

G.K-1

A Factual Account of Thursday's March

To get adequate coverage of the entire march to some extent, I decided to interview persons at the front, middle and the end of the line of march. It so happened that all are from LeMoyne. The following paragraphs are their accounts of what happened from their vantage point in the march. First, from the front of the march Bill Hodges reported the following information. "I was near the front of the march and not far from Martin Luther King when he finally arrived. I had been at Clayborne Temple since early morn like countless others present. About 10:00 p.m. the people became anxious to get the march started. The sun was shining making it hot. It was felt that time was being wasted just waiting around the church. When the march did start, there was a lot of noise and talking. King finally arrived and everybody tried to get near him. Upon reaching Beale and Linden, windows started to be broken. People were walking on the sidewalks, some crashing windows. All that could be heard was noise and shouting. King and allies hooked arms together. They shouted for the others to do likewise, but with no luck. Newsmen took pictures. A CBS Newsman photographed the window crashing and the crashes. However, policemen did not bother anyone until the marchers reached Main Street with the window breaking. The police promptly started breaking the march up when York Arms' windows were broken out. They used tear gas, chasing the marchers back down South Main. The marchers scattered in various directions. Some of them ran toward Vance and some toward Beale. The CBS Newsman's camera was taken and broken. At Lansky Brothers Men's Shop, policemen sprayed mace in looters' eyes and beat them with their billy sticks. A group of soul brothers chased a policeman through Handy Park while an officer across [mic] the street from the incident stayed there. The [mic] of the policemen ran the marches on down the middle of Beale Street toward Clayborne Temple. In the process, they sprayed tear gas. The marchers going back to the church shouted to each other, "they're shooting tear gas". I didn't go back to the church, I went home instead. I was not hurt and unharmed I went home. However, he did observe some of the people going back to the church but looters and some other people passed on by the Clayborne Temple. I asked Bill was he scared during all the events. He answered, "no, I went for a cause"."

About middle ways the march was Anita Jones. She related the following account. "Before I knew anything, the march had begun. The line of march had been held up for the arrival of Martin Luther King. I heard noise all around me. As we walked on down Beale, I noticed that a few of the shop windows were already broken. The line of march finally reached the turn on Main from Beale. The front of the march had turned the corner when suddenly people came running back down South main toward Beale. I didn't know what was happening. The thought of possible shooting at the front of the march ran through my mind. I was rather tense and nervous and yes, even scared. I heard a voice over a megaphone telling everybody to go back to the church for the march was over. Being mad and somewhat disgusted, I refused to run back like the people approaching me. I got on sidewalk along with a friend and began the way back down Bale. My friend and I turned on Third Street off Beale and sat in a Volkswagen and observed the sights. Most of the people were afraid and wanted to go home. The people from what I could see, were cooperating with the police by moving on but they pushed forcefully those individuals not able to move fast enough.