

# Summary



Selma, Lord, Selma – book review The book ‘ Selma, Lord, Selma’ is set against the war held against the prevailing system of justice to claim the voting rights for the blacks. It narrates their participation with Martin Luther King, the leader of the peaceful demonstrations in against discriminatory voting practice in Selma. The participation in the war was not based upon the identity of being an Afro American of Selma, but it dependent upon individual decision as well. There were people who did not participate spontaneously. Other chose the option on different grounds. The story highlights the journey of two young nine years old girls names Sheyann Webb and Rachel West both of whom joined the army.

Though none of the children managed to end up heroically and simply followed their elders, they both survived the war and saw its end. Therefore their actions cannot be referred as something trivial. The story begins in a flashback note where the events of Bloody Sunday (1965) were recollected. The two girls recollect their experiences in the three months of their lives in 1965. These events and experiences are presented in the form of interviews suitable for newspapers. The book does not focus on a detailed version of what happened during the time nor does it emphasize upon the day-to-day experience of the girls but the records are based upon oral history style. Around forty interviews were conducted by Frank Sikora, journalist, and the venue was mostly domestic in nature including the living rooms and kitchens in the George Washington Carver Homes conducted over a span of 1975 to 1979. The discussion has been presented as the interviewer mentions according to what he learnt from them, their speech and feelings during their experience. Selma observed that her recollection was like writing her own story and for Rachel it was like holding a conversation with the Blessed

Virgin Mary. They were not aware beforehand joining the thing was not formal – “ You didnt enlist. You just were, or you werent” (Webb, Nelson and Sikora, 3). But after observing the crowd for sometime, Selma joined the movement willingly. The idea behind interrogating two young ladies, who experienced the time as children while there were several known personalities as well, is that Sikora wanted to bring out those unknown faces that faced the similar experience of violent, arrest and torment as the elders. The two girls could therefore represent the other children form the other towns as well who went through similar experience but whose names have not been officially recorded – “ if there is something compelling about the dreams and efforts of a people to overcome, to more responsive chord when it is seen through the innocent eyes of children” (Webb, Nelson and Sikora, xiii).

The story of both the girls in terms of first hand accounts are really interesting to read through essentially because the experience of reading through this is like hearing some common person speak his or her heart. Their story of courage, disappointment and will moves the heart and makes us question the action even more strongly especially where children were involved.

#### Work Cited

Webb, Sheyann, Nelson, Rachel West and Frank Sikora. *Selma, Lord, Selma*. University Alabama Press, 1997.