

# Area People Join March Demanding Civil Rights

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WASHINGTON—At least 60 area residents yesterday witnessed the largest peaceful demonstration in the history of the nation's capitol [sic]. By 10:40 a.m. officials announced that over 90,000 marchers were in the immediate vicinity of the Washington Monument. In the course of the afternoon, that figure doubled.

The marchers proceeded in two sections down Constitution and Independence Avenues and gathered for a spirited two-hour rally at the Lincoln Memorial. Some 150 of the nation's most prominent political, religious and civic leaders joined a star-studded contingent from the entertainment world in a two-hour program to demand the package of "meaningful legislation" to wipe out segregation and racial discrimination in the United States.

Master of ceremonies Oscar Davis, a playwright, author of "Purley Victorious" introduced such notables as Ralph G. Bunche, Undersecretary of the United Nations; entertainers Harry Belafonte and Odetta, comedian Dick Gregory, and Burt Lancaster. Lancaster flew in for the rally from Paris, where he is working on a movie, with a scroll bearing the names of 1,500 American civil rights supporters in the French capital.

Negro comedian Gregory summed up the tenor of the entire program when he quipped, "The last time I saw this many of us, Bull Connor was doing all the talking." (Connor is the police commissioner of Birmingham.)

## "As Daring as Meredith"

Yesterday afternoon it was the American Negro's opportunity to do the talking.

Roy Wilkins, executive secretary of the NAACP, said that "We came to petition our lawmakers to be as brave as our sit-ins and marchers, to be as daring as James Meredith, as unafraid as the nine children of Little Rock, as forthright as the governor of North Carolina, and as dedicated as the Archbishop of St. Louis." He warned that any watering down of the President's civil rights legislation would reduce it to "pap."

Walter P. Reuther, president of the UAW, which sent a large delegation to the march, called for "action, bold and adequate, to square American philosophy and performance with its promise of full citizenship rights and equal opportunity for all Americans."

James Farmer, national director of CORE, who was unable to attend the march due to his recent arrest in Donaldsonville, La., sent a message from his jail cell noting that "Violence is outmoded as a solution to the problems of men."

"We will not stop," he said, "until the dogs stop biting us in the South and the rats stop biting us in the North."

## **Dr. King Speaks**

The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, considered by many the nation's foremost leader in the civil rights struggle, called on Negro citizens to cash "the promissory note to which every American was full heir" when "the architects of our republic spoke the magnificent words of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence." He added that "the marvelous new militancy" will allow "neither rest nor tranquility in America until the Negro is granted his citizenship rights."

## **Sing their Anthem**

The marchers left the Washington Monument at 11 a.m., half an hour early because of the large number that had to get over to the Lincoln Memorial. Whites and Negroes of all ages and many young people between the ages of 17 and 22 were in the line of march. They sang "We Shall Overcome," the recognized anthem of the civil rights movement.

There were many celebrities and honored guests occupying the steps of the Lincoln Memorial which served as the platform. Among them were author James Baldwin, in from Paris; actor Marlon Brando, singer Mahalia Jackson, folk singer Joan Baez, and Peter, Paul and Mary, folk singers; included in the crowd of marchers were many baby carriages and elderly people on crutches and in wheel chairs. A continuous stream of people who fainted were carried off by an army of first aid workers.

The weather was a little warm, but clear, with a cloudless sky.

Lena Horne, who lives in Englewood was also present, and spoke briefly. There were many independent signs such as "Hawaii is With You," "Boys High School, Brooklyn," and others identifying local groups and participants.

There were no major incidents. Washington had banned liquor sales.

## **Introduce Mrs. Parks**

The participants marched 25 abreast down Constitution Avenue. The march started at 11 a.m.; the program started at 1:30 p.m. The crowds continued to enter the Lincoln Memorial grounds until well into the afternoon. The police estimate at 2:30 p.m. was between 175,000 and 200,000 and the crowds were continuing to arrive.

From New York City, national headquarters in New York City had predicted that many of the buses would not arrive in time for the program.

Bayard Rustin, assistant to A. Philip Randolph, organizer of the march, introduced "one of the great, great heroes of this struggle," Mrs. Rosa Parks, who is credited with triggering the "Negro revolt" when she refused to surrender a seat she was occupying in the white section of a bus in Montgomery, Ala., in 1961.

The leaders were scheduled to meet with the President at 5 p.m. at the White House.

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