

McCOMB INCIDENT SUMMARY

June - September 1964

JUNE

- 21 Homes of two NAACP members bombed. Freddie Bates and C.C. Bryant were planning to house summer volunteers. Seven dynamite sticks found on lawn of Mrs. Corine Andrews.

JULY

- 8 SNCC Freedom House bombed. Curtis Hays and Dennis Sweeney injured slightly. Threats had been received. Police protection had been sought and denied.
- 17 Mount Zion Hill Baptist Church in Pike County burned to the ground. Pastor associated with summer project.
- 22 Mount Vernon Missionary Baptist Church near Percy Quin State Park, Pike County, burned to the ground. Church had no connection with civil rights movement.
- 24 Mr. Brock, owner of local Negro cafe, beaten and then arrested. Policeman threatened to kill him.
- 26 Two bombs thrown at home of Charles Bryant, long active on civil rights movement. As the second bomb thrown a shot was fired into the house. House damaged slightly and lawn torn up.
- 27 Staff member Mandy Samstein arrested for "failure to yield right of way" while driving local Negro children for voter registration canvassing.

AUGUST

- 4 Two Negro boys, students at Freedom School, who had been receiving harrassing phone calls were arrested for using profanity over the phone, tried without counsel, and sentenced one year each to jail under Mississippi's phone harrasment law.
- 11 Two crosses burned at homes of white residents.
- 14 Burgland Supermarket, across the street from the Freedom School, bombed. All windows shattered, walls and roof damaged. Local Negro, Roy Lee Morton, threatened and then arrested later for inciting to riot when only officers were present. Fine \$250.00.
- 16 Staff office at Freedom House raided by 24 officers representing city, county, and state police. Warrant for illegal liquor; none was found, but officers stayed and inspected letters and material in the office.
- 18 Summer volunteer chased and threatened. Attempted house burning of local Negro whose daughter is in Freedom School. Two Negro voter registrants threatened with arrest.
- 22 Local voter registration worker, Percy McGhee, arrested for "loitering" inside the courthouse. Staff member Cephus Hughes went to post bond. Jailer refused the money and pulled a gun on him. Later four staff members successfully bonded out McGhee.
- 23 Friendly poor white man abducted for three hours by five hooded and armed white men.
- 28 Bomb exploded on lawn of Willie J. Dillon. Whole family active in summer project. Dillon was arrested later for "running an unlicensed garage and stealing electricity." Trial set for 2 pm next day, was held at 10 a.m. without his lawyer present, and he was convicted. Sentenced to jail plus \$1500 fine. When Mrs. Dillon tried to pay the fine, it was raised to \$2000. Mrs. Dillon had been threatened twice by police officers.

AUGUST

- 29 Police cars and cars with white hoodlums circled the Freedom House from midnight to 5 a.m..

SEPTEMBER

- 2 Robert Stone, white volunteer, assaulted by white man in downtown McComb. Rev. Russell Bennett from Inglewood, California, dragged from car and beaten by several men while waiting at Western Union office for a summer volunteer who was also stuck, struck.
- 5 Mr. and Mrs. Albert Heffner, Jr., white segregationists and parents of 1963 "Miss Mississippi", moved out of town after two months of harrassment. They had tried to arrange peaceful relations between the summer project and the community.
- 7 Four bombings today. A grocery store whose front was demolished. The house of Rev. Hugh Washington was seriously damaged. He has no connection with the civil rights movement. A pool hall in a white section was completely destroyed. A church in Chilsom Mission suffered slight damage. No connection with civil rights.
- 20 (Sunday). Home of Mrs. Alyanne Quin bombed. Extensive damage. Baby sitter and two small children escaped with minor cuts. Society Hill Baptist Church bombed. Almost totally destroyed. After Quin bombing local Negroes poured into the streets, carrying arms; threw rocks at police cars. Police falsely reported a 3000 person riot and called in State Police. Project workers Hughes and Harris quieted Negroes. State police sent 50 cars and 100 men into McComb. Arrests began.
- 21 (Monday). At an evening mass meeting at Society Hill site more Negroes were arrested, most of Project staff taken to city jail, questioned, and threatened.
- 22 (Tuesday). More Negroes arrested on various phoney charges. Some let go, some fined. Police stationed on every corner. Many State police still there.
- 23 (Wednesday). Two bombings. One at home of Artis Garner, Negro ex-policeman who testified today before the Civil Rights Advisory Committee in Greenville, Miss.. Mrs. Garner evacuated shortly before the bombing. Two children are staying with relatives. Both Garners are to be flown to Washington, D.C. to talk to Justice Department. Second bombing at home of Mr. Matthew Jackson near the Percy Quinn State Park. Twenty four Negroes have been arrested and originally charged under the Criminal Syndicalism law. Bond ranges from \$1,000 to \$5,000. Dennis Sweeney, project staff member, arrested for "accessory after the fact and possession of dynamite." Released Thursday, after a Negro refused to testify against him at preliminary hearing. The prosecuting attorney told Sweeney he'd "damn well better get a lawyer, because after we get one of them to testify we're going to pick you up." He was told they would be watching him 24 hours a day.