

That Was the Day That Was!

Memphis was in an uproar; but how did it get that way? I had waited a long time for this day to come, but now that it was here I wasn't sure that I wanted it. I witnessed many things that have already been explained or justified. All I will do is tell the things I saw and did.

I saw the mass of marchers advancing up Beale toward Main. I wanted to be with them. I advanced down Beale and Third and there I joined the marchers. I saw mostly high school students surrounding me. A lot of the boys I saw had a stick or a club in his hand. Others were carrying signs. I wasn't expecting any violence so I didn't realize then what the sticks were for.

There wasn't much order in the march. When the crowd reached Pope's Men Store I discovered what the sticks were for.

M.H. -

The window crashed and the march continued on. I saw fellows entering the stores carrying out goods. The looting had begun.

I was walking about two feet away from Martin Luther King when we got on Main. The crowd had gone wild. Mr. King and a group of ministers left the march down a side street. I thought it best for me to follow. We walked about the same pace we ~~had~~ been going. The ministers put Mr. King into a white car on Front Street and drove off. By this time police had us surrounded from all angles. The policemen had their guns drawn and gas mask on. They ordered "all of you to get back on Main. We were pushed by some of the policemen, so immediately we got back on Main.

On Main I saw more windows being broken. People were running and others walking. Others with loud speakers were telling the crowd to go back to Clayborne Temple. This is what the majority of the people did. On my way back to Clayborne Temple I heard bullets firing and more windows

being broken. I also saw fellows on the street drinking liquor that was stolen from the package store.

Back at Clayborne Temple fellows were trying to sell some of the things they had stolen. Over the loud speaker at Clayborne Temple, Rev. Middlebrook asked the people to come inside and take seats. When I left the church, most of the people were standing all around the building and in the street. I left there on my way home.

On my way home, I saw teenagers drinking more liquor and police cars speeding through the streets. I saw two teenagers on Vance Ave. stop and beat up a white taxi cab driver. A police car was nearby, but drove right by this incident. I passed by Porter Jr. High School and saw parents taking their children home.

I made it home, and about 5 or 6 o'clock that evening I saw army truck passing by. All night long I heard the sound of sirens, and heavy trucks.

A personal friend and I was affected
by the curfew hour Loeb put into action.
We wanted to go out that night but
couldn't. We wrote the following short
poem to express how we felt.

Blue skies, Moon light

I've got to get out of this house tonight
I was planning on going on a date, but
because of what is happening here I'm stuck
If Loeb wasn't such a big coward
I wouldn't be here because of this
curfew hour.

Blue skies, Moon light

Loeb let me out of my house tonight!