



**Name of Property:** Edmund Pettus Bridge  
**City, State:** Selma, Dallas County, Alabama  
**Period of Significance:** March 7, 1965-March 21, 1965  
**NHL Criteria:** 1, Exception 8  
**NHL Themes:** II. Creating Social Institutions and Movement  
2. Reform movements  
IV. Shaping the Political Landscape  
1. Parties, protests, and movements  
**Previous Recognition:** 1996 Selma to Montgomery National Historic Trail  
**National Historic Context:** 2009 *Civil Rights in America: Racial Voting Rights Theme Study*

**NHL Significance:**

- On March 7, 1965, local and state law enforcement officers attacked peaceful civil rights marchers crossing the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma en route to the state capitol as part of a planned 54-mile march along US 80 to Montgomery. The attack, which became known as “Bloody Sunday,” contributed to the introduction and passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965.
- Television and newspaper coverage of “Bloody Sunday” shocked the American public and dramatized the need for voting rights legislation, prompting President Lyndon Johnson to submit new voting rights legislation to Congress.
- The United States Department of Justice has called the Voting Rights Act the single most effective piece of civil rights legislation ever passed by the US Congress.

**Integrity:**

- The Edmund Pettus Bridge and the portion of US 80 east of the bridge, have a high degree of historic integrity and remain unaltered. As in 1965, the bridge carries US 80 over the Alabama River and is the main approach to Selma from the east. Although the historic setting of the bridge has changed some over time, the bridge remains the main approach to Selma, which is still a small town with a modest skyline. To the east, the landscape still features small-scale commercial buildings.



- The bridge and US80 receive routine maintenance and have not undergone any significant construction or renovations.

**Owner of Property:** Alabama Department of Transportation

**Acreage of Property:** 7.15 acres

**Origins of Nomination:** A historian from the Southeast Regional Office, National Park Service, wrote the nomination.

**Cost of Nomination to the Public:** None known.

**Potential for Positive Public Response or Reflection on NHL Program:**

- Designation as a National Historic Landmark will bring timely attention to one of the seminal events of the Civil Rights Movement as the country prepares to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the passage of the Voting Rights Act.
- Designation as a National Historic Landmark will promote tourism and have a positive economic impact on the surrounding community.

**Potential for Negative Public Response or Reflection on NHL Program:** None known.

**Landmarks Committee Comments:** Mr. James asked that more nuanced language be added to the nomination acknowledging that this was not the end for civil rights struggles.

**Landmarks Committee Recommendation:** Designation. Dr. Murtagh moved, Dr. Clark Hine seconded; unanimous approval.

**Public Comments Favoring Designation (comments received as of 11/06/12):**

Frank W. White, State Historic Preservation Officer, State of Alabama, Alabama Historical Commission, Montgomery, Alabama

Central High School, Hayneville, Alabama (16 letters of support)

Sandra L. Taylor, Superintendent, Tuskegee Institute National Historic Site, Tuskegee Airmen National Historic Site, and Selma to Montgomery National Historic Trail

Alyssa Goodman

Shannon M. Lindstedt

Diana Filo

Julia Ramirez

Natalie Anderson

Katie Hernandez

Abby B. Crawford

Sharon Michaels

Emily Yadau

Julia L. Hieser

Erika Acheson

Matthew Sayder



Chris Ott  
Christina A. Chinnici  
Michael Savage  
Carter Sayha Lu  
Jasmine S.  
Blair Sherry  
Christine Jaun  
Austin Bosemeear  
S. Gume  
Four letters of support with unintelligible signatures

**Advisory Board Recommendation:**