

# Rhodes College Digital Archives - DLynx

## LeMoyne Reflections on Sanitation Strike March pp. 80-82 -- B.W.

Item Type	Text
Download date	2026-04-12 03:46:06
Link to Item	<a href="http://hdl.handle.net/10267/34036">http://hdl.handle.net/10267/34036</a>

**B.W. – 1**

The Unsuccessful March

Thursday morning of March 28, 1968, I walked down Vance to Hernando Street to see the gathering of hundreds of Negroes and a few (illegible) at about 10 a.m. They were waiting on Rev. Martin L. King, who was to lead this (illegible) march for the purpose of justice being done for the sanitation workers (strikers). Before Rev. King arrived, the crowd carried posters and were discussing what they were going to do. I heard one Negro tell another that "as soon as they start breaking windows, I am going to get some watches and diamonds." I could see then that this man had the wrong spirit.

Rev. King led the mass march from Clayborn Temple to Main Street. I was told by one of the marchers that some started throwing bricks and breaking windows, and that the marchers were stopped at York Arms (store on Main). They had to return to the Temple, and Peaches (one of the marchers) said that mace was sprayed into the Temple. I feel that this was wrong and very unfair on the part of the policemen because the insiders

80

**B.W. – 2**

were not harming anyone.

About thirty minutes later, I saw and heard fire trucks and police squad cars going down Vance where many stores had been burned and damaged. People were running from the direction of Beale St., cursing which did not do any good. The policemen were shooting at someone on Third St., and many Negroes were hurt other places, I was told. There was stealing, shooting, beating and spraying of mace.

Some of the eyewitnesses' statements were"

Mrs. E.K. – "Thursday, about 12:30 a.m., watch from the windows of King Cotton Cleaner, I saw 19 or 24 boys from 16-19 years old with planks, bricks and bottles. They went around Sears (on 3<sup>rd</sup> St.) and broke out all of the windows. Their faces were not covered, and I didn't recognize any of them. As I was driving off, they went over to the cleaners and started breaking windows. The workers were running and screaming. After a while the policemen came."

Mrs. K. – "I didn't see the boy (Larry Payne-16) get shot, but I saw the policemen spraying mace into the face of people

81

**B.W. – 3**

who lined up (illegible) the home on Mason St. the policemen dared them to come down, and one (illegible) policeman spit at one of the girls who worked with me. Mrs. Payne went to the hospital with

me. Mrs. Payne went to the hospital, and they wouldn't let her see him. It was awful, and we need to pay."

Peaches (a marcher)- "A man was pulled out of his car and (illegible) by the policemen."

Sister G- "A policeman kicked an old lady in the street and started hitting a man with his stick. They were both standing at the bus stop."

Thursday was a frightening and dreadful day, and some of the marchers took advantage of Rev. King's march for their own evil gain, which was wrong. Prayer is the only answer to these problems, and God will judge the length of his trouble. If God doesn't stop it, other men and Loeb sure can not.