

INTIMIDATIONS AND HARASSMENTS
AGAINST
NEGROES AND CORE WORKERS

Summer, 1963 to Summer, 1964

July 30, 1963: Sheriff Smith of Pointe Coupee Parish grabbed Ruthie Wells' (CORE VR Worker - Voter Registration) purse and searched it for a tape recorder during conversation between him and CORE workers. He had no search warrant.

August, 1963: In Clinton, Louisiana, the following occurred:
Monday - It was reported that a car with Mississippi License plates was cruising around Mama Jo's (Headquarters for Voter Registration workers (VR). Esther Lee Daniel got the license number, and the incident was reported to JD.

Tuesday * During the day the Sheriff's office was busy delivering subpoenas to leaders in the voter registration drive and to several newly registered voters to appear at a Grand Jury session to be held that night. At night, the Sheriff and Manchester entered the church where the mass meeting was being held and announced that they had subpoenas for several people. Manchester marched to the front of the church with his hat on, and refused to take it off. They were only able to locate Mr. Joseph Holmes; the other Task Force workers had made themselves scarce. Bill Brown was released on cash bond.

Wednesday - It was reported to us that one window in the front of the Mt. Pilgrim Church was broken with a rock. The FBI was notified but did not investigate.

Thursday * It was reported that all the windows on the north side of the Church had been broken with rocks. Hazel Matthews attempted to get a loan from the bank, and was refused, although her credit was good - excellent. It is rumored that the merchants are going to stop giving credit to Negroes. The newspapers have been advertising the fact that it was the Supervisor of Negro schools and her husband who bonded Mike Lesser out of jail on Wednesday. We take this as an invitation for her to be fired. A statement was read to the teachers at their workshop by Ned Williams that indirectly threatened teachers with loss of their jobs if they even attempted to register to vote. The statement came from the School Board.

Friday - James Charles Bell and the three Task Force men guarded Mt. Pilgrim Church during its Revival Meeting. There were no incidents. It was reported that Charles Kilbourne was threatened with losing his job. Hattie Evans reported that she had lost her job because she attended the Mass Rally. The FBI was notified of the windows being broken but claimed that it was out of their jurisdiction to investigate it. Reports from people who were at the Grand Jury session indicate that it is investigating CORE activities.

August, 1963: The local police in White Castle, Louisiana, told Voter Registration workers to get out of town.

August 19, 1963: Plaquemine, Louisiana * Police broke up a peaceful demonstration with tear gas and cop billies. The march

leaders were arrested. In later marches and sit-ins 232 people were arrested.

August 31, 1963: In Plaquemine, police on horseback broke up another peaceful demonstration. Peaceful demonstrators were trampled by horses, being kicked in their heads, on the legs and breasts; also they were forced into weeds by electrical cattle prods, and were molested ~~the~~ in the usual manner with tear gas bombs. This resulted in bruises, scratches, abrasions, lacerations, etc. of the demonstrators.

September 1, 1963: In Plaquemine, 900 silent peaceful marchers were attacked by police with tear gas, fire hoses, cop billies, and electric cattle prods, injuring 28 persons. The ministers leading the marchers were arrested. The marchers returned to the church carrying the injured. Forty mounted police came riding in front of the church shooting tear gas and forcing the injured away from ambulances. Then the police attacked the church breaking windows with tear gas bombs and forcing over 700 people to run out of the back doors and take cover. After tear gasing the church the police used fire hoses and pumped water into the church arresting everyone they could catch. Then they began a house-to-house search for James Farmer and other leaders. They would break into a home and if they couldn't find a leader they would arrest all residents present. For hours, the police rode down the streets for blocks surrounding the church searching homes, throwing tear gas, etc. 400 people were arrested in all. Farmer asked for Federal intervention. 150 people needed hospitalization with the church almost totally demolished.

September 1963: Police trailed voter registration canvassing teams and circled around the clinic when it was in operation. They yelled nasty remarks from their cars, but so far no other action has been taken. This happened in White Castle, La.

September 30, 1963: to October 5, 1963: In Port Allen, La., high school students belonging to CORE were told they would be expelled. White youths in cars have taken to trying to run down Negro kids returning from school. Also some kids have reported that these same youths have shot at them from cars.

October 8, 1963: In Ward 8 of Iberville Parish Negro plantation workers were told that they would be fired if they attended a voter registration clinic.

October 9, 1963: In Plaquemine, Negro students marching on the white high school were stopped and attacked by police throwing tear gas and using cattle prods. The students returned to the church. A short while later the police attacked the church, throwing tear gas, etc.

October 10, 1963: In Plaquemine, Police Chief Songy said that if Negro students striking their high school continue to hold meetings in a Baptist Church he is "going to break it up."

October 12, 1963: In Blaquemine, a Negro student riding a bicycle was stopped by City Police. They asked him what his name was in order that they might serve an injunction on him. He replied that if they wanted to serve the injunction they should know his name. The policeman then hit him on his forehead with a night stick. This student was also hit with the night-stick just below his eye and on the cheek near the corner of the mouth.

November 4 - 10, 1963: In St. Francisville, Louisiana applicants for registration were photographed by Judge Barick and his wife. Also people involved in voter registration were taken before the Grand Jury and asked questions about their voter registration activities.

December 9 to 12, 1963: In Monroe, Louisiana, Voter registration workers in waiting room of bus station were being watched closely by Monroe police.

December 30, 1963: to January 12, 1964: Clinton, Louisiana: In attempting to bond Ed Vickery on property bond, people were harassed by being forced to prove that their property wasn't mortgaged by getting a certificate from the Clerk of Court. Also, both the husband and wife were required to sign. People involved in V-R activities continued to lose their jobs. Herbert Bell, bus driver employed by East Feliciana Parish was fired and charges are being pressed against him for allowing a manor (his son, James Charles) to drive the bus. Launa Spears, a Bookmobile assistant on the Negro Bookmobile, was dismissed at the end of 1963 for "excessive absence." Police continued to "watch" V-R workers. John Manchester, Town Marshall has moved from the country to a house within two blocks of CORE headquarters and his daily rounds to check on CORE activities has increased.

December 30 to January 12, 1964: St. Francisville, Louisiana: There are rumors that the Princeville Canning Company will refuse to renew its contracts with these farmers who tried to register.

January 13 to 26, 1964: West Feliciana Parish, Louisiana: The Parish was hit with a wave of cross burnings although not as many were burned as in East Feliciana Parish.

January 12 to 31, 1964: Monroe, Louisiana: Voter registration workers were under constant surveillance. On Jan. 14, Mike Lesser, CORE VR worker, was picked up by police and then released. On Jan. 16, a VR clinic was surrounded by police, trooper and sheriff cars. A complaint was filed with the FBI the next day. The FBI agent (Cox) suggested to Mike that "Perhaps they were there to protest you."

On Jan 24 at 4 P.M. a telephone was installed in our office. By 7 P.M. it was tapped. By Jan. 27 almost every phone in the building was tapped, as well as the phones of people working with us.

*bus driver
dismissed*

KKK

*FBI
PHONES*

KKK
three or four police who claim they are looking for juveniles drinking in the bar. The chief of police suggested to one of the owners over the phone, that perhaps this would stop if there was not "that white boy in your place so much."

On Saturday night, Jan. 26, a cross was burned in front of the house in which two VR workers live. We are still living there.

January 27 to February 9, 1964, Clinton Louisiana: Gas bills were excessively high for the second month in a row. A complaint was filed with the FBI in Baton Rouge. The result of a committee's protests and threats to stop using gas unless the bills were changed resulted in the lowering of several bills.

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January 27 to February 9, 1964: St. Francisville: Louisiana; The Princeville Canning Company did renew its contracts contrary to expectations.

March 2, 1964, Monroe, Louisiana: Mike Lesser was picked up by the police chief for questioning. Mike (CORE VR worker) was then told that he should no longer go to the Town House (a local Negro cafe) claiming that he had been receiving many calls that Mike was "disturbing the peace". He threatened that Mike would be arrested if he went there any more, and

April 1 to April 13, 1964: St. Francisville, La.: There was another incident reported of a white man drawing a gun on a Negro man who was on his way home from work. The incident will be reported to the FBI. The man had reported it to the Sheriff, but no investigation ensued. Farmers are trying to get a Chicago Merchant's Exchange to buy their potatoes after they were refused by Princeville.

March 1, 1964, to March 31, 1964, Clinton, La.: Intimidation comes now in the court room especially when some of us or someone in the movement is being tried. Mimi Feingold (CORE worker) was called on the stand to give her deposition but, instead, it seemed that they wanted to get CORE's background instead of hers. When she refused to answer some of the questions on the grounds of the First, Fifth, and Fourteenth Amendments to the Constitution she was ordered to answer them.

Every time a strange face enters into Clinton, La., he is stopped and questioned by the town Marshal.

March 1, 1964 to March 31, 1964, St. Francisville: The Grand Jury continued its investigation of CORE V-R activities. The Grand Jury called before it local leaders and attempted to find out as much as it could about voter registration meetings and the local CORE Chapter. Their manner of questioning indicated that they already knew a great deal about the chapter and lacked mainly information about finances. There was no indication to any of the witnesses as to what the purpose of the investigation was.

Persons continue to lose their jobs, including several persons who work in Baton Rouge (name of employer is, of course, readily available from the application form for voter registration). These incidents have been reported to the Justice Department. Reports come in about individuals being shot at, not necessarily connected with V-R drive. (The individuals are not necessarily connected with the V-R drive that is).

Princeville Canning Company indicated that it might buy the potatoes from the non-contracted farmers in the fall. The Company offered to give the farmers seed and fertilizer as usual. Most of the farmers are taking this. The problem is to find a market in the fall.