to Alabama Birmingham College Five Points area We'll then drive to Selma - and spend the night.

Saturday, March 2 - Selma

The Bridge Crossing Jubilee is more than just a walk through history. There's all sorts of stuff planned for the weekend. There's music and street fair, good food and African arts vendors. We'll spend the Saturday roaming around Selma. I'll for sure introduce you all to Joanne Bland, and I will do my best to have her take us around town. And hopefully, sometime that weekend we will meet with John Lewis. The Voting Rights museum has all sorts of activities planned For most of the day students will be able to roam on their own in Selma. Saturday night we will drive up to Marian to the grave site of Jimmie Lee Jackson.

Sunday, March 3 - Selma

The morning begins with ministers of the Civil Rights movement speaking at local churches - Rev CT Vivian, Rev James Webb, Rev Jesse Jackson and more. At noon hundreds, sometimes thousands of people meet at the Brown Chapel. There are speeches and prayers, and people together head off to the Bridge. We retrace the march from Brown across the Edmund Pettus Bridge on Bloody Sunday. Adults, kids, high school students, grannies and grandkids - black, white, and brown people all walk together. Some people sing, some walk quietly and reminisce - some walk together, some alone. Across the Bridge there are speeches and prayers. And the Jubilee is over. The street fair continues on til sundown.

Monday, March 4 - Selma to Montgomery to Birmingham to Grand Rapids

We get up bright and early and drive to Montgomery, Alabama. In Montgomery we will visit the Rosa Parks Museum and go to the Dexter Street Church where King ministered during the 1965 Montgomery Bus Boycott. We will take in the Civil Rights Memorial designed by Maya Lin - the same person who designed the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. We will then continue on to Birmingham and fly back to Grand Rapids on Monday night. In the end we will have spent four solid days touring the places and the people who stand at the heart of the American Civil Rights Movement.

Questions - please contact Bob Wood teacher OHS
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