



Smithsonian

National Museum of American History Kenneth E. Behring Center

Guide to the Stephen Somerstein Selma to Montgomery March Photographs

NMAH.AC.1300

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives Center, National Museum of American History
Title:	Stephen Somerstein Selma to Montgomery March Photographs
Date:	1965
Identifier:	NMAH.AC.1300
Creator:	Somerstein, Stephen (Photographer)
Extent:	12 Photographic prints
Language:	English .

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

Stephen Somerstein

Processing Information

Collection is unprocessed.

Preferred Citation

Stephen Somerstein Selma to Montgomery March Photographs, 1965, Archives Center, National Museum of American History.

Restrictions

Collection is open for research.

Conditions Governing Use

Collection items available for reproduction, but the Archives Center makes no guarantees concerning copyright restrictions. Other intellectual property rights may apply. Archives Center cost-recovery and use fees may apply when requesting reproductions.

Biographical / Historical

Stephen Somerstein was born in 1941 in New York City, Somerstein is best known for his photographic work capturing the march from Selma to Montgomery. He began his passion for photography while studying at the City University of New York while pursuing a degree in physics. In college Stephen ultimately became the managing editor for the university newspaper entitled "Main Events". In 1965, with the rise in public consciousness in the importance of the civil rights movement and Dr. King's pursuit of equal opportunity and voting rights, Stephen decided to journey to Alabama to cover the Selma to Montgomery civil rights march for his collegiat newspaper. Stephen was 24 years old when he shot the iconic images of the march on Selma.

It was an historic occasion that greatly tested his ability to shape beautiful and meaningful images, while on a short film quota, with rapidly evolving photo-opportunities. The 1965 Selma to Montgomery Civil Rights March (actually three separate marches) was the culmination of a multi-year protest against alleged discriminatory voting registration practices in Dallas County, Alabama. Images in the news media of violence

that took place in response to the march shocked Americans and influenced civil rights legislation and enforcement. His body of work spans a continuous thread from the 1960's to the present, covering cultural, social and political subjects.

Scope and Contents

The collection documents the march of many Americans from Selma to Montgomery Alabama in 1965 during the Civil Rights March. It focuses mainly on photographs and an original book cover from Stephen Somerstein. There are twelve black and white images, 11" x 14", documenting the 1965 Selma to Montgomery Civil Rights March. Some of the photographs include Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Other images include John Lewis of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, minister and civil rights leader Ralph D. Abernathy, and singer Joan Baez.

Arrangement

This collection is arranged into two folders.

Folder 1: Photographs, 1965

A collection of 12 black and white images showcasing what life was like for the marchers headed to Montgomery to Selma.

Folder 2: Book Cover, 1965

An original book cover which served as the enclosure for the images.

Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

Names:

- Abernathy, Ralph, 1926-1990
- Baez, Joan
- King, Martin Luther, Jr., 1929-1968
- Lewis, John
- Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (U.S.)

Container Listing

Box 1, Folder 1	Photographs, 1965
Box 2, Folder 1	Book Cover, 1965, 1965