

The Gentle Warrior

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King toured India, stopping to lay a wreath on the grave of Mahatma Gandhi, King's predecessor in non-violence.

Dr. King resigned his pastorate in Montgomery in 1960, and moved his family back to Atlanta. In the same months, students at A&T State University staged a sit-in at a local Woolworth lunch counter in Greensboro, triggering a wave of non-violent protests.

Dr. King traveled through most of 1960, appearing at meetings, rallies, and workshops — fund-raising, and exhorting activists to "fill the jails."

King himself was jailed on several occasions, such as the time that he and 36 followers walked into Rich's Department Store in Atlanta and requested service at the store's restaurant. In that case, the charges were dropped when the mayor of Atlanta interceded and ordered a two-month truce for negotiations.

King called the freedom rides "a psychological turning point in our whole struggle," and the city which best exemplified the conflict was Albany, Georgia. Racial conflict surfaced there when a group of black ministers asked the editor of the Albany Herald to stop printing defamatory material about blacks. White racists responded by stoning one of the minister's homes. Albany became the scene of months of demonstrations and strife between police and protesters. King called Albany "a symbol for segregation's last stand," in an article written in a jail-cell in the town.

King was jailed again in the Birmingham campaign, which spawned 758 demonstrations in 186 cities during the following ten weeks.

By 1963 the toll of arrests for sit-ins had risen from 3,600 to 14,733.

The year 1963 was climaxed by the March on Washington, in which nearly a quarter of a million people congregated around the monuments in the capital, listening to speeches and protest songs, with singers, celebrities, and over 150 members of Congress. It was at this gathering that King made his famous "I have a dream" speech, ending "Free at last, free at last. Thank God Almighty, I'm free at last."

In 1964, King was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

There were many more milestones in his pursuit of freedom for his people: Selma, Chicago, Birmingham — and finally Memphis.

When King arrived in Memphis in late March of 1968, he spoke to his followers in a way considered by many to be a premonition of his fate:

"Like anybody, I would like to live a long time," he told the crowd. "Longevity has its place. But I'm not concerned about that now. I just want to do God's will. And He's allowed me to go up to the mountain. And I've looked over and I've seen the promised land."

"I may not get there with you, but I want you to know that we as a people will get to the promised land.

"So I'm happy tonight. I'm not worried about anything. I'm not fearing any man. Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord."

The next day, April 4, 1968, as assassin's bullet ended the life of Martin Luther King, Jr.

Residents Remember

Dr. Martin L. King

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the television set all night listening to the news about it."

The next day a white friend offered Griffin a ride

to the D.C. airport.

"We were riding along on the freeway, and as we got to the top of a hill, we could see Washington burning..."

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We Salute Dr. Martin Luther King