

SELMA: And Possemen Waited For The Buses

By MIKE YOPP
DTH Managing Editor

It isn't easy to get to Selma. There's no air service and only one bus line routes coaches through the small Alabama town. One arrives at 4:23 a.m.

Two white cars were parked in front of the bus station. In each sat four possemen, Dallas County residents deputized by Sheriff James Clark. They gave some dirty looks, but made no threats. They came later.

I left the bus with a civil rights worker from Washington. Nobody else got off. "Know where you're going?" he asked. "Nope, the hotels are full. You?" He had a few telephone numbers so we walked to a nearby phone booth. Under the icy stares of eight armed men, we became fast friends.

His third call paid off. "You might have to sleep on the floor, but you're welcome to come along," he offered. A floor with sharp nails sticking through it would have been better than that cold Selma street.

We couldn't call just any cab. It had to be from a special taxi service he said. There was one parked around the corner.

The house was nestled deep in the heart of a Negro neighborhood, probably the largest one in town.

C. T. Vivian, an aid to Dr. Martin Luther King, answered the door. He was a guest too, in the home of Mrs. Amelia Boynton, secretary of the Alabama Southern Christian Leadership Conference. There were five or six others sleeping there. One of them was national CORE director James Farmer.

Nobody Was Sleepy

It was late. Everybody was tired. Nobody was sleepy. Vivian and Mrs. Boynton filled us in on the day's activities. King was here, Vivian said, and everything was set for the march. Then he excused himself. "There's a conference," he said.

Mrs. Boynton talked of her injuries from Sunday's attempted march on the state capitol at Montgomery. She was bruised all

over and had suffered briefly from tear gas burns.

The Washington rights worker brushed the long hair out of his eyes and talked of rights work in the nation's capital. He revealed that he was treasurer of Prince George County White Citizens Council. After our mouths closed, he laughed and said he was one of a large group of CORE and NAACP members who had infiltrated the council and taken over its policy.

"We're got the charter and we're the council as long as we stay in control." He said the council wasn't too active.

The tone of the conversation was quite different from one I participated in about four hours earlier in Birmingham. A Birmingham doctor sat by me on the flight and later we ate dinner and drove through the downtown section with him pointing out the signs of progress in this city torn by racial strife only one year ago.

He condemned the actions of militant rights workers there and in Selma, and it was a rational line, not typical southern Alabama Klan talk.

Not On The Floor

But we didn't sleep on the floor. The rights worker slept on a couch and I bunked out on a tiny cot with my knees hanging off the edge.

"Bombings?" I thought, and remembered houses of rights workers which were blasted. Often they weren't hurt because they were sleeping in the rear and only the front of the dwelling was shattered. We were in the front. With those thoughts in mind, I fell into a restless sleep about 5:30 a.m.

Thud! Something slammed against the screen door five feet from my head. I leaped from the cot and grabbed the foot of the rights worker. "Hit the floor!" I shouted. Nothing happened. I crawled to the door and peeped out. There, unexplored on the porch, was the morning edition of the Birmingham Post-Dispatch.

I laughed and the rights worker mumbled a sleepy oath and snored again.

The house was a meeting place of SCLC workers and white

ministers who had come down for the rally. The visits began early. Since we were in the center of the living room we wiped the sleep out of our eyes at about 7:30 a.m. to make room for them.

Everybody who came was ready to march. One Birmingham Negro wanted to go then. Ministers from Boston, Bloomington, Ind. and Nashville, Tenn. were willing to march, but joked about how they would "pass out" after the first few miles.

A Negro arrived with a huge cardboard box overflowing with bacon, eggs and grits. Five Negro women prepared dinner for about 30 hungry men.

There was plenty of time for talk before breakfast, but after the last egg was eaten the house was emptied in a matter of minutes. Everybody went to Brown Chapel A.M.E. Church, the gathering point for the march.

Most of the faces at the church were young. But there were plenty of older people too and a large number of clergymen who had come to march.

The morning passed with scores of speakers arousing the sentiments of the mixed crowd. Between talks there were songs and it appeared the civil rights songbook had grown since the Chapel Hill demonstrations.

So there were speeches and "Yes, brother, you know it." And there was singing and hands clapping and feet beating rhythm on the wooden floor of the old chapel.

The crowd grew as the time for King's arrival drew near. It became increasingly difficult to move among the hundreds jamming the church and the crowd outside that spilled over into a residential area across the street.

Then King arrived and hundreds made a last effort to get inside the already overflowing church. Scores of newsmen attempted to follow King through a side entrance.

Right Idea

Reporters and cameramen jammed the door and a large Negro kept yelling, "No more inside, no more inside." A tele-

vision camera crew had the right idea. They joined together into something resembling a flying wedge and pushed through the tightly-packed, screaming corps of newsmen. I joined in as last man on the wedge and squeezed into the door behind a television camera.

By this time the people inside were worked into a single, yelling, screaming, stomping unit. They were ready to march and probably wouldn't have taken "No" for an answer even if King would have demanded it. He didn't.

"I've got to march!" he roared. The crowd went wild. The cheers died down and plans for the march were announced. The Medical Committee for Human Rights announced it had mobilized a fleet of ambulances complete with doctors and nurses. But the excited spokesman for the committee got a little ahead of himself in his instructions on what to do if attacked.

"If you are knocked unconscious," he warned, "make sure somebody stays with you." The 900 people jamming the chapel laughed, but soon forgot it. They were ready. And they poured out of the church with the spirit of a football pep rally.

It was quiet as the marchers left the church and walked toward the Edmund Pettus bridge about 10 blocks away. Leading the march at that time were James Orange and Rev. A. D. Williams King. Orange sported blue overalls. "I have no fear," King said.

Possemen, state troopers, sheriff's deputies and city policemen lined the route. All had helmets. Some had Confederate flags decaled on the sides. The march proceeded across the bridge after a confrontation with a U. S. marshal on the Selma side. King was in the lead now.

"No one will be allowed across the bridge unless they have a press pass from Sheriff Clark or are marching." This message boomed from a loudspeaker in a patrol car. I didn't have one and I cursed myself for not taking time to get one that morning. I ran across the long bridge which spans the Alabama River, hoping to beat the car with the loudspeaker. I didn't. A blue-shirted trooper met me as I left the bridge.

"Got a pass?" I showed him my press card. Not good enough. It had to be one issued by Clark. A hasty argument did me no good. "Either get a pass or get on the bridge," was his final word. That was unless I wanted to march with the demonstrators. The idea wasn't appealing.

I looked from the bridge as the marchers filed past. "Can't get a story from here," I told an Atlanta cameraman who also had not bothered to get a pass. "Yep," he said, and we joined the march about 10 ranks from the front.

We skirted the outside until we were even with King and walked through the lines of troopers on each side of the road toward the roadblock about 400 yards away. "Know how an Indian felt when he ran a gauntlet?" I asked the cameraman. "Yep," he muttered and looked at the hands of the troopers as they fingered long riot sticks slung on their waist near their revolvers.

A Trooper Moved

So it went, a cameraman and a reporter walking with 1,000 marchers to within 10 yards of the human roadblock backed up by state patrol cars. But one of the evenly-spaced troopers had moved, leaving a 10-yard gap between riot sticks. We ducked out of the line. "You two press?" demanded a trooper. "Yes." We were in.

We squeezed in among the dozens of other newsmen gathered by the roadblock until the cameraman was ordered back about 200 yards along with others who carried television cameras. The air was tense with excitement and loud with the roar of jets from a nearby air base giving the affair a close look. "Be a good time for a cloudburst," wished a newspaper reporter.

But the feared melee didn't take place. As King turned his marchers around after a prayer service the quarter-mile long line burst into song: "We Love Everybody." A veteran newsmen on my right relaxed, smiled and joined in the song.

They sang all the way back as reporters and cameramen broke into the ranks for quotes and comments from the many rights leaders gathered there.

"This is getting old," remarked a Selma man standing in front of his store. "Poor white trash," was the usual comment. No one seemed to notice the Negroes.

They walked to the chapel and listened to more speeches. It was over and the town relaxed. But the stillness of the Alabama sunset was shattered with the sirens of ambulances that carried three white ministers to a hospital after a beating by angry whites outside of a downtown cafe.

And if you were a stranger in town, you could count on very little service in a restaurant. But the food was good.

Selma looked like an army camp Tuesday night. Armed men walked the streets in groups and patrol cars cruised. You could about one patrol car in every four that passed Broad Street, which houses Selma's main area.

There was still a lot going on, but I had to catch a 10:30 p.m. bus to Birmingham to get an early flight out Wednesday morning. "Which way to the Greyhound bus station?" I asked two possemen. "You a stranger?" one asked. "Yes." "Then you're looking for trouble." The word "trouble" brought four others to their side. Not one of the six possemen smiled as the short one with a scar on his nose told me I was a troublemaker and that I was unwelcome. No explanation would suit him. "Get out of town," he demanded.

"That's exactly what I'm trying to do if you people think you might know where the bus station is." He wanted to argue. After looking at the riot sticks for the second time that day and thinking that they could probably kill a man and not be prosecuted, I didn't.

Finally, a large posseman offered the information. The scar-nosed man repeated his "get out of town" threat. I didn't like it, but there wasn't much choice on that dark side street. The only consideration was seeing the amazed looks on their faces when I said: "Thank all you gentlemen so much."

It was three hours before the bus left so I walked the streets of Selma. But all was quiet and heavily guarded.

There were no possemen around as I boarded the bus along with two others, a white youth and a Negro construction worker. I sat on the third row of the empty vehicle. The youth sat on the first. The middle-aged Negro walked to the back of the bus.

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UNC-G Students Assemble

False Alarm Halts Protest Lecture

A Speaker Ban protest lecture attended by UNC-G students in the Greensboro Public Library Tuesday night was temporarily halted by police and firemen after a false alarm was turned in.

The program, part of Greensboro lecture series "Great Decisions 1965," featured the Second Secretary of the Polish Embassy in Washington.

The secretary, Ryszard Krystosik, was prevented from addressing UNC-G students on their campus by the state's Speaker Ban Law because of his membership

in the Communist Party of his country.

UNC-G student Pamela Pfaff, one of the organizers of the off-campus lecture, led a quiet, bannerless protest march of 100 girls from the campus to the library.

Miss Pfaff, a senior from Greensboro called the demonstration a "protest by presence."

The false alarm was turned in from a box located beside an elevator on the first level of the basement of the library, known as the "upper stairs" level.

A member of the library staff told police that entrance could be gained to the floor only by use of a special key or by stairways descending from two ground level offices.

The lecture was delayed while alarms were turned off and police and firemen checked to see if safety regulations were being adhered to for the safety of the overflow crowd.

The protest march was granted a parade permit by city officials only after student leaders promised not to picket, chant or carry posters during their walk to the library.

University officials and students said the protest was not an organized move by any group but an expression by students who wished their feelings known about the Ban.

Police are seeking the person who turned in the false alarm.

Faculty Club Hears Debate On System

Members of the Faculty Club at their weekly luncheon Tuesday heard a debate on the topic "Should the Honor System Be Abolished?"

Of the approximately 100 members of the faculty in attendance, only two voted to abolish the system.

Debating in favor of retaining the Honor System was Eric Van Loon. His opponent was debate club president Bob Powell.

Gymkhana

Craige dormitory and the Piedmont Sports Car Club will co-sponsor a Gymkhana Sunday at the Wellons Village Shopping Center in Durham.

In preparation for the weekend, there will be a rally clinic at Craig Thursday at 8 p.m., open to all students.

The groups will hold a closed rally Saturday for members of the Piedmont Club and residents of Maverick House.

Additional information may be obtained from Sam Blate, 929-2204.



James Brown Came To Town

—Photo by Jock Lauterer

House Approves State Name Change

RALEIGH (AP) — Cries that the proposed name change for North Carolina State would destroy the Consolidated University went unheeded Wednesday as the House overwhelmingly passed the measure.

Only a scattering of noes could be heard in the House voice vote on the proposal to change the school's name to North Carolina State University at Raleigh from the present name, North Carolina State of the University of North Carolina at Raleigh.

The bill, backed by State alumni, faces tougher opposition on the Senate side, home of Sen. Ralph Scott of Alamance. Scott is a State alumnus but he strongly opposes the bill and is chairman of the Senate Higher Education Committee.

While the opposition votes were not strong in the House, their warnings were.

"If this bill passes, it will do a great deal of harm to higher education," said R. D. McMillan of Robeson, chairman of the House Higher Education Committee.

"The name suggester sets North Carolina State apart," he said. He added that the proposal was the first step towards destruction of the Consolidated University of North Carolina which also has campuses at Greensboro and Chapel Hill and will have one in Charlotte.

Freshman Rep. C. W. Phillips of Guilford echoed McMillan's warnings in his maiden House speech.

"I listened to the hearings," he said, "and I cannot bring myself to agree with the proposition." The measure, he said, was the first move to "drive away consolidation."

But in all the heat generated in the debate, not even consolidation was safe.

"If I were sure that this measure would have a tendency to deconsolidate, I would vote for it . . ." roared Raleigh Rep. Roger Kiser.

Consolidation, he said, has dragged Woman's College in Greensboro down from the status of a fine university to a "co-educational institution."

Aldermen Vote Down Burger Stand

The Town Board of Aldermen unanimously adopted a resolution Monday night urging the owners of the property adjoining the Baptist Church not to construct a walk-in restaurant there.

Alderman Roland Giduz introduced the resolution which advised the owner that by changing his plans he would "be acting not only in the over-all interests of the citizens of the Town of Chapel Hill, but in his own enlightened self-interest."

Town Attorney J. Q. LeGrand said there was nothing in the zoning ordinance at present which could prevent the construction of the proposed hamburger stand by the Bell chain of Charlotte. Mr. LeGrand said "I don't know whether the Legislature itself could do anything" about regulating buildings with regard to aesthetics.

Assaulted Minister In 'Poor' Condition

BIRMINGHAM Ala., (AP) — A Boston white minister who came South to help Alabama Negroes win voting rights lay in critical condition Wednesday after he was beaten by a gang of white men.

A spokesman at University Hospital said Wednesday the condition of the Rev. James J. Reeb, 38-year-old father of four, had worsened. The churchman, the spokesman said, was in an "extremely critical condition . . . his prognosis is poor."

Twice this morning his heart stopped, the hospital said. Both times he was restored immediately.

His wife arrived in Birmingham this afternoon. She was immediately available for comment.

In Selma three men were arrested in connection with the assault and a fourth man was being sought.

Reeb and two other white Unitarian ministers were attacked after they left a Negro restaurant in downtown Selma Tuesday night. The clergymen had attended a civil rights rally earlier.

As Reeb, the Rev. Arloff F. Miller, 25, also of Boston, and the Rev. Clark Olsen, 32, Berkeley, Calif., started down the dark street, white men yelled at them from across the street.

"Hey, you niggers," said one of the white men. The ministers quickened their pace, but the white men ran across the street and a club whistled through the darkness.

"It struck Reeb in the back of the head with a sickening thud," Miller said.

Miller said he crouched as he had been taught to do.

"The assailants either hit me with the club or kicked me," he said.

"They slugged Olsen, then left. As soon as we regained our senses we walked 2½ blocks to the SCLC (Southern Christian Leadership Conference) office.

"Jim (Reeb) was incoherent at first and we helped him walk. Then his head cleared, but he was in terrific pain and groaned loudly. We were taken to Burwell Infirmary (for Negroes) for treatment. I had minor head bruises and Olsen was not visibly hurt.

"Suddenly Jim got sick and lapsed into unconsciousness. The doctor there decided it was too serious for him and decided to send us to Birmingham.

"We got into an ambulance and started but got only a few miles when he had a flat tire. The driver drove on the rim until we reached a telephone. While we waited for another ambulance, several cars loaded with whites drove by and stared at us. Some of them returned several times.

"Then a Dallas County Sheriff's car stopped and deputies got out. They surrounded us and demanded to know who was hurt, jabbing their flashlights around the car. They weren't really discourteous, but frankly I was scared stiff."

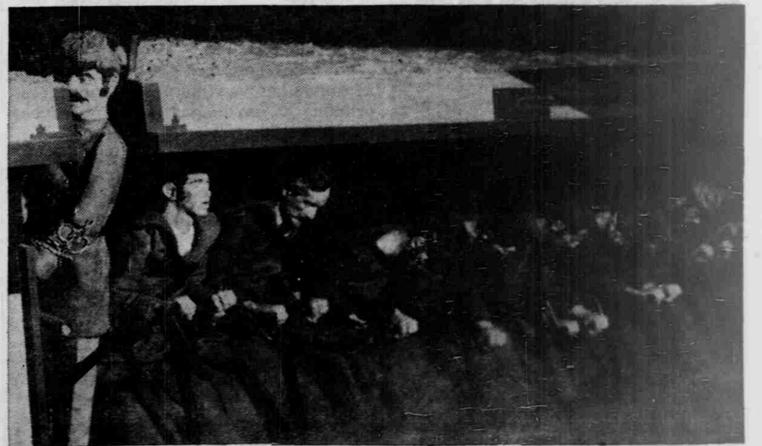
A second ambulance took the ministers to Birmingham, about 100 miles away. Reeb was given

CONCERT SET FOR SUNDAY

Violinist Jack Glatzer will perform in the Graham Memorial Lounge Sunday at 8 p.m. The program is sponsored by the GM Music Committee.

Glatzer, who began the study of the violin at the age of five, has been enthusiastically received both in the United States and Europe.

In 1956 the then 17-year-old Glatzer was awarded first prize in violin in the Merriweather Post Competition. As a result of this achievement he performed the Brahms Concerto with the National Symphony Orchestra.



THE GRUNT AND GROAN CREW of the Confederate submarine Hunley are a part of an exhibit now in the Naval armory commemorating the civil war. The exhibit features realistic moving models.—Photo by Jock Lauterer