

BLACK HISTORY MONTH and the American Experience

Cry for Justice Ends in Police Attack Selma to Montgomery: 1965

Outraged over the killing of a demonstrator by a state trooper in Marion, Alabama, the black community of Marion decided to hold a march.

When Gov. Wallace refused to allow the march, Dr. King went to Washington to speak with President Johnson, delaying the demonstration until March 8.



troopers waiting for them. As the demonstrators crossed the bridge leading out of Selma, they were ordered to disperse, but the troopers did not wait for their warning to be headed.

Deadly police brutality and denied voting rights for black Americans sent marchers on a trek Sunday, March 7, 1965 from Selma, Alabama to the state capital of Montgomery.



Diversity in Civil Rights Struggle

The Rev. Robert Graetz (left), a Lutheran pastor, was the only white member of the Montgomery Improvement Association. The group was headed by then 26-year-old Martin Luther King Jr. (right) and included Rosa Parks, the African-American woman whose refusal to give up her bus seat to a white person sparked a bus boycott and helped launch the modern Civil Rights movement.

An Extraordinary Woman of Courage

BY JUNE POTTER ACOSTA

During the final years of the Civil War, there had emerged onto the American scene a woman of color, a forerunner of the voices and personalities of the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s and 70s.

Ida Bell Wells was born in the small community of Holly Springs, Miss. on July 16, 1862, the firstborn and eldest daughter of James and Elizabeth Wells who were not permitted to marry legally at the time by Southern laws.

Wells' father was first child of an elderly master enslaver, who owned a plantation in Tippah County, and a black slave named Peggy who cherished him and did well by him.

She was fortunate to grow up in a loving family. Wells flourished, and was able to attend a newly founded institution, Shaw University, where she was trained to be a teacher.

Outspoken and opinionated early in life, she was bold enough to sue the Tennessee Railway Co. at the age of 20 when she had settled herself in the white section of a train she was riding and was forcefully removed.



Ida B. Wells

Following the end the Reconstruction in the conquered South, the hideous practice of lynching was launched, meted out largely by the Ku Klux Klan.

Wells left the South - Memphis, where she had settled - and found a home eventually in Chicago, where she met her future husband, Ferdinand Barnett, an attorney, a writer and editor of a small newspaper, the Conservator. Their common interests in writing about the injustices for African Americans drew them together.

Wells was also a suffragette for the women's right to vote and a friend and ally of Susan B. Anthony. Their goals were identical: justice for black people and equal rights for women.

She was one of the founding members of the NAACP, in 1910. Always, she advanced the ideas of self-help for her people, the value of education, and faith in God.

Wells lived through enormous changes in her country and the world. She died in Chicago in 1931 at the age of 69.

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