

Learn about the Power of the Holmes County Movement

THUNDER OF FREEDOM: Black Leadership and the Transformation of 1960s Mississippi

by Sue [Lorenzi] Sojourner with Cheryl Reitan

Forthcoming in Fall 2012 from University Press of Kentucky

Excerpts from the Foreword by Historian John Dittmer,
Author of *LOCAL PEOPLE: The Struggle for Civil Rights in Mississippi* and 1995 Winner
of the Bancroft Prize in American History

"Although [this coverage of Holmes Co., Mississippi, 1963-67] is one of several outstanding local community studies [. . .like the ones by Crosby, Moye, and Jeffries...], THUNDER OF FREEDOM is unique in that Sojourner was a participant in the events she describes. Yet unlike other memoirs, constructed mostly from memory decades after the fact, Sojourner was compiling the primary source material for this book—documents, oral histories, photographic images—as...the events themselves were unfolding.

"Insofar as I know, no civil rights memoir combines the reporting of a journalist with the experience of the organizer and the perspective of an historian.

"...WE FIND UNFORGETTABLE PERSONAL PORTRAITS OF LOCAL PEOPLE LIKE ALMA MITCHELL CARNEGIE WHOSE POLITICAL INVOLVEMENT BEGAN AS A SHARECROPPER IN THE '20S,... BY THE '60S [SHE] WAS THE 'OLDEST TO JOIN EVERY PERILOUS MOVEMENT ACTION'...

"The people of Holmes County come alive in this book, the best we have on the daily lives of community organizers who joined together across lines of social class to crack open Mississippi's 'closed society.'

"When [Henry and Sue] Lorenzi first arrived in Holmes [in September 1964], they met Hartman Turnbow and Ralthus Hayes, leaders of a group of fourteen Holmes county blacks who defied custom and risked arrest by attempting to register to vote in the spring of 1963.

"As Lawrence Guyot has observed, no local movement in the state was 'as broad based, indigenous, or contagious as in Holmes.' The Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party achieved its greatest successes there, winning the first major victory in 1967 when a Holmes County school teacher named Robert Clark became the first African American elected to the Mississippi legislature in the 20th century.

"Sojourner has written a remarkable book...Scholars will comb through it for primary material.... Most of all, THUNDER OF FREEDOM will have enormous appeal to general readers interested in learning more about this fascinating time and place, where ordinary people accomplished extraordinary things."

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For more about availability of & ordering THUNDER OF FREEDOM, check the UPK website: www.kentuckypress.com or email questions or contact info to Sue at susojo@yahoo.com. Tell us your ideas for a book signing, reading, or other event. Thanks for spreading the FREEDOM word.