

Lafayette: This is a report of the first sit-in in Selma, Alabama.

A.C. Williams : Saturday, May 25, 1963. Here is the report of the 3 Negro students who attempted service at the down town drug stores ~~in~~ ~~at~~ and other facilities in Selma, Alabama:

We left Selma University at 9:25 am and arrived in town around 9:30. First we checked the town out to see what would be our best move. Then we went into Carters drugstore on Broad Street and ~~x~~ sat down at the counter for service. We were stared at from every angle with great anticipation. The crowd then began to clear out of the store. A lad was seated a little below us and someone moved him hurriedly. In the rear someone remarked: we aren't going to serve them damn black niggers. Refusing to serve us, we left -- no violence. Before we could get out of the door, the man on the loud-speaker had the news all over town. We then went into the Negro section with two white men following us. We then went into Ammersons Place. Shortly afterward, we began to follow the two white men. As we walked up and down Broad Street, people looked. The police with dogs were standing at each corner with the crowd gazing on. With seriousness in our eyes, we went to the Greyhound bus station. And on the side where white usually sit, we sat down and had a coke. Then we headed for town again, lookin' various stores over; marchin' on the same street where Carters Drug Store is located. The police and others were looking on at <sup>our</sup> every move. We attempted to go in Pirschers McBride Drug Store. But as we turned to go in, the man from within locked the door. From there we went into Tapers. Everyone was staring at us inside the store because they had been informed of us. When we came out, the police were standing in their cars waiting for us. We then made another turn in the Negro area. When we got to that section, the police were standing near. Then we decided we would call it a day around 10:15 am Saturday morning.

Lafayette: Reverend Williams, tell us why you went down to sit-in in Selma, Alabama.



A.C. Williams: Well, the reason that I went down to sit-in in Selma because not only the other demonstrations that had taken place, in Birmingham and other areas but I felt that it was my duty as a Negro citizen to try to do something about the situation even though I knew that this hadn't occurred in Selma, I was convinced of going and I was willing to sacrifice whatever was necessary to go.

Lafayette: I understand there were only 3 students who went down. Why were you willing to go with such a small group knowin' the possible danger here in a small Southern community like Selma, Alabama?

A.C. Williams: Yes, that is true. There were only 3 students that went down. We had discussed this move and we said that we weren't going to back out and each of us had stated that we were willing to go even if we had to go to jail. Because we knew that eventually this would come to Selma.

Lafayette: Did you have any fears about goin' down, I mean knowin' what possibly might happen to you and this sort of thing?

A.C. Williams: Well, there might have been just a little fear but as we first got in town and began to look the crowd over, at first perhaps there were a little fear but goin' that far, we had to go through with it in order to stand for what we had said. But we were not, I would say, just afraid. Because if we were afraid, we would not have gone through with what we had started.

Lafayette: Why do you think only 3 students went down?

A.C. Williams: I believe that there were only three students to go down because of the fact that not only the fear but also the background -- their family. And ~~that~~ they were not willing to sacrifice that in order to go down to just for themselves. And that most of them did not understand what it was actually all about.

Rev. Benny Lee Tucker:

Lafayette: Reverend Tucker, you're one of the studentt who went down to sit-in this past Saturday, with the other two students. Can you tell us in



your own words what motivated you to go down and sit-in a place like Selma, Alabama?

Rev. Tucker: Well, after hearing on the news we decided that someone had to do this. And so after paryin' over it, I decided myself if only I have to go myself, that I would go. And I think that that's why that we start in the first movement.

Lafayette: Tell us, when did this idea first come into your mind. No doubt you been ~~thinkin'~~ thinkin' about it. And no doubt, hearin' about the sit-ins in 1960 and th other direct action and voter registration drives all across the South and Birmingham movement. When was it you really gave serious thought to this action?

Rev. Tucker: Most of the time, when we would sit in our calss room and we would discuss the matters and things that would happen in Selma. And we find that there were no places for most of the Negro to attend. So we decided that one day it were comin' to Selma. Se after most of the Negroes here in Selma was afraid to do certain things. And so we said that one day someone would do this.

Lafayette: Did you really feel that you were goin' to be served down in Selma, Alabama lunch counters?

Rev. Tucker: Yes, I believed that someone would serve us. Not in Carters Drug store, but some other drug.

Lafayette: Tell us something about your experiences and this sort of thing. When did you have your first experience with segregation? Did you realize that because you were Negro that you were different. And how do you feel about some of the existin' situations in the South?

Rev. Tucker: Well, here my first experience: As i were workin' one day the white man -- we were discussin' the matter of the Negro problem. And Mr. Jack Coon, a very good white friend of mine, told me that: you need to go to school and do somethin' for your race. And I said to him: I'm just a Negro with not much money but rely mostly upon my parents. And he said to



me that you should go on off no matter that if you don't have any money. Say: someone will see that you are tryin' to do somethin' for your race and they will help you. And so that year I decided that when I got out of high school that I would go. So after bein' in school and the problem of the Negro race is pressin' me hard, And so bein' a minister, I think it's my duty to move and help the Negro. And after goin' in different cities, I find that there are only few places for Negroes. And the white peoples have the large places. And most of ~~ix~~ all the Negro places is not even fit enough for the Negro. And the white people feel the same way: it's not fit for them. And I say if they think that way, why should the Negro eat in those places? Why can't they change over and all men will be created equal?

Lafayette: Mr. Mc Millian, you're one of the 3 students who went down and to Carter's Drug Store last Saturday here in Selma, Alabama, home of the White Citizens Council. Will you mind tellin' us in your ~~own~~ own words what motivated you to do this.

McMillian: The most thing that inspired me mostly was when the meeting was began to organize, mostly boys said that they were going to participate. We had girls also. But when it came down to the last minute, it was only 3 willing to participate. Which were Tucker and William. So at the present time we couldn't back out after we'd gone that far. So we went down town which one of the girls was supposed to meet us. But she didn't show up. Then, Tucker, he was the head of the organization, he gave us the idea to go on into Carter's drug Store, just the three of us, which might have been a better idea than going in with larger numbers. So we went in. It was about 10 o'clock. That's what most inspired me. But after only 3 of us participated, I was still willing to go. The thing that inspired me mostly wasn't because of the experience that I had with it but when I was going to read more and listen to the news report, hearin' these cases which were goin' on, it inspired me most of all. \_\_\_\_\_ the other persons sit-

uation that was bein' held in other places. So it inspired me to think about  
s erious matters which everyone figured that it wouldn't be long before it  
would come to down South, at our present home that we're livin' in today.  
And so actually that waht inspired me most of all.