

# Pilgrimage to Alabama 2025

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& Kathy Simms

Session 2

Presented by Kathy Simms

## **Opening Prayer**

“Eternal God, out of whose mind this great cosmic universe, we bless you. Help us to seek that which is high, noble and good. Help us in the moment of difficult decision. Help us to work with renewed vigor for a warless world, a better distribution of wealth, and a brother/sisterhood that transcends race or color.”

Excerpt from “Thou, Dear God”  
— Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

## My “Why”

- Nudged by God
- Step out of routine, adventure
- Experience a pilgrimage
- Explore Alabama civil rights history
- Experience what the civil rights activists and African-American residents of AL experienced during the movement.
  - Walk where they walked — sacred ground
  - Visit churches where they worshipped and gathered
- Connection to my late father, and what he experienced as a freedom rider and civil rights activist

## **Pilgrimage**

— a journey to a special, significant or sacred space

- Physical journey - Trusting and traveling into the “Deep South” with people I didn’t know
- Spiritual purpose - Seeking closer connection to God and a renewed sense of purpose
- Inner transformation - Using the journey for prayer, gaining clarity, and finding inspiration
- Sacred space - Engaging with African-American and Civil Rights History of Alabama
- Connection - Feeling part of the civil rights experience, feeling connection to my Dad (deceased), fellowship with other pilgrims/new friends

# Civil Rights Pilgrimage to Alabama Overview

April 21-25, 2025

## Day 1: Birmingham, April 21

- **Kelly Ingram Park**
- Historic Bethel Baptist Church

## Day 2: Birmingham, April 22

- Birmingham Civil Rights Institute
- **16th Street Baptist Church**
- St. Mark's Episcopal Church (dinner and worship)

## Day 3: Montgomery, April 23

Equal Justice Initiative (EJI) Legacy Sites:

- **The Legacy Museum**
- Freedom Monument Sculpture Park

## Day 4: Montgomery, April 24

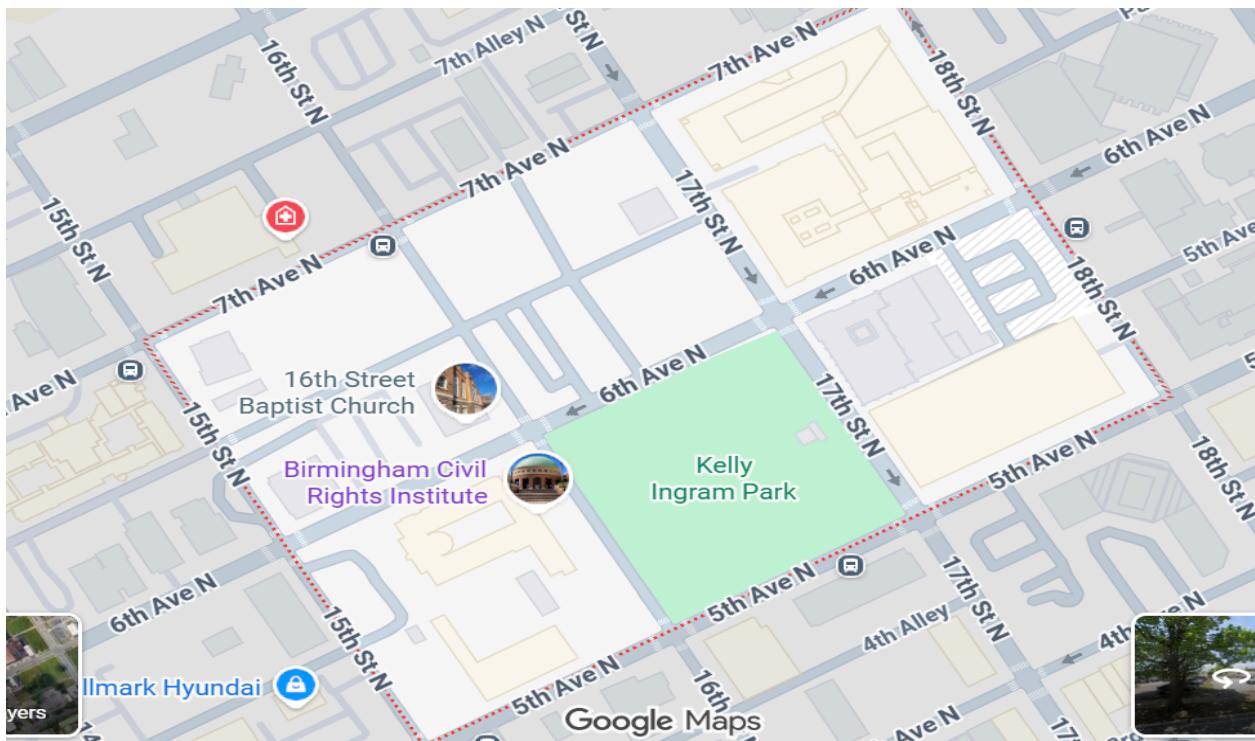
- EJI Legacy Site: **National Memorial for Peace and Justice** (“**Lynching Museum**”)
- More Up Campus
- Episcopal Church of the Good Shepherd (visit and fellowship)
- Dexter Avenue Baptist Church
- Rosa Parks Museum
- The NewSouth Bookstore

## Day 5: Selma, April 25

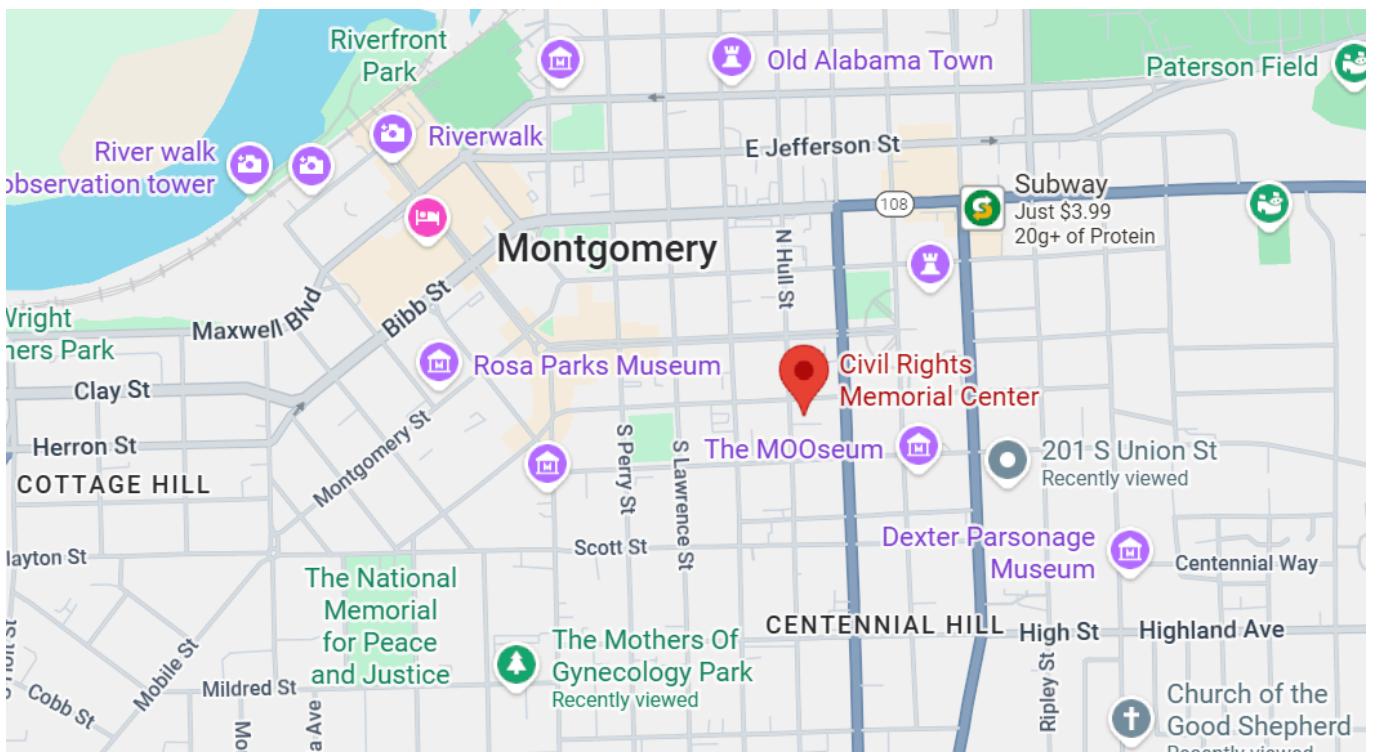
- National Voting Rights Museum & Institute
- **Edmund Pettus Bridge**
- Civil Rights Memorial Park

\*\*\* Items in bold were most impactful for me

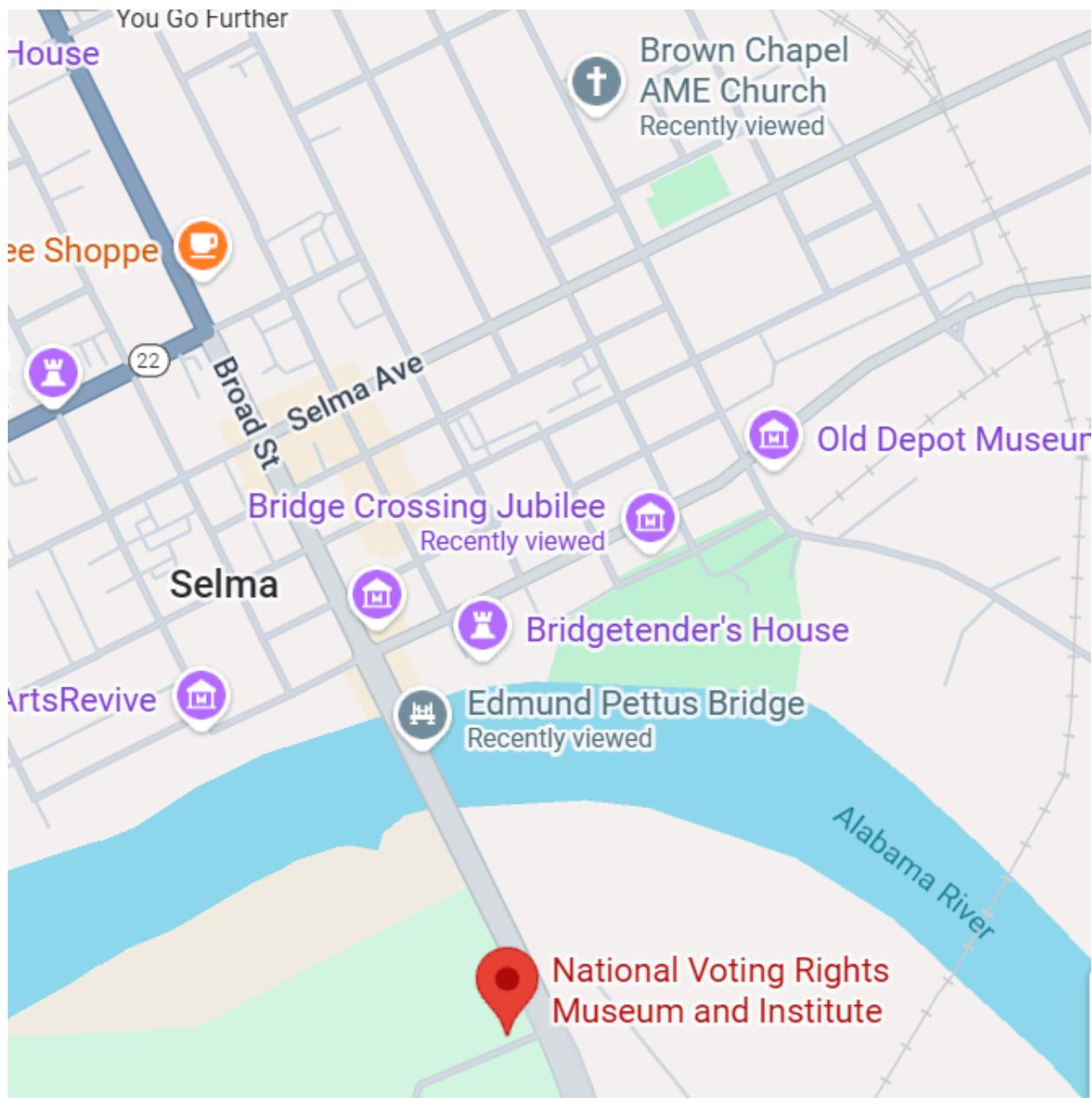
## Map of Birmingham Civil Rights District



## Map of Historic Area of Montgomery, AL



## Historic Areas of Selma, AL



## Impactful Quotes

From the Reflection Room of the EJI Legacy Museum:

*If we have the courage and tenacity of our forbears, who stood firmly like a rock against the lash of slavery, we shall find a way to do for our day what they did for theirs.*

Mary McLeod Bethune  
--National Council of Negro Women

From the Rosa Parks Museum:

*The end is reconciliation; the end is redemption; the end is the creation of the beloved community.*

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

