

WATTS LINE REPORT

September 12, 13, and 14, 1966

CANTON, MISS. Sept. 12, 1966 Mrs. Devine was out, hadn't been seen for several days. George Raymond out. Sept. 13, 1966 Mr. Chinn in office gave the following report. On Friday aft. some people picketed liquor store, group of whites gathered and attacked Negroes picketing. Chinn and associates called Police Chief to come to scene, but he refused, and white cops refused to make arrest. A Negro "Tom" with gun was put on 3 of guys picketing. Finally sheriff came by, Chinn asked him if armed Negro was deputy sheriff and why he was armed. Chinn went to filling station owned by Price Lewis (one of white men who attacked Negroes), sheriff went there also, said a few words to whites there who had attacked group, but made no effort to arrest Price Lewis. On Monday (Sept. 12) Price Lewis beat 11 yr. old Negro boy who was at white grocery, beat him without reason. Chinn was unable to get any arrest again. P. Lewis left scene with gun exposed, accompanied by white cops. Chinn asked whites to take boy to hospital, but whites said they didn't have time to do it, that Chinn had a car, why didn't he do it himself. Chinn took badly beaten boy to doctor. Whites were jamming shot guns on Negroes up and down the streets, all whites (civilian and cops alike) had guns exposed. Situation is very tense. Every black sees that law and order is not for Negroes, consequently they are arming themselves. Chinn told police chief that the whole matter was a disgrace. Chief said "no matter how it looked, that's how it was going to be." He said he didn't give a damn if Chinn called LBJ. Then Chinn left, cops were hurrying Negroes along with guns, tried to put shotgun in Chinn's face. Chinn told him not to put any shotgun in his face. Cops put guns in backs of at least 10 to 15 Negroes, and also on their heads. About 3 or 4 hundred Negroes gathered in an alley, but then dispersed. Chinn returned to office, white cops rode by office. Chinn talked with FBI man, but he hasn't said anything and is not cooperating. As of Tuesday, Spt. 13, situation is quiet. People will call protest this weekend vs. police brutality against 2 kids and their inability to get warrants. Some will picket, demonstrate etc. A Negro--Lee Guffie Sanders--from Canton, working in Jackson, went into Jackson restaurant, there was misunderstanding between whites and himself, they got into it. Sanders left scene, forgot his cap, returned to pick up cap, got into it again. Cops picked him up Monday night at work in Jackson. Up until now, Chinn unable to reach him, can't find out which jail he's in, if he's in jail. Something is wrong. Chinn has contacted lawyers, who will look into case and call FBI if they can't find him. Sanders is 28.

ALBANY, GEORGIA Sept. 13, 1966 Isaac Simpkins said they were working on ASCS elections in Clay and Baker Counties on Sept. 23, 1966. Ballots were out today.

JACKSON, MISS. MFDP Sept. 13, 1966 In Rankin County, woman almost got shot in the night while in bed. Bullet fired into her house, came within inches of her body. Mrs. Palmer thinks it was a Mrs. Anderson, whose son is active in civil rights (CORE & MFDP, school desegregation) This was Sept. 11. There were 2 shootings, this was one of them, no information on other. Last night, about 7:45 she and other MFDP folk were looking out of window of office, a Negro stopped his car, got out, cops pulled up behind, started firing at him, so Negro began running into Negro section. There is complete breakdown in law and order there.

ISSAQUEUNA COUNTY Sept. 12, 1966 Unita Blackwell reported that there is a trial with a law student from INC. FUND charged with reckless driving. There's no onw in county from SNCC. She will call in more information when it is available.

WEST POINT, MISS. John Buffington reported on Sept. 12, 1966 the following: On Friday, Sept. 9, a white man selling watermelons came by ~~office~~, white woman tried to buy watermelon, man said they were only for sale to "niggers." A white woman called John's office, informing them of incident. When man came to SNCC office with watermelons, John called police who came, broke open a watermelon, which contained deadly poison. SNCC has gotten out leaflets to people advising them not to buy watermelons, food stuff or cosmetics from unidentified peddlers. The peddler is from Webster County (next to Blay county). SNCC has started tutoring classes for kids in integrated schools and Negro schools--in Negro history, etc. Classes serve social function for Negro students isolated in integrated schools. Means of getting black youth together.

GOULD, ARKANSAS: Robert Cableton reported the following on Sept. 12, 1966: SNCC is working four counties (Ashley, Lincoln, Chicot, Veshea) in S.E. Arkansas. Primarily concerned with getting Negro woman (Mrs. Carrie Dillworth) to run for mayor. Gould is 82% Negro, controlled by whites. It's almost official that Mrs. Dillworth will run for mayor. They're trying to get Negroes registered, thinks he has 80% of the people registered. No trouble so far--hard to get sick and elderly out. Trying to get registrars from Lincoln City to come out and see that this group gets registered. Cableton is now organizing a group in Crosett (Ashley County). He says the existing organization (Negro) was bourgeois, no civil rights activity. He has found a Rev. Brookings who is militant, in touch with grass roots, real good leader. Two weeks ago they had meeting, Cableton made contacts. Rev. Brookings got 29 out to first meeting, 40 out to 2nd meeting. They're planning rally for four counties, will rally around "Black Power", hopefull will be held between Chicot and Veshea Counties. But he has no transportation. Justice Jim Johnson (another George Wallace) is running vs. Rockefeller for governor. SNCC's trying to get Negro bloc vote behind republicans unofficially, not openly advocating this to people, SNCC can't come out and endorse him, but he is really lesser of two evils.

Sept. 11, 1966 in Dumas, 9 miles from Gould, a Tom Negro cop shot, almost killed another Negro, whose in critical condition, now in Jefferson Cty. hospital in Pine Bluff. Man's name is Mr. L.C. Murray. Story is as follows: Murray was drunk in restaurant, arguing with wife, Negro cop (Officer Duey) happened onto the scene. Murray's 15 yr. old son had his father under control, in process of escorting him home, when cop interfered, threatened to arrest Murray. Murray told him that he wasn't doing anything, that he wouldn't let himself be arrested, that the cop would have to shoot him first. Then cop drew pistol, shot hole through Murray's stomach, bullet ricocheted and hit another lady in leg, paralyzing leg. Tom cop got scared, offered to take Murray to hospital in his car, Murray refused, got into another car which took him to hospital. At hospital, white cop and civilian cracker showed up at emergency room, insulted Capleton (who was then on scene) and Murray's 13 yr. old son (2nd son.) 13 yr. old son was upset, began yelling "I hate cfacket cops, blue eyed cops, you killed my daddy, etc." Cop threatened 13 yr. old son. Meanwhile, 15 yr. old son had been arrested because he also reacted to shooting in restaurant and yelled his anger to Tom cop, told Duey that he would get him for killing his father. Murray in critical condition, Capleton arrived at hospital within 35 to 40 minutes after news reached him.

In Eudora, Arkansas (Chicot County), 70% Negro, no Negro has official position in town. Capleton advocating "Black Power", says all but bourgeois blacks understand concept. Things changing slowly, he's working with lower, lower, lower classes, says life is getting into them. Capleton got 8 of them registered within 30 minutes. 15 will go tomorrow to register. Local leadership (Rev. Crenshaw who is pretty militant) is working with people. They're trying to create new leadership in Eudora, have exposed bourgeois leaders who sell out people to white politicians. They're planning a meeting to find new leadership throughout four counties.

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GOULD, ARKANSAS: continued from pg.2 Cableton goes back to story on shooting of Mr. Murray. Less than 2½ months ago, a suit was filed on behalf of 7 Negro plaintiffs vs. Chief of Police of Gould for damages of \$126,000.00 charging police brutality. Atty. John Walker filed suit. Murray was one of the 7 plaintiffs. Cableton thinks that whites got Tom cop to do their dirty work in harrassing Murray (shooting in restaurant). In police brutality suit, SNCC has information on every beating done by cop Harold Pearson (white) in last 3 years, he's beaten women and men. Cableton says that Murray is known for not letting anyone push him around, and that shooting of Murray is directly related to fact that he is one of plaintiffs in this suit. Another one of 7 (Henry Lee Maxwell) is now doing time (90)days, at County Farm on trumped up charges of drunkenness and disturbing peace, arrested one month after suit was filed..another example of harrassment.

TUSKEGEE, ALABAMA; Sept. 13, 1966 Reported by Scott B. Smith and Jimmy Rogers. They're working on Sam Younge's trial, Grand Jury hearing Nov. 18. They want SNCC people (such as Forman, Ricks etc.) to go to Tuskegee campus and speak Nov. 15. Scott B. is working on arrangements with African Heritage Assn. for Sncc speakers to appear there also. Want Forman to stay over for a few days for trial, leaflets will be set up to cover whole county, Stillman, Alabama A&M, Miles, Taladega. Students will be ready prior to 15th. They'll need SNCC to print up leaflets, enough to cover whole county, asking students from mentioned colleges to converge on Tuskegee for the 15th. to rally around Sam Younge's trial. Father Morrisroe's trial coming soon, Morrisroe supposed to come. Rogers handling that. Scott B. and Rogers are at TYSEP, gave us new phone number, but are working on getting other phone. JET's Bob Johnson said they will send someone to cover trial.

PINE BLUFF, ARKANSAS; Sept. 13, 1966 Reported by Vince O'Connor
9 Negroes are running for School Board in Jefferson County. Vince and whoever he can get to drive him around have been going around, getting folks to run. They have voters list for each area, impetus is to get Negroes running for other offices, such as Justice of Peace. There's some voter registration activity, will send statistics regarding racial breakdown of county. He thinks they have 10 or 11,000 registered registered out of 31,000 ~~potential~~. ~~Maximum~~ Potential voters are 50,000 total: 30,000 white, 20,000 Negro. In the town and rural areas, they're running independent candidates opposing democrats, he's working alone. He's not sure about how many Justice of Peace candidates they can get, deadline is Sept. 24, he's tried to explain function of J.P. office to folks running and those able to read. Doing voter profiles on county, explaining to populace, helping get people to run. Within the next week he's getting a city-wide (Pine Bluff) group to sit down, get someone (Negro) to run for alderman--with idea of drawing up platform on which candidate can run. Want fairly radical platform first, then get candidates--he and 15 or 20 other people are sitting down to discuss this, trying to make it a city-wide campaign. In Pine Bluff they're trying to get people registered, working on political education projects that will be started after campaign. On voter registration, Vince tries to get 2 or 3 local people in each area interested, commit them, and get them to do contact work, registering, etc. They are then responsible for drawing folks to polls. He's found 30 or 40 new voter registration people in past 3 or 4 weeks through process of getting candidates--then they--the candidates get out the vote and the registering. The best that can be done in the Justice of Peace offices is get 20 to 30 Negroes elected out of 136 positions--this includes every township in county. Value of getting Negro J.P.'s is you can affect rural parts of county. County has 20 townships, Pine Bluff has 91 out of 136 J.P.'s, all but three will be white. Pine Bluff racial profile is 64% white, 36% black. All of candidates running will be independents, not in democratic party, there's lots of political analysis and discussion going on.

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PINE BLUFF, ARKANSAS continued.

In at least 12 out of 20 townships in county, Negroes are in majority, but they are small townships, big townships have large white majority.

Vince had just come from meeting of an interested parents group ~~xx~~ who will boycott a school at Packingtown. One of fellows there was candidate for J.P. (age 21) who just registered to vote today, he's a good speaker, militant, natural leader. School is terrible, inadequate, they tried to see Supt. of Schools, but he's done nothing and hasn't met their demands. Vince works with them on and off, start and go. He took voter list of their precinct to this boycott meeting. They will also start to register people, almost 130 in precinct ~~should be~~ registered, should be 200 soon, also trying to get polling place in that precinct. A bond issue is involved with boycotts, timing of boycott will adversely affect bond issue--SNCC can't come out and say they're against bonds, but they are. He doesn't want it to be a black vs. white issue, wants folks to vote on issue, not on color. Whites will vote vs. bond issue also--leading segregationist is also against it. They're trying to get Negro judges and clerks in polling places, afraid Negro voters will be (as they now are) intimidated. Trying to get some polling places changed in location, in regards to this, he's met with County Election Commissioner. Response was that they will have another meeting at which Vince will attend and complain again. Then commission will make decision. Vince feels he's threatened them enough, the city (Pine Bluff) ~~doesn't~~ doesn't want any disorder or demonstrations to disrupt industrial life there. City wants new industry, wishes to avoid bad publicity.

On Sept. 14, 1966, they are printing leaflet on Chief of Police, with a story about after dinner remarks he made using "nigger" in dirty jokes, awful speech. Vince will see that they're spread around. Will carry numbers and address of mayor and city civil service commission, asking people to call in and protest. Also on leaflet will be fact that there is only one Negro policeman and ~~and~~ no Negro firemen. Vince doesn't have people to organize, but he gets people to distribute leaflets. It will be hot copy. Selective Service is hanging over his head, doesn't know how long he can avoid being arrested. Was drafted last Nov., got FBI visit 10 days ago asking why he hadn't reported for hospital civilian duty. But he won't do it, considers this work more important. Although he resigned from SNCC, he's still committed to movement, anything he can do, he'll continue to do. Will try to send cable to Mayor Allen, protesting Stokely's arrest.

RULEVILLE, MISSISSIPPI: Sept. 13, 1966 Mrs. Fannie Lou Hamer reported following: 3 kids beaten up in Grenada, trying to integrate school, 1 seriously injured, in Mound Bayou hospital. Cops beat them. Atty. Henry Arson for legal defense, was beaten in Grenada, doesn't know if beatings took place in jail or on streets. She is disgusted with situation, Miss. hasn't changed. Her husband finally got job on pipe line, FBI went to his job, saying they were looking for her, know good and well where to find her...another type of harrassment. She was in store other day, two white men stared her down all the time.

WEST POINT, MISS.: Sept. 14, 1966 Ike Coleman reports the following: Council of Community Organizations, a group composed of total block organizations in West Point, is going to hold a meeting Sept. 15, to deal with the problems of threats that have been made to potential voters by whites, and also to see if polling places can be changed so that the threats are not carried out. It's been rumored that if black people ~~will~~ attempt to register at a white owned store in the Eastern part of the county where plantations are, they will be shot through head. The organization is trying to change polling places to a black church where Negroes can vote instead of white owned store.

WATTS LINE REPORT continued Sept. 14, 1966

JEFFERSON COUNTY, MISS. Serd Allen reports from Jefferson County branch of NAACP that a boycott has been in effect against white stores in county for last 8 months, has been 75% effective. Boycott is now lifted because blacks who were previously hired in menial jobs only have been upgraded to positions such as department store cashiers, clerks, etc. 2 black policemen have also been hired on city's police force.

MARVELLE, ARKANSAS Mrs. Adams reported the following:

The Marvella District 22 Action Committee, a group composed of black citizens who have school age children, met last night and discussed the school boycott which has been in effect in Marvella since school began the last of August. The committee decided to continue the boycott. A few families who have not participated in the 75% effective boycott have sent their kids to school because they have been threatened with welfare cut offs or eviction by white land owners. The boycott started when 13 families who live at Jones Ridge decided to bring suit against the Board of Education because of it's failure to comply with the 1960 school desegregation guidelines. The concerned black community decided to stick together and throw their support behind the Jones Ridge families. The boycott resulted.

NEW YORK CITY SNCC: Elizabeth Sutherland reported the following on September 14, 1966. Members of the Black Panther Party led a picket line which began 8 A.M. at Frederick Douglass Jr. High. P.S. 139. Before picketing, they met with local police who promised "no trouble" if demonstration was "peaceful," and did not interfere with persons seeking entrance to school. When picketing began, police asked pickets to move inside pair of barricades which they did. They therefore didn't block entry, picketed, marched and chanted "Black Power" every hour. At 8:10 A.M. Ted Wilson, who was standing on sidewalk outside barricades directing line and not carrying sign, was arrested. Police refused to say what the charges were. Police moved barricades closer together leaving area 2 feet wide to march. Picketers were told to stop chanting or "we'll love you all up." Police moved paddy wagon to barricade and at 8:20 A.M. arrested everyone. At the jail, those arrested were held for 8 hours before being told what charges against them were. They were in jail 30 hours before being arraigned, not allowed any phone calls. Nine persons had 3 charges against them, which were (1) impairing morals of minors, (2) contributing to delinquency of minors, and (3) disorderly conduct. Three persons were charged with "disorderly conduct." These three were released later that day, ~~three of the nine persons~~ 3:30 P.M. Sept. 13. Three of nine persons were released, and 6 are still in jail, with bail of \$25.00. The arrest order was issued by Sanford Jarelik, Special Assistant to Police Commissioner Leary, over the heads of local cops. After arrest of 12, a new line was started by 15 to 20 people, with T.V. crews present, there were no arrests. They plan to picket again at 7:30 A.M. Sept. 14, 1966 Original picketing began Sept. 13, 1966.