United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Campsite 3: The Gardner Farm

Other names/site number: Robert and Mary Gardner Farm

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

(Remove "N/A" if property is part of a multiple property listing and add name)

2. Location

Street & Number: 2342 Frederick Douglass Road

City or town: Lowndesboro State: AL County: Lowndes

Not For Publication: N/A Vicinity: X Zip: 36752

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this _X_ nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property _X_ meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

[x] **national** [ ] **statewide** [ ] **local**

Applicable National Register Criteria: [x] **A** [ ] **B** [ ] **C** [ ] **D**

Lee Anne Wofford May 23, 2023

Signature of certifying official/Title: **Date**

Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer, Alabama Historical Commission

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of Commenting Official: **Date**

Title: **State of Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government**

Campsite 3: The Gardner Farm | Lowndes, AL
Name of Property | County and State

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

___ entered in the National Register
___ determined eligible for the National Register
___ determined not eligible for the National Register
___ removed from the National Register
___ other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply.)

Private	x
Public – Local	
Public – State	
Public – Federal	

Category of Property
(Check only **one** box.)

Building(s)	
District	x
Site	
Structure	
Object	

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
2	4	buildings
2	0	sites
1	0	structures
0	0	objects
5	4	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

Campsite 3: The Gardner Farm | Lowndes, AL
Name of Property | County and State

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)	Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)
DOMESTIC/camp	AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE/agricultural field
AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE/agricultural field	VACANT/NOT IN USE
DOMESTIC/single dwelling	DOMESTIC/single dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)
OTHER: gable front and wing

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)
Principal exterior materials of the property: METAL; BRICK; WOOD; CONCRETE

Narrative Description
(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with **a summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Campsite 3: The Gardner Farm Historic District is located on the Selma to Montgomery National Historic Trail, at the southeast corner of Highway 80 (the National Historic Trail route) and Frederick Douglass Road in Lowndesboro, Lowndes County, Alabama. The district contains nine resources, including two contributing sites; two contributing buildings; one contributing structure; and four non-contributing buildings. The farmland is flat pasture, with fencing and tree lines marking the boundaries of the 139-acre parcel. Within the boundaries, fencing and tree lines further divide the property into irregularly shaped fields. The majority of the historic resources are located near the center of the parcel. A dirt and gravel driveway runs perpendicular from Frederick Douglass Road leading approximately .15 of a mile east to the Robert Gardner home. Activists on the Voting Rights March walked this path to access their resting places and amenities for the night of March 23, 1965. Three large tents to shelter the marchers were set up in the fields to the north side of the driveway, the dining tent was in the field to the south. These two sites where tents were located comprise the two contributing sites. The centerpiece of the farm, where the Gardner

family lived during the March, is a one-story, frame, gable front and wing home that sits at the east end of the driveway near the middle of a fenced yard. The house dates to c.1900-1912 with additions and modifications that occurred near the mid-20th century, including a c.1940s shed roof addition to the north elevation; a c.1955 gable roof addition to the east (rear) elevation and remodel and enclosure of the front porch. Metal siding has been placed over the original weatherboard walls. The Gardner House is a contributing building, along with a wooden vehicle shed that sits just southeast behind the home. Trees and shrubs that have grown along the yard's fence line clearly define the domestic area of the farm. Contributing structures include the c.1950s pond located in a field to the northeast of the home. Non-contributing buildings include two mobile homes and a small metal shed located north of the driveway, and a corrugated metal barn in the field to the south of the driveway. Aside from the addition of these three buildings, the farm has seen minimal changes since its 1965 period of significance. It retains a high level of integrity of location and setting, and a moderate level of integrity of design, materials, and workmanship. These characteristics lend to the farm's high level of integrity regarding association and feeling.

Setting

The setting of Campsite 3: The Gardner Farm retains the physical attributes, historic viewshed, and feel activists would have encountered and experienced in 1965. Historical narratives and technical documentation repeatedly note the role of the Black Belt's landscape and setting in "creating the economic and social system that ruled this part of the Deep South for generations."[1] Within this system, before the Civil War and well into the 20th century, African Americans worked the rich soil of the prairies and rolling hills, creating wealth for elite, white landowners who controlled Black laborers through debt, intimidation, violence, and political disenfranchisement. The landscape of Lowndes County, particularly the area traversed by U.S. Highway 80 and approaching the Gardner Farm, with its rambling desolation, swamps, vast open fields and low hills interspersed with stands of forest, contributed to the isolation and fear that, according to the "Protection Plan for U.S. Highway 80: Selma to Montgomery" written in 2010, "made it particularly difficult to challenge economic and social dominance of the white establishment."[2]

In March of 1965, activists on the Voting Rights March faced these same landscape features, particularly the desolation, isolation, and the quiet and darkness that accompanies such a place. The intact landscape characteristics of the area have thus played a continuous role in shaping the lives of residents, their historic oppression, and the need for civil rights activity; the military-like defense logistics of the Voting Rights March and the importance of overnight safe havens such as the Gardner Farm; and the experiences and literal views of passersby and visitors today.

The area remains starkly rural. The terrain is characterized by flat, and in some places, gently rolling land. In the area immediately surrounding the nominated property, trees are most often found along fences marking boundary lines, leaving large open tracts used for hay and livestock pastures. Much of the fencing in the area remains traditional: wood posts and barbed wire. Two features that shape the farm's setting are the historic transportation corridors activists used for entry and egress during the property's use as a campsite in 1965: Highway 80 (west-east) and Frederick Douglass Road (formerly Caffey Road, north-south). The farm remains south adjacent to Highway 80, noted by the National Park Service as "one of the most defining

[1] "Protection Plan for U.S. Highway 80: Selma to Montgomery," June 2010, 13-14.
[2] Ibid., 14.

elements of the cultural landscape of the [Selma to Montgomery National Historic] Trail."[3] Due to lack of viewshed obstruction, much of the farm is clearly visible from Highway 80, and though the highway sits slightly lower than the farm, traffic is visible from the nominated property, as noted by the 2010 "Protection Plan."[4] Frederick Douglass Road runs south from Highway 80 at a perpendicular angle, creating the farm's west boundary. As in 1965, there are no traffic lights or street lamps to illuminate these corridors at night, the specific time of day in which the Gardner Farm achieved its historic significance. Aside from the addition of one street lamp located along the private driveway between Frederick Douglass Road and the Gardner House, the darkness is enveloping.

Near the junction of Highway 80 and Frederick Douglass Road, at the northwest corner of the district, there is a National Park Service sign that landmarks the farm as Campsite 3 on the Selma to Montgomery National Historic Trail. The 2010 "Protection Plan for U.S. Highway 80: Selma to Montgomery" defines the "Robert Gardner Property and Campsite Area" as the area "comprised of all land within a half mile radius of the sign memorializing the location of the overnight campsite, the third night of the march, as well as the Robert Gardner property itself" and defines this designated area as a "known historically significant site/location," thus underscoring the importance and intact nature of the Farm's setting.[5]

Summary

The land comprising Campsite 3: The Gardner Farm Historic District is a flat and largely open 139-acre parcel with the historic resources concentrated near the center of the tract. A polygon, the property is the shape of an inverted "L" with the arm pointed west. The property is bound on the north by Highway 80/Selma to Montgomery National Historic Trail; to the west by Frederick Douglass Road; to the south by single-family residential tracts; and to the east by privately-owned agricultural fields. A barbed wire fence marks the property boundary along Highway 80 and Frederick Douglass Road. Scrub brush has grown up along the fence of the west boundary. The westernmost portion of the southern boundary is created by a tree line of mostly pines. The southern and eastern boundaries are marked by fence lines overgrown with mostly pine trees.

Within the tract, there are two irregularly shaped but readily discernible fields maintained as pasture for livestock and hay. The two fields are divided by an overgrown fence line with two perpendicular angles. A rivulet of Rock Creek runs diagonally from northeast to southwest through the southeastern corner of the property before forking at the southernmost west corner. Near the center of the property, there is a contributing farm pond. Just south of the pond is the domestic area of the property, including the Robert Gardner House and accompanying shed, both contributing. A gravel and dirt driveway leads from Frederick Douglass Road at a perpendicular angle to the house. It was north of the driveway that two sleeping tents and one medical auxiliary tent measuring for the marchers was set up, this area comprises contributing site #1. Three non-contributing buildings sit on top of the site. South of the driveway is a field with a non-contributing metal barn. The dining tent was placed in this field. This area comprises contributing site #2.[6]

[3] National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, *Selma to Montgomery National Historic Trail: Comprehensive Management Plan and Final Environmental Impact Statement* (June 2005), 116.

[4] "Protection Plan," 15.

[5] Ibid., 32.

[6]; Location of tents indicated by site maps accompanying "Campsite 3: The Gardner Farm," Alabama Register of Landmarks and Heritage Form.

The gravel driveway continues past these fields and ends near the south elevation of the Gardner House. Shrubs, trees, and fencing define the yard around the home. Mature trees scattered throughout the yard provide shade. A discernable path leads from the end of the driveway near the house, past a wood shed in the southeast corner of the backyard to a gate that provides access to a small, rectangular-shaped pasture area with corrals. There is fence break near the southeast corner of the yard that provides access to another pasture.

Property Inventory

The resource number to each resource is keyed to the historic district map.

1. **Site #1: Approximate location of two sleeping tents and one medical tent, 1965** **C**

Site #1 is located north of the private driveway leading from Frederick Douglass Road to the Gardner House. This is the reported approximate location of two sleeping tents, each measuring 50 x 80 feet, and one smaller tent used for medical services measuring 30x40 during the Voting Rights March in 1965.[7] At present, the orientation of the three tents to one another and to the driveway and Frederick Douglass Road is unknown. To account for lacking this detail, Site #1 is considered to be an approximately 250 x 600-foot rectangle with its length on an east-west axis. The west border of the site is Frederick Douglass Road; there is a wood post and barbed wire fence along this border. The southern border of the site is the private driveway; there is an electric cattle fence with metal posts that runs parallel to the driveway, beginning near Frederick Douglass Road and running approximately 240 feet before it ends at a large wood post. The eastern border is the fencing and tree line that mark the western boundary of the yard surrounding the Gardner House; the northern boundary is an imaginary line approximately 250 feet north of and parallel to the private driveway.

Within Site #1 is a portion of a hayfield and two manicured yards. Within the manicured yards are three non-contributing buildings. Two of the non-contributing buildings are prefabricated homes that sit side-by-side, their lengths facing south toward the driveway leading to the Gardner House. Each house has a dirt and gravel path that branches northward from the main driveway to the Gardner House. Each of the houses have a defined yard around them.

The westernmost house is prefabricated home #1 (resource #6). Its yard is defined on its west and north sides by barbed wire and metal post fencing. Two trees are located on the western fence line near the southwest corner of the yard. Three trees create a visual buffer between prefabricated house #1 and the driveway to the Gardner House. Two trees help define the east side of the yard and differentiate it visually from the yard of prefabricated house #2 (resource #8). There is a non-contributing metal shed (resource #7) in the backyard.

The easternmost house is prefabricated home #2 (resource #8). Its yard is defined on the west side by a few trees that help differentiate it from the yard of prefabricated home #1. The yard's north and east borders are defined by an overgrown fence line.

[7] Size of tents reported by media outlets. "U.S. Army Guarding Highway: 50-Mile Hike to Take 5 Days," *Miami Herald*, March 22, 1965.

2. Site #2: Approximate location of dining tent, 1965 C

Site #2 is located in the nearly-rectangular hayfield south of the driveway leading from Frederick Douglass Road to the Gardner House. The length of the field is parallel to the driveway. This is the reported location of the dining tent measuring 30 x 40 feet during the Voting Rights March in 1965.[8] The field is open and well-defined by barbed wire and wood and metal post fencing on all sides. The fence line is overgrown on the south and east sides. It measures approximately 720 x 205 feet. At present, it is not known exactly where in this field the dining tent was located. Because of this lack of detail, Site #2 comprises the entire field. There is one non-contributing metal building (resource #9) located near the center of the field.

3. House, c.1900-1912, c.1940s, c.1955, C

The Robert Gardner house is a one-story, gable front and wing home, built c.1900-1912 with at least two major additions occurring in the mid-20th century. In the 1940s, the Gardner family increased the footprint of the house by building a shed roof addition onto the north elevation, or gable front portion of the house. Around 1955, the ell at the rear of the wing portion of the house was extended. During this second expansion, the front porch was enclosed with wood paneling and one-over-one double-hung, metal sash windows. There are two c.1955 concrete slabs adjacent to the house. The patio slab at the rear of the house fills in the "L"-shape created by the ell extension and the gable-end rear wall; the slab near the south elevation of the house was used as a parking space.

Exterior

The cross-gable roof of the Gardner house is covered in metal paneling. Boxed eaves and wood fascia are found around the perimeter of the house. Each of the three original gables have cornice returns. Metal siding covers the home's original weatherboard siding. All six-over-six double-hung windows are vinyl. All two-over-two windows are wood. The one-over-one windows in the porch enclosure are metal. The home's original brick piers are extant. In some areas, the foundation has been filled in and/or covered with metal paneling. The foundation of the porch is continuous and made of concrete block.

Façade/West Elevation

The west elevation of the Gardner House has three sections: the c.1940s shed roof extension, the gable-front section, and the wing section covered by the enclosed porch with a shed roof. The c.1940s shed roof extension has one small six-over-six double-hung sash window flanked by decorative shutters and shaded by a metal awning. The gable-front section has two adjacent six-over-six, double-hung sash windows which are flanked by one set of decorative shutters. Above these windows, beneath the gable, is a rectangular attic vent.

[8] Size of tents reported by media outlets. "U.S. Army Guarding Highway: 50-Mile Hike to Take 5 Days," *Miami Herald*, March 22, 1965.

The enclosed front porch obscures the view of the wing section's original façade. The single-leaf front doorway leading from the porch to the interior is located near the corner of the porch created by the "L"-shape of the gable front and wing sections of the house. There is one six-over-six double-hung sash window.

The enclosed porch has a continuous foundation made of concrete block. The porch floor is poured concrete. Concrete block steps provide entrance to the porch through the west elevation (façade). The doorway is a single-leaf storm door that aligns with the primary entrance to the home. A second single-leaf doorway with storm door is located in the south elevation of the porch. Concrete block steps lead from a small, concrete landing to the door. The porch is supported by three brick piers, each with a simple wooden column on top. Between the brick column piers is wood paneling that makes up the bottom third of the porch enclosure's walls. The top two-thirds of the wall is made of windows. On the west elevation, there are five one-over-one double-hung sash windows. On the south elevation of the porch there are two windows of the same size and style.

North Elevation

The home's north elevation is comprised of the c.1940s shed roof addition to the front-facing gable portion of the house. There are three two-over-two double-hung sash windows on this elevation. The middle window is smaller and sits higher in the wall than the others.

East Elevation

The east elevation/rear of the house is made up of two main sections listed from north to south: the original rear-facing gabled wall of the house, extended by the c.1940s shed roof addition to the north elevation, and the c.1955 ell expansion which projects approximately fourteen feet from the original gabled wall.

The original gabled wall has one two-over-two double-hung sash window. Above the window, beneath the gable, is a small, square-shaped attic vent. The east elevation of the c.1940s shed roof addition has one, slightly smaller window of the same style.

The c.1955 ell expansion with gable roof has in its north elevation one single-leaf wood door covered by a storm door. Brick steps lead from the concrete patio to the doorway. The ell's east elevation has near the north corner of the wall one sliding window made of two side-by-side wood sashes, each sash containing two vertical glass panes.

South Elevation

The south elevation has three sections described from west to east: the previously described enclosed porch, the original gable-end section with short ell, and the c.1955 expansion of the ell. The gable-end has two adjacent six-over-six double-hung sash windows. Above the windows, beneath the gable, is a small, square attic vent. There is one six-over-six double-hung sash window in the original ell portion of the wall. The c.1955 ell expansion has one smaller window of the same style.

4. Wooden vehicle shed, c.1900 C

Behind the house, near the southeast corner of the yard is a small wooden vehicle shed with a gable roof covered in corrugated metal.

5. **Pond, c.1950s** **C**

There is a pond located to the northeast of the house. The pond is an inverted bell-shape. Vegetation and shrubs have grown along the eastern perimeter. A narrow path has been worn around the south corner and eastern side of the pond.

6. **Prefabricated home #1, c.1990s** **NC**

There are two -prefabricated homes on the north side of the driveway leading from Frederick Douglass Road to the Gardner home. The westernmost home (#1) faces south, its length parallel to the driveway. The side-gable roof is covered in metal. Vinyl siding clads the exterior walls; the foundation is brick.

7. **Small metal shed, c.1990s** **NC**

To the northeast of mobile home #1 there is a small metal shed with gable roof.

8. **Prefabricated home #2, c.1990s** **NC**

Prefabricated home #2 is the easternmost house located on the north side of the driveway. The side-gable roof is covered in asphalt shingles. Vinyl siding clads the exterior walls; the foundation is concrete block.

9. **Metal barn, c.1990s** **NC**

In the field south of the driveway there is a metal barn with gable roof. There is an entrance in each gable end.

Integrity statement

Campsite 3: The Gardner Farm Historic District has seen only moderate change since its 1965 period of significance. The property maintains integrity of location as the property itself remains adjacent to Highway 80/Selma to Montgomery National Historic Trail and Frederick Douglass Road (formerly Caffey Road), that the marchers took to reach their campsite in 1965. Its extant location directly adjacent to Highway 80 is especially important, as this proximity to the march route was integral in its selection as a safe overnight haven in a county known for violence. Furthermore, the location of the district adjacent to Highway 80 and the unobstructed viewshed between the two conveys clear association between the route marchers took and their third campsite at the Gardner Farm.

The setting of the property also retains high integrity as the surroundings remain rural and largely undeveloped. Setting is especially important to the overall integrity of this property, as several media outlets and march participants noted the rural, and at times desolate, landscape they were traversing, as well as the danger it potentially posed to the activists. In the 2010 “Protection Plan for U.S. Highway 80: Selma to

Montgomery," the parcel comprising the nominated district is considered a high priority Potential Conservation Priority Area, a ranking which takes into account "visibility, adjacency to the US Highway 80 corridor, landscape integrity, and/or cultural or environmental qualities."[9]

The design of the farm remains much the same as the arrangement of the driveway, Robert Gardner House, shed, open agricultural fields, sites of the tents, and these things' relationship to one another have not changed. The addition of two prefabricated homes, metal shed, and metal barn do moderately affect the design, materials, and workmanship of the property. It should be reiterated that these buildings sit on or near the former sites of the tents. However, the masonry foundations of the prefabricated homes sit on top of the ground, as do the metal buildings, and could, theoretically, be removed without substantial damage to the historic fabric of the property. The rest of the 139-acre property remains undeveloped as it was during the Selma to Montgomery March.

As a result of the property retaining the above qualities, with special attribution to its integrity of location and setting, it retains integrity of feeling. Though the addition of two modern homes and two outbuildings are readily visible, the property is able to express its historic character, importance, and role in the Selma to Montgomery Voting Rights March of 1965. Taken together these factors make the association between Campsite 3: The Gardner Farm to the Voting Rights March evident.

[9] "Protection Plan for U.S. Highway 80: Selma to Montgomery," June 2010, 50.

Campsite 3: The Gardner Farm | Lowndes, AL
Name of Property | County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria
(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- [x] A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- [ ] B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- [ ] C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- [ ] D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations
(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)
Property is: N/A

- [ ] A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- [ ] B removed from its original location.
- [ ] C a birthplace or grave.
- [ ] D a cemetery.
- [ ] E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- [ ] F a commemorative property.
- [ ] G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions.)
ETHNIC HISTORY: Black
SOCIAL HISTORY: Civil Rights

Period of Significance
1965

Significant Dates
1965

Significant Person
(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)
N/A

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder
Unknown

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Gardner Farm, or Campsite 3 on the Selma to Montgomery National Historic Trail, located at 2342 Frederick Douglass Road, Lowndesboro, Lowndes County, Alabama, is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for national significance in Black heritage (Ethnic Heritage-Black) and Social History: Civil rights history for its association with the Selma to Montgomery Voting Rights March in 1965. Considering the violence endured by African Americans and other activists leading up to the march, and the general hostility towards resistance in the Jim Crow Black Belt, finding safe places for the marchers to stay along U.S. Highway 80/Jefferson Davis Highway between Selma and Montgomery was an integral component of planning the city-to-city demonstration. The Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), the civil rights organization in charge, sought Black-owned property near the route, hoping they would sympathize with the cause and provide a safe place to eat, sleep, and recharge for the next day of walking to the state capitol. Finding safety in Lowndes County specifically may have loomed especially important as it was a place known for anti-Black terror, earning it the nickname "Bloody Lowndes." Aware of the risks to his family and property, Robert Gardner – who grew up on the farm, lived there, and operated it – and his siblings, all co-owners, allowed it to be used. Robert Gardner and his wife Mary hosted hundreds of marchers the third night of the trek, March 23, 1965. The two nights prior, March 21 and 22, were spent at the David Hall Farm (Campsite 1) in Selma and the Rosie Steel property (Campsite 2) in Lowndes County. The fourth night, marchers stayed at the Catholic complex of the City of St. Jude (NRHP) in Montgomery.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)
After the Civil War, with the passage of the 13th, 14th, and 15th amendments, the Congress abolished slavery, granted citizenship to African Americans, and guaranteed them the right to vote. Under these new laws, many free and formerly enslaved African American men cast ballots for the first time. They elected Black men to state legislatures and local government positions. Within this new freedom, Black individuals also banded together to establish churches, schools, and mutual-aid societies, laying the foundations of their communities. While much work remained on political, economic, and social fronts, this immediate post-emancipation period provided a glimpse of how post-Civil War America could work toward the realization of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness for its millions newly freed.

Though each southern state's Reconstruction experience varied, white Democrats across the South bristled under Republican-controlled state legislatures – often seated with Black legislators, and made accusations of bribery and fraud, while white mobs often terrorized communities of Black families, churches, and schools. By the 1870s, Democrats had begun "redeeming" southern states through political fraud and intimidation, placing state and local governments back into the hands of wealthy white men and confederate veterans who sought to control African Americans to a degree that closely resembled slavery. As one historian of the South wrote, "In counties and states across the South white veterans with education and property stepped forward to seize the power they considered rightfully theirs."[10] The federal withdrawal from the South in 1877 enabled the southern states to treat African Americans as they wished, signaling to Blacks and state

[10] Edward Ayers, *The Promise of the New South: Life After Reconstruction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 8.

governments alike that the federal government would not protect the former's constitutionally-enshrined rights.

By the turn of the century, southern states had each passed a series of Jim Crow laws and were drafting new state constitutions that reinforced racial segregation, negatively affected public education of whites and Blacks, helped wealthy whites control Black labor, and effectively disenfranchised Black voters through property requirements, reading tests, poll taxes, grandfather clauses, and other measures.[11] In Alabama, the president of the state's 1900 constitutional convention declared in his address to the delegates, "And what is it we want to do? Why it is within the limits imposed by the Federal Constitution, to establish white supremacy in this state…This is our problem, and we should be permitted to deal with it, unobstructed by outside influences."[12] The makeup of the 1900 constitutional convention alone reflected the relative success with which white Democrats had taken control of the state government. Ninety-two percent of the delegates were Democrats, none of which were African American.

Before Alabama's new constitution was ratified in 1901, there were 181,471 Black voters in the state. After implementation of disfranchisement laws therein, only 3,654 Black men voted in Alabama. The public referendum on the constitution's ratification itself was fraudulent and foreshadowed African Americans' separation from the ballot for the next several decades. One historian wrote of the constitutional referendum in Dallas County, "Scores of African American men went to the polls that day as well, rejecting their own disfranchisement in what appeared to be the very last vote of their lives."[13] Despite Black voters making up the majority of registered voters, Democrats were in charge of vote tallying, and Dallas County, similar to the other counties of the Black Belt, ratified the new constitution by a landslide. The new constitution gave local election authorities near free reign in deciding who could and could not vote. After one Black man qualified to vote in Dallas County in 1902, a Selma newspaper warned the registrars: "The eyes of the state are upon you…As Dallas goes so goes the Black Belt. Think. Think. Think."[14] By the summer of 1902, only 61 Black men were on the voter rolls in Dallas County, compared to 2,230 white men (83% of Dallas Countians were Black in 1900). Jeremiah Haralson, a former enslaved man from Selma who was elected twice to the state legislature before being elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1874, had foreshadowed such a scene year earlier: "The Democratic party, if they got power, would inaugurate slavery in a new form; not such as it was, but by depriving us of our right to vote…The gentlemen who used to own us would represent us."[15]

Disfranchisement affected nearly all aspects of Black life. Black schools were underfunded, infrastructure in Black communities severely lacked, Black individuals had little recourse within the legal system, and working-class Blacks had little control over their labor. This was especially true in the Black Belt region of

[11] Steven Hahn, *A Nation under Our Feet: Black Politics in the Rural South from Slavery through the Great Migration* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), 376.
[12] John B. Knox, quoted in Wayne Flynt, *Alabama in the Twentieth Century* (Tuscaloosa: University Press of Alabama, 2006), 7.
[13] Karlyn Forner, *Why the Vote Wasn't Enough for Selma* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2017), 10.
[14] "A Suggestion," Selma Morning Times (Selma, Alabama), March 13, 1902.
[15] Jeremiah Haralson, quoted in Eric Foner, *Freedom's Lawmakers: A Directory of Black Officeholders during Reconstruction* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1996), 94.

Alabama where the cotton plantation economy ruled well into the 20th century, and few Black residents – despite making up more than half of the population (73% in 1900) – voted, owned the land they worked, or the homes in which they lived.[16] The vast majority of African Americans in the Black Belt were sharecroppers, tenant farmers, or day laborers on farms. Near the turn of the century, only approximately 8% owned the land they worked, compared to 54% of white farmers. This was in large part due to the debt cycles in which poor farmers, especially poor Black farmers, were caught. Owing white landlords year after year prevented the majority of Black farmers from becoming landowners. Only two-thirds of Black adult men could read, making it hard to challenge fraudulent terms. If and when they did resist a white landowner, they could be faced with debt peonage. Visitors to the Black Belt observed that white landowners held a "sort of claim or mortgage on the [N]egro community."[17] In addition to Jim Crow laws, anti-Black terror in the Black Belt helped to maintain the status quo. White supremacists met any resistance with intimidation and extreme violence that was ignored, if not perpetrated, by local law enforcement. As W.E.B. duBois noted in 1906 of the racial violence in the Black Belt region of Alabama, "The white element was lawless, and up until recent times the body of a dead Negro did not even call for an arrest."[18]

Despite Jim Crow's stranglehold on southern society, African Americans across the region resisted white dominance by building upon familial and community networks, mobilizing the resources they had to carve out their own spaces and establish semiautonomous communities in the midst of state-sanctioned segregation and discrimination. Black churches in Selma multiplied after the Civil War and the city quickly emerged as a place rich in religious institutions that anchored African American neighborhoods and empowered congregants. The state's Black Baptist conventions took place in Selma in 1871 and 1872 at First Colored Baptist Church, which helped to elevate the city as a leader in Black religious affairs. Other denominations established themselves early on, including Methodists and Presbyterians who began what is now Brown's Chapel A.M.E. Church, Ward Chapel A.M.E. Church, St. Paul C.M.E., and the Reformed Presbyterian Church. Rev. Charles O. Boothe, in his *Cylcopedia of the Colored Baptists of Alabama* described the establishment of Black churches and the role they played in Black society:

> With homeless mothers and fathers, with homeless wives and children, and with oppression on every side – with all these burdens and much more which cannot be told upon us – we bravely undertook the work of building the walls of Zion…Our ministry, whatever the faults and imperfections which have attended them, have wrought nobly and wrought to good results.[19]

[16] The Encyclopedia of Alabama indicates the African American population in the Black Belt region of Alabama grew from 38% of the population in 1820, to 64% in 1860, and, finally, to an "all-time high" of approximately 73% in 1900, before the beginning of a steady decline well into the late 20th century. Terance L. Winemiller, "Black Belt Region in Alabama," *Encyclopedia of Alabama* online, http://encyclopediaofalabama.org/article/h-2458, December 19, 2019, accessed July 14, 2022.
[17] Transcripts of the hearings of the Board of Railroad Wages and Working Conditions, quoted in Eric Arnesen, *Brotherhoods of Color: Black Railroad Workers and the Struggle for Equality* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), 139-142.
[18] W.E.B. duBois, "The Economic Future of the Negro," in *W.E.B. duBois Speaks: Speeches and Addresses, 1890-1919,* ed. Philip S. Foner (New York: Pathfinder, 1970), 163.
[19] C.O. Boothe, *Cyclopedia of the Colored Baptists of Alabama* (Birmingham: Alabama Publishing House, 1895), 240-241.

The establishment of Black schools in the South was intricately interwoven with Black churches who often provided the physical spaces, leadership, materials, and funds for early schools. The richness of Selma's religious landscape helped Selma rise as an educational center for Blacks. According to Rev. Ralph Abernathy, "blacks in the South knew [Selma] as an intellectual and cultural center…the 'Capital of the Black Belt,' a place where intelligent young people and learned elders gathered."[20] Here were Knox Academy, Payne University, and Selma University – a major statement of the African American Baptist seminary's commitment to Selma, all private African American schools that bolstered the social and economic framework of Selma's Black community and eventual capacity for movement building. As stated in Selma's Multiple Property Documentation Form for the Civil Rights Movement,

> The turn of the 20th century was a building period for [B]lack institutions, creating community bonds and powerful networks that would later be important organizing ground for the Civil Rights Movement. Significant expansion…created an institutional infrastructure that helped the community weather the storm of Jim Crow segregation in the first half of the twentieth century, creating space for resistance in the segregated city.[21]

The local Black community's commitment to pursuing a better quality of life for African Americans is evident in their early organizing efforts. In 1918, eighty-one Black Selma residents organized one of Alabama's first chapters of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. Soon after the founding of Selma's local branch, Rev. J.A. Martin, an NAACP member and local Baptist pastor spoke at the national organization's tenth anniversary conference where he declared the "problems of the South" would not be resolved until African Americans receive "recognition of our citizenship and the ballot."[22] After World War I veteran and president of the local NAACP chapter Charles J. Adams was denied voter registration at the Dallas County courthouse, Adams organized the Dallas County Voters League (DCVL). Beginning voter education classes in the 1930s and supporting other civil rights efforts throughout the 1940s, the DCVL and other organizations such as the Dallas County Improvement Association helped make Selma the center of Alabama's civil and voting rights movement in the mid-twentieth century.

Reflecting on the capacity of Black Dallas County residents to build and maintain a movement, civil rights activist John Lewis wrote

> Selma was even more a mass movement than any of the others, very different from, say Birmingham, where there were lots of generals on the scene…carefully planning every move, all of it very organized from the top down. Selma was more of a bottom -up campaign, of the people acting with

[20] Ralph Abernathy, *And the Walls Came Tumbling Down* (New York: Harper & Row, 1989), 353; *1940 Federal Census.*
[21] Carroll Van West, et al., "The Civil Rights Movement in Selma, Alabama, 1865-1972," National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form, United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, May 3, 2013, 3.
[22] J.A. Martin, "Rural Conditions of Labor," Tenth Anniversary Conference of the NAACP, June 24, 1919, quoted in Forner, *Why the Vote,* 38.

> minimal direction from the leaders. We were there to guide and help carry out what the people wanted to do, but it was essentially the people themselves who pointed the way.[23]

The fervent pursuit of civil rights by African Americans in Selma was equally matched by white resistance. Selma was the first city in Alabama where a White Citizen's Council was established (1954). The organization intimidated Blacks through various means, including violence and economic blacklisting, tactics that only increased in intensity after the Montgomery Bus Boycott of 1955 and 1956. Extreme white opposition in Selma coincided with the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1957 and the creation of the Civil Rights Division of the Justice Department. The Ku Klux Klan established a chapter in Selma in 1957 and the state headquarters of the White Citizen's Council moved to the city the following year.[24] In 1960, white voters elected Jim Clark, who Lewis remembered "had a violent temper, he took everything personally, and he always retaliated physically," to Dallas County Sheriff.[25] To reinforce his message of white supremacy, Clark deputized white males in Selma, creating "an armed posse with one purpose – to keep the Black people of Dallas County from voting."[26] Clark's extremism helped to position Selma as "famous within the movement circle for the vicious and violent behavior" of the local authorities and white citizenry.[27] Clark's temper, along with the national media attention it would eventually garner, played a role in the Southern Christian Leadership Council's (SCLC) overall strategy in Selma.

By the time local activists asked Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. to come to Selma to help them in late 1964, locals and members of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) had been working for months to educate and register Black voters. The Reverend Frederick D. Reese and other members of the Courageous Eight (Ulysses Blackmon, Amelia Boynton-Robinson, Ernest Doyle, Marie Foster, James Gildersleeve, Rev. J.D. Hunter, and Rev. Henry Shannon) – the leaders who revived the Dallas County Voters League (DCVL) and met, despite a court injunction and threats of violence, to strategize toward the realization of voting rights – had reportedly lost confidence in the ability of SNCC to see the movement through in Selma. They invited Dr. King to Selma, just as he and the SCLC were "deciding where they should turn their sights next" already aware of the movement there.[28]

On January 2, 1965, Dr. King and Rev. Abernathy addressed hundreds at Brown Chapel A.M.E. Church, marking the beginning of the SCLC's commitment to the Selma campaign and the events leading to the Selma to Montgomery Voting Rights March three months later. Members of SCLC and SNCC began door-to-door recruiting efforts, rallying the Black youth of the city, and drawing the ire of Sheriff Jim Clark who disrupted a January 7 meeting at Brown Chapel. Peaceful demonstrations soon began, one of the earliest and most important being the group of approximately 100 teachers led by Rev. Reese, who walked to the courthouse to register to vote, were turned away by Sheriff Clark, and proceeded to Brown Chapel for a meeting. Later in January, after a federal judge ordered Dallas County to register Black voters, Sheriff Clark

[23] John Lewis with Michael D'Orso, *Walking with the Wind: A Memoir of the Movement* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1998), 307.
[24] David J. Garrow, *Protest at Selma: Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Voting Rights Act of 1965* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1978), 14.
[25] Lewis, *Walking*, 306.
[26] Ibid.
[27] Garrow, *Protest at Selma*, 3.
[28] Lewis, *Walking*, 303.

and deputies beat and arrested local Black resident Annie Lee Cooper who was there to register. According to one historian of the Civil Rights Movement, "The most important result of this clash was the widely circulated picture of it which appeared in newspapers throughout the country."[29]

With the eyes of the nation increasingly turning toward Selma, SCLC leaders led a demonstration in an anniversary celebration of the Greensboro, North Carolina, sit-ins, during which Dr. King was arrested and sent to the Selma jail where he wrote "Letter from a Selma Jail" which appeared in the New York Times on February 5, 1965. According to African American and Selma attorney J.L. Chestnut, Jr., "Every time Sheriff Clark went to extremes – shoved Mrs. Boynton, used cattle prods on children – more local blacks said, 'That's it. I'm marching.'"[30] The aggressive actions of Selma's law enforcement continued to draw national media attention, as well as compel people, particularly ministers, to come to Selma ready to engage in the campaign.

The idea for the Voting Rights March originated with the fatal police shooting of Jimmie Lee Jackson in nearby Marion, Alabama, on February 18, 1965. On that night, C.T. Vivian, one of Dr. King's assistants, led a demonstration of marchers from Zion Chapel Methodist Church in Marion with the intention of arriving at the Perry County Jail to protest the arrest of James Orange, an aide to Dr. King.[31] A total of four hundred African American protesters left the church at around 9:30 at night but would never arrive at the city jail, almost immediately coming into contact with fifty state troopers.[32] James Orange later stated in an interview, "Rumors had gotten out that I was supposed to be lynched in jail. Protesters had hardly left the church, right in front of the courthouse and city hall, they were brutally beaten."[33] The protesters had marched about half a block when they were met by a line of troopers. Witnesses provided statements detailing the events, stating:

> Chief Harris said over a loudspeaker, "This is an unlawful assembly. You are hereby ordered to disperse, go home or back to the church." The negroes stopped but stood in a line. The Rev. James N. Dobyne, one of the leaders, kneeled and began praying. He and two other leaders were probed along the sidewalk into the hands of Perry County Deputies, who hit them with nightsticks.[34]

As the beatings continued many of the protesters ran into nearby homes and businesses for safety. One of the marchers, Jimmie Lee Jackson, along with his mother, sister, and eighty-two-year-old grandfather, took shelters in Mack's Café where they were followed by troopers. A fellow marcher who took shelter in the same café stated "one of the troopers struck Mrs. Jackson, causing her son Jimmy Lee to lunge at the officer. I tried to hold him back, but the trooper took out his gun and shot."[35] After Jackson was shot, troopers chased

[29] Garrow, *Protest at Selma*, 45.
[30] J. L. Chestnut, Jr. and Julia Cass, *Black In Selma: The Uncommon Life of J.L. Chestnut, Jr.: Politics and Power in a Small American Town* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1990), 199.
[31] John Herbers, "2 Inquires Open on Racial Clash in Alabama Town," *New York Times*, February 20, 1965.
[32] Ibid.
[33] Dennis Havesi "Rev. James E. Orange, 65, Aide to Dr. King," New York Times, February 22, 2008.
[34] Herbers, "2 Inquires Open on Racial Clash in Alabama Town."
[35] Ibid.

him outside and continued to beat him until he collapsed.[36] By the end of the night ten were injured by nightsticks, Jimmie Lee Jackson was hospitalized in critical condition, and two protesters remained in jail even with severe wounds.[37] Jimmie Lee Jackson would survive a total of eight days at the Good Samaritan Hospital in Selma before succumbing to his wounds.

The funeral of Jimmie Lee Jackson took place on March 3, 1965 at Brown Chapel. Four thousand African Americans came to mourn. At the funeral many of the leaders of the Civil Rights Movement spoke of Jackson's death and would ultimately announce the plans for the first attempt of the Selma to Montgomery Voting Rights March, otherwise known as Bloody Sunday.

The many voices heard at Jimmie Lee Jackson's funeral proceedings:

Rev. J. T. Johnson, an African American minister from Marion, Alabama said in the opening prayer, "Our Father, we pray for the policemen of this town and this state who would rather see blood in the streets and a man shot down than sit down and talk."[38]

John Lewis, chairman of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), said, "We must recognize the fact that the evil climate created by men like Governor Wallace and Sheriff Jim Clark was responsible for the death of Jimmie Jackson."[39]

Rev. Ralph D. Abernathy, top aide to Dr. Martin Luther King in the Southern Christian Leadership Conference stated, "Jimmie Jackson has joined the ranks of the many martyrs who have fallen along the way in building this great nation and in bringing us to this hour." He continued "We are gathered around the bier of the first casualty in the Black Belt demonstrations. Who knows but what before it's over, you and I may take our rightful place beside him."[40]

Dr. Martin Luther King, who went to visit Jackson in the hospital only days before his passing said, "Jimmie Lee Jackson is speaking to us from the casket, and he is saying to us that we must substitute courage for caution. His death says to us that we must work passionately and unrelentingly to make the American dream a reality. His death must prove that unmerited suffering does not go unredempted."[41]

In a long and powerful speech by Rev. James Bevel, Alabama project director of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, ended with the announcement of the fifty mile walk from Selma to Montgomery that would take place the following week, starting Sunday. The march would be to dramatize the drive for voting rights. Bevel stated, "we are going to see the Governor."[42]

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[36] "Jimmie Lee Jackson Biography," Stanford: The Martin Luther King Jr. Research and Education Institute, https://kinginstitute.stanford.edu/encyclopedia/jackson-jimmie-lee.
[37] Herbers, "2 Inquires Open on Racial Clash in Alabama Town."
[38] Roy Reed, "Alabama Victim Called Martyr: Dr. King and Others Speak at the Marion Funeral," New York Times, March 4, 1965.
[39] Ibid.
[40] Ibid.
[41] Ibid.
[42] Ibid.

The martyrdom of Jimmie Lee Jackson proved to be a calling for nonviolent peoples who wanted better for their country and its African American citizens. The march that would take place on March 7, 1965, or Bloody Sunday, would be a national wake-up call to many across the country leading to large participation in the final Selma to Montgomery March.

On the morning of March 7, 1965, it was reported about 525 African Americans left Browns Chapel Church towards Broad Street and Edmund Pettus Bridge. The marchers had walked nearly six blocks when they were confronted by a line of fifty troopers, fifteen of the troopers sat on horses.[43] The group of marchers continued on their path until they stood fifty feet from the line of police. The leader of the troopers, Major John Cloud announced over a loudspeaker "this is an unlawful assembly. Your march is not conducive to the public safety. You are ordered to disperse and go back to your church or to your homes."[44] It is reported that a leader of the march, Mr. Williams asked for a word with the major which was refused. Soon after, a two-minute warning was given by Major Cloud followed by the dreadful order to advance.[45]

> When we got to the first light across the Edmund Pettus Bridge, there was a wall of officers right across the street that we were going to march on. And we were told to stop—don't go any farther. Hosea Williams, who was at the head said, May I have something to say? And through the bull horn that was, "No, you can not have anything to say. Charge on them, men." And the men came from the right side, from the left side from in front of us, they came upon us and started beating us with their night sticks, they started cattle prodding us, they started gassing us with gas.[46]

As the troopers advanced and the crown of marchers remained in place the bloodshed and abuse began. The first ten to twenty marchers were swept to the ground by officer's use of nightsticks sparking the chaos of other marchers to quickly retreat. The troopers on horseback ran into the crowds of retreating marchers breaking bones and causing severe head injuries. It was reported that in this moment, cheers could be heard from white spectators lining the highway.[47] In a later interview conducted by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, John Lewis one of the first injured in the attack, recalled the order for troopers to put on their gas masks.[48] Soon after there was a report of what sound like a gun shot when thick smoke began to fill the streets. John Lewis stated in his interview that individuals immediately began to fall physically sick in the streets while others screamed while choking on the fumes.[49] As the marchers fled back to homes and Brown

[43] Roy Reed, "Alabama Police Use Gas and Clubs to Rout Negros," *New York Times*, March 8, 1965.
[44] Ibid.
[45] Ibid.
[46] Amelia Boynton Robinson, "Interview with Amelia Boynton Robinson," conducted by Blackside, Inc. on December 6, 1985, for Eyes on the Prize: America's Civil Rights Years (1954-1965). Washington University Libraries, Film and Media Archive, Henry Hampton Collection.
[47] Roy Reed, "Alabama Police Use Gas and Clubs to Rout Negros."
[48] "John Lewis-March from Selma to Montgomery, Bloody Sunday, 1965," *Confrontations for Justice, Eyewitness: American Originals*, National Archives, https://www.archives.gov/exhibits/eyewitness/ html.php?section=2.
[49] Ibid.

Chapel, a hospital was set up for the injured next to the church. The total injured is reported as high as one hundred people with seventeen hospitalized and at least forty more needing emergency treatment for their wounds.[50]

Two major leaders of the march who were injured were John Lewis, Chairman of the Student Nonviolent Coordination Committee, and Amelia Boynton, an advocate for voter rights demonstrations. Lewis was clubbed on the back of the head when the violence initially began, and then hospitalized for his injuries. Boynton was knocked unconscious during the attack and also severely injured. In a later interview Boynton stated, "I wasn't looking for notoriety but if that's what it took, I didn't care how many licks I got. It just made me even more determined to fight for our cause."[51] Boynton was beaten over the back of the head by a sheriff on a white horse, and was then doused in gas. She was beaten so severely she couldn't move. Thinking she was dead, somebody stated, "if she's dead just pull her on the side and let the buzzards eat her."[52] After the attack Boynton was first taken to Brown Chapel AME church. It was deemed her injuries were too severe to be helped there so she was rushed to the hospital.[53] Boynton could tell from the start of the march that it was different. "This is the strangest thing I ever saw. Just look at those officers, they look like tin soldiers."[54] Robinson recalled the mix of deputies, sheriffs, and recently deputized white male citizens, remembering that, "almost every white man who wanted to hurt a black person was given a gun and was given permission to carry that gun and became deputized."[55] The goal of the march on March 7th was to see the Governor and demand that they could become registered voters since they were American citizens, but it ended in violence and only acted to further unify and motivate the Civil Rights Movement.

Bloody Sunday was a brute show of force by the Alabama government and police force, but due to the news coverage of events it sparked action across the U.S. Bert Philips was Dean of Students at Tuskegee Institute at the time of the Bloody Sunday events. He states that when the news of Bloody Sunday arrived on campus, it motivated students to become more involved in the civil rights movement. "When it came to the campus, I think it was a shock and sadness and, anger at what had happened…The students immediately wanted to do something, to show that they were, you know in full support of the marchers."[56]

Various newspapers reported on what was happening in Selma, Alabama throughout March 1965. News coverage drastically increased following the events of Sunday March 7th, 1965, which became known as Bloody Sunday. The *Boston Globe*, a paper who had dedicated frequent coverage to the events in Selma

[50] Leon Daniel, "Tear Gas, Clubs Halt 600 in Selma March," *Washington Post*, March 8, 1965.
[51] Margalit Fox, "Amelia Boynton Robinson, a Pivotal Figure at the Selma March, Dies at 104," *New York Times*, August 26, 2015.
[52] Boynton Robinson, "Interview with Amelia Boynton Robinson."
[53] Ibid.
[54] Ibid.
[55] Ibid.
[56] "Bertram Phillips." *Civil Rights Voices Speak*. National Center for the Study of Civil Rights and African-American Culture at Alabama State University. July 20, 2018. https://sites.google.com/alasu.edu/civilrightsvoicesspeak/voices/meet-the-voices/bertram-phillips?pli=1.

from before the march to the very end of it, described the events of March 7th as "Selma's Day of Shame."[57] The *Globe* would provide almost daily coverage of the events that were unfolding in Alabama, and dedicated three of their reporters to cover what was happening in Selma.[58] Similar sentiment was felt across the nation as news spread of the Alabama government's harsh and violent treatment of peaceful protestors. President Lyndon B. Johnson responded to the violence against the protestors at Selma by sending federal troops to protect marchers during the journey from Selma to Montgomery. King used the media coverage to appeal to other clergymen across the country to come join him, King understood the importance of keeping the attention of the media to the protest to help ensure the best outcome.[59] Over the course of the month of March in 1965 the *New York Times* would dedicate over 1,764 inches of paper column space to the protest while also providing front page coverage of the events on the 8th, 9th, 10th, 21st, 22nd, 23rd, 24th, 25th, and 26th of March. *Birmingham News* would dedicate 1,555 inches with over a third of that belonging to images and pictures. The *Boston Globe* between their morning and evening editions would give 1,677 inches of their columns from papers – through the month of March to the Selma events and March. Not all papers were interested in giving attention to the events at Selma, however. The *Montgomery Advertiser* chose to mostly ignore the local events related to the Selma to Montgomery March and instead covered topics such as the Vietnam War and space flight. This lack of coverage from local papers emphasized the importance papers such as *The Boston Globe* and the *New York Times* had with their almost daily coverage of the events starting right after Bloody Sunday.

On March 17, 1965, the *Chicago Defender* newspaper re-printed a special article from *The New York Times* which laid out the text of the proposal for the Selma to Montgomery Voting Rights March, also known as the Alabama Freedom March, submitted by attorneys with the African American voter-registration movement to Alabama Judge Frank M. Johnson, Jr.[60] The proposal outlined the legal aspects of the march. Section 1 delineated when it would begin; section 2 how many people would be marching (no more than 300 people on the two-lane portion of Route 80, which is why would-be-marchers were turned away along this part of the route); section 3 gives the approximate distances to be marched each day; section 4 provides the route of the march in the city of Selma; section 5 gives the march route in the city of Montgomery; section 6 provides the guidelines of the march along the highway; section 7 lays out the supportive services that will be available; section 8 ascertains communication between march leaders and government leaders; sections 9, 10, and 11 lay out the final logistics in Montgomery and the end of the march, as well as maintaining that it will remain "orderly and peaceful and otherwise observe the highest standards of dignity and decorum."[61] One thing this march proposal clarifies in section 3 is that the places the marchers would camp each of the four nights of the five-day official march were pre-arranged. However, the pre-arranged destinations were not always the stopping points at the end of the day. The final three campsites used during the march include the David Hall farm (Sunday, March 21), the Rosie Steele farm (Monday, March 22), and the Robert Gardner farm (Tuesday, March 23). It was pre-planned that "large tents will be erected at the campsites by

[57] S. Ray Granade and Deranda R. Granade, "All They Want Is to Gain Attention": Press Coverage and the Selma-to-Montgomery March," (1993). *Articles.*
[58] Ibid., 14.
[59] Granade and Granade, "All They Want," 6, 12, 14, 17.
[60] Roy Reed, "Freedom March Begins at Selma; Troops on Guard," *New York Times*, March 22, 1965.
[61] "Text of the Plan for Selma-to-Montgomery March. Special to The New York Times," *New York Times*, March 17, 1965.

professionals."[62] Also pre-planned in the march proposal was that food, sanitary and toilet facilities, litter and garbage pick-up, and ambulance and first-aid service would all be provided for by the march planners along the route of the 5-day march. Walkie-talkie radios were also planned to be available to keep the lines of communication open amongst the marchers, march leaders, and auxiliary services. These supportive services were provided mainly by trucks that accompanied the marchers along their route.[63]

Criterion A Significance in Social History: Civil Rights and Ethnic Heritage: Black

Related to its use during the march by the SCLC and other activists, the Gardner Farm was a Black-owned farm in Lowndes County, an area referred to by a U.S. district attorney as "honeycombed with slavery" near the turn of the 20th century, an observation that remained true for the vast majority of the county's African Americans who lived on and worked land owned by whites well into the mid-century.[64]

Robert Gardner's grandfather Hugh A. Carson owned the land comprising Campsite 3: The Gardner Farm. Born enslaved in North Carolina, Carson was of African and European descent. It is unclear when and under what circumstances he came to Lowndes County. Carson is known for being one of only three Black delegates at Alabama's 1875 constitutional convention. He and the other two Black delegates, Alexander H. Curtis and Greene S.W. Lewis of Perry County, voted against the passage of the new, Democrat-backed constitution which "marked the transition from Republican oversight to Democratic ascendancy and the virtual end of Congressional Reconstruction in Alabama."[65] Later, when Lowndes County chose Carson as state representative, Democrats expelled him on false charges related to a fabricated indictment, after which an ex-Confederate filled his seat, making Carson one of the state's last Black legislators for almost a century. After his expulsion, Carson remained involved in the state and national Republican party, owned a store in Hayneville and farmed in Pintlala until he moved to Montgomery c.1906 where he eventually assumed the position of deputy collector with the federal government before his death in 1912.[66]

It is possible Hugh A. Carson built the house on the Gardner Farm before moving to Montgomery. In 1895, a newspaper article in the local *Citizen-Examiner* told of the burning of H.A. Carson's "dwelling at

[62] Ibid.
[63] "Text of the Plan for Selma-to-Montgomery March." Section 7.
[64] Warren S. Reese, Jr. to Attorney General, (June 10, 1903), File 5280-03, General Records of the Department of Justice, quoted in Hasan Kwame Jeffries, *Bloody Lowndes: Civil Rights and Black Power in Alabama's Black Belt* (New York: New York University Press, 2009), 18.
[65] Joshua Shiver, "Alabama Constitution of 1875," *Encyclopedia of Alabama* online, April 16, 2020, accessed April 20, 2022, http://encyclopediaofalabama.org/article/h-4195.
[66] Richard Bailey, *Neither Carpet Baggers nor Scalawags: Black Officeholders during the Reconstruction of Alabama, 1867-1878,* 5th ed. (Montgomery, AL: New South Books, 2010), 249; Jeffries, *Bloody Lowndes,* 15; *1880 Federal Census; 1900 Federal Census; Montgomery Alabama City Directory* (1906), 27; *1910 Federal Census.* Hugh A. Carson died in Montgomery in 1912 and is buried in Lincoln Cemetery there. Community members and officials unveiled a historical marker next to Carson's grave during the rededication of the cemetery in December 2021.

Stanwood," a house Carson purchased from A.E. Caffee.[67] The article explains the site "was about sixteen miles from the town Montgomery and near the high road to that place from Hayneville," likely what is now Highway 21 that runs directly from Hayneville northeast to Montgomery. (The Robert Gardner Farm is approximately 18 miles from Montgomery and sits just northwest of Highway 21, near a corner created by its junction with Highway 80. The road on which the Gardner Farm sits was once named Caffee or Caffey Road). In the 1900 Census record, Carson, his wife Eliza, and their children - including Roberta Carson, Robert Gardner's mother - lived on a farm in the "Pintlala, Beat 17" section of Lowndes County, indicating Carson purchased or built a house (possibly the extant house at the Gardner Farm) after fire destroyed Stanwood.[68]

Roberta Carson and Billie Gardner's 1904 marriage in Lowndes County took place at "H.A. Carson's place," indicating Carson hadn't yet moved to Montgomery when the couple married. Though some sources suggest Hugh Carson gifted Roberta and Billie the property when they married, the 1910 census recorded the couple renting a farm in Hayneville. It is more likely the case that the couple received the farm as part of Roberta's inheritance outlined in Hugh Carson's 1912 will and executed soon after his death the same year. In it, Carson divided a 440-acre tract in Lowndes County between four of his children, including Roberta. She inherited the northernmost 110-acre tract that eventually became Campsite 3 on the Selma to Montgomery Voting Rights March (See *Figure 2* on Continuation Sheet). The 1920 census documented Roberta and Billie living on the nominated property in the "Pintlala, Precinct 17" section of the county, the same vicinity of the Carson family in 1900, and possibly the same land and home.[69]

Though at present it is unclear whether the Carsons or the Gardners built the home, the gable front and wing house was befitting to the socioeconomic status of the related families. Hugh A. Carson was a prominent Black politician and property owner, and his wife Eliza taught school, placing them solidly in the middle to upper middle class of African Americans in Lowndes County. Billie Gardner, Roberta's husband, was referred to by one source as a "gentleman farmer who attended to his farming duties well-dressed and astride a white horse."[70] It is therefore unsurprising that a wing and gable style house was built, as these "irregularly massed dwellings" of the late 19th and early 20th century "symbolized modernity" and the ability of the family to keep up appearances.[71] Gable front and wing houses were particularly popular in Montgomery around the turn of the century, indicating the ways domestic architectural styles emanated from city centers into rural areas.[72]

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[67] "Stanwood," *Citizen-Examiner* (Hayneville, Alabama), December 19, 1895; *1900 Federal Census.*
[68] *1900 Federal Census.*
[69] Lowndes County, Alabama marriage record, December 1, 1904; Carol Jenkins and Elizabeth Gardner Hines, *A.G. Gaston and the making of a Black American Millionaire* (New York: Random House, 2004), 118; *1910 Federal Census*; Alabama Probate Court, Lowndes County, *Will Books 1830-1940,* Hugh Carson, 1912, 170-174; *1920 Federal Census.*
[70] Jenkins and Hines, *A.G. Gaston*, 118-119.
[71] John A. Jakle, Robert W. Bastian, and Douglas K. Meyer, *Common Houses in America's Small Towns: The Atlantic Seaboard to the Mississippi Valley* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1989), 161-162; Virginia McAlester and Lee McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1984), 309.
[72] City of Montgomery, "Historic Residential Architecture of Montgomery: A Style Guide," (2012).

On the farm, located in an area referred to as Burkville, Billie and Roberta Gardner raised milking cows and grew cotton and food crops. The Gardners were reportedly, "considered prosperous for their time and place," a notion supported by their ownership of their farm and home in which they lived.[73] Billie and Roberta Gardner's ownership of their home and farm beginning in the mid-1910s is significant, as Black landownership in Lowndes County, and the Black Belt generally, was uncommon due to the predatory systems of tenant farming, sharecropping, peonage, and the violence whites wielded to maintain control. As Democrats began regaining political power in the 1870s and 1880s, wealthy, white landowners and planters demanded the Redeemer legislatures pass laws to control Black labor. According to one historian of the South, "Planters got what they wanted early on in the New South years and asked little of the government afterward except that it keep taxes low and blacks in their place."[74] Though specific arrangements varied throughout the county and region, the overwhelming trend saw Black farmers working and living on land owned by whites who exercised near total control over Black labor through inescapable cycles of debt and fraudulent criminal convictions, both of which made them beholden to landowners and employers who fronted cash and required labor to resolve the debt. The effectiveness of landed whites' various control mechanisms meant to keep Black people from becoming landowners and thus achieving some semblance of economic independence is clear. In 1900, only 8% of African American farmers in the Black Belt owned the land they farmed, compared to 54% of whites in the region.[75]

The dire economic situation of the majority of Lowndes County African Americans moved sociologist W.E. B. Du Bois to push for a federally-sponsored study of it. After producing several groundbreaking reports on the South for the U.S. Department of Labor near the turn of the century, duBois in 1906 convinced the department to fund a study of sharecropping in Lowndes County. As one source explains, Du Bois "intended to uncover every mechanism behind landownership and labor control in the county from 1850 to the present…".[76] Several months into the project, in a report to the commissioner of labor Charles P. Neill, duBois explained he and his team had interviewed thousands of Black farmers in Lowndes County. His inquiry also included "confidential talks" with local white men, facilitated by two white agents on special release from the Department of Labor. By his own account, Du Bois' report "considered the distribution of labor; the relation of landlord and tenant; the political organization and the family life and the distribution of the population."[77] The Department of Labor ultimately rejected the report and destroyed it, telling duBois it "touched on political matters."[78] Du Bois' selection of Lowndes County for a study that plagued the larger Black Belt region, and the federal government's rash destruction of the data indicates not only the economic circumstances of most Blacks there but the government's unwillingness to publish the material and anger southern lawmakers.

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[73] Jenkins and Hines, *A.G. Gaston*, 119.
[74] Edward L. Ayers, *The Promise of the New South: Life after Reconstruction* 15th ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 45.
[75] Ibid., 196.
[76] David Levering Lewis, *W.E.B. duBois: A Biography, 1868-1963* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, LLC, 2009), 236.
[77] W.E.B. Du Bois, *The Autobiography of W.E.B. Du Bois: A Soliloquy on Viewing My Life from the Last Decade of its First Century* (New York: International Publishers, 1968), 226.
[78] Ibid., 227.

In his study of the Civil Rights Movement and Black Power in Lowndes County, historian Hasan Kwame Jeffries asserts that owning land was a common aspiration that was rarely realized. In Lowndes, the Black-landholding communities of White Hall and Calhoun were "exceptions to the norm. Everywhere else, African Americans remained landless and handcuffed by debt to white financiers."[79] Of the 106 families or single heads of household listed as Black or mulatto and living in the immediate vicinity of the Gardner farm in 1920, only four owned their homes and farms. In 1935, the Gardners belonged to the five percent of non-white Lowndes County farm operators that owned all of the land they worked (compared to 40% of white farm operators who owned all the land they worked).[80] Significantly, by 1936, the Gardners not only belonged to the small class of Black farmers who owned all the land they worked, Billie and Roberta had expanded their farm acreage from 110 acres to the present 139-acre tract illustrated in *Figure 3.*

The Gardners had 15 children, the vast majority of them lived and worked on the farm, giving "Every ounce of energy…to make the farm work, whether their job was milking a cow or ironing a shirt."[81] Roberta was often sick and Billie worked tirelessly, often leaving one of the eldest daughters Minnie to care for her mother and the youngest children. After leaving home, Minnie graduated from Tuskegee Institute (Tuskegee University). Like Minnie, every other Gardner daughter attended college, which Billie and Roberta saw as "a way to get the girls out on their own" as an alternative to relying on marriage. Minnie was responsible for overseeing her siblings' education and, once leaving home, became the "leader-at-large of the Gardner progeny, taking it upon herself to care for them all."[82]

Once in Birmingham, Minnie was heavily involved in leading the businesses created by millionaire A.G. Gaston, and served as the Vice President of Booker T. Washington Insurance Company. She was also instrumental in establishing and running the Booker T. Washington Business College, a business trade school she started with Gaston. The two married in 1943. Students and others knew Minnie as "someone who couldn't turn a needy student away," often paying for supplies, tuition, and books to help get low-income African American students trained in white collar trades and placed in a job. Perhaps her most overlooked contribution to education was her advocacy for federal support of income-based student loans and a wider range of postsecondary institutions, ideas eventually codified in the Higher Education Act of 1965.[83]

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[79] Jeffries, *Bloody Lowndes*, 25.
[80] *1935 Census of Agriculture, Volumes 1 and 2: First and Second Series State Reports and U.S. Summary,* "Alabama," 629. Of the 3,743 "non-white" operators counted in the 1935 agricultural census of Lowndes County 222 were full owners; 107 part owners; 3 managers; 983 "croppers"; and 2,428 "other tenants". Of the 586 white farm operators, 234 were full owners; 89 part owners; 10 managers; 38 "croppers"; and 215 "other tenants".
[81] Ibid. This "Ibid" seems to have been separated from its original reference.
[82] Ibid., 119-120; *1920 Federal Census*
[83] Erin Shaw, "Gaston 'a serious leader,'" *Birmingham Post-Herald*, July 5, 2000; "Prepared Statement by Mrs. A.G. Gaston, Director, Booker T. Washington Business College, Birmingham, Alabama," *College Student Aid Legislation: Hearing before the Subcommittee on Education of the Labor and Public Welfare Committee of the United States Senate,* 370-372; "Wife of Millionaire Spurs Aid to Needy Students," *Pittsburgh Courier,* March 27, 1965.

The Gardner Farm in the first half of the 20th century provided the foundation for Minnie and the other children to shape their futures off the farm in ways many Black families in Lowndes could not. While owning land provided a degree of economic independence and mobility not realized by most and it was – as Jeffries put it – "less than revolutionary" in that it did not confer the right to vote and did not make one immune to violence. Benjamin Mays, who had family in Lowndes observed, "The more a Negro owned, the more humble he had to act in order to keep in the good graces of the white people."[84] This could be no more vividly illustrated than in the 1947 murder of Elmore Bolling, a Black entrepreneur and landowner who owned a store approximately four miles west of the Gardner Farm on Highway 80, killed because he was reportedly "too prosperous as a Negro farmer."[85]

It is within this environment that Billie and Roberta raised a family and maintained a sizeable property that would later become instrumental in the Selma to Montgomery Voting Rights March. By the time Roberta Gardner passed away in 1952, the only children remaining on the farm with Billie were Clinton and Robert. When Billie passed away in 1963, the Gardner siblings inherited the land, but it was Robert, his wife Mary, and their children who continued to run the farm and hosted the voting rights marchers in 1965.[86]

Family accounts maintain that Minnie's husband A.G. Gaston initially had the idea for the marchers to spend the night at the Gardner Farm during the Selma to Montgomery demonstration. Gaston was a self-made millionaire who established the Booker T. Washington Insurance Company, the Smith and Gaston Funeral Home (NRHP), a loan company, and the A.G. Gaston Motel (NRHP), a modern establishment that catered to African American travelers and opened in 1954. Though sources refer to Gaston as a conservative supporter of civil rights who did not always agree with the tactics used by the leaders of the movement, Gaston allowed his hotel to serve as the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s headquarters during the Birmingham Civil Rights Movement. It is within this context of prior familiarity with the individuals and organizations involved that A.G. Gaston allegedly suggested the Gardner Farm as a campsite for the 1965 march.[87]

Elizabeth Ross, one of Robert and Mary Gardner's daughters remembers,

> Uncle A.G. told the men when they entered Lowndes County to ask for directions to Robert Gardner's property along Highway 80 in hopes the marchers could camp there on the last leg of the march before reaching St. Jude in Montgomery. When the organizers got to Lowndes County, they stopped at Canaan Hill Primitive Baptist Church where the members were having a meeting and asked for directions to our home. The following Monday, the men came to the house and told my father who they were and they wanted permission for the marchers to camp on our property. My father told the men to let him think

[84] Benjamin Mays, quoted in Leon Litwack, *Trouble in Mind: Black Southerners in the Age of Jim Crow* (New York: Knopf, 1998), 321.
[85] NAACP Division of Research and Information, "A Record of Mob Violence and Race Clashes in the United States, 1947," (January 1948), Part 17, Reel 2, Frame 344.
[86] *1950 Federal Census.*
[87] Elizabeth Ross, quoted in Bob Johnson, "Wife of Central Michigan University president recalls family helping Selma civil rights marchers 50 years ago," *Mlive/Saginaw News* (Saginaw, Michigan), March 4, 2015, accessed April 19, 2022, https://www.mlive.com/news/saginaw/2015/03/cmu_first_lady_recalls_family.html.

> about it and to come back. Daddy and Mama talked about it and decided that they would let the marchers camp. The organizers told my parents that we would be protected by the troops.[88]

Though many media outlets referred to the marchers' third campsite as a "farm owned by millionaire A.G. Gaston," and, incorrectly, as a "tenant farm," Gaston's ownership was implied due to his wife Minnie being co-owner of the family farm, along with her other siblings who inherited the property from their father.[89] Tamara Harris Johnson, a niece of Robert Gardner, indicated:

> At the time of the Selma to Montgomery March, the Gardner farm was owned by my grandparents' children: Ransom Gardner, Annie Gardner Lowe, Hugh Carson Gardner, Minnie Gardner Gaston, William Gardner, Mary Belle Gardner Cummings, Thomas Gardner, Roberta Gardner Shorte, Helen Gardner Washington, Susie Marie Gardner Wood, Elizabeth Gardner Jenkins, Clinton Gardner, Robert Gardner, and Dixie Gardner Harris. Calls were made to as many of them as could be reached for permission for the marchers to rest on the farm. I recall permission was given proudly.[90]

It is likely Gaston's notoriety, his involvement with the Birmingham civil rights movement, his alleged initiation of the plans to stay at the Gardner Farm, and the era's tendency toward recognizing husbands as stewards of a married couple's property resulted in reports implying Gaston's sole ownership of the farm. Certainly, Gaston's involvement in the march did not go unnoticed. On Sunday March 21, 1965, the first day of the Selma to Montgomery Voting Rights March, four bombs were found in Birmingham, one each at the following places: Catholic Church of Our Lady Queen of the Universe, the Western Olin Negro High School, the home of Black civil rights attorney Arthur Shores, and Smith and Gaston Funeral Home – owned by A.G. Gaston.[91]

Robert Gardner and his family received visits and threats from white people once word spread they planned to host the demonstrators. The historic, largely unanswered violence suffered by Lowndes County's African Americans emphasized the importance of SCLC leaders finding a safe place for marchers to stay while passing through but also spoke to the risk of hosting. Elizabeth Ross remembered three white men coming to the Gardner Farm to pressure her father to "change his mind and not let the marchers camp."[92] An article in *Jet* magazine elaborated on the same visit:

> A delegation of three white farmers appeared at the home of 40-year-old George [sic] Gardner and demanded that he withdraw the offer. Gardner, who was born in the house and whose family has owned the property for a century, actually sought to comply with the request. It took hours for him to reconsider

[88] Ibid.
[89] Nicholas C. Chriss, "King Cleveland-Bound: 300 Begin Last Half of 'Freedom March'," *Tyrone Daily Herald* (Tyrone, Pennsylvania), March 23, 1965; "Good Spirits Still Held: Rain Hits March; King Leaves Crowd," *Anniston Star* (Anniston, Alabama), March 23, 1965; Roy Reed, "Alabama March Passes Midpoint: Sore Feet and High Spirits in Evidence," *New York Times,* March 24, 1965.
[90] Tamara Harris Johnson, "Selma: a family's pride, a nation's turning point: guest opinion," AL.com, February 18, 2015, accessed May 3, 2022, https://www.al.com/opinion/2015/02/a_familys_pride_a_nations_turn.html.
[91] "4 Time Bombs Planted in B'ham Negro Areas," *Montgomery Advertiser,* March 22, 1965.
[92] Johnson, "Wife of Central Michigan."

> and allow the marchers to arrive on his farm. By then, his party line was inoperable, threats were violent, and he was voicing concern for the safety of his wife and four children.[93]

Given the amount of intimidation experienced by the Gardner family before the March, securing the farm was an important part of campsite logistics. Ross also remembered the security measures leading up to the camp at her home:

> A few days before the march, the troops began securing my Daddy's property…They turned over rocks, cow droppings and dirt mounds looking for anything that posed a threat. Tuesday, March 23, when I left home for school my parents told me that the marchers would be camping on the property that night and would probably be there when I returned. Winston Pringle, our neighbor, would meet me at the bus stop to identify me and bring me home. When the bus approached my stop, I saw a sea of people, military men, guardsmen, tents, trucks and cars up and down the main road and in our driveway. Winston met me as I got off the bus and identified me as the daughter of Robert and Mary Gardner. He, along with guardsmen, escorted me home.[94]

Third day of the Selma to Montgomery Voting Rights March: Tuesday, March 23, 1965

After spending the night of Monday, March 22 at the property of African American landowner Rosie Steele, marchers continued along Highway 80 around 8:00 A.M and headed east toward the third campsite at the Gardner Farm. (Though a widely circulated newspaper illustration of the route – *see Figure 5* – held that night three would be spend at a church, that fact is inaccurate.) Soon after, rain began to fall, and "by mid-morning the walkers were slogging down the blacktop in a steady downpour."[95] While the hundreds of Army and National Guard troops escorting the marchers had "ponchos and heavy raincoats" to protect them, observed a *New York Times* (*NYT*) reporter, "the civilian officials were not so fortunate." John Doar, head of the Civil Rights Division of the Department of Justice "walked through the downpour soaked to the skin, his hair hanging across his forehead in weeping ringlets."[96] Many others "fashioned makeshift ponchos from sheets of plastic," after which, one of the marchers observed, "Man, we must look like a black Ku Klux Klan."[97] Another outlet reported, "a few youngsters put on corn flakes boxes [from breakfast] for hats."[98]

In addition to the rain, this particular leg of Highway 80 between Rosie Steele's place and the Gardner Farm routed through the desolate Big Swamp of Lowndes County, a landscape that proved intimidating to those unfamiliar with the region. A *NYT* reporter described the scene: "The countryside was as depressing as the weather for the first few miles. The highway was raised 15 feet and on either side the marchers looked down on a thicket of vines, brush and Spanish moss clogging the trees and the spongy wet ground."[99] A Chicago-based reporter called the area a "menacing swampland" explaining it was "infested

[93] "Ask U.S. To Protect Farmers," *Jet*, April 8, 1965.
[94] Ibid.
[95] Reed, "Alabama March Passes Midpoint."
[96] Ibid.
[97] William Chapman and Thomas R Kendrick, "300 Pitch Camp in Mud of Alabama," *Washington Post, Times Herald (*Washington, D.C.), March 24, 1965.
[98] Reed, "Alabama March Passes Midpoint."
[99] Ibid.

with the deadly water moccasin – a highly poisonous snake which thrives in the area." The perceived danger of the natural landscape seemed to go hand-in-hand with the risk for terrorism along the route, as the same reporter wrote, "There was always the danger that local Klansmen might make good on their threat – to break up the March with violence. It would have been so easy for them to do so. The forest, which crept up on the shoulder of the road was an excellent place for camouflaged snipers to hide and imperil the queue of 300 marchers."[100]

Despite the conditions, the demonstrators, "some of them footsore and limping, trudged through the rain," calling the precipitation "freedom rains."[101] Numerous media outlets reported the high spirits of the marchers and their songs, including a chant of "I Love Everybody" as they walked. Rev. Richard Leonard, a Unitarian Universalist minister wrote afterward that "the freedom songs we sang never really ended," and that "The same song could be sung for half an hour, with people continually inventing new verses…As usual, we included Governor Wallace, Sheriff Clark, Commissioner Baker, Mayor Smitherman, and Al Lingo in our love chants."[102]

Campsite 3 at the Gardner Farm on March 23, 1965

After approximately six hours of walking through the rain, demonstrators turned south off of Highway 80 in the afternoon of Tuesday March 23 and continued about a fifth of a mile before reaching the Gardner Farm on their left, along with the many vehicles lining the road. Before reaching the Gardners' property, the marchers certainly saw the four large tents that volunteers had already been set up in the fields in front of the family's home. Three tents, two sleeping tents and one auxiliary tent, were located on the north side of the driveway; the dining tent was set up across the driveway to the south. One media outlet reported the place was a "rain-soaked pasture."[103]

Minister Leonard provided a vivid description:

> "The field was a complete quagmire, with mud deep enough to ooze over the tops of our shoes…A liberal supply of hay had been brought in and laid both inside the tents and out. But the mud was too deep. The hay very quickly became wet and sank into the mud, sometimes out of sight…I finally found a small patch of relatively dry hay in the tent and sat down on it, resting my head on my arms and dozing off immediately. A few minutes later I was toppling over in the mud, and righted myself…A man went sloshing past muttering half aloud that this was worse than New Guinea in 1944."[104]

Despite the rain and exhaustion, contemporary accounts imply the flurry of activity at the Gardner Farm. Robert Gardner's daughter, Cheryl Gardner Davis, was four years old at the time and remembers the crowds

[100] Betty Washington, "Ala. Marchers Finish 3rd Day; Camp at Gaston-Owned Farm," *Chicago Daily Defender*, March 24, 1965.
[101] "Good Spirits Still Held."
[102] Richard D. Leonard, *Call to Selma: Eighteen Days of* Witness (Boston, Massachusetts: Skinner House Books, 2002), 102.
[103] Reed, "Alabama March Passes Midpoint."
[104] Leionard, *Call to Witness*, 103.

and the noise.[105] The *New York Times* reported, "When they arrived at camp, many of them threw themselves down, exhausted, under the four big tents. Many crowded around portable heaters and dried their clothes."[106] Others ate dinner supplied by Tuskegee University students. Marchers "formed a 50-yard-long chow line for ham, baked beans, salad, bread and chocolate…One server, chanting like a circus barker, touted the bread. 'A couple of slices of bread, you can have a couple slices of bread,' he sang."[107]

Once the rain stopped, the National Guardsmen and Army troops, who were on duty in pairs, were visible encircling the camp, dispersed among the Hereford cattle in the fields. Minister Leonard remembered, "An American flag had been planted on a small incline overlooking the road in front of our tent. It looked so good to me that I put my mattress down close to it and spent many minutes just contemplating it."[108] A local newspaper reporter noted, "Dotting the campsite were little mounds of dirt that looked like small graves. On each was a sign with the word 'segregation'."[109]

Though the organizers reportedly cancelled the usual camp meeting because of the mud, marchers mingled with locals and celebrities. In addition to the approximately 300 who walked the last leg of the route, those who could not march that day in the demonstration due to number limits started filtering into the camp. One example were the McGills, a Black family from the White Hall community in Lowndes County who drove to the Gardner Farm to spend time with the marchers there. Historian Hasan Kwame Jeffries writes that despite the marchers' soaked and muddy condition, "Local visitors found mingling among them [the demonstrators] breathtaking. Their appearance might have been unimpressive, but their purpose was inspiring and left an indelible imprint on the hearts and minds of those who dared meet them."[110]

The *Chicago Defender* reported "Folksinger Pete Seeger, his guitar slung across his back, leaned on a car and discussed with some of the marchers the songs they have made up along the road."[111] Another newspaper reported a "swinging" jam session Seeger intended to join underneath one of the tents.[112] Gary Merrill, a well-known British actor who had been volunteering since Sunday, and Pernell Roberts, an actor from the United States who starred in *Bonanza*, spoke to demonstrators, commiserated about the muddy conditions, and signed autographs. When asked what he thought about the Black Belt, Merrill said "I think mud is the same everywhere, it's what's on top of the mud that's different here."[113]

Around nighttime, the Reverend James Bevel, a leader in the SCLC and aide to Dr. King, "ordered that no more campers be permitted on the campsite 'because there is too much mud'."[114] As people began to bed down, volunteers handed out air mattresses for marchers to sleep on as they tried to find dry spots beneath

[105] Jay Reeves, article for the Associated Press, June 3, 2021.
[106] Reed, "Alabama March Passes Midpoint."
[107] Washington, "Ala. Marchers Finish 3rd Day."
[108] Leonard, *A Call to Witness*, 104; Chapman and Kendrick, "300 Pitch Camp."
[109] "Marchers Begin Final Leg in 50-mile Trek," *Selma Times-Journal* (Selma, Alabama), March 24, 1965.
[110] Jeffries, *Bloody Lowndes"* 50. `
[111] Washington, "Ala. Marchers Finish 3rd Day."
[112] Chapman and Kendrick, "300 Pitch Camp."
[113] Reed, "Alabama March Passes Midpoint."
[114] "Marchers Begin Final Leg."

tents. Minister Leonard recalled, "Mine turned out to be leaking and not very comfortable. But at least it was something to sit on to separate me from the mud."[115]

Lynda Lowery, a teenager on the march, remembered waking up on the Gardner Farm on Wednesday, March 24: "We all woke up muddy. We joked that it was the heavy people who sank down in that mud, but I weighed about ninety pounds and I got just as muddy as the heavy people. It was a good thing a family nearby let me bathe in their house!"[116] The demonstrators had oatmeal, toast, and coffee before leaving the Gardner Farm around 7:00 A.M, continuing east toward Montgomery.

Two weeks after the March, *Jet* magazine ran an article titled "Ask U.S. To Protect Farmers," advocating for protection of the Gardner family, as well the David Hall family, and Rosie Steele, owners of campsites number one and two, respectively. The piece stated that although the marchers "became major civil rights heroes…little publicity was given to the three Negro farmers…who offered their land as campsites…in three of Alabama's police state counties."[117] The magazine continued, "They face harassment, intimidation, home burnings and even death – unless the federal government moves aggressively to guarantee their right of citizenship – the right to welcome on their property any people they choose." The piece continued, "Friends [of Gardner's] urged him to buy a shotgun and protect his property after his electric wires were cut the day after the marchers moved on toward Montgomery." Given the state government's unwillingness to protect the marchers en route to Montgomery, the "SCLC officials called on government officials to guarantee protection since it is obvious Alabama government aides have no such intention." The article quoted SCLC leaders, "We have not forgotten these people…We are concerned about their safety."

The Gardner Farm's significance as Campsite 3 on the Selma to Montgomery March begins with the property's importance as a Black-owned farm during the Jim Crow in Selma. The marchers' use of the farm as a campsite underscores the degree of independence afforded by the Gardner family's ownership of their home and farmland. As seen in the initial planning for the first march campsite, in which a white landowner prevented the marchers from using his land after a Black tenant granted permission, Black-owned property along the March route was of utmost importance to the safety and success of the city-to-city demonstration. In her summary of the first few days of the March, Betty Washington, correspondent for Chicago's Black newspaper the *Chicago Daily Defender* who participated in the March, used the term "freedom campsite" to refer to the three privately-owned properties used by the marchers.[118] This reference, the violence that preceded and followed the March, the intimidation experienced by the farm owners, and the jeering and threats marchers experienced en route to Montgomery, worked together to lend immediate significance of the March campsites in the acquisition of federally-protected voting rights for Blacks. The Gardner Farm has remained in the Gardner family and continues to be farmed by Gardner descendants.

[115] Leonard, *Call to Witness*, 103.
[116] Lynda Lowery, *Turning 15 on the Road to Freedom: My Story of the 1965 Selma Voting Rights March* (New York: Penguin Random House, 2016), 93.
[117] "Ask U.S."
[118] Betty Washington, "March To End at Ala. Capital," *Chicago Daily Defender*, March 25, 1965; Theresa Fambro Hooks, "teesee's topics," *Chicago Defender*, March 27, 1965.

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Campsite 3: The Gardner Farm — Lowndes, AL
Name of Property — County and State

Previous documentation on file (NPS):		Primary location of additional data:	
	preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested)		State Historic Preservation Office
	previously listed in the National Register		Other State agency
	previously determined eligible by the National Register		Federal agency
	designated a National Historic Landmark		Local government
	recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #		University
	recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #		Other
	recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey #	Name of repository:	
Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):			

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 139 **USGS Quadrangle** Lowndesboro

(Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates. Delete the other.)

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

1. Latitude: 32.268959 Longitude: -86.536093
2. Latitude: 32.269077 Longitude: -86.528937
3. Latitude: 32.269159 Longitude: -86.528658
4. Latitude: 32.269141 Longitude: -86.528057
5. Latitude: 32.262064 Longitude: -86.528175
6. Latitude: 32.261973 Longitude: -86.533786
7. Latitude: 32.264695 Longitude: -86.533883
8. Latitude: 32.264659 Longitude: -86.536383
9. Latitude: 32.268724 Longitude: -86.536372

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The boundaries of Campsite 3: The Gardner Farm encompass all 139 acres of Lowndes County parcel number 45 09 06 23 0 000 002.000, as identified on the attached tax parcel map found on Lowndes County Parcel Viewer (https://www.alabamagis.com/Lowndes/frameset.cfm?cfid=830067&cftoken=27962045). Accessed November 22, 2022.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundaries of the nominated property encompass all of the resources associated with the property's 1965 period of significance, and reflect the size of the property during its period of significance. Furthermore, the 2010 "Protection Plan for U.S. Highway 80: Selma to Montgomery" defines the "Robert Gardner Property and Campsite Area" as that which falls within a half mile radius of the National Park Service sign near the northwest corner of the property. This radius nearly covers the entire property, further justifying the district boundaries.

11. Form Prepared By

Name	Savannah Grandey Knies and Carroll Van West, contributions by Kate Hughes, Alexis Matrone		
Organization	Center for Historic Preservation at Middle Tennessee State University		
Street & Number	Box 80	Date	January 2023
City or Town	Murfreesboro	Telephone	615-494-8938
E-mail	Savannah.grandey@mtsu.edu	State TN	Zip Code 37132

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to map.
- **Photographs (**refer to Tennessee Historical Commission National Register *Photo Policy* for submittal of digital images and prints**)**
- **Additional items:** (additional supporting documentation including historic photographs, historic maps, etc. should be included on a Continuation Sheet following the photographic log and sketch maps)

Photo Log

Name of Property: Campsite 3: The Gardner Farm
City or Vicinity: Lowndesboro
County: Lowndes State: AL
Photographer: Savannah Grandey Knies
Date Photographed: November 8, 2021, November 10, 2022

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

AL_LowndesCo_RobertGardnerFarm_0001
National Park Service sign identifying the Robert Gardner Farm. Photographer facing southeast.

AL_LowndesCo_RobertGardnerFarm_0002
Northern section of property with Highway 80 in left background. Photographer facing east.

AL_LowndesCo_RobertGardnerFarm_0003
Looking toward Site #1 near the two prefabricated homes (NC) and shed (NC). Photographer facing southeast.

AL_LowndesCo_RobertGardnerFarm_0004
Frederick Douglass Road along the west side of the farm. Photographer facing south.

AL_LowndesCo_RobertGardnerFarm_0005
Looking toward Site #2. Photographer facing southeast.

AL_LowndesCo_RobertGardnerFarm_0006
Looking down the driveway marchers used to access the farm. Tent sites were on either side (left and right). Roof of Robert Gardner House (C) is visible in background. Metal barn (NC) to the right. Photographer facing east.

AL_LowndesCo_RobertGardnerFarm_0007
Looking toward Site #1 north of the driveway. Photographer facing northeast.

AL_LowndesCo_RobertGardnerFarm_0008
Looking toward Site #1 and prefabricated home #1 (NC) north of the driveway. Photographer facing northeast.

AL_LowndesCo_RobertGardnerFarm_0009
Looking toward Site #2 south of driveway. Photographer facing southeast.

AL_LowndesCo_RobertGardnerFarm_0010
Looking toward Site #1 north of driveway, where prefabricated home #2 (NC) sits. Photographer facing northwest.

AL_LowndesCo_RobertGardnerFarm_0011
Robert Gardner House (C), west elevation. Photographer facing east.

AL_LowndesCo_RobertGardnerFarm_0012
Robert Gardner House (C), northeast oblique. Photographer facing southwest.

AL_LowndesCo_RobertGardnerFarm_0013
Wooden vehicle shed (C), northwest oblique. Photographer facing southeast.

AL_LowndesCo_RobertGardnerFarm_0014
View of farmland east of Robert Gardner House. Photographer facing east.

AL_LowndesCo_RobertGardnerFarm_0015
View of farmland north of Robert Gardner House, traffic of Highway 80 visible. Photographer facing north.

AL_LowndesCo_RobertGardnerFarm_0016
View of farmland south of Robert Gardner House. Photographer facing southeast.

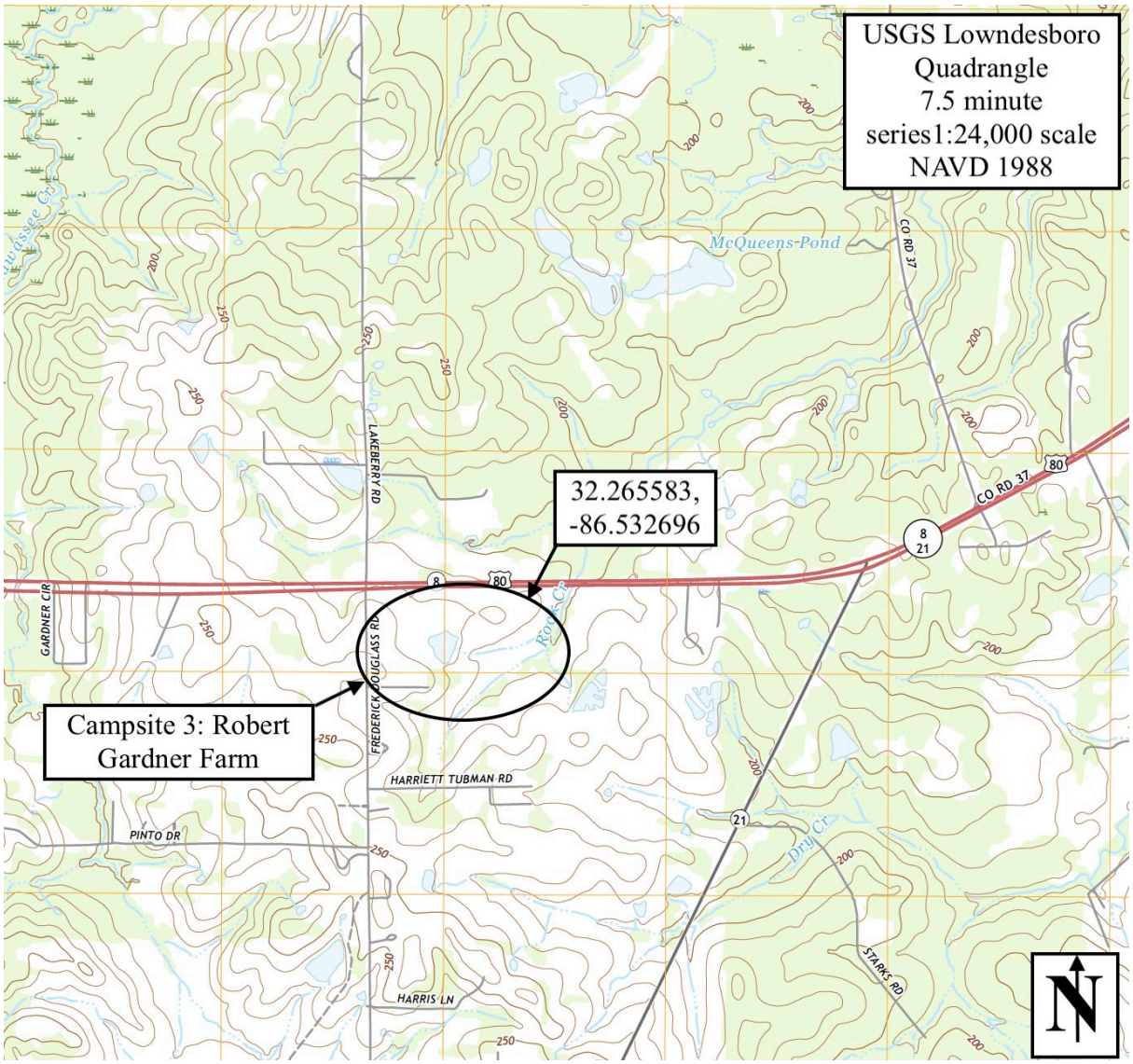
AL_LowndesCo_RobertGardnerFarm_0017
Metal barn (NC). Photographer facing southeast.

AL_LowndesCo_RobertGardnerFarm_0018
Prefabricated home #2 (NC) – located on site of former tents. Photographer facing northeast.

AL_LowndesCo_RobertGardnerFarm_0019
Prefabricated home #1 (NC) and metal shed (NC) – located on Site #1. Photographer facing southeast.

Campsite 3: The Gardner Farm | Lowndes, AL
Name of Property | County and State

Location Map



Campsite 3: The Gardner Farm | Lowndes, AL
Name of Property | County and State

Boundary/Coordinates Map

Lowndes County, Al tax map

Parcel No. 45 09 06 23 0 000 002.000

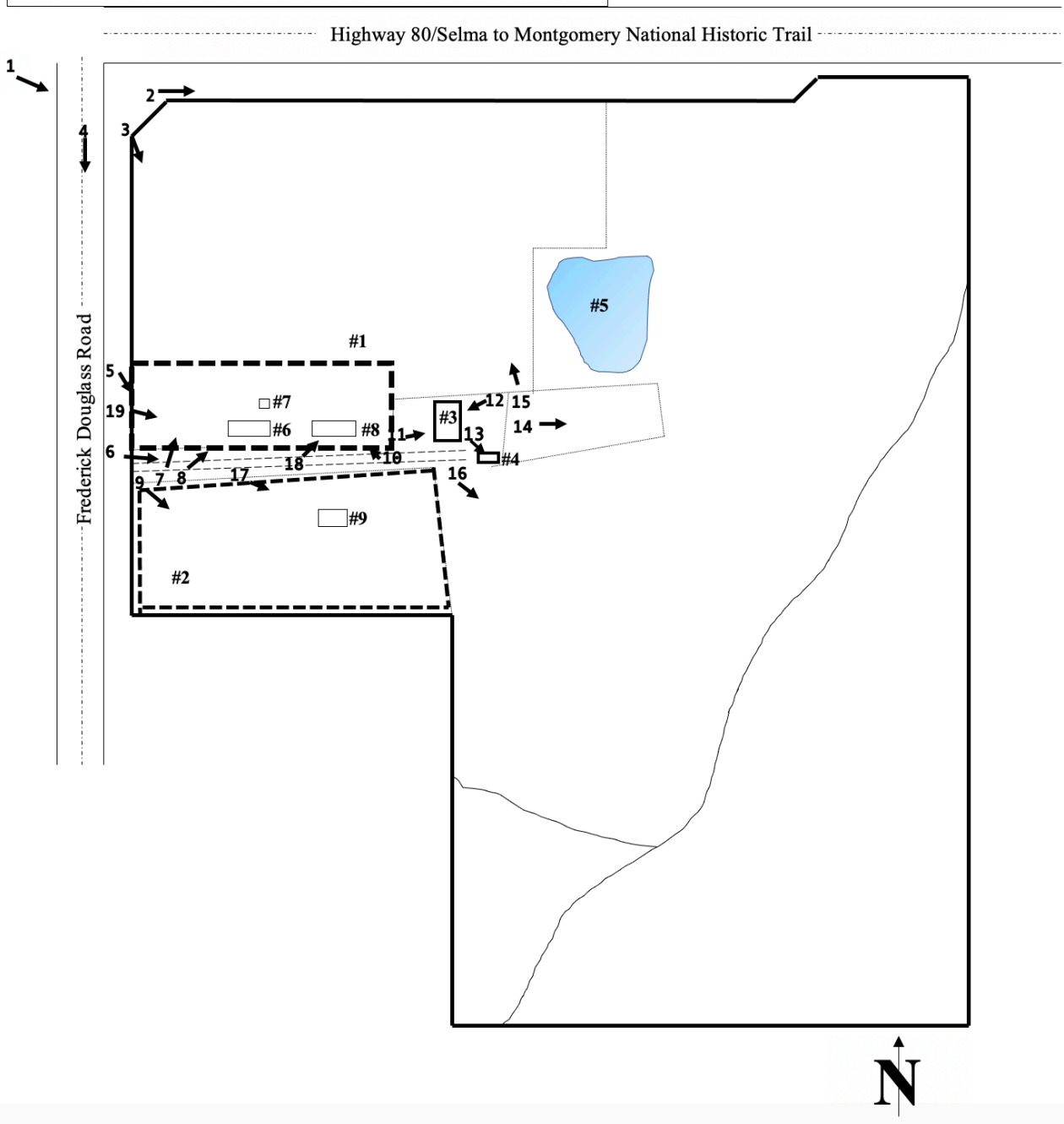
*This map represents the boundary of the nominated parcel with the coordinate provided for the nine corners.

Site Plan

Campsite 3: The Gardner Farm | Lowndes, AL
Name of Property | County and State

Site Plan Key *(not to scale)*
- heavy, solid black line represents property boundary
- dotted lines within the boundary represent fence lines

1. **Site #1 (C)**
2. **Site #2 (C)**
3. **Robert Gardner House (C)**
4. **Shed (C)**
5. **Pond (C)**
6. **Prefabricated home #1 (NC)**
7. **Small metal shed (NC)**
8. **Prefabricated home #2 (NC)**
9. **Metal barn (NC)**



The N.R. Continuation Sheet should be used for additional supporting documentation such as historic photographs, maps, and addendum documentation. Do NOT imbed supporting documentation and/or images within the text of Sections 7 and 8.

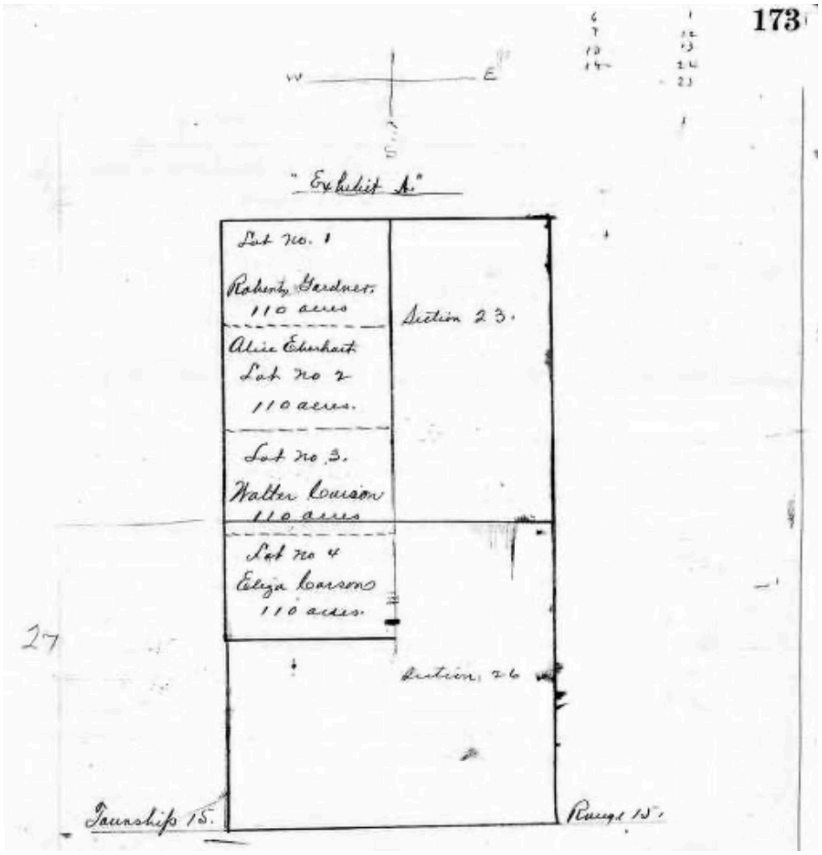


Figure 2. Image of map in Hugh A. Carson's will illustrating the parceling of a 440-acre tract between four of his children. Roberta's share, the northernmost of the 110-acre parcels, is the property that would become Robert Gardner's farm.

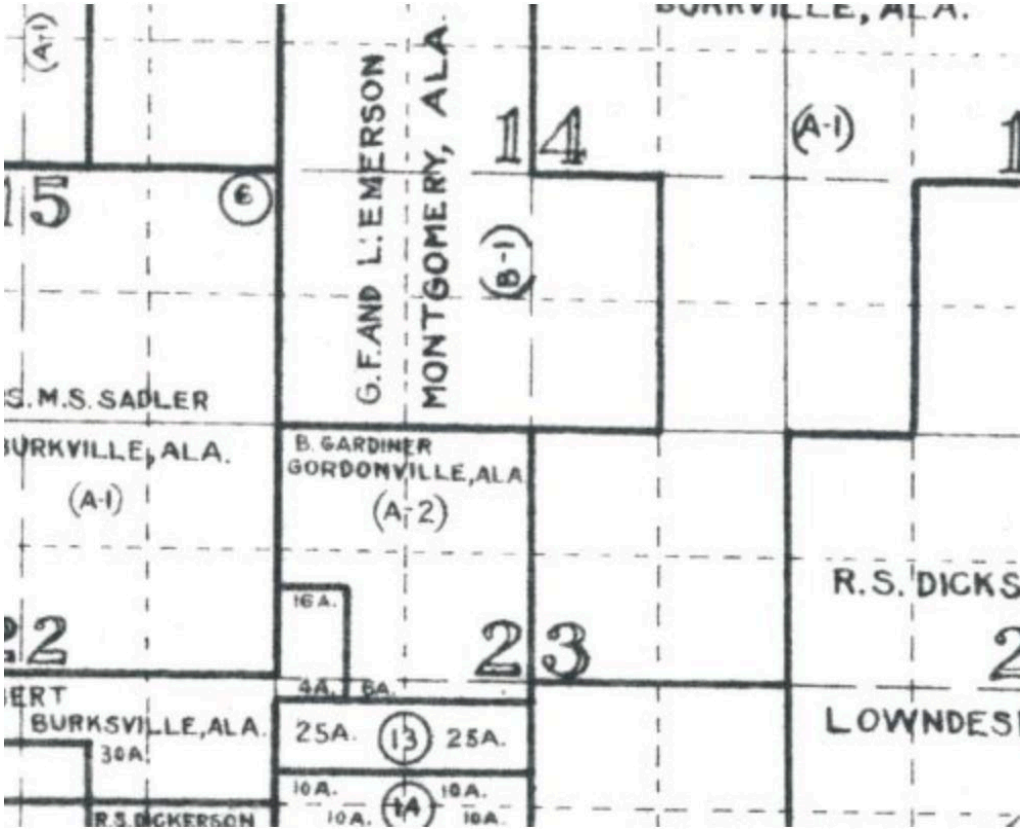
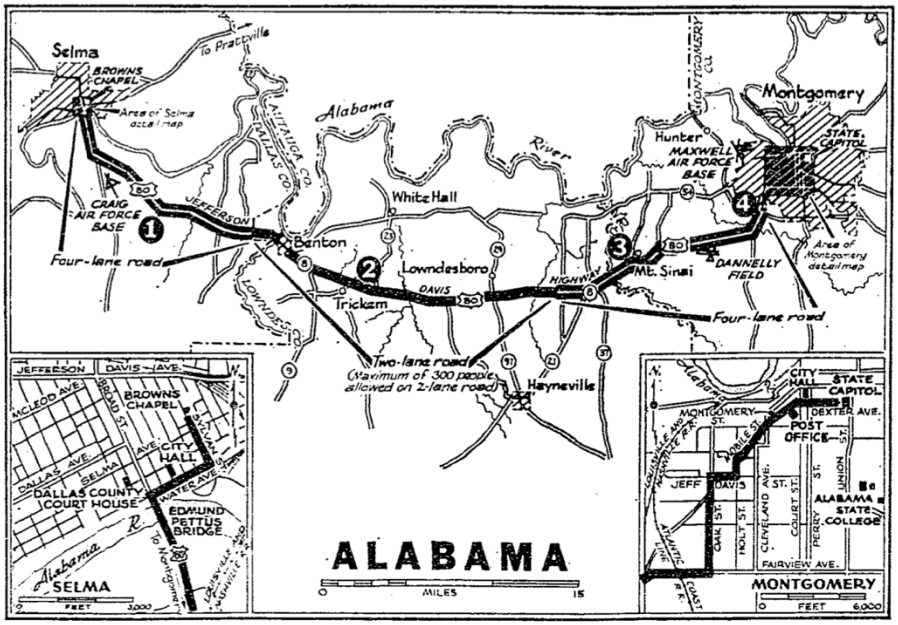


Figure 3. Excerpt from "Property Ownership Maps of Lowndes County, 1936" created by the Works Progress Administration in 1936. Notice the tract attributed to "B. Gardiner" near the center. Found at http://alabamamaps.ua.edu/historicalmaps/counties/lowndes/Cadastrals/index.htm.

After first refusing use of land, farmer Gardner consented, then admitted he was going to move from tense area for protection.

Figure 4. Photograph of Robert Gardner at his home, in April 8, 1965 edition of *Jet* magazine.



The New York Times March 22, 1965

MARCH ROUTE: Demonstrators left Browns Chapel Church in Selma and marched to New Sister Springs Church (1), near where 300 camped. They were to stop overnight Monday at a farm (2), Tuesday at a church (3), and Wednesday at the City of St. Jude (4), a Catholic institution serving Negroes. From there they planned to continue until Thursday to the Capitol in Montgomery, where the march will end. The farm and the church on the route were not identified for security reasons.

Figure 5. Map of the marchers' route with each campsite numbered and circled. From March 22, 1965 article in the *New York Times*