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REPORT ON CANTON, MADISON COUNTY, MISSISSIPPI

Canton is the county seat of Madison County, located about 20 miles north of Jackson in west central Mississippi. The county population is 32,904, of which 9,262 are white and 23,637 are Negro (72%). Canton is the county's largest town, with a population of 9,707, of which 6,220 are Negro.

Madison County, by anyone's standards, is poor.

FAMILY INCOME (1960)

	Madison Co.	Canton	Rural Madison Co.
All families	6,719	2,239	4,480
Under \$1,000	2,242	457	1,785
\$1,000-1,999	1,296	436	860
\$2,000-2,999	782	314	468
\$3,000-3,999	607	273	334
\$4,000-4,999	441	147	294
\$5,000-5,999	365	137	228
\$6,000-6,999	303	149	154
\$7,000-7,999	226	114	112
\$8,000-8,999	115	33	82
\$9,000-9,999	90	50	40
\$10,000 and over	252	129	123
Median income	\$1,862	\$2,721	\$1,529

It can be seen above that more than one-third of all families in Madison County have incomes below \$1,000 a year.

1961 INFANT MORTALITY RATE (per 1,000 births)

	Total	White	Non-white
Madison County	42.4	28.9	43.4
Mississippi	37.8	23.5	50.0
United States	25.3	22.4	40.7

The following statistics on housing conditions give an idea of the situation, but they cannot describe the actual conditions under which many of the poor live.

	Canton	Madison County
All housing units	2,717	7,945
Deteriorating	644	2,262
with all plumbing	225	443
lacking only hot water	65	104
lacking other plumbing	354	1,715
Dilapidated	611	3,172

Housing Conditions, continued	Canton	Madison County
Water Supply		
hot and cold water (piped inside)	1,606	3,172
only cold water (piped inside)	942	1,142
no piped water	18	3,175
Toilet Facilities		
flush toilet, exclusive use	109	3,176
flush toilet, shared	393	420
other facilities, or none	219	3,809
Other plumbing		
bathtub, shower--exclusive	1,704	3,306
bathtub or shower, shared	44	64
no bathtub or shower	969	4,573

Civil rights staff workers have been in Canton since June, 1963. Those currently there are:

James Collier, SNCC field worker, Negro, 28, from Jackson, Mississippi.
 Alma Bosley, CORE Task Force worker, Negro, 21, from Plaquemine, La.
 C.O. Chinn, CORE Task Force worker, Negro, 42, from Canton, Miss.
 Theodis Hewitt, CORE Task Force worker, Negro, 25, from Canton, Miss.
 Joe Lee Watts, CORE Task Force worker, Negro, 20, from Canton, Miss.
 Richard Jewett, CORE Task Force worker, white, 30, from New York City
 Carole Merritt, SNCC field worker, Negro, 23, from Cincinnati, Ohio
 Claude Weaver, SNCC field worker, Negro, 20, from Atlanta, Georgia
 Lenora Thurmond, CORE Task Force worker, Negro, 20, from Lexington, Mi
 Andrew Lee Green, SNCC field worker, Negro, 29, from Hattiesburg, Miss
 Mattheo Suarez, CORE Task Force worker, Negro, 26, from New Orleans, L
 George Raymond, CORE Task Force worker, Negro, 21, from New Orleans

Temporarily in Canton:

Rev. B. Elton Cox, CORE Field Secretary, Negro, 32, from High Point, N.
 Jerome Smith, CORE Field Secretary, Negro, 24, from New Orleans, La.

David Dennis, CORE Field Secretary (Negro, 23, Jackson, Miss.) is in overall charge of Canton. He is also the Assistant Program Director for the Council of Federated Organizations.

All the staff permanently in Canton work for subsistence and a "salary" of about \$10 a week. The staff works under the direction of the Council of Federated Organizations (COFO). COFO is a confederation of civil rights organizations in Mississippi; it includes CORE, SNCC, NAACP, SCLC and some local groups. Nearly all civil rights work done in Mississippi is done under the COFO banner, though under its organization the separate groups do not lose their identity. Projects are, for the most part, jointly staffed, planned and financed.

The main aims of the staff in Canton are to get Negroes to register to vote and to establish a community center to provide various services such as a library (there are no library facilities for Negroes in the County except for those in the Negro schools), a reading hour for sma-

children, typing and reading classes, etc. The community center has not been established because a suitable building cannot be found. There is a center in Meridian which is functioning well. Currently the staff is also working on a selective buying campaign which is in its eighth week

In the early 1950's a group of about 300 Negroes marched to the courthouse in Canton and demanded to be registered. A few (believed to be about 40) were successful. In the 13 years since then only 200-250 Negroes have been able to register. In the last eight months, since the staff has been in Canton, Negroes have made over 1,000 attempts to register. Only about 30 have been successful. Over 300 signed affidavits complaining of discrimination have been filed with the Justice Department in Washington.

On January 6, 1964, a selective buying campaign was started against 21 stores and 3 products (Mosby's Milk, Barq's Drinks and Hart's Bread, which are also being boycotted statewide). The staff in Canton estimates that the campaign is about 90% effective among Negroes. One local merchant has been so hard hit that in the third week of the boycott he attended a mass meeting of the Negro community and asked forgiveness and the return of their patronage.

Harassment, intimidation and violence are not new in Canton. On July 24, 1963, a local white gas station attendant, Price Lewis, shot five teenagers, who had been involved in civil rights activity, with a shotgun on Peace St. in Canton. Fortunately, none was injured seriously. Lewis was charged with the unlawful discharge of a firearm within city limits and fined \$500. He is now free. During the Democratic primaries last August whites rode around in the rural areas threatening the few registered Negroes that if they showed up at the polls they would be killed.

Since January, however, intimidation and violence have increased. Faced with both a selective buying campaign and increased voter registration activity, the white community has retaliated in a variety of ways.

The Freedom House in Canton (the building in which the staff lives) has been raided twice by police who searched it. George Raymond, CORE Task Force worker, was told by Constable Herbie Evans that every time the Justice Department comes to Canton it will cost the Negro community \$5,000. In January, Raymond was pistol-whipped by Evans. After the beating, Raymond was charged with intimidating an officer and resisting arrest. He was never tried and is out on \$70 bail.

Mass meetings are usually held twice a week in Canton. Police are always present taking license numbers, taking people's names and addresses, taking photographs of those who attend, stopping cars and asking for drivers' licenses, listening to the proceedings from outside with electronic listening devices, following people after they leave, etc.

Local Negroes are losing their jobs and being arrested for violations which would normally not be punished. Specific information is hard to get because in most cases these incidents are not reported to the staff because, taken individually, the events aren't seen as part of the general pattern.

On January 21 the Board of Mayor and Aldermen passed a city ordinance making it an offense to distribute leaflets, handbills, or circulars on city streets and sidewalks without permission from the Mayor and Chief of Police. The law specifies that a written request for permission accompanied by a copy of the leaflet must be submitted. It provides penalties of not less than \$10 nor more than \$100 and jail terms of up to 30 days. To enforce this law and deal with civil rights workers in other ways both the city and county increased their police forces the week the law was passed.

On January 22 George Washington, a local Negro grocery store owner and property holder, was arrested for "burning trash without a permit" on the sidewalk in front of his store as he had done for a number of years. Washington is in his middle fifties and has lived in Canton since 1935. He was released from jail on \$250 bail and on Monday, February 3, was fined \$100 (which he paid) and given a 30-day jail sentence suspended pending "good behavior." Also on February 3, his store was shot into by a passing car during the evening, when it was closed. Washington had two gasoline pumps in front of his store, but they were taken out on January 29 by the Pan Am company (reported to be an affiliate of Amoco). Also, all meat deliveries to his store were cut off that week. He is now getting meat secretly.

On January 23-24 nearly all the staff (all but 3 at the time) and some local people were arrested. Except for CO Chinn and Theodis Hewitt, all were arrested for distributing leaflets without a permit. Except for the juveniles, this charge was dropped and others added while they were in jail.

Those arrested:

Pete Hewitt, 17	}	Released after 2 days without bail because they are juveniles. Juvenile court hearing February 5.
Milton Esco, 17		
Levi Jackson, 15		
Bobbi Robinson, 15		Charges against her were dropped because she and her parents signed a statement for the sheriff that Carole Merritt gave her leaflets to distribute, which provided the basis for the contributing to the delinquency of a minor charge against Carole.

The following defendants were tried Monday, February 3, in Canton city court (Mayor's Court) and found guilty by Justice of the Peace L.S. Matthews (who is also Mayor).

James Collier	Altering the inside of a building without a permit. Sentenced: \$100 and 15 days in city jail. Released Feb. 22 on \$500 appeal bond supplied by the National Council of Churches.
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C.O. Chinn	}	Intimidating Easter Branch; \$500 and six months in county prison for both of them. Chinn released about Feb. 6 on \$500 appeal bond privately raised. Hewitt released Feb. 21, \$500 appeal bond raised by the National Council of Churches.
Theodis Hewitt		

Carole Merritt Contributing to the delinquency of a minor publishing libel, for each count \$500 and Released February 21 on \$1000 appeal bond by the National Council of Churches.

Joe Lee Watts, 20 Interfering with a business and publishing Each count \$500 and 6 months; released Feb on \$1,000 appeal bond, privately raised.

Richard Jewett
Patricia Meyers, 18 } Publishing libel and disturbing the peace; for each count \$500 and 6 months.
Martha Jones, 21 } Patricia Meyers released on \$1,000 appeal bond, privately raised, about Feb. 5
William Veal, 18 } The other 4 released on \$1,000 appeal bond each, on Feb. 21, raised by the NCC
Sylvester Lee
Palmer, 20 }

Alma Bosley Contributing to the delinquency of a minor, publishing libel, disturbing the peace; \$500 and six months on each count; released Feb. 21 on \$1500 appeal bond raised by the NCC.

With the exception of Collier, who was in the city jail because he had violated a city ordinance, all the others were in the Madison County jail. During their stay, some were moved to the Jackson jail for six days for an unknown reason.

On Monday, January 27, George Raymond was told to get out of town by plainclothes policeman John Chance. He did not leave. On Wednesday, January 29, about 11:30 p.m., Raymond was driving from Canton to Jackson following a community meeting in the Pleasant Green Church. He was stopped by the state highway patrol on Highway 51 just outside Canton. He was taken behind the patrol car and found Constable Herbie Evans waiting there. Evans challenged Raymond to a fist fight and removed his badge, gun and watch and verbally taunted him to fight. When Raymond remained passive, Evans kicked him several times, knocking him against the back of the patrol car. Evans then let him go. The passengers in Raymond's car could not see the incident; the only possible witness was a highway patrolman who turned his back, during the incident.

On February 3, 1964, two local Negro teenagers were beaten by police, some in uniform, some not, after they left a voter registration meeting on Monday, Feb. 3. The police stopped them in front of their truck outside the church, asked for identification, searched them, drew a gun and told them they were under arrest. Willie Galloway, Jr. was taken behind the jail and hit in the head and stomach by officers and Constable Herbie Evans. They asked him a number of questions about his (Galloway's) father and mentioned that they knew that his father had tried to register recently. The beating, with their fists, was mixed with the questioning. They told Galloway that it would not be good for him if they saw him at any more meetings. They told him to tell his father, a carpenter, that if he went to work the next day, the men on whose property he was working would have an undertaker carry him off the property. They told him not to tell anyone what happened and that if he did, he had better catch the next train for St. Louis. The other young man, Arthur Harris, was taken inside the police station and questioned about what went on at the meetings, what various speakers said. Combined with the questioning they hit him on the head with a

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rubber siphon hose, broke a nightstick over his head, cut some hair off the top of his head with a razor, fired a bullet near his feet and held a pistol loaded with blanks up to his head and then fired a blank close to his body (he has powder burns on his coat). They told him not to tell anyone what happened or they would put a weight around his neck and drop him in the river. They also told him that if he came into Canton (he lives in the rural area), he had better be home by 9 o'clock. They were not actually arrested, apparently.

On February 7, Claude Weaver and Ed Hollander were arrested for allegedly "intimidating by threats of force and violence" a woman named Charlean Smith and her child. The threats were supposed to have been to keep her from accepting a job at the C & C store #2, one of the stores on the selective patronage list. Neither Weaver nor Hollander had ever met or heard of Charlean Smith prior to their arrest. They were found guilty on February 10 and sentenced to \$500 and six months. Both were released February 21 on \$500 appeal bond each, raised by the National Council of Churches. They had been in the Madison County jail.

On February 15, Henry Lee Chinn, 21 (son of CORE Task Force worker C.O. Chinn) was arrested for speeding and not having his driver's license with him. Plainclothes policeman John Chance and another policeman questioned him about civil rights activity, the whereabouts of his father and beat him on and off for over half an hour. They hit him in the face, head and stomach with open hands, fists and a nightstick. He was confined in a cell briefly afterwards, then released.

On February 23, Richard Jewett was arrested, just two days after he had gotten out of jail, on a charge of reckless driving. He was released later that day after paying a \$36 fine.

In January state senator Ed Henry and representative P.L. Hughes, both from Madison County, introduced bills to make it illegal to promote selective buying campaigns (boycotts are already illegal) by the use of leaflets and other means. One of the bills has passed the state senate.

On February 25, the state legislature passed and the governor signed a bill providing for "mutual assistance pacts." The bill provides for cities to loan each other police and equipment to deal with any problems. Though the plan had been in the hopper, it seems to have been rushed through with Canton in mind. Madison County Sheriff Jack S. Cauthen has told newsmen that every city, large and small, is standing by to help Canton.

No one knows what will happen in Canton on Friday, February 28, Freedom Day. Negroes are going to attempt to walk to the courthouse, stand in line and register. Norman Thomas and about 15 ministers from various denominations, under the auspices of the National Council of Churches, will be present as observers. These ministers will be from such places as New York, Cincinnati, Indianapolis, Hays and Wichita, Kansas; Chicago, Chapel Hill, NC. and Westfield, N.J.

Local officials likely to be involved: Sheriff--Jack S. Cauthen, Police Chief--Dan C. Thompson, Assistant Chief--W.R. Cook, Registrar--Foote Campbell, Mayor--L.S. Matthews, Deputy Sheriff--Billy Noble (former sheriff and very powerful), City Attorney--Robert Goza