

NEWS RELEASE
STUDENT NONVIOLENT COORDINATING COMMITTEE
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ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30314

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 15, 1965

SELMA FREEDOM DAY SET

SELMA, ALABAMA - Civil rights forces here have planned a "Freedom Day" Here January 18 through 20 and January 25 through 27.

During the "Freedom Day", Dallas County Negroes will be encouraged to attempt to register in large numbers at the County Courthouse here.

"Freedom Days" have been held in Alabama, Georgia and Mississippi to spur Negro voter registration. The first was held here on October 8, 1963, when 450 Dallas County Negroes stood outside the courthouse here all day to register. The first Freedom Day here was observed by writer James Baldwin, who watched two field secretaries from the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) get beaten when they tried to take food and water to the Negroes waiting in line. Two other registration workers were arrested that day when they stood on the steps of the federal courthouse wearing signs urging Negroes to register to vote.

SNCC Chairman John Lewis will be in Selma for Freedom Day. Lewis plans to participate in workshops and precinct meetings being held in Selma's Negro neighborhoods and in rural Dallas County before the Freedom Day and to encourage Negroes to turn out in large numbers on the planned Freedom Days.

F. D. Reese, President of the Dallas County Voters League, has asked the County Board of Registrars to appoint deputy registrars for January 18, 19, 20, 25, 26 and 27, when large numbers of Negroes are expected to try to register.

SNCC has been conducting a voter registration drive in Selma since February, 1963. Only .09% of the voting age Negroes in Dallas County are registered to vote, according to the Civil Rights Commission report on Voting, 1961.