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43rd Selma Pilgrimage Set March 16-17

SELMA, Ala. — Exquisite homes and fabulous art will showcase the 43rd Historic Selma Pilgrimage March 16 and 17 along with the town's pivotal role in the American Civil War and Civil Rights Movement.

Presented by the Selma-Dallas County Historic Preservation Society and the City of Selma, patrons will delight in events that include guided tours of nine homes, the Summerfield Methodist Church, art shows, museums, book signings, exploration of an 1860's gristmill and grounds, plus the portrayal of famous Selmians at the 19th Century Heritage Village.

At almost 200 years old, Selma is home to the largest historic district in Alabama where a special blend of southern hospitality, Spanish Moss, heirloom blooms, wrought-iron fences and intricate architecture enchant locals and visitors alike.

Pilgrims will enjoy antebellum edifices, Victorian cottages, a semi-modern mansion and museums that tell the story of Alabama's Black Belt – from its days as one of the richest areas in the nation to its role in social change. Much of Selma, a major Confederate munitions manufacturer during the Civil War, was burned in 1865 by Wilson's Raiders, and the surviving war-era homes are waiting to be shared. A hundred years later, Selma became a center for the Civil Rights Movement, and today, the **Edmund Pettus Bridge** and **Selma Interpretive Center (NPS)** are popular tourist destinations. The **Old Depot Museum** also shares local Civil Rights history and relics of the Black Belt from the days of native Americans to industry, women's suffrage, railroad years, a fire museum and antique agricultural implements. The museum has been renovated to show its layout during its days as an L&N Depot. A new feature at the Old Depot for Pilgrimage will be book signings by Selma authors.

Pilgrimage begins at the **Vaughan-Smitherman Museum** which serves as ticket headquarters and the first stop on the tour. The three-story building has served as a girl's school, courthouse, Confederate hospital and a local renowned hospital during the 20th Century. Its collections are a microcosm of Selma history. This year, the museum will also host a luncheon where **Friends of the Vaughan** will sell box lunches from 11 to 1 both days. The lunches can be carried out or eaten on the beautiful museum grounds.

Actors will portray some of Selma's prominent citizens from the past and relay personal tales of woe and triumph at **Heritage Village** and **Miss Minnie Sue's Cottage**. Heritage Village, the site

of several 1800's structures donated to the SDCHPS, include the McKinnon-Riggs doctor's office, 1830 Calhoun law office, Siegel servant quarters and a historic pigeon cote, as well as displays of 19th century equipment and furnishings. Miss Minnie Sue's, c. 1830, is fashioned from hand-hewn timbers joined with wooden pegs and was recently donated to the preservation society.

Across from Heritage Village is **Sturdivant Hall**, an antebellum house museum furnished with lovely antiques true to the period.

Four private homes are on tour in the morning from 9 until 1, and a completely different tour of homes opens in the afternoon from 1 until 5 both days. Morning houses include both antebellum and Victorian. The **1860 Parke House** is an outstanding Greek Revival with modern renovations such as a seven-car garage and chef's kitchen. The **1910 Strand Cottage** and **1865 McEachern Cottage** are both in Fair Oaks Square, an Old Town neighborhood that was renovated in the 1980s. The Strand Cottage has a modernized interior that is filled with antiques, collections and art, some of it the owner Anne Strand's own work.

Afternoon houses are all antebellum, beginning with **the Platt-Lewis-Gayle-Linden House** in downtown Selma. The Italianate was saved during the Battle of Selma and features lovely collections from the owner's childhood home in Greenville where both her father and grandfather were physicians. **Kenan's Mill**, an 1860's gristmill that operated until the 1970s, will grind meal in the afternoon, and cornmeal can be purchased. Wandering troubadour Paul Garner will sing and play his guitar, and pilgrims can also tour the **mill house**, a charcoal kiln, walk a swinging bridge across Valley Creek and enjoy the park-like grounds.

Descendants of the original owners and builders of Kenan's Mill are also opening the old **Kenan Place**, an antebellum home with an interesting story of the Civil War. Kenan's Mill and the Kenan home are on the way to the antebellum **Moore-Pinson-Tate-Hudson Home** and the **Methodist Church** in Summerfield.

Friday night's house is truly a treat. The **Hohenberg-Jones-Hobbs House** will be open to pilgrims with wine, punch and snacks at the end of the tour. This mansion, built in the 1930's, has been fully restored and modernized to accommodate luxurious modern living. The older guest house will also be open for tours.

Other events include the **Selma Art Guild** show both days and **Alabama Plein Air Artists Show** and Sale Saturday from 4:30 to 6 p.m. At **Carneal Arts Revive**, there will be an art exhibition by Paper Workers Local plus a traveling Water/Ways exhibit from the Smithsonian's Museum on Main Street.

While several venues are free, admission is charged for most homes and museums. Individual ticket prices range from \$5-\$20, and a complete package ticket for both days is available for \$50. Visit selmapilgrimage.com where you can download a brochure and check special offers. Updates are posted on Facebook at "Selma's Historic Pilgrimage." You may also email info@selmapilgrimage.com or call 334-412-8550.

Sponsored by the Selma-Dallas County Historic Preservation Society, Pilgrimage began in 1976 as a way to share the city's variety of architectural styles and rich history. Selma's historic district features more than 1200 structures.