

Current Events in Memphis

a march, a non-violent march, a riot, which was it suppose to be? What did it start as, and what did it end as? Did the march accomplish its goals?

A non-violent march which was scheduled for Thursday, March 28, 1968 in support of the striking sanitation workers turned into an unexpected riot. The battles between the marchers and policemen in some cases were brutal. Those who survived the battles could be considered as the survival of the fittest, in which the police proved to be the fittest.

According to an active participant in the march, the marchers began gathering at Clayborn Temple as early as 7:30 am. By the time the march got on the way, the marchers were in a state of tenseness and restlessness. The march began to progress down the street in an orderly fashion, then all of a sudden the marchers turned and start running in all directions. This participant saw an older man passing out sticks to youths, who immediately began breaking out store windows. After this participant saw that

there was going ~~some~~ trouble she and her companion decided to go to the "Big M" ~~last night. But on the way~~ they had only been seated for an hour or so when the police came in and said, "All of you M. F. get out of here right now." One fellow was walking too slow, ~~so~~ he was immediately beaten to the floor. According to this participant the police over reacted in some situations. People who weren't involved in the march were attacked by the police as well as those involved.

Another participant, who was arrested said that there were more injuries and arrests than the news medias reported. He said most of the injuries were head injuries apparently made by the night sticks of policemen. He reported to me that the court room was filled with quite a number of bloody Negroes, ranging from about 25 to 15 years of age.

My opinion of the march is that it

was necessary, but it was carried out in the wrong way. By this I mean, their leader Martin Luther King had one objective in mind, but the people backing him had another objective in mind. These differences in objectives therefore resulted in violence and violence resulted to death. The march in itself I think was fine, but the after effects were not so fine. So the efforts of the march which turned into a riot did nothing but break laws, destroyed property, caused injuries and death, caused a curfew that damaged business profits, caused an over usage of police and national guards, which will cause an increase in tax next year, and most of all it destroyed the goals of the march.