

Selma

Reactions to Selma

The Honorable William Jackson (Jack) Edwards U.S. Representative of Alabama

Remembering the varying responses of the citizens of Alabama to the events in Selma.

Interview recorded August 23, 2012

Yeah, there was, and it was twofold. One was that nobody could believe that the highway patrol and the state police did what they did. But it was easy in those days for many of those same folks to say, "Well, they wouldn't have had to do it if those folks hadn't come down here where they didn't have any business, stirring up the people of Selma and the state." And so I'm not going to say that there was any one hard-over view. It was mixed. Everybody was embarrassed about what took place, but everybody could seem to find an excuse as to probably why it ended up that way. "If those folks had just stayed across the bridge, or stayed in Washington or wherever, and not come down and stirred it up, then a lot of this wouldn't have happened." I mean, I can't tell you how it is to be in the middle of all that, trying to find right answers knowing that many of the old ways were not right, looking for ways to try to resolve those issues, and for those of us in office trying to find the right answer for the people, there was no easy answer. So it got kicked around a lot. I don't recall in that sense individual stories, but the atmosphere was just—I mean, it was hazardous to be in that area at that time.