



AP Photo/Perry Aycock

In this March 16, 1965 file photo, mounted state and county police officers ride their horses into a group of demonstrators after they refused to disperse in Montgomery, Alabama.

# Remembering Selma 50 years later

Associated Press

It only lasted minutes, but images of sheriff's deputies lobbing tear gas and beating civil rights marchers with batons and whips on March 7, 1965 energized the nation into fighting against segregation in the South.

50 years ago, Martin Luther King Jr.'s Southern Christian Leadership Conference began a series of marches from Selma, Alabama to the state capital of Montgomery as part of a push for black voting rights.

The first of the three marches became known as "Bloody Sunday." The second came days later as King led protesters on a march to the scene of the violence, but no further to avoid violating the judge's order. A third march — that came with federal backing — began on March 21 and made the 50-mile stretch from Selma to Montgomery. That year, Congress passed the Voting Rights Act, which gave African-Americans the right to vote.



AP Photo/File

In this March 7, 1965 file photo, state troopers use clubs against participants of a civil rights voting march in Selma. At foreground right, John Lewis, chairman of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, is beaten by a state trooper. The day, which became known as "Bloody Sunday," is widely credited for galvanizing the nation's leaders and ultimately yielded passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965.



AP Photo/File

In this March 7, 1965 file photo, S.W. Boynton is carried and another injured man tended to after they were injured when state police broke up a demonstration march in Selma. Boynton, wife of a real estate and insurance man, has been a leader in civil rights efforts.



AP Photo/File

In this March 5, 1965 file photo, the mayor and his auxiliary police, armed with shotguns, rifles, pistols and tear gas, form a roadblock at city limits to stop 150 African Americans from marching into town and the courthouse in Camden, Ala.

## Obama: Ferguson report exposed racially biased system

COLUMBIA, S.C. (AP) — The police situation in Ferguson, Missouri, was "oppressive and abusive," President Barack Obama said Friday, as he prepared to commemorate a half-century since the historic civil rights marches in Selma, Alabama.

"It turns out they weren't just making it up. This was happening," Obama said.

In his most expansive comments yet about the Justice Department's report on racial bias in Ferguson, Obama said it was striking that investigators merely had to look at email sent by police officials

to find evidence of bias. He said the City of Ferguson now must make a decision about how to move forward.

"Are they going to enter into some sort of agreement with the Justice Department to fix what is clearly a broken and racially biased system?" Obama said.

The Justice Department's report cleared Darren Wilson, the white former Ferguson police officer who fatally shot 18-year-old Michael Brown, who was black and unarmed, while on duty in a St. Louis suburb in August. But in a separate report, federal in-

vestigators found patterns of racial profiling, bigotry and profit-driven law enforcement and court practices within the Ferguson Police Department. Ferguson city leaders are to meet with Justice Department officials in about two weeks to put forth an improvement plan.

The president himself was the subject of some of the racist emails from Ferguson police and municipal courts employees uncovered in the investigation. A 2008 email said Obama would not be president for long because "what black man holds a steady job for four

years," while another depicted Obama as a chimpanzee.

Although Obama said he didn't think what happened in Ferguson was typical of the rest of the country, he added that it wasn't an isolated incident, either.

He called for communities to work together to address tensions between police and communities without succumbing to cynical attitudes that say "this is never going to change, because everybody's racist."

"That's not a good solution," Obama said. "That's not what the folks in Selma did."

## Why 5.5 percent unemployment isn't as great as it seems

WASHINGTON (AP) — Unemployment in the U.S. has dropped to a seven-year low of 5.5 percent — a level normally considered the mark of a healthy job market. Yet that number isn't as encouraging as it might sound.

While U.S. employers added a solid 295,000 jobs in February, and the jobless rate fell from 5.7 percent, it went down mostly because many people gave up looking for work and were no longer officially counted as unemployed, the government reported Friday. What's more, wage gains remained sluggish.

Those trends suggest that the job market, while improving rapidly, isn't quite as healthy as it looks.

That complicates the Federal Reserve's task of figuring out when the economy has strengthened enough to withstand higher interest rates. The Fed is considering a rate increase as early as June.

With Friday's report, employers have now produced 12 straight monthly job gains above 200,000. It's the longest such stretch since 1994-95.

The U.S. is easily outshining most other major economies. For example, the unemployment rate in the 19 countries that share the euro is 11.2 percent, or twice the U.S. rate.

The robust U.S. job gains appear to have convinced many investors that the Fed will soon raise the short-term interest rate it controls. Investors on Friday sold ultra-safe U.S. Treasuries, a sign that many anticipate a rate increase. The yield on the 10-year Treasury note rose to 2.24 percent from 2.11 percent.

And they dumped stocks. The Dow Jones industrial average plummeted 276 points in afternoon trading.

A 5.5 percent unemployment rate is typically consistent with what economists call "full employment" — when the proportion of unemployed people has fallen so low that employers must raise pay to find enough qualified workers.

Companies then raise prices to pay for the higher wages. And the Fed usually follows suit by raising its benchmark short-term rate to cool growth and ward off inflation.

But the scars of the Great Recession have made the process hazier and more complicated.

"5.5 percent doesn't mean what it once did," said Diane Swonk, chief economist at Mesirow Financial. Full employment "is always a moving target, and it has moved down."

Since the recession ended in June 2009, the percentage

of adults working or looking for work has fallen to a 37-year low of 62.8 percent. It has hovered around the mark for most of the past year.

Economists calculate that about half that decline reflects the aging of the population as the baby boom generation retires.

But another factor is that many Americans have become discouraged about their job prospects and have given up looking. Those out of work aren't counted as unemployed unless they are actively looking for jobs.

That has helped artificially lowered the rate since its peak of 10 percent in October 2009.

Many economists also argue the economy can't be near full employment

**"5.5 percent doesn't mean what it once did. (Full employment) is always a moving target, and it has moved down."**

— Diane Swonk, chief economist at Mesirow Financial

if wages aren't growing. And average hourly earnings rose just 3 cents to \$24.78 in February from the previous month.

Meagan Greene, chief economist at John Hancock Financial Services, noted that hourly pay

fell in February from January in the construction and mining industries. Such figures will outweigh the falling unemployment rate in Fed chair Janet Yellen's mind, she said, and perhaps discourage a rate increase soon.

The short-term interest rate is usually at 3 percent or 4 percent when the economy is at full employment. It is now at a record low of zero, and inflation is practically nonexistent.

Tim Hopper, chief economist at TIAA-CREF, said that if unemployment keeps falling and inflation starts to pick up later this year, "the Fed will be behind the curve if they haven't already started raising rates."

Nearly 3.3 million more Americans are earning paychecks than 12 months ago. That has boosted U.S. consumer spending and the broader global economy. Many leading exporters, particularly China, Germany and Japan, depend on Americans' spending for a chunk of their growth.

February's hiring gains were broad-based. Some of the industries with the biggest gains include mostly low-paid work: Hotels and restaurants added 60,000 jobs, retailers 32,000.

But higher-paying fields also added jobs: Professional and business services, which include accountants, engineers and lawyers, gained 51,000, construction 29,000 and financial services 10,000.

Growth slowed in the final three months of last year to an annual rate of 2.2 percent after roaring ahead at nearly 5 percent last spring and summer. But consumer spending rose, a sign demand remains strong.



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Blue Mountain Community College

Faculty Spotlight: Did You Know?





Jeremy Pike

BMCC Diesel Technologies Instructor

Jeremy has a degree in Ag Diesel Equipment Mechanics, and has worked for local diesel shops including Blue Mountain Helicopter, Wentland Diesel and the Ford Dealerships in Walla Walla and Pendleton in positions that included maintenance and diagnostics. He spent the 8 years prior to beginning at BMCC in Cummin's Northwest in Pendleton where he worked as a Cummin's Certified Master Technician. Jeremy began with BMCC during the Fall 2014 term and has been an invaluable component to the program since. He loves working on motors and teaching has come very naturally to him. Jeremy and his wife Meghan have two children, Laney and Ryder. He loves to spend time with his family at the cabin, fish with his son and hunt.

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[www.bluecc.edu/about-bmcc/bond-measure](http://www.bluecc.edu/about-bmcc/bond-measure)

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