Viewpoint One

A. G. Gaston, African-American millionaire in Birmingham who supported negotiations over marching.

“As a responsible citizen of Birmingham, I deplore the invasion of our schools to enlist students for demonstrations during school hours.”

*A Fire You Can’t Put Out: The Civil Rights Life of Birmingham’s Fred Shuttlesworth* by Andrew M. Manis, pg. 368.

Robert Kennedy, brother of President Kennedy and Attorney General.

“School children participating in street demonstrations is a dangerous business. An injured, maimed or dead child is a price none of us can afford to pay.”

*New York Times*, May 4, 1963, pg. 8.

Malcolm X, Civil Rights leaders

“Real men don’t put their children on the firing line.”

*New York Times*, May 11, 1963, pg. 9.

Albert Boutwell, Mayor of Birmingham during the Children’s Marches.

“When people who are not residents of this city, and who will not have to live with fearful consequences, come to the point o using innocent children as their tools…then the time has come for every responsible white and colored parent in this city to demand a halt.”

*Carry Me Home: Birmingham, Alabama: The Climactic Battle of the Civil Rights Revolution* by Diane McWhorter, pg. 366.

Mary Gadson, a participant in the Children’s Marches talks about how her parents felt about children participating in the marches.

“During those days, our parents were basically afraid. I think they would have kept us from doing a lot of things, if they had known about it. My mother didn’t know I was going to Sixteenth Street Church [to participate in the march]. She thought I was going to school…She worked for the white folks. They were constantly asking parents, “Is your child involved in this stuff [protest marches]? I hope she isn’t….

…I went in and told my mama that we had to run from Bull Connor, and everybody was in jail except me. She told my daddy. He just sat there and shook his head.”

*Freedom’s Children* by Ellen Levine, pg. 85.