

## THEY CHANGED THE WORLD

*When Rosa Parks refused on the afternoon of Dec. 1, 1955, to give up her bus seat so that a white man could sit, it is unlikely that she fully realized the forces she had set into motion and the controversy that would soon swirl around her.*

### ***BOMB ROCKS RESIDENCE OF BUS BOYCOTT LEADER – None Injured After Bombing Of Kings Home***

By Joe Azbell

Published Date: January 31, 1956

A bomb tossed on the porch of the home of the Rev. M. L. King, Negro boycott leader, 309 S. Jackson St. about 9:15 last night shattered windows, ripped a hole in the porch and cracked a porch column. No one was injured

Neighbors reported that a light colored automobile was seen at the time of the explosion. It was believed to have stopped in front of the home as a man got out and placed or tossed the bomb on the porch.

Coretta King, wife of the Baptist minister, said she was sitting in the front room of the six-room white frame dwelling a half block from the Ben Moore Hotel when she heard footsteps and a thud "like a brick hitting on the porch."

She said she was talking with the wife of Roscoe Williams, Montgomery electrician, and that they feared the thud" might be "something dangerous." The two women ducked through a side door to the middle bedroom and went to a third room in the rear. As they reached the third room, they said that they heard the explosion.

In the rear room also was the King's seven and a half weeks old baby, Yolanda Denise.

Vann Pruitt, assistant state toxicologist, said he believed the bomb to be either a hand grenade or a half stick of dynamite.

#### **HOLE IN CONCRETE**

The bomb hit on the south side of the porch about two feet from the concrete steps. It ripped a slight hole about a half inch deep, four inches long and two inches wide in the tile-like porch covering.

The bomb explosion shattered the four windows on the front of the house, sending glass flying inside the living room on the north side and den and music room on the south side. The house is the parsonage of Dexter Avenue Baptist Church.

The house is about 15-feet from the sidewalk and about 30 feet from the street.

#### SEARCH SITE

*type keywords*

#### PHOTO GALLERY



### ***Biographies***

- *Claudette Colvin*
- *Edgar Daniel "E.D." Nixon*
- *Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr.*
- *Rosa Parks*
- *Clifford Durr*
- *Rev. Ralph David Abernathy*
- *Full List...*

### ***Profiles***

- *Urelee Gordon*
- *Thomas Gray*
- *Vera Harris*
- *Idessa Redden*
- *Johnnie Carr*
- *Rev. Robert Graetz*
- *Lucille Times*
- *Full List...*

The Williams woman told essentially the same story as the wife of King. She said she was “shocked by the explosion.”

### **PLEA FOR PEACE**

As a crowd of about 300 Negroes gathered outside the house, the 27-year-old Rev. King, in a dramatic scene, addressed them. He began by asking the group to be “peaceful.”

“We believe in law and order. Don’t get panicky. Don’t do anything panicky at all. Don’t get your weapons. He who lives by the sword will perish by the sword. Remember that is what God said. We are not advocating violence. We want to love our enemies. I want you to love our enemies. Be good to them. Love them and let them know you love them. I did not start this boycott. I was asked by you to serve as your spokesman. I want it to be known the length and breadth of this land that if I am stopped this movement will not stop. If I am stopped our work will not stop. For what we are doing is right. What we are doing is just. And God is with us.”

As he finished his talk, the crowd of Negroes cheered him, shouting “Amen,” and “God bless you, Brother King.”

Then Police Commissioner Clyde C. Sellers addressed the group. A few minutes before, he had told the King couple inside their house that he did not condone “such acts of violence as this and I will certainly do everything in my power to bring the guilty parties to court and put them in prison.” He told King that “I do not agree with you in your beliefs, but I will do everything within my power to defend you against such acts as this.”

### **POLICE PROTECTION**

He told the crowd the same and added that he was providing “police protection for the King family.”

Mayor W. A. Gayle, also on the scene, told the group that “I am for law and order and the entire white community is for law and order and none of us condones or believes in these sorts of acts in any way. I am going to work with my last breath if necessary to find and convict the guilty parties.”

A short distance away, Sheriff Mac Sim Butler was aiding in the investigation. He said that he was “opposed to such acts of violence and would furnish men and equipment and anything else in his power to help find the guilty parties.”

The Rev. King addressed the group again saying “go home and sleep calm. Go home and don’t worry. Be calm as I and my family are. We are not hurt and remember that if anything happens to me, there will be others to take my place.”

King, dressed in an overcoat and suit, arrived home about 15 minutes after the bombing. He said that he had just returned from a Negro mass meeting at the First Baptist Church at Ripley and Jefferson where some 2,000 Negroes met.

### **“BE CALM AND QUIT”**

He said he had addressed that group to “be calm and quit. Don’t do anything that will not be for justice, for God is with us.”

### **5-MINUTES SPEECH**

Sellers and Gayle, he spoke for about five minutes.

The line of traffic moving up and down the street caused a huge jam and police were stationed at Adams street and High street to keep traffic off the street.

An Advertiser reported questioned people in homes on both sides of Jackson street, and only one Negro besides Walters said he saw an automobile. The man said he thought the car was al taxi cab but he would not give his name and disappeared in the crowd. Police were attempting to locate the Negro for further details last night.

Sellers said that he was leaving a patrol car on duty throughout the night and that he would “continue to provide police protection for King.”

The Rev. King, pastor of the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church, has been the main spokesman for the boycotters since the movement began Dec. 5 in protest to the segregated seating facilities on city buses.

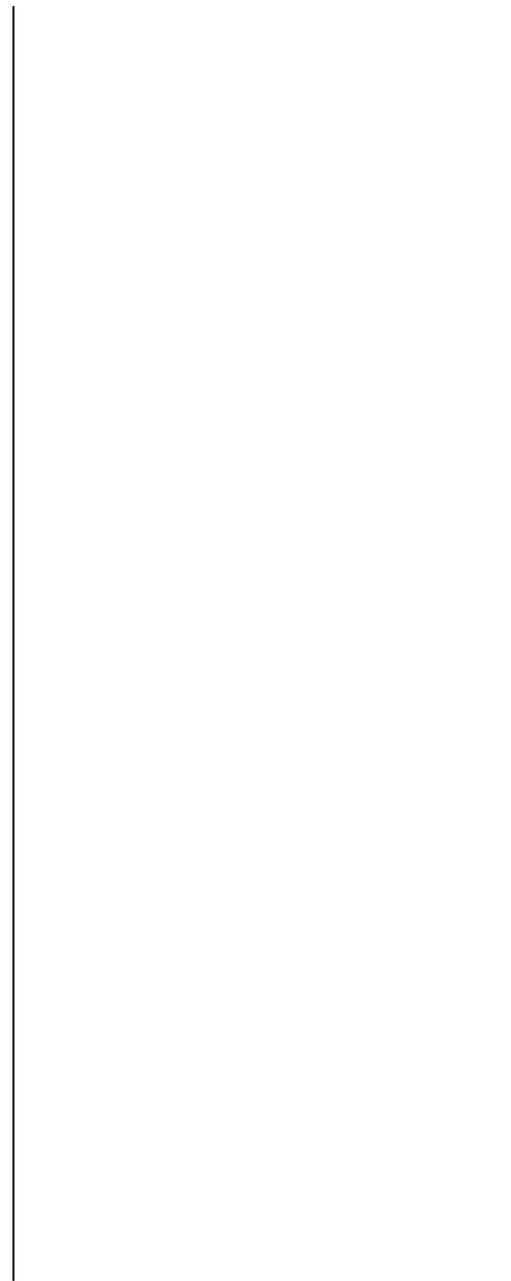
The Negro minister was fined \$10 in police court Saturday on a speeding charge. He denied going 30 miles an hour in a 25-mile zone and said his arrest was the result of his activities in the boycott.

### NO FURTHER EFFORTS

His arrest followed an announcement by Mayor W. A. Gayle who said the three member City Commission was through “with pussyfooting” around with the boycotters. The mayor said the commission would make no further efforts to reach a compromise.

Boycott leader, many of them ministers, have demanded that seats on city buses be made available on a “first come, first serve” basis. They have suggested that Negroes continue to sit from the rear toward the front but would not be required to stand if any seats are vacant.

But officials of the Montgomery City Lines and the City Commission have contended that such a plan would still violate state and city segregation laws that separate facilities be maintained for whites and Negroes.



*'They Walked to Freedom'*

*Voices of the Boycott*

*Historical Newspaper Fronts*

