

## US History An Age of Civil Disobedience

### Learning Target:

*I can examine the events leading up to the passage of the voting rights act of 1965 and analyze its impact on American society.*

### 9. Selma to Montgomery: Voting Rights

#### ***Fifteenth Amendment Ignored –***

- Supposed to guarantee right to vote regardless of “race, color, or previous conditional of servitude”
- Had been made useless by secret ballots, poll taxes, and literacy tests to stop blacks from voting
- Literary tests often had impossible questions like “how many bubbles are in a bar of soap?”
- By 1940 only 3% of eligible blacks in the south were registered to vote

#### ***“Freedom Summer” Murders –***

- June 1964 – three civil rights workers were abducted and murdered
- Had been attempting to register blacks to vote across Mississippi
- Three men were pulled over by law enforcement, abducted, and shot at close range
- Sparked national outrage and focused attention on voting rights

#### ***Selma –***

- Chosen by the SNCC & SCLC because the sheriff, Jim Clark was notoriously violent
- Hoped the sheriff would attract national attention and put pressure on the President & Congress to enact voting rights legislation
- First month protests produced mass arrests but little violence

#### ***Selma to Montgomery (March 7, 1965) –***

- March organized in reaction to the murder Jimmie Jackson, a 26-year-old church deacon
  - Was protecting his mother from a state trooper’s nightstick
- March led by Hosea Williams and John Lewis
- March made its way across the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma when they encountered a blockade of state troopers and local police commanded by Sheriff Clark
- Marchers ordered to disperse, when they did not they were violently beaten, even ones retreating
- Became known as “Bloody Sunday”

#### ***King Responds –***

- King called on religious leaders from all over the nation to join him in another march in 2 days
- Federal court ordered King to delay the march until protection could be provided
- King refused and marched on March 9, 1965
- At the Edmund Pettus bridge King and the marchers stopped and prayed then turned around

#### ***Johnson Gives His Support –***

- March 15, 1965 – Johnson addressed Congress giving his support to voting rights
- Submitted voting rights legislation on March 17, 1965
- March 21, 1965 – King leads a court sanctioned march from Selma to Montgomery
- Voting Rights Act of 1965 passed on Aug. 2<sup>nd</sup>