THE STORY OF GREENWOOD, MISSISSIPPI

RECORDED AND PRODUCED BY GUY CARAWAN
FOR THE STUDENT NON-VIOLENT COORDINATING COMMITTEE (SNCC)

FEATURING:
Bob Moses and SNCC workers
Fannie Lou Hamer and Greenwood citizens
Mass meetings, hymns, prayers
Freedom songs
Medgar Evers
Dick Gregory
STORY OF GREENWOOD, MISSISSIPPI

Recorded and Produced for S.N.C.C. by Guy Carawan

SIDE ONE

1A - "This Little Light Of Mine" -- song

"This little light of mine,
I'm goin' to let it shine, oh--
This little light of mine,
I'm goin' to let it shine,
This little light of mine,
I'm goin' to let it shine,
Let it shine, oh--

I've got the light of freedom,
I'm goin' to let it shine, every day,
I've got the light of freedom,
I'm goin' to let it shine...."

My name is Bob Moses and I first came to Mississippi in the summer of 1960, and I began working with the Voter Registration Projects in Mississippi in the summer of 1961. We carried out projects in the southwest corner of Mississippi that year and the next summer we moved up to the Delta area, where there was a higher concentration of Negroes. We began projects in six or more Delta towns, including Greenwood, Mississippi.

1B - Church -- Preacher and Congregation

"Oh Father, oh Lord,
Now, now now Lordie, oh Lord,
When we get through drinkin' tears for water,
When we get through eatin' unwelcome table,
When we get through shakin' unwelcome hands,
We've got to meet Death somewhere,
Don't let us be afraid to die,
Rock me, rock me, Lord,
Rock me until I won't have no cares,
 Lay my spirit... where I'll be at rest.
 Father, I stretch my hand to thee...
No other help I know...."

2A - "I'm a citizen of Greenwood for about fifty years. I've lived in and around this town when it was only a mud hole. I have five children, three sons and two daughters. I did some honest to God hard, long-life work setting rings in the streets and building manholes and laying curbs which will be here years and years after I'm gone. We know that the procedure that are being taken now to qualify people to register and vote is not pleasing to our white neighbors, but the law has been passed that we have rights to go to the court and apply for registration, and we are goin' without any weapon at all. We're goin', we're goin' with the spirit to treat both sides right. And since that is our attitude and aim, I don't think the white people of the city oughta feel like that we're tryin' to get in the front of them. We are askin' them kindly, let us walk by your side."

"Why do they hate us so bad, and we've been workin' for 'em all of our lives? They go on ridin' in the fine cars while our children goin' to school barefoot and never get no automobile and we're not able to pay for one. Why do they try to just keep us down? We're not wantin' to stay down now, and we're ready to fight." "Amen."

2B - "This is Clarence Jordan. I've been in the county about forty years. When I came here most of this land was in woods. I worked by the day for sixty cents a day on up from that to $1.25. Saved with a cross-cut saw cutting logs, draggin' them up with mules, work at night, raised my children, only saw 'em live on a Sunday mornin'. in the bed when I left in the mornin', come in late in the evenin' in the bed. Only six bits a day. Made tableland, farmed one place thirty years, made it all the way from 35 to 40 bale of cotton, picked every one of 'em. Didn't get too much out of it. Been a registered voter about twenty years, and I think that I have the right to help my peoples to register and vote. I know that God chose my color. I'm not the cause that I'm black. God choose this color and he made all nations. We are brothers, I don't care how you treat it, but we are all brothers. We're different colors but we're all human. We're not monkey. We're human, we've got feelings just like you got, and I think it's time for our white brother to realize that. And so we're just tired of it and we want to be free. We made all the white people in this Delta rich. If you ain't got no money you have bad is, and ought to have it. And so we just mean to register and vote, we don't mean to fight and we don't mean to run. We just mean to go to the polls and get our freedom. I have fifteen grandchildren and I know I'm not goin' to live long, at the age of sixty, but I'm fighting for my grandchildren so they won't have to go through with what I'm goin' through with. I thank you."

3A - Mass Meetings -- Preacher and Congregation

"What did our Father do..... Before I drew my breath....."

3B - "The Greenwood Voter Registration project with erupted into national prominence fits best into three stages. The first stage lasted for six months and started in August of 1962, when Samuel Bloom went into Greenwood as a field secretary. He was joined later on that month by Willy Peacock from Charleston, Mississippi, after he'd been chased out by a mob at the voting office in Greenwood.

What did they do for those six months? Well, for six months primarily they conducted a very intensive, very nerve-wracking voter registration campaign in which they contacted the Negroes in the community and really at that time the Negroes in the community were not with them. That is, most of the Negroes were aware that they were in town, were aware that the white power structure did not want them in town, and were aware that for the time being they were not going to associate with some. They couldn't find a place to live, they couldn't find a place to meet, and for six months they operated pretty much on the streets, knocking from door to door, contacting people, getting over the fear which is basic in all or these towns that they were going to leave them. That is, most of the people felt that Sam and Willy were coming in to work for a little while, to stir up some trouble, to agitate, and then to be gone. And what they had to convince people was that they were there to stay. And this is what they did from August, 1962, until December, 1962."
"I'm Willy Peacock, field secretary for the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee. I am presently working in Greenwood, Mississippi in voter registration. The police began trailing us every night, Sam and I; there's not a night passes that they don't trail us, even now. They don't like this Samual Bloch in Greenwood. They're convinced now that Sam is going to stay in Greenwood, and that we're going to stay in Greenwood, just like we said, until we get a satisfactory number of Negroes registered. You can't very well call me an outsider, because I'm a Mississippian. I was born just across the river. This is what my environment has shaped me to be, and I think I'm trying to fill a need which has been needed for some time. There's a great amount of fear there. The Negro will tell you a lie, some of them, that they don't want to become registered. To hide the pride which says if I say I'm afraid, then I'm less than a man; if I say I don't want to. I'm lying but this person doesn't know the difference. So we've been working on cutting through this fear, trying to find something that really would stimulate the people to get out and do something toward becoming a full-fledged citizen. I think that if we can get the cooperation of the ministers to let us have their churches to get up schools in and teach reading and writing and citizenship as a whole, I think that we'll be able to really get the job done.

3C - Congregation:

"Some times we go hungry,
Don't sleep or eat,
Goin' to keep on fightin' for freedom,
In the end we'll be free.
Get on board, children, children (3x)
And fight for human rights.

I hear those mobs howling and coming round the square,
I catch those Freedom Fighters but we're goin'
to meet them there.

Get on board, children, children (3x)
Let's fight for human rights."

4 - "The coming of the new year brought the coming of a new plateau in the voter registration project in Greenwood. A food and clothing drive was organized around the country and shipped into Greenwood, and thousands of people turned out from the plantations and in town to stand in line, to wait in the cold, to get a box of food, to take it home to a family of eight, ten, twelve children who were literally starving. Now you should understand that the county did not have a cotton crop that year. In the first place, they had a bumper crop. They turned in more cotton and made more money than they had the year before. But there was a dry season, the cotton was low off the ground, and they were able to use machines to go in and pick the cotton, which meant that the Negroes didn't have in this wealth, or share any less than they usually do. So that you had a lot of Negro families who were destitute, who were just rock bottom poor, poverty which you just can't imagine in most parts of the United States, poverty in which the children really didn't have food, in which little babies didn't have milk, in which the mothers were not able to send their kids to school because they didn't have shoes and they didn't have winter clothes."

"We don't have enough money to buy clothes or: food for our children to go to school, or to take care of school expenses for them, and teachers is always for money from the children for some problems. We don't get enough out of our jobs to cover our expenses at home, and some of us only makes $2.50 a day. And our husbands, they don't have jobs. They be at home all winter long, and our light bills and gas bills is all the way from $20 to $21 a month. Some of our lights and gas be cut off, and it be so cold in the wintertime, and we've had some nearly like a froze this winter. And I know that the women don't have husbands a houseful of children, and the children didn't have jobs and their mother was sick, and it was just quite a problem to live."

"It was in this situation you had a chance to tell thousands of people first that they were poor, second why they were poor, and third what was some of the things that they had to do in order to alleviate their poverty. This meant that you had a chance to tell thousands of people that they needed to walk down to the courthouse to register to vote,"

5 - For the first time you had hundreds of people lined up at the courthouse in Greenwood, which remember is the home of the Citizens Council in the heart of the Delta, Mississippi -- asking to be registered to vote even though they couldn't read and write. And this is very crucial. Because for one thing, the Negro has a great fear of being ashamed when he goes down to the courthouse and they ask him questions and he doesn't know the answer; and even a greater fear of being asked to write something or read something when he can't read or write. But the poverty was so life that they overcame this fear."

"I want to vote and I want to be able to say who I want in office and how I feel about it, and if one in office who beat niggers over the head, guess 'em and kick 'em about in their stores, I want to put 'em out. We know that all persons born and naturalized in the state of Mississippi are citizens, and we don't have our right of citizenship, and we never have had it. We're underprivileged, and we're denied our Civil Rights, and that's what we want. We want freedom of speech, we want freedom of press, and we want everything that the white man has. We're entitled to it because we are full-fledged citizens, just like they are, and we're willing to die for it. We're willing to die that our children and our children's children may live."

6A - "If you can imagine it, people were standing in line in front of the church waiting for food while their plantation owner was riding by in the street, calling out their names and telling them to leave and go back to the plantations; and they were telling them that they were going to stand there and get their food because their children were hungry."

"This is Mrs. Fanny Lou Hamer from Ruleville, Mississippi. I went down to Indianola on the 31st of August in 1962, and after I had gone to Indianola we were stopped by the Highway Patrol and the city police, and on that same date I was fired. The man that I'd been working for, he said I would have to go down and withdraw or I would have to leave. So I told him that I was trying to register for myself, and he said that if I didn't go down and withdraw I would have to go; if I did go down and withdraw I still might have to go. I didn't have no other choice. I went that Friday night and spent the night with Mrs. Mary Tucker in Ruleville, and people knowing that I was at her house, they shot in there sixteen times, and I had to go then to Talahatchee County and live there up until December, and I'm back in Louver and I've quite a few things to go through, but it's nothing that will keep me and get my spirit down because now I'm in the fight for freedom. I'm just really tired of all that I've been goin' through."
We just got to stand up now as Negroes for ourselves and for our freedom, and if it don't do me any good, I do know the young people it will do good, and it is a help to our nation because we need peace and there's no other way that we can have it than tryin' to live together. We been apart, but something got to bring peace to this earth."

6B- Congregation - "Let tiny shine, let tiny shine, everywhere I go, Lord, I'm goin' to let tiny shine (3x)."

7- "The second stage led rapidly into the third stage. The large numbers of Negroes congregating at the county courthouse frightened the white people, and they turned to violence. On February 28th, Jimmy Travers, myself, and Randolph Blackwell drove to Greenwood to get a look at the project first hand and see how it was going. That evening as we were leaving, Jimmy spotted a car with three white men in it, and said that they had been circling around the office that day. They had parked down the street a little ways. We pulled up behind them, it was dark and we had our lights shining at them. They were three white men in a white Buick. We looked at them. They turned around, looked at us, and said that they were going to the office.

I got out, told Sam and Willy that they better close up before going on out to the highway, took a back road out to the highway, and when we got there the men were sitting across from the highway facing us. They drove slowly by us and didn't see us until they got parallel. Then as we were passing, they spotted us and backed up, turned around, and followed us out of town. This time they had on dark glasses. It was the same car. They followed us for seven miles out of town and then finally opened up in a spray of bullets like a machine gun. Glass was splattering everywhere. Jimmy shouted that he was hit, slumped down in his lap and Randolph Blackwell said that he had a bullet in the back of his neck lodged close to his spine. We waited at that hospital all night and in the morning he was removed to Jackson, where they operated. The doctor said he removed a large copper-jacketed bullet and that the bullet had lodged close to Jimmy's spine and if it had had a little more force when it entered, he would have been killed instantly since it was headed for a vital brain area. That began the third phase of the voter registration project in Greenwood. We gathered our people from the various towns around the Delta where they were working, and moved into Greenwood to see if we couldn't have a crash program to get as many Negroes as we could to go down to register to vote. It seemed to be the only way to answer this kind of violence: instead of letting up, to pour it on, and instead of backing out to move more people in; instead of giving any signs of fear, to show them that for once the Negro was not going to turn around and was not possible to shoot them out, and that if anything was going to happen at all, there was going to be increased activity."

SIDE TWO

1A - Congregation:

"We want more faith, We may be able to ask you for what we need here in this torn world,"

Amen, Oh Lord, Oh Lord,
Don't leave us here
In this distress which we're now going through,
Because we know you have all power
In Heaven and in earth.
Oh, the lily of the valley,
The bright and mornin' star,
Fairest of ten thousand to my soul,
For Heaven sake, I can't rest.
Oh, my Father,
You said you would come to our rescue
If we would only call in faith,
We want more faith, my God...
We call on the Heavenly friend,
A light to shine on our road
To lead us on to Thee."

1B - "First I would just like to ask everybody in the audience that have been down and attempted to register, to raise their hands. They had parked down the street a little ways. We pulled up behind them, it was dark and we had our lights shining at them. They were three white men in a white Buick. We looked at them. They turned around, looked at us, and said that they were going to the office.

I got out, told Sam and Willy that they better close up before going on out to the highway, took a back road out to the highway, and when we got there the men were sitting across from the highway facing us. They drove slowly by us and didn't see us until they got parallel. Then as we were passing, they spotted us and backed up, turned around, and followed us out of town. This time they had on dark glasses. It was the same car. They followed us for seven miles out of town and then finally opened up in a spray of bullets like a machine gun. Glass was splattering everywhere. Jimmy shouted that he was hit, slumped down in his lap and Randolph Blackwell said that he had a bullet in the back of his neck lodged close to his spine. We waited at that hospital all night and in the morning he was removed to Jackson, where they operated. The doctor said he removed a large copper-jacketed bullet and that the bullet had lodged close to Jimmy's spine and if it had had a little more force when it entered, he would have been killed instantly since it was headed for a vital brain area. That began the third phase of the voter registration project in Greenwood. We gathered our people from the various towns around the Delta where they were working, and moved into Greenwood to see if we couldn't have a crash program to get as many Negroes as we could to go down to register to vote. It seemed to be the only way to answer this kind of violence: instead of letting up, to pour it on; instead of backing out, to move more people in; instead of giving any signs of fear, to show them that for once the Negro was not going to turn around and was not possible to shoot them out, and that if anything was going to happen at all, there was going to be increased activity."

1C - Congregation: "Walk, walk, walk, oh...walk, walk...."

2A - "We worked all of March, and as was to be expected there was more violence. Sam Bloch and Willie Pannock were shot at in front of the office one night as they were parked after coming back from the church where they were getting together a clothes shipment. White men drove up close by the car, took a shotgun and blasted through the windows so close that the pellets didn't have a chance to spread out and luckily none of the four people in the car were injured. About a week later a group of white men shot into a group of Negroes coming out of the Negro theater. Then finally late in March one of our workers, George Green, was shot at
just as he entered his house, having returned home at night from work at the office. That next morning we gathered at the church steps at Wesley Methodist Church in Greenwood and started singing.

2B-Congregation:

"Get on board, children, children,
Get on board, children, children,
Let's go home, children, children.

We know as Freedom Fighters
That we may go to jail,
But when you fight for freedom
The Lord will go your ball."
(Repeat first verse)

2C-"We sang and we sang and we sang, and people gathered around and finally we sang 'We Shall Overcome' in a big circle, and I talked to them and explained to them why I thought we needed to walk downtown to do two things: to protest to city hall about the shootings, because any time unlicensed cars drive around the town and subsequently shoot at Negroes with white people in the car, the police have to be implicated in it. It doesn't seem to me possible that unlicensed cars with white men in them can drive around the Negro community and cause violence and the police don't know about them. So we were going to protest to the police at City Hall, and then go on to the courthouse to register another type of protest and try and register to vote. We never got to the courthouse. We were met at the police station with police dogs. They told us to turn around, or the dogs would be turned loose on them."

2D-"I never thought that Greenwood peoples would treat Negroes that been around here, that nursed their children, cook for 'em and farm this land, that they would have those type of a police, that would put dogs on humans. I was knocked off my feet the other day. I saw a terrible thing happen. I saw 'em put a dog on a first class citizen, a decent man, and told him he was a black son of a bitch.... I never will overcome it. A black son of a bitch, a man is not a son of a bitch; a man is a created being made in God's image. When God made man, he said it was good. And I don't think no man ought to be on the police force unless he know God. I don't think heathens ought to be allowed on the police force. We goin' up there without a pocket knife and men comin' out with guns and everything, my my, with guns around like that. I think that men on the police force ought to be the best men. They ought to know God and they ought to be able to love humanity. No man is fittin' to be nothin', no police nothin', if he's not got the grace of God in him.... It read like this, 'Be not deceived, what's ever man's sowed, he's gonna reap it.' Elijah told Ahab, the same dog that licked Haber blood would lick yours. The same man that sic the dog on Tucker, gonna get dog bit in a different form. God gonna sic the dog on him."

2E-"We isn't city hall and started toward the courthouse. We walked about two blocks and the church met us again. They had some police carrying guns, some on motorcycles, some on their cars. Finally Jim Foreman and Lawrence Glatt were arrested, and we turned back to walk to the church. When we got to the church, the police who had followed us all the way back then began to arrest the voting workers. They were trying to get the people into cars, to carry them by cars into the court house. Myself and eight others were arrested, put in the city jail and later transferred to the county jail where we stayed for a week. While we were in jail we heard that the people were marching and trying to get down to the courthouse, that Dick Gregory had come to town, and that there was a great deal of uproar about the situation in Greenwood."

3A-"Dick Gregory "I can't tell you how heartbroken I was last week as I sat in New York City and read the reports that was coming out of Greenwood, reports that you would expect to come out of South Africa, reports that you would expect to come out of Russia, or South Vietnam. I read reports and listened to the news on television and I read some things that bad they happened in any other place in the world, America would probably have been at war. And I couldn't help but think, we went into Germany, we went into Japan, we went into Korea, we're keeping a close eye on Cuba; if Russia aggravated West Berlin half as much as you was aggrandized last week, we would be there. And I can't help but wonder why someone can't come down here. Whether they want to admit it or not, Mississippi is America. I picked up your local newspaper today and read where your Governor who holds the highest office in this state said the things he said on the front page -- it's disgraceful. We have been lied on for so long it's made us over-sensitive, it's made us over-energetic, and it's made us over-defensive. We have been accused of being inferior by this man. I say if he really believes we were really inferior to him, he would integrate his schools tomorrow and we would flock out by moon. By his crooked tactics and his crooked standards he has made us better than him, because he has said if you have 1/15ths white blood and 1/15ths Negro blood, you are Negro. So who's inferior and superior to who? Here's a man who said he wanted racial prejudice and racial segregation, and didn't even know how it worked. Because had he been sincere in racial prejudice and racial segregation I have no business doing this Light. Because if he really means what he says about racial mixing then I'm supposed to be pitch black, midnight black. Here's a man who didn't have enough intelligence to know that if you want to segregate someone and really put 'em down, you put 'em up front. He made the great mistake of putting us in the back. So for three hundred years, we've been watchin' him. We have been accused of having the highest crime rate in America, and it's so amusing when you turn on television and see the gangster stories, detective plays -- you never see us. This man has accused us of having guns. We goin' up there with guns and everything, my my, with guns around like that. I think that men on the police force ought to be the best men. They ought to know God and they ought to be able to love humanity. No man is fittin' to be nothin', no police nothin', if he's not got the grace of God in him.... It read like this, 'Be not deceived, what's ever man's sowed, he's gonna reap it.' Elijah told Ahab, the same dog that licked Haber blood would lick yours. The same man that sic the dog on Tucker, gonna get dog bit in a different form. God gonna sic the dog on him."
"Thank you very much. Ladies and gentleman, it's very good to see the number of persons out here tonight, and certainly this indicates that we're ready for freedom and we're ready to march for it. I just want to say to you here tonight that the reason I'm up here is because you've given us inspiration in Jackson, and we're going to go back to Jackson, south Mississippi and all over Mississippi and fight for freedom as you're fighting for it here in Greenwood. All we want you to do is keep going with this fight for freedom, and as we stick together here, as you feel the pains of dogs here in Greenwood, we'll feel them in Jackson. When we feel them in Jackson, you'll feel them here, and when we get this unity, ladies and gentlemen, nothing can stop us. We're going to win this fight for freedom. Thank you very much."

"For us, the events in Greenwood represented a major breakthrough. For the first time we had hundreds of people lined up at the courthouse in an effort to register to vote. We had gotten people off the plantations where they'd been strapped in the toughest way to economic poverty and the mores of segregation, and gotten them to come in and face the white man."

"It is something that hasn't ever happened here to us. We really feel like we have someone thinking of us, feeling our care, and we are willing to cooperate with them. We've had the mayor of this town to tell us so many different things until we just didn't hardly know which way to go. We was just all tied up. We didn't know one time whether to let any of them in the door, but after we come out ourselves trying to see what it was, that give us ideas about this. We just feel all right. We don't feel afraid, not many of us feeling afraid, not like we have been. We feel that it was something to help us to live."

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CHAPTER 5. "MISSISSIPPI 11: GREENWOOD"
FROM SNCC THE NEW ABOLITIONISTS
by HOWARD ZINN

Leaving McComb in early 1962, the winter in Mississippi not yet over, Bob Moses wrote to the Atlanta office:

The movement from the rural to the urban is irresistible and the line from Amite to McComb to Jackson straight as the worm furrows. Accordingly, I have left the dusty roads to run the dusty streets. In short, I'm now installed in Jackson—subject to repossession— and am duly reporting. Jackson is to be the center for a new newspaper, the Mississippi Free Press... A group of Jackson businessmen are backing the idea... The third and fourth congressional districts are to see Negro candidates for Congress, and I'm up to be the submerged campaign director for the Rev. R. L. Smith, who is running for the fourth district... we will suffice like hell to get as many poll taxes paid as possible in the next six weeks, while the hunting season lasts. After the hunting comes the killing and if we're all dead, I want to be cremated and snuck into the next sun-circling satellite for my last rites....

A group of SNCC staff people had rented a house in Jackson, and Moses stayed there, with Paul Brooks and his wife, James and Diane Nash Bevel (newly wed), Lester McKenzie and Bernard Lafayette. With his old friend Annie Moore, Moses went on a field trip through the state. With Reverend Smith, the candidate for Congress, he visited a session of the Mississippi state legislature and tried to sit in the white section of the gallery, but was turned away. With Tom Gaither of CORE, a plan was drafted for CORE, SNCC, SCLC, and NAACP to carry on a unified voter registration program in Mississippi, joined together in a Council of Federated Organizations (COFO). Moses wrote, "Most of the winter was lean. We were just hanging on in Jackson... laying foundations, getting ready for the next drives in the summer." Meanwhile, Mississippi continued in its ways. To Jackson in February came the story told to SNCC people by a young Negro woman, Bessie Turner, aged nineteen, who lived in Clarksdale:

About four o'clock Sunday afternoon, January 21, two policemen came to my house, one short and stocky with silver teeth at the bottom, and a tall slender policeman. They told me to get in their car and they carried me to the City Hall into a small room and began questioning me about some money they said I had taken... The short policeman told me to lay down on the concrete floor in the jail and pull up my dress and pull down my panties. He then began to whip me... He then told me to turn over... He hit me between my legs with the same leather strap... He told me then to get up and fix my clothes and wipe my face, as I had been crying... In May, Diane Nash Bevel was tried in Jackson for teaching the techniques of nonviolence to Negro youngsters; the charge was "contributing to the delinquency of minors" and she was sentenced to two years in jail. Four months pregnant, she insisted on going to jail rather than putting up bond, saying: "I can no longer cooperate with the evil and corrupt court system of this state. Since my child will be a black child, born in Mississippi, whether I am in jail or not he will be born in prison." After a short stay in prison, she was released.

Two Negro students from Jackson were in the courtroom during the trial of Mrs. Bevel. One was Jesse Harris, tall and serious, who had attached himself to SNCC ever since James Bevel came to Jackson in the Freedom Rides. The other was seventeen-year-old Lovaghn Brown. They refused to move to the "colored" side of the courtroom and were arrested. En
route to jail, Harris was beaten by a deputy. Out on the prison
farm, both were singled out for special attention. A guard
ordered other prisoners to hold Jesse Harris while he whipped
him with a length of hose. At another time, he was beaten with
a stick, handcuffed and removed to the county jail where he
was put in the "sweatbox" on a bread and water diet. Brown
was also beaten. After forty days of such treatment, they were
released.

In Jackson that spring, Moses, with an enlarged SNCC
staff, began to plan voter registration operations for the sum-
mer. The money that Tim Jenkins had spoken about was on its
way, contributed by the Taconic and Field Foundations,
administered by the Southern Regional Council in Atlanta,
through a new Voters Education Project. Money was going
to SNCC, CORE, NAACP, SCLC and the Urban League. Moses
planned to set up voter registration projects in seven different
Mississippi towns in a "crash program" for the summer months.

Lester McKinnie was already working in Laurel, form-
where he wrote to James Forman in Atlanta: "Jim, the Negroes
in Laurel are like many other cities, waiting until someone
else starts something, and then if it is effective they will get
on the band wagon. Every minister seems to be uncle Tomish;
it's absurd really. So I am working mostly with the common
layman...." And in June, Frank Smith, a wiry, agile More-
house College student from Atlanta, set up shop in Holly
Springs, where tiny Rust College, a Negro school, was a kind
of haven. His first report back to Atlanta gives an idea of how
a SNCC worker goes about his business when he arrives in a
Deep South town:

Two days were spent just looking around in all sections of the
County in an effort to find out just who the most trusted and
respected leaders were. . . . On June 27, a letter was sent to
seventeen people in Marshall County announcing a meeting.
It was very vague and mentioned only slightly voter registra-
tion. Sixteen people came out and among them was Father
Mondey, who let us have the meeting at the Catholic School.
It was quite a success and everyone was very enthusiastic.
Mr. O. C. Pegues is a middle-aged man of about forty. He has
seven kids and is renting a 200-acre farm. He has a high
school diploma and served three years during World War II.
He has a very prosperous farm and a wonderful family. He is
one of the few that is known by the white community as a
"crazy nigger." He doesn't stand any pushing around. . . .
The door-to-door committee was set into motion on July 8 . . .

Transportation was provided for all persons and we contacted
about 1000 people and got about 150 of them to take the voter
registration test. . . . It did not take the sheriff and the police
force long to discover that Smith was in town. . . . We are
dealing with very subtle problems here, not one of shootings
and hangings, but of lowering of cotton acreage allotments
and the raising of taxes. The Chancery Court sells the land
for taxes and the farmer is forced to move. In the meantime
the banks refuse to give him a loan. . . . Here we have the
problem of the sheriff riding by a place where meetings are
being held and writing down the tag numbers. The next
week, any person at the meeting who does public work is
fired. . . . Perhaps something should be said about handicaps
at this point. Perhaps the greatest one could be spelled out in
one word, money. . . . There were times when my buddy and
I walked as many as fifteen miles per day, and we rode a mule
for almost a week. These things were good psychologically
for the community, but I don't think they did the souls and
the feet of two of us any good....

Thus, the original nucleus that had gathered in McComb
after the Freedom Rides had spread out in the summer of 1962
to Holly Springs, Laurel, and other places. Curtis Hayes and
Hollis Watkins were in Hattiesburg; other staff members were
in Greenville, Cleveland, Vicksburg, and Ruleville.

But it was the city of Greenwood, seat of Leflore County,
that was to become the focus of attention in Mississippi for
the next year. To Greenwood came, in June, 1962, a twenty-
three-year-old native of Cleveland, Mississippi, named Sam
Block, the son of a construction worker, tall, black, gaunt,
silent, who sings in a deep voice and looks at you with eyes
large and sad.

As Sam Block walked through the Negro section of Green-
wood, knocking on doors, a police car followed him around
and people were afraid to talk to him. The Elks Club gave him
a meeting place, and people began to gather there around
Sam. But he wrote to Jim Forman in mid-July: "We lost our
meeting place at the Elks Club. The members did not approve
of our meeting there and singing Freedom songs." One day
three white men beat Sam; another day he had to jump behind
a telephone pole to escape a speeding truck.

Willie Peacock, also from Mississippi, dark, muscular,
handsome, who joined Block in Greenwood, spoke of their
hard times together:

We were hungry one day and didn't have anything to eat and
didn't even have a pair of shoes hardly, and we went down
and started hustling and a fellow gave me a pair of shoes.
Then we had to ride a mule. . . . Didn't even have transporta-
tion. But we kept begging for transportation. Came up to
Memphis and had to stay five days and still didn't get a car.
But we're not worryin'. We ain't complaining. We just go on
and raise hell all the time. We don't have to ride, we can walk,
we don't care.

A profile of Leflore County is very much a profile of the
rural Deep South. The county in 1900 had about 50,000 people,
of whom approximately two-thirds were Negro. Whites owned
90 percent of the land and held 100 percent of the political
offices; their median income was three times that of Negroes.
(But most whites were poor; thirty-six white families made
over $25,000 a year, earning a total amount of money greater
than the 3000 poorest families.) Of 168 hospital beds in the
county, 131 were reserved for whites. Ninety-five percent of
the whites of voting age were registered to vote; 2 percent of
the Negroes of voting age were registered.

Soon after his arrival in Greenwood, Sam Block became
interested in a police brutality case. Late in July, the police
picked up a fourteen-year-old Negro boy and accused him of
breaking into a white woman's house. The boy told them:
"I go to the cotton field all the time and back home," but
they took him to the police station, where they forced him to strip
and beat him with a bull whip as he lay naked on the concrete
floor. They kicked him, beat him with fists, a billy club,
and a blackjack until knots and welts were raised all over his
body. When someone came near, a buzzer was sounded, and a
television set was turned on to drown out the boy's screams.
Finally, his father came for him. Police told him to stop crying,
wash his face, dress, and go to the courtroom. He entered the
wrong room, and a policeman struck him on the head, pushed
him into the courtroom, saying: "That room, nigger.

Sam Block took affidavits from the boy, took photos of his
wounds, and dropped them into the bottomless, bucketless
well of the Justice Department. "From then on," says Bob
Moses, "it was Sam versus the police." Sam's courage began to
be contagious; more people began to show up at the SNCC
office at 616 Avenue I in Greenwood, and to go down to the
county courthouse to register. The newspapers now reported
that a voter registration drive was being organized among
Negroes in town, and gave the address of the office.

On August 17, 1962, Bob Moses was in Cleveland, Mis-
sippi, when a collect telephone call came at midnight from
Greenwood. Sam Block, Luvaghn Brown and Lawrence Gayot
were working late in the second story SNCC office there. It
was Sam Block on the line:

Sam said there were some people outside, police cars, about
twelve o'clock at night . . . white people riding up and down
the street, and they felt something was going to happen. I
told him to keep in touch with us, hung up, called a member of the Justice Department. We gave him Sam's number and he had some instructions about calling the local FBI. And Sam called back again. The police had gone, and white people had come in their cars, were standing outside the office. He was crouched in the office, looking out the window, talking on the phone in a very hushed voice, describing people downstairs with guns and chains, milling around down there, outside his office. He had to hang up. . . . We didn't know what to do, . . . Willie Peacock and I decided then to drive over to Greenwood. We got there about three-thirty or four. The office was empty, the door was knocked down, the window was up, Sam was gone, so was Guyot and Lavagh. Well, the next morning when they came in they told us what had happened. People had charged up the back stairs, had come into the office and they had escaped out the window, across the roof to an adjoining building, and down a TV antenna into somebody else's home.

Sam Block went to Hattiesburg the day after that incident, and returned to Greenwood to find the SNCC office a shambles. The owner told him he couldn't stay there any longer. For the next two nights he slept in a junkyard on the seat of a wrecked auto. Then he found a room to sleep in. It would be five months before they could find another office, but he and Willie Peacock stayed in town, visiting people every day. They were, as Moses put it, "breaking down the psychological feeling on the part of the Negroes that these boys are just coming in here, they're going to be in here for a short time, and then they're going to leave, and we're going to be left holding the bag."

One day, while taking Negroes down to register in Greenwood, Block was stopped by the sheriff, and the following conversation took place:

SHERIFF: Nigger, where you from?
BLOCK: I'm a native of Mississippi.
SHERIFF: I know all the niggers here.
BLOCK: Do you know any colored people?
(The sheriff spat at him.)
SHERIFF: I'll give you till tomorrow to get out of here.
BLOCK: If you don't want to see me here, you better pack up and leave, because I'll be here.

That he wasn't murdered on the spot is something of a miracle. The next day, Sam Block took some more Negro men and women down to the county courthouse to try to register.

As the stream of voting applicants in Greenwood increased (though in Block's first six months there, only five Negroes were actually declared by the registrar to have passed), the economic screws tightened on the Negro community. Winters were always lean in the farming towns of Mississippi, and people depended on surplus food supplied by the Government to keep them going. In October, 1962, the government took the food drive turned out to be a catalyst for the voter registration campaign in Mississippi. It brought the SNCC workers into direct contact with thousands of Negroes, many of whom came forward to help with the distribution of food, and stayed on to work on voter registration. Thus SNCC became identified in the minds of Negroes in Mississippi not simply with agitation, but with direct aid. The more food was distributed, the more people began to go down to the courthouse to register. Eventually, Federal pressure led Leflore County to resume the distribution of surplus food.

Bob Moses wrote, on February 24, to thank the Chicago Friends of SNCC, who, with the aid of Dick Gregory, had sent food and clothing and medicine to Mississippi.

... we have been on a deep plateau all winter, shaking off the effects of the violence of August and September and the eruption that was Meredith at Old Miss. ... You combat your own fears about beatings, shootings and possible mob violence, you stymie by your mere physical presence the anxious fear of the Negro community, seeded across town and blown from paneled pine and white sunken sink to windy kitchen floor and rusty old stoves, that maybe you did come only to boil and bubble and then burst out of sight ... you create a small mining force capable of moving out when the time comes. ... After more than six hundred lined up to receive food in Greenwood on Wednesday, 20 February, and Sam's subsequent arrest and weekend in prison on Thursday, 21 February, over one hundred people overcrowded city hall to
protest at his trial, over two hundred and fifty gathered at a mass meeting that same night, and on Tuesday by 10:30 a.m. I had counted over fifty people standing in silent line in the county courthouse; they say over two hundred stood in line that day. This is a new dimension.... Negroes have never stood en masse in protest at the seat of power in the iceberg of Mississippi politics.... We don't know this plateau at all. We were relieved at the absence of immediate violence at the courthouse, but who knows what's to come next?

The evening after he wrote that letter, about 10:00 p.m., Bob Moses left the SNCC office in Greenwood and got into an automobile with two other men, heading for Greenville. One was Randolph Blackwell, of the Voters Education Project in Atlanta, tall, of powerful build and voice, who was doing a tour of the voter registration areas. The other was Jimmy Travis, twenty years old, a native Mississippian and a former Freedom Rider, who had come out of the Rides to join the SNCC staff.

A 1962 Buick with no license tags had been sitting outside the SNCC office all day, with three white men in it—nothing unusual for SNCC. As they pulled away, the Buick followed. They stopped at a filling station for gasoline, and the Buick followed and circled the block. Then they headed out on the main highway toward Greenville, all three sitting in front: Jimmy Travis at the wheel, Bob Moses next to him, Blackwell on the outside. It was about 10:30 p.m., and there was a good deal of traffic on the road. As the traffic began to thin, the Buick pulled up alongside and then came the deafening sound of gunfire. Thirteen 45-calibre bullets ripped through the car shattering the front left window, missing Bob Moses and Randolph Blackwell by inches, smashing through the window on the other side. Two bullets hit Jimmy Travis. The Buick sped off, and Moses grabbed the controls to pull the car to a stop as Travis crouched in his seat, bleeding. They drove to a hospital, and phoned the news to Atlanta. Ruby Doris Smith sent wires the next morning to SNCC workers in the field: "Jimmy Travis was shot in the Delta last night. Twice in shoulder and neck. Will be operated on today to remove bullet which is lodged behind spinal cord." Travis lived, but the doctor said that if the bullet had penetrated with just slightly more force, he would have died instantly.

From Jackson, David Dennis, who came out of the Freedom Rides to be CORE's representative in Mississippi, wired Attorney General Kennedy asking for "immediate action by the federal government" to protect voter registrants and civil rights workers. The head of the NAAACP in Mississippi, Aaron Henry, also issued a statement of protest. Jim Forman wrote to President Kennedy from Atlanta, requesting protection. But, as in all other acts of violence in Mississippi, the national government carefully confined its work to the filing of occasional lawsuits, and left the police power of the state of Mississippi to its own devices.

One immediate consequence of the shooting was that Wiley Branton, the civil rights lawyer in charge of the Voters Education Project in Atlanta, asked registration workers all over Mississippi, from all civil rights groups, to move into Greenwood immediately. (Branton, a very fair-skinned Negro, was, coincidentally, a descendant of the remarkable white millionaire slave-owner Greenwood LeFlore, after whom both the city and the county were named, who built a mansion styled after the palace of Emperor Josephine, and who supported the Union from his plantation in the Delta all through the Civil War, dying on his front porch with four grandchildren holding Union flags above him.) For the next year, LeFlore County was to be the point of concentration for all civil rights work in Mississippi. Said Branton: "The State of Mississippi has repeatedly thrown down a gauntlet at the feet of would-be Negro voters.... The time has come for us to pick up the gauntlet. LeFlore County has elected itself as the testing ground for democracy."

With the whole Mississippi Voter Education Project staff clustered in Greenwood now—dozens of SNCC people, a few from CORE and SCLC—violence continued. A week after the shooting of Travis, a station-wagon pulled up near SNCC headquarters and someone blasted away with a shotgun into a parked car where Sam Block and three other young people were sitting. The car windows were smashed, but no one was injured. And on March 24, 1963, the voter registration office used by SNCC and the other civil rights organizations was destroyed by fire. All of the office equipment was ruined, records were burned, a phone was ripped from the wall—Greenwood police said there was no evidence of arson. With the owner urging them to leave, SNCC had to look again for another office. Two nights later, someone fired a shotgun into the home of George Greene, a SNCC worker whose family lived in Greenwood. Three children slept as the shots tore into the wall of their bedroom.

Meanwhile, in other parts of Mississippi, there was more trouble. The windows in Aaron Henry's drug store in Clarksdale were broken, as they had been many times before. Dave Dennis' car was fired into in Jackson, three bullets boring through the windshield, but fortunately no one was in the car.

The day after the shooting up of the Greene home, Wednesday, March 27, 1963, Bob Moses, Jim Forman, Willie Peacock, Frank Smith and six others were arrested leading a march to the county courthouse.

Moses recalls:

"The march that took place in Greenwood was not planned.... Now the morning of the march we were at the church three and began staging. Forman came by; he was actually on his way out of town, he was driving. So he suggested that maybe we ought to go down to city hall and protest the shooting. We did not anticipate that the police would react as they did. We were simply going to the police station and request a conference with the police chief asking for police protection in light of the shooting. And they met us there with the dogs and with guns and so forth and I guess, as Jim says, they simply went berserk for a little while..."

As about a hundred Negro men, women, and youngsters, singing and praying, approached the Leflore County Courthouse, the police appeared, wearing yellow helmets, carrying riot sticks, leading police dogs. One of the dogs bit twenty-year-old Matthew Hugh, a demonstrator. Another, snarling and grunting, attacked Bob Moses, tearing a long gash in his trousers. Marian Wright, a young Negro woman studying law at Yale, was on the scene that day:

"I had been with Bob Moses one evening and dogs kept following us down the street. Bob was saying how he wasn't used to dogs, that he wasn't brought up around dogs, and he was really afraid of them. Then came the march, and the dogs growling and the police pushing us back. And there was Bob, refusing to move back, walking, walking towards the dogs.

Demonstrations continued around the county courthouse for the next few days, with more arrests. Comedian Dick Gregory joined the demonstrators. Moses, Forman, and the others were found guilty of disorderly conduct and given the maximum sentence, four months in prison and a $200 fine.

They were released in return for a Justice Department agreement to postpone its suit against local officials.

To the SNCC headquarters in Greenwood, through the spring and early summer of 1963, came a stream of reports of events happening all over the state: an explosive tossed into the window of NAACP leader Aaron Henry's home in Clarksdale, then an explosion ripping into the roof of his drugstore, then bullets fired from a passing car into his home; firebombs thrown into the home of Hartman Turner, first Negro voter applicant in Holmes County, after which Bob Moses and three others were arrested on "suspicion of arson"; SNCC worker Milton Hancock clubbed by a Greenwood policeman; a sit-in..."
student beaten and kicked at a Jackson lunch counter, an NAACP official clubbed to the ground at a demonstration in Jackson; and, on June 12, Medgar Evers murdered in the driveway of his home in Jackson.

But the evidence began to appear, here and there throughout the state of Mississippi, that what Bob Moses had called the "Mississippi iceberg" was beginning to crack. The evidence was not yet in changes in the social structure of the state, but in the people who emerged slowly, as rocks appear one by one by one out of a receding sea.

Mrs. Fannie Lou Hamer, forty-seven, married, the mother of two children, has been all her life a sharecropper in Ruleville, Mississippi (Sunflower County, where James Eastland has his plantation). I spoke to her at a SNCC staff meeting in Greenville, Mississippi, in late 1963, on a sunny Sunday afternoon, over the noise of Negro boys practicing in a brass band, blowing trumpets and pounding on drums just outside the door. She told how she got into the movement.

I went to a meeting at this church, they announced about this important mass meeting, something we wasn't used to, and they said James Bevel would be speaking that night. So I went to church that Monday night in Ruleville, . . . James Bevel did talk that night and everything he said, you know, made sense. And also, Jim Forman was there. So when they stopped talking, well, they wanted to know, who would go down to register you see, on this particular Friday, and I held up my hand.

Mrs. Hamer is short and stocky, her skin like weather-beaten copper, her eyes soft and large; she walks with a limp because she had polio as a child, and when she sings she is crying out to the heavens.

She told how she got into the movement:

After her eviction from the plantation, Mrs. Hamer stayed with a friend in Ruleville. Ten days later, a car drove by the house and sixteen bullets were pumped into the bedroom where she slept. She was out of the house that night, and no one was hurt.

On June 9, 1963, Mrs. Hamer and five other people were returning to Greenwood from a meeting in South Carolina. The bus made a brief stop in Winona, Mississippi, and some of them went into the white waiting room. The police came and arrested all of them, including Mrs. Hamer, who had just stepped off the bus to see what was happening. They were taken to the Winona jail.

One of the group was Annelle Ponder, in her twenties, black-skinned and beautiful, very quiet, who worked on voter registration in Greenwood for the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. (Annelle graduated from Clark College at Atlanta, and her younger sister was a student of mine at Spelman.) After they got to the jail and were separated inside, Mrs. Hamer heard Annelle screaming, "I knew Annelle's voice. And she was prayin' for God to forgive them . . . ."

Then they came for Mrs. Hamer. "I was carried to another cell where there was three white men and two Negro prisoners. The state trooper gave one of the Negroes the blackjack and he said . . . . 'I want you to make that hitch wish she was dead . . . .' " The prisoner beat her with the blackjack, all over her body, while someone held her feet down to keep her from moving. Then the blackjack was handed to another prisoner, who continued the beating. (Negro prisoners—threatened, bribed, desperate—have often been used against other Negro prisoners, as white prisoners have been used against whites in jails all over the nation.)

The day after the arrest, a group of SNCC people, summoned by telephone, drove to Winona to see if they could help. One of them was Lawrence Guyot, a twenty-three-year-old native of Mississippi, a graduate of Tougaloo College, now a SNCC field secretary, of powerful frame, fair skin, and a voice that roars with passion at church meetings in the Delta. Guyot, trying to see the prisoners, was questioned by a state trooper, who became enraged when Guyot refused to say "Yes, sir," and "No, sir." The trooper slapped Guyot repeatedly, then turned him over to a group of Citizens Council members. They beat him until he couldn't lift his arms, hit him again and again in his face until his eyes were so swollen he couldn't open them.

Another SNCC worker in the group of visitors managed to get into the jail to see Annelle Ponder. She reported on her visit when she got back to Greenwood: "Annelle's face was swollen . . . . She could barely talk. She looked at me and was able to whisper one word: FREEDOM."

Mrs. Hamer became a field secretary for SNCC after her eviction from the plantation. Just as Moses and the other "outsiders" had become insiders, now the outsiders were beginning to become outsiders to the society they had grown up in. As Mrs. Hamer put it:

You know they said outsiders was coming in and beginning to get the people stirred up because they've always been satisfied. Well, as long as I can remember, I've never been satisfied. It was twenty of us, six girls and fourteen boys, and we just barely was making it. You know I could see the whites was going to school at a time we would be out of school . . . and most of the time we didn't have anything to wear. I knew it was something wrong . . . . I always sensed that we was the one who always do the hard work, you know . . . .

I asked her if she was going to remain with the movement, and she responded with the words to a song: "I told them if they ever miss me from the movement and couldn't find me nowhere, come on over to the graveyard, and I'll be buried there."

Shortly after the Winona incident, a voter registration meeting held in a tiny church in the cotton-growing village of Itta Bena, just outside of Greenwood, was broken up by smoke-bombs. When forty-five Negroes marched to the town marshal's office to protest this, they were arrested; the following week, thirteen youngsters working with SNCC, some of them from Itta Bena, were arrested in Greenwood.

My wife and I were in Greenwood in August, 1963, when those fifty-eight people finally were freed on bond money supplied by the National Council of Churches. That night SNCC headquarters had the eerie quality of a field hospital after a battle. Youngsters out of jail—sixteen and seventeen years old—were sprawled here and there. Two of them lay on the narrow cots upstairs while a few of the SNCC girls dabbed their eyes with boric acid solutions; some dietary deficiency in jail had affected their eyes. One boy nursed an infected hand. Another boy's foot was swollen. He had started to lose feeling in it while in the "hot box" at Fosharch w Men's Penitentiary, and had stamped on it desperately to restore circulation. Medical attention was refused them in prison.

Newspaper reports about demonstrators arrested in the Deep South have never conveyed fully the reality of a Black Belt jail. As we stood around in SNCC headquarters, three of the youngsters out of Fosharch spoke of their arrest and their two months in jail. The first was Willie Rogers:

. . . . it was twenty minutes to one when the chief came out of his car and across the street in front of the courthouse. It was June 25—Tuesday. The chief said, 'I'm a lookin' you-all to move on. We said that we were up there to get our folks registered.
... He said I'm aSin' you to leave now. We said we came to get them registered and soon as they registered we would leave. So he started placing us under arrest one by one ... The judge sentenced us to four months and $200 fine for refusing to move on ... We stayed in the hot box two nights. It's a cell about six foot square, which they call the hot box. Long as they don't turn the heat on—with three in there—you can make it. There's no openings for light or air; there was a little crack under the door, but you couldn't see your hand before your face less you get down on your knees. When they got ready to feed you they hand the tray through a little door which they close—and then you can't eat unless you get down on your knees by the light comin' in the door—then you can see how to eat. And they had a little round hole in the floor which was a commode ...

Next to speak was Jesse James Glover, another teenager, who told of nine of them being put in the hot box one time, and thirteen another time. We were making it okay about thirty minutes with the fan off, breathing in this oxygen, letting out this carbon dioxide — and the air was evaporating on top of the building, and it got so hot the water was falling off the top of the building all around the sides like it was raining ... He let us out ... we told everyone to keep quiet because we didn't want to get in the hot box again. Then a few fellows were talking to each other. He came down and told Lawrence Guyot, "I'm going to put these negroes up to this damn bar if I hear any of this racket"—so they hung MacArthur Cotton and Willie Rogers on the bars—MacArthur was singing some Freedom songs ... Altogether, I was thirteen days in the hot box. ... How did I get in the movement? I was at a mass meeting in Itta Bena. I'd been walkin' and canvassin' on my own. Bob Moses asked me, did I want to work with SNCC? I told him yes ... Fred Harris spoke:

... He came around and said, "You gonna move? you gonna move?" And he frightened the old people. And when we didn't move he arrested us ... In all I spent 100 hours in the hole—the hot box that is. ... I'm seventeen. I got involved with the movement back in 1960, when SNCC came up. I was fourteen then. Sam Black was talking to me about the movement. I told him, yes, I'd be glad to help, and I started from there on. ... At first my mother didn't want me to be in it. Then she realized it would be best for her and for me ... she told me I could go ahead.

The next afternoon we drove in two cars, with Bob Moses, Stokely Carmichael, and several others, to Itta Bena. People came out of the cotton fields to meet in a dilapidated little church, welcoming back the Parchman prisoners, singing freedom songs with an overpowering spirit. One of the returned prisoners was Mother Perkins, fragile and small, seventy-five years old, who had just spent, like the rest, two months on the county prison farm for wanting to register to vote. Cars filled with white men rumbled by along the road that passed by the church door, but the meeting and the singing went on.

Bob Moses spoke, told them that there were no jobs in Chicago or Detroit, that they must stay and wrench from the State of Mississippi what they deserved as human beings. Anyone who felt the urge got up to speak. An old man rose on his cane and said slowly, thoughtfully: "All these years, going along behind my plow, I thought some day things would change. But I never dreamed I'd see it now."

In the fall of 1963, the SNCC workers concentrated in Greenwood began to spread out all over the state in the most daring political action undertaken by Mississippi Negroes since Reconstruction. With Negroes prevented—by intimidation and reprisal—from registering and voting in the regular gubernatorial election (between Paul Johnson, segregationist Democrat, and Rubel Phillips, segregationist Republican), it was decided to give them a chance to vote for a Negro governor, Aaron Henry, in an unofficial Freedom Ballot.

Henry, a forty-one-year-old pharmacist, army veteran, and NAACP leader, was from Clarksdale, Mississippi, and one of the pillars of the movement in the state. Running for Lieutenant-Governor on Henry's ticket was a twenty-seven-year-old white minister, Edwin King, chaplain at Tougaloo College. King was born in Vicksburg, Mississippi, educated at Millsaps College in Jackson, then went off to study theology at Boston University. He had been arrested four times since 1960 for various civil rights actions and was once beaten in a jail in Montgomery. The Henry-King platform stressed the subjection of poor whites as well as Negroes to the political and economic dictatorship that had so long run the state of Mississippi.

All the civil rights organizations in the Council of Federated Organizations cooperated in the campaign, and Bob Moses of SNCC directed it, with ballot boxes placed in churches and meeting places throughout the state, where adult Negroes could come and vote. In October and November hundreds of workers canvassed the State of Mississippi, aided by visiting white students from Yale and Stanford, organized by Al Lowenstein, a young political scientist. There were jailings, beatings, and shootings, but the campaign went on.

In Rolling Forks, Mississippi, Ivanhoe Donaldson was canvassing along with Charlie Cobb. People were on their front porches, back from church, or in the back yard. As Donaldson describes one exchange:

"Good afternoon, Ma'am. Have you voted in the election yet?"

"No. What election?"

"Well, Dr. Aaron Henry, a Negro from Clarksdale, Mississippi ... " A pickup truck with a white man in it careened onto the lawn.

"Nigger, we aren't going to have any more of this agitation around here. Niggers round here don't need to vote, so you and your damned buddy get out of here. God damn it, nigger: I'll give you one minute to get out of town or I'll kill you!"

Another time, a policeman had Ivanhoe Donaldson in the back of a police car, and worked himself into a rage, pulling his pistol, cocking it, holding it near Donaldson's head, shouting: "You and the other goddamn Moses' niggers around here ain't gonna git nothin' but a bullet in the head. Black son of a bitch, I'm gonna kill you, nigger!" Another policeman came over and suggested this was not the time or place for a killing, and finally he was let go.

Claude Weaver is a Negro student at Harvard College, very young-looking, mild-mannered, who plays the guitar and draws hilarious cartoons with charcoal (his greatest creation is "Supersnick," a hambone Negro janitor named Tom who turns into "Supersnick" at will and saves his brethren from Mississippi sheriffs). Weaver joined the SNCC staff time for the Freedom Ballot campaign. He wrote from Mississippi:

The Delta lies vacant and barren all day; it broods in the evening and it cries all night. I get the impression that the land is cursed and suffering, groaning under the awful weight of history's sins. I can understand what Faulkner meant; it must be loved or hated ... or both. It's hard to imagine how any music but the blues could have taken root in the black soil around one.

Weaver stayed on after the Freedom Ballot campaign. He was jailed several times, and was once threatened by a policeman with a pistol-whipping if he didn't say "Yes, sir." He wrote to a friend back home, as if he were simply offering a piece of news: "We are not afraid."

When the Freedom Ballot campaign was over, 80,000 Negroes had marked ballots for Henry and King, four times the number officially registered in the state. It showed, Bob
Moses said that Mississippi Negroes would vote, in huge numbers, if given the chance. It showed that Negro and white youngsters were still not afraid, despite everything that had happened in the last two years, to move into the towns and villages and farmland of Mississippi and talk to people about what the future might be like.

For SNCC the McComb days of 1961 had been a quick and ugly rebuff. The Greenwood concentration of 1962–1963, in spite of the violence and the pain, had awakened voices and hopes in Mississippi that could not be stifled. Perhaps 1964 would be the year for the transformation of the state of Mississippi. SNCC now had 130 staff members throughout the South, with forty of these jail-hardened youngsters concentrated in Mississippi, spread out in different places throughout the state. One of these places, in Forrest County, was the little city of Hattiesburg.

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1-12" 33-1/3 rpm longplay record ............. $5.95


1-12" 33-1/3 rpm longplay record ............. $8.50


1-12" 33-1/3 rpm record ....................... $5.95

**FH5953** THE ST-IN STORY: The Story of the Lunch­Room Sit-In presented by World Broadcasting. Mr. Eddie Randall, narrator, and including the voices of Dr. Martin Luther King, Ralph McGill, Greenfield Pitts, Peggy Alexander, Kelly Miller Smith, Philip Howard, Dr. John R. Cunningham; Events and personal experiences in the integration struggle in the South by Rev. Ralph Abernathy. Complete texts.

1-12" 33-1/3 rpm longplay ....................... $5.95

**FH5511** W.E.B. DUBoIS: a recorded autobiography, interviewed by Moses Asch; Early College Years (Fisk), Harvard, Germany, Atlanta University, NAACP, "The Crisis," World War I, Pan-African Conference, Africa, USA & Europe, NAACP and the UN, Peace Congresses and the Triumphant Negro and Young People, The Negro and Apartheid of Today.

1-12" 33-1/3 rpm longplay record ............. $5.95


1-12" 33-1/3 rpm longplay record ............. $5.95

**FH5359** NU YORk. Documentary of Puerto Ricans in New York City conceived, recorded and edited by Tony Schwartz; Includes interviews with Boricuas in New York City, housing, food and clothing, illegal status, Language and Life. Complete song texts.

1-12" 33-1/3 rpm longplay record ............. $5.95

**FH5990** THE NASHVILLE ST-IN STORY, a dramatic documentary based on the lunch-counter "sitt-in" campaign by Negro students in Nashville, Tennessee: song, interviews, re-creation of historic moments by the students themselves. Conceived, coordinated and directed by Guy Carawan; narration by Rev. C. Tindell Wynn. Notes, and documentary photographs.

1-12" 33-1/3 rpm longplay record ....... $5.95

**FH5983** WE SHALL OVERCOME; songs of the FREEDOM RIDERS and the ST-INs, spirituals, gospel and new songs sung by the Montgomery Gospel Trio, The Nashville Quartet and Guy Carawan. This 1963 light of Mine, There's a Meeting Here Tonight, Rock My Soul, Hold On, Let Us Break Bread Together, We are Soldiers in the Army, We Shall Not Be Moved, Your Dog, Michael Row The Best Abreast, I'm So Glad, Oh Freedom, We Shall Overcome, Sunglasses, notes, and documentary photographs.

1-12" 33-1/3 rpm longplay record ............. $5.95


1-12" 33-1/3 rpm longplay record ............. $5.95

**FC7005** COSH, WHAT A WONDERFUL WORLD! Songs about scientific progress, people and customs of many lands, written by Gil Scott of the New York School System and sung by the members of the Negro Children's Chorus of New York. Neighbors Mexico, We're Very Good Friends with Canada, The Goosche, Lovely Italy, High in the Alps of Switzerland, From France to Congo to Puerto Rico, These Great United States, Transportation, Big Ben, Communication. With complete notes and text.

1-12" 33-1/3 rpm longplay record ............. $4.95


WESLEY CURTIS: Heart of the Woods; GEORGIA DOUGLAS JOHNSON: My Little Dream; FRANK BOREN: To January; TRADITIONAL; Did You Feed My Cow? Isidro, Precious Things, I'm a Round-Town Gent, Take To' Time Miss Love. Complete text.

1-12" 33-1/3 rpm longplay record ............. $5.95

**FC7072** THE GLORY OF NEGRO HISTORY, written and narrated by Langston Hughes with the actual voices of Ralph Bunche and Mary McLeod Bethune recorded especially for this album. Pt. 1 - The Struggle (Oh Freedom, Shall Overcome, Swing Low, Sweet Charlie Ol Riley, Oh Dew Moses, John Brown's Body, Battle hymn of the Republic). Pt. 2 - The Glory Statements by Ralph Bunche and Mary McLeod Bethune: Trouble in Mind, Dallas Rag I'm Not Sorry; Oh Freedom, They Started on the Dog, Organ Grinder's Swing. Complete text.

1-12" 33-1/3 rpm longplay record ............. $4.95


1-12" 33-1/3 rpm longplay record ............. $4.95


1-12" 33-1/3 rpm longplay record ............. $5.95