

Selma, Alabama - March 7, 1965; 3 pm

W.E.Scott calls Atlanta from Brown's Chapel in Selma. John Lewis, Chairman of SNCC and Robert Mants, SNCC staff, and Hosea Williams, SCLC staff, are leading the march. They are in the process of organizing into companies and squads, with company commanders and squad leaders.

Larry Fox:

The people are at the bridge over the Alabama River; they have to walk double file. A group of state troopers, plus white people, plus Sheriff Clark and his posse, plus Al Lingo head of the state highway patrol are on the other side of the bridge.

Leading the march are John Lewis, Robert Mants, and Hosea Williams. Behind them are about 50 Selma people, then SNCC staff member, Wilson Brown, then 50 more Selma people then SNCC staff member Jesse Harrison, 50 more Selma people and SCLC staff member, Eugene Pritchett.

Other SNCC staff members -- Willie Emma Schoot, Frank Soracco, John Luitkys, Chris Wylie and Annie Pearl Avery -- haven't arrived yet.

3:45 p.m. Larry Fox

SCLC staff members Addy Young, James Bevel, Hosea Williams, Ben Clark and Harry Boyd are on the scene.

JACKSON, 4 pm Ruth Howard

Four carloads of SNCC staff people are planning to leave Jackson for Selma.

SELMA 4 p.m. Lafayette Surney, street corner

About 2000-3000 people are marching. Mr. Turner of Marion is also leading. They are on the bridge now.

If the police stop the people, they will wait until they are tear-gassed to leave.

This morning, John Lewis read a three-minute statement to the press about why they were marching. SCLC's Andy Young told Dr. King wasn't coming: because after he heard that Wallace had given the State Troopers all power to stop the march, he decided to work on getting as much Northern support as possible. A minister from SCLC in Selma vowed they would bring every minister from all over the country in to town.

JACKSON, 4:05 p.m. Cleveland Sellers

Four carloads of SNCC staff are leaving.

SELMA 4:06 p.m. Surney

Two carloads of possemen just went to the bridge. The police are making local whites get indoors.

SCLC's Fautleroy is in Washington DC talking to Congressmen. A lot of churches in New York City which were contacted earlier by SCLC are calling in. Radio stations are calling in by direct lines.

SNCC's Annie Pearl Avery was just arrested--don't know what for. She just passed by in a police car. Two local white guys were also arrested.

Three doctors and six-seven nurses from the Medical Committee for Human Rights, also three ambulances are there.

4:15 p.m. State Troopers are throwing tear gas on them. A few are running back. A few are being blinded by tear gas. Somebody got hurt--don't know who.

4:15 p.m. They're beating them and throwing tear gas at them.

4:16 p.m. Police are beating people on the streets. Oh, man, they're just picking them up and putting them in ambulances. People are getting hurt pretty bad.

There were two people on the ground in pretty bad shape. I'm going to leave in a few minutes--people are running back this way.

4:17 p.m. Ambulances are going by with their sirens going. People are running, crying, telling what's happening.

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Lafayette Surney, street, corner, continued:

4:18 p.m. Police are pushing people into alleys. I don't know why. People are screaming, hollering.

They're bringing on more ambulances. People are running, hollering, crying.

4:20 p.m. People are running.

4:22 p.m. Police got somebody else; it's hard to tell who. Looks like they're taking them to the hospital.

Three more ambulances went by. The ambulances are picking them up off the ground. There goes another one. Two more. There go three of them.

4:23 p.m. They're carrying people by.

4:25 p.m. It looks pretty bad. They're carrying people by, putting people in ambulances, private ambulances. People are running.

Here come the white hoodlums. I'm on the corner of one of the main streets.

A lady said they tried to kill her.

People in the streets who were marching look like they're going back to the churches.

4:26 p.m. They're going back to the church. I'm going too. Should be there in about five minutes.

4:32 p.m. Brown's Chapel Church

James Austen

State troopers are outside the church throwing rocks.

John Lewis

People marched, 1500 to 2000 of them, marched down Highway 80, across the bridge. At the other side of the bridge were 200 State Troopers, 200 possemen, about 1000 white people. The Major of the State Troopers made an announcement that they should turn around. The people refused. They knelt to the ground in a prayerful manner. Then the State Troopers fired tear gas at them and began to beat them. I was hit in the head.

People went back to the church. There are about 2000-3000 in the church. The posse is coming down to the church. People on horseback are beating people with whips and ropes. They are shooting tear gas.

I've never seen anything like it in my life. They are shooting gas, acid.

One very odd lady I know has a broken arm.

Billy Bailey

I was across the bridge almost to the front of the line. A number of people were beat by State Troopers. They started walking toward us. When they started walking toward us, we walked back. We kneeled and started to pray. Then they started throwing gas. Then we just started running back.

4:40 p.m. Willie Emma Scott

We have a problem--the guys are not non-violent any more. They're ready to fight. About two or three busloads of possemen are in front of the church beating people, throwing tear gas, beating children and adults. They have about twenty people on horseback. I don't know how many's been carried to the hospital.

John Lewis has a small hole in his head. I tried to do something for it, but he wouldn't let me. They say Christopher Wylie is in pretty bad condition. Another lady has her arm broken in two or three places.

4:45 p.m. They didn't only throw tear gas at the people, but also sprayed it on them so their clothes are full of it. The church is full of tear gas.

Atlanta 5:05 p.m. Ralph Featherstone, Ivanhoe Donaldson, Courtland Cox, and RoybShields left here by plane for Selma.

Selma 5:14 p.m. Good Samaritan Hospital

Lafayette Surney

People had their legs, arms broke. Fractures of legs, arms. Tear gas--that's the baddest thing. The ambulance made

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Lafayette Surney, Good Samaritan Hospital, continued:

several trips. They trampled over people with horses. The people at the church started throwing bricks at the State Troopers.

5:30 p.m. Brown's Chapel Church

Larry Fox

The church is surrounded by possemen on horseback with tear gas.

People are in the hospital. Doctors are next door to the church.

5:34 p.m. Wilson Brown

The church is surrounded by possemen, State Troopers, and Jim Clark. They have Sylvan Street (the street the church is on) blocked off from one end to the other so people can't get in or out of the church. They are forcing people to go back into their homes, beating them with billy sticks.

6 p.m. Good Samaritan Hospital Nurse Thomas

So far there have been no reports of people having been shot,

6:15 p.m. Brown's Chapel Larry Fox

There is a rumor that if the people don't leave the church, it will be raided by State Troopers. This came through a funeral home.

Tear gas was shot into a house down the street by State Troopers.

6:20 pm Good Samaritan Hospital Worth Long

John Lewis is in the hospital with a possible skull fracture.

6:21 p.m. The people have just come back from the airport. There was no one there. It was hard getting there, and hard getting back, and it will probably be harder to get out again.

6:30 p.m. State Troopers and possemen have left.

ATLANTA 7 p.m.

James Forman called Dr. Martin Luther King to discuss the situation in Selma. Dr. King's secretary said that Dr. King was busy preparing a statement on Selma and could not be disturbed. Forman left word asking that Dr. King return his call.

SELMA 7:05 p.m. Good Samaritan Hospital

Lafayette Surney

John Lewis is still in the emergency room and will have to stay over night. There is the possibility of a concussion. I just finished talking to Police Commissioner Baker. He said that State Troopers took over and just took it out of their hands.

8:30 p.m. Brown's Chapel Church

Willie Emma Scott

People are gathering at the church for a mass meeting. John Lewis is still in the hospital.

Note: All times given are Eastern Standard Time (Atlanta time). Alabama time is one hour behind.