

Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee

6 RAYMOND STREET, N.W., ATLANTA 14, GEORGIA • 680-0331

702 Wall Street
McComb, Mississippi
39648

(601) 684-9414

SIGNIFICANT EVENTS OF 1964 IN McCOMB MISSISSIPPI AND AREA

- Jan. 6, Circle Inn night club on Hwy. 24 west burns to the ground. Previous frame tavern burned a number of months previously. Residents of Sunny Hill Baptist Church area in McComb had asked the Board of Supervisors to eliminate sale of beer in the area by zoning. The new sheriff was one of the group, as was the church pastor.
- Jan. 10, Night riders fire shots into five Negro businesses and homes in Burgland. These were Eddie Grocery, Carter's Shoe Shop, South of the Border Cafe, Hollis Wells Grocery, and the Oliver Powell home - all on Summit Street. Four Southwest Junior College students, Sims Callon, Dan Bland, Jummy Goldman and Ellis Leigh were charged with malicious mischief. Sheriff R.R. Warren said he believed the youths were "pranking."
- Jan. 16, Baertown, a 330 acre area at the south end of McComb, a Negro community of 1,500 person, was de-annexed from the city. Selectmen Philip Brady, Herman Tucker, and William Smith and Mayor Burt voted in favor while Tom Magruder, John White and Earl Holiday jr. voted against. The petition for the contraction claimed that convenience and necessity of the public is required and would be served by it.
- Jan. 22, Attorneys for the Baertown residents claim most of the area is annexed in 1961 which the city intends to keep is inhabited by white persons, and the de-annexation would deprive the Baertown people of effective participation in the municipal affairs of the city and thereby of the right of free speech.
- Jan. 27, Crosses burned in front of large number of Negro churches in Pike County by a well organized team of men in pick up trucks. The places chosen were New Jerusalem and Rose Hill Churches, a spot on Hwy. 51 in Baertown, a Negro school in Summit, a spot on old Holmesville Road, a shoe shop in Berglund, the Enterprise-Journal office, the editor's front lawn, and seven Negro churches in Amite County. The burnings were announced to the Jackson Clarion-Ledger the previous day in the name of the Ku Klux Klan. License numbers were obtained in some cases.
- Jan. 31, Louis Allen, 44 year old Negro, shot to death at the en-

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trance to his house on Hwy. 24 in Amite County. He had returned from visiting Mr. King, a white man. His brother said Allen had been subject to harrassment by the sheriff since he had testified as a witness at the trial of E.H. Hurst, ex State Legislator, who shot Herbert Lee, Negro voter registration worker, in Liberty. Sheriff Jones, who lives down the highway from the Allen house, said he did not think the G men would find the Negro-white question a ruling factor, and that it was likely that domestic and other such problems were the cause. The case was probed by C.G. Prospere and other F.B.I. agents from Natchez, and by Robert Moses and other civil rights representatives. Mrs. Allen and her family left Mississippi immediately after the funeral of her husband.

- March 6, Fred A. Ross, chairman of the State Welfare Board said the state ranks fiftieth in personal income and in wages because "we have 900,000 millstones around our necks in the form of negroes." He added, "These jungle savages have not reached an equal point with us." He revealed that the federal government pays 75% of welfare costs. He said of the nation's press that, "they want us to mix with this jungle filth that cannot even support itself."
- March 19, Two crosses burned in Magnolia, one in front of a Negro pulpwood worker's home and the other in front of a Negro railroad worker's home. State Senator Corbett Partidge called on the Mississippi Legislature to take steps to "immediately get rid of Silver." This referred to Prof. James Silver of the Univ. of Mississippi, author of Mississippi, the Closed Society. Speeches were made regularly in the state legislature condemning Silver and consequently, he went on a leave of absence from the university. Motions have also been made in the state legislature advocating revoking the charter of Tougaloo College, which one legislator referred to as a haven for queers and quacks.
- March 20, The Pike County grand jury in Magnolia commends Sheriff Warren "for his excellant manner in which he and his very capable deputies have performed their duties and for the intelligent manner in which they enforce the laws of our county and state."
- March 23, Robert Moses, director of C.O.F.O. in Mississippi, told a news conference in Washington D.C. that he believed the F.B.I. had leaked to local officials the late Louis Allen's statement that the killing of Herbert Lee, by

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State Legislator E.H. Hirst, which he had witnessed, was not in self defense. Louis Allen, Moses said, was killed the night before he was to leave Amite County and Mississippi.

- April 10, Vernon Pace of Forrest Mississippi, state coordinator of the John Birch Society, addressed the McComb Exchange Society, and announced that the John Birch Society had set up classes in Mississippi, on an experimental basis, to educate Negroes to the dangers of Communist Propaganda.
- April 16, Sunset Cafe in Summit burns to the ground.
- April 28, C.C. Bryant, McComb chairman of the N.A.A.C.P. had his barber shop bombed with a homemade bomb.
- May 6, Robert Moses complains to Mississippi Advisory Committee to the U.S. Civil Rights Commission in Natchez about beatings of Negro civil rights workers in Adams, Pike, Amite, and Wilkenson Counties and of five unsolved murders.
- May 7, Melvin Parker, 19, of Summit charged with a felony as a peeping Tom by Sheriff Warren.
- May 8, Several motorists stopped and checked by the State Troopers while heading to an N.A.A.C.P. meeting at Mount Herman Baptist Church, at which Charles Evers, brother of the murdered N.A.A.C.P. leader Medgar Evers, spoke.
- May 12, Mississippi Senate gives overwhelming approval to law outlawing criminal syndicalism and which particularly outlaws syndicalism if used as a "means of accomplishing or effecting change in agricultural or industrial ownership or control of effecting any political or social change for profit."
- May 14, Sheriff Warren addresses Pike County Chapter of Americans for the Preservation of the White Race at the Town Hall in Summit. He said that if the law was not strong enough to handle civil rights demonstrators, he would "recruit some of you." Warren said, "They say we are going to have a long hot summer and I sort of believe that." He added, "I don't see why we can't whip this thing." As for facilities for arrested demonstrators, the sheriff said, "We have a new key club below Magnolia; it's called the county farm. You don't need a key to get in, but you're going to need a key to get out."
- May 16, Robert Shelton, Imperial Wizard of the United Klans of America, addressed an audience of 800 at the Fairgrounds

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- Horse Show Arena. He was introduced by McComb resident, Phillip Brady, a McComb Selectman and a major shareholder in radio station WINT McComb. Shelton asserted, "We in Mississippi or Alabama might be better off if we seceded from the United States." He said it was probable that C.C. Bryant has received \$50,000 to \$60,000 through the mails since his barbershop was bombed. He asserted that "of 45 bombings in Birmingham not one has been proven to have been done by white people."
- May 18, E.J. Thornhill, millionaire oil investor of Summit, asserted that the Klan in Mississippi has a membership of 96,480 and has one third of the votes in Mississippi. He said the Klan burned crosses recently in Mississippi, "to lighten people up tha's in the dark."
- May 29, Baseball personality, Dizzy Dean, said that none of the city had apologized for an incident in which two officers pulled up to his parked car in McComb and after asking for the Negro driver's license, told Dean and the others, "I think we had better call someone to investigate you people."
- May 22, Mrs. Jackson, presently of McComb, had the front door of her house, in Liberty, broken down by two carloads of white men. She was abducted at gunpoint, struck on the head twice with a stick and driven 13 miles into the country. There a mask was put on her face and a rope around her neck. She was dragged out to the woods. There her clothes were ripped off with a knife and her hip cut. One assailant declared, "We want the n a e d meat." Her head was held under one man's boot and she was whipped alternately for five to ten minutes and left for lifeless. Mrs. Allen was well acquainted with Louis Allen who was a regular customer at the store where she worked. She is a relative of a civil rights worker. She had previously been subjected to harassing telephone calls and a cross burning, and shots had been fired through her window. Her uncle was threatened by telephone call that if he didn't contribute \$150 she would be gone.
- June 5, Louis Asekoff and Andre Martin, graduate students of Brandies University and Renee Jonas, a New York lawyer, were roadblocked off the road a few miles north of Summit and forced into the underbrush at gunpoint and beaten with brass knuckles by two other men for eight minutes.
- June 6, Roland Sleeper, a farmer on Hwy. 24, Amite County, and a close acquaintance of Louis Allen; was carried off in his

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sleeping clothes by a group of white men to the woods and beaten. Two weeks later, he was chased by a group of white men whom he outran, returning home in the morning. He then moved to Whitestown, Pike County, leaving his crops in the field which were confiscated by white people.

- June 18, Wilbert Lewis, 46, of McComb, a mechanic, was abducted at gunpoint and whipped with a leather strap.
- June 22, Freddie Bates' home, 928 Summit Street was bombed. Curtis Bryant's home in Baertown was bombed. Corrine Andrews home on Warren Street was bombed.
- July 8, C.O.F.O. headquarters bombed; Dennis Sweeney and Curtis Hayes injured. Bernel Felder, policeman, and companion fired upon on Summit Street.
- July 17, Zion Hill Free Baptist Church near group camp entrance to Percy Quin State Park completely destroyed by fire. Albert Hefner's house in McComb surrounded by vigilante committee of eight cars after Dennis Sweeney and Rev. Don McCord, civil rights workers, had visited.
- July 18, Sweet Home Baptist Missionary Church in Whitestown attempted arson.
- July 19, Nat McGhee's home in Summit housing project bombed with bottle filled with kerosene.
- July 21, Mount Vernon Missionary Baptist Church on Hwy. 24, seven miles west of McComb, damaged by fire.
- July 23, Rose Bower Missionary Baptist Church on Hwy near Morgantown, damaged by fire.
- July 26, Charles Bryant's home in Morgantown just east of McComb, bombed and fired upon.
- July 31, John Cotton of Utopian Court, fired from Burt Plumbing after 22 years of employment there. The proprietor was a brother of Mayor Burt, and the reason given for the firing was that it was believed that Cotton was a relative of Willie Mae Cotton whose home is rented by C.O.F.O. A subsequent offer of a job at the gdf course in Fernwood was cancelled. He was told at the employment office that there were jobs for a plumber "in your area."
- July 24, Van Brock, owner of Macombo #2 night club, beaten and then arrested by police, who threatened to kill him. C.O.F.O. workers often go to Macombo.
- July 27, Mendy Samstein, SNCC staff member, arrested for failing

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to "yield right of Way," while driving local youths to canvass for voter registration.

- Aug. 4, Robert Earl Bell, 14, some of Mamie Patterson and James Thomas jr., 18, both of Burglund, were fined \$500.00 and costs and sentenced six months in county jail for making improper phone calls to whites, by Judge Clinton Frith of Summit.
- Aug. 6, Mount Canaan Missionary Baptist Church in Smithtown, 15 miles east of McComb, damaged by fire.
- Aug. 16, Burglund Supermarket at Warren and Denwiddie in Berglund damaged by bomb. Roy Lee, operator of Bates Service Station arrested on charges of disturbing the peace after the bombing. C.O.F.O. worker Clifton Hopson arrested for "interfering with officers." Chief Guy and Sheriff Warren along with 22 other officers raid C.O.F.O. houses ostensibly in search of illegal liquor.
- Aug. 18, Arson attempt at home of Verna Brown.
- Aug. 18, Stink bombs clear Woolworth Store the day after Negro served cup of coffee at cafeteria. Curtis Hayes, C.O.F.O. worker, chased and threatened by a carload of white men while working on voter registration.
- Aug. 22, Voter registration worker, Percy McGhee, arrested for "loitering" inside the courthouse. Gun pulled on Cephas Hughes, while he was unsuccessfully attempting to post bond for Percy McGhee. On a second attempt, also unsuccessful, he was threatened with death.
- Aug. 23, Poor white men from Fernwood, who were friendly to Negroes, were abducted for three hours by five hooded and armed whites.
- Aug. 26, Bomb exploded on front lawn of Willie Dillon's home. Dillon arrested and charged with "running an unlicensed garage and stealing electricity." Mrs. Dillon threatened by two police officers, one of whom was Hwy. Patrolman Felder and warned of another bombing if she did not stop cooperating with C.O.F.O. Eugene Bishop of Summit, whose wife works for C.O.F.O. arrested by Patrolman Felder on Hwy. 51 near Summit and threatened with a beating.
- Aug. 29, Willie Dillon tried without lawyer four hours before trial scheduled and sentenced to jail plu \$1,500 fine, later raised to \$2,000. Police cars accompanied by cars with white hoodlums circled Freedom House from midnight to 5 a.m.

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David Wright, C.O.F.O. worker, arrested and taken to Magnolia for "improper parking" during protest meeting at the home of Willie Dillon.

- Sept. 2, Robert Stone, C.O.F.O. worker thrown on ground and kicked by white man near Quin's Tire Shop in downtown M. Comb. C.O.F.O. workers Brian Peterson and Rev. Bennett punched and beaten up by several whites near Western Union office in downtown McComb.
- Sept. 4, Albert Hefner's home circled by vigilantes' cars while the Hefners entertain three out of state guests. The Hefners move to Jackson the following day.
- Sept. 8, Hugh Washington's home in Summit bombed. Booker T. Gutter's home, eight miles east of Summit, bombed. Prof. Allen Coney, principal of Eva Gordon School in Magnolia has bomb exploded in his Bar B Q pit. Chisholm Mission Church in Smithdale bombed. Rev. James Baker's home on Hwy. 44 two miles east of Quin's bridge, bombed. Eugene Bishop of Summit brought home at noon by a Summit officer and ordered to pack his things. He was then taken outside the county and has resided in Lincoln County, separate from his wife, ever since. His wife had attempted to register her daughter at an all-white school in Summit that morning. She was subsequently evicted from her home by her landlord, and both she and her husband have been subjected to harrassments and threats.
- Sept. 14, A second Negro policeman hired by the city to replace Artis Garner, who revealed to the Civil Rights Commission that he had been told when he was hired to plant an informer in the Freedom School operated by C.O.F.O. The new policeman, Edgar Coward, has a long criminal record, having shot Buddy Williams and Robert Lee, beaten Bruce Martin and an N.A.A.C.P. executive, and selling corn liquor at his home. Coward was removed for the time being from the police force sometime after a petition asking his removal was received by the mayor from Berglund residents. Coward remains in McComb while Felder and Garner, the other two Negro ex-policemen have had to leave town.
- Sept. 20, Home of Mrs. Alene Quin, proprietor of South of the Border restaurant, has been destroyed by bomb exploding on porch next to bedroom where her two youngest children were sleeping. Children were slightly injured. Society Hill Baptist Church in Baertown destroyed by bomb.

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- Sept. 21, Johnnie Wilcher, babysitter at Quin home and witness to bombing, and Carolyn Breckenridge, daughter of Mrs. Quin, arrested and asked to take lie detector test in Jackson. Many Negroes stopped and searched on highways and main streets and some arrested. Arms confiscated by police. Six C.O.F.O. workers arrested while returned from rally at bombed Society Hill Church. They were Ursula Junk, Dennis Sweeney, Bill Powell, Jess Harris, Cephas Hughes, and Roy Lee.
- Sept 22, More Negroes arrested on phony charges, some fined, some let go.
- Sept. 23, Dennis Sweeney, C.O.F.O. worker, arrested by Sheriff's deputy and charge as accessory after the fact and possession of dynamite. Twenty four Negroes in Burglund, mostly high school student, arrested on felony and charged with "criminal syndicalism" and assessed bonds ranging from \$1,000 to \$5,000. Home of Artis Garner, in Whitestown, bombed. Garner, an ex-Negro policeman had testified before civil rights commission in Greenville that day. Mathew Jackson's home on Hwy. 48 bombed. Joe Harrison C.O.F.O. worker, arrested on highway north of Summit and held for an hour "on suspicion."
- Sept. 24, Joe Harrison arrested on Main Street on suspicion of causing trouble and held four and a half hours. Joe Harrison arrested for running red light and fined \$27.50. Curtis Bryant arrested and released after questioning. Rev. Ned. Taylor arrested and taken to Jackson for lie detector test.
- Sept. 25, Cephas Hughes arrested and fined \$25.00 for having faulty license plate light.
- Oct. 6, Vern I Felder, who quit the McComb police force and left McComb on August 3, testifies before a federal court in Jackson that a fellow white officer, Huey Miller, threatened to kill Roy Lee after the bombing of Berglund Supermarket on August 15, and the Patrolman John Sharpling drew a gun on Roy Lee while the latter was on the ground, praying. This contradicted testimony of Frank Ford, former F.B.I. director in McComb, who was transferred to Natchez prior to the arrest of the eleven bombers. Judge Mize accepted the work of Ford on the basis of his long service.
- Oct. 12, Henrietta Jackson fired from her job as housekeeper because she would not remove her Johnson for the U.S.A. sticker from the bumper of her car.

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- Oct. 19, Mrs. Aylone Quin's beer license revoked by Sheriff Warren with the reason given being that she had paid a fine for unlawful possession of liquor at her cafe on August 22. The liquor referred to was planted by police while conducting a search on the premises. On that occasion waitress Johnnie Wilcher was arrested and bond posted at \$300. The fine was \$152.50.
- Oct. 21, C.O.F.O. worker, Candy Brown, chased and threatened by blue pick up truck while canvassing for voter registration in Baertown area.
- Oct. 23, Thirteen C.O.F.O. workers jailed at the city jail and later the county jail of a charge of operating a food handling establishment without a health permit. They were Karen Pate, Ernestine Bishop, Jess Harris, Ursula Junk, Bill Powell, John Wilkinson, Marshall Ganz, Dennis Sweeney, J.D. Smith, Lori Smith, Candy Brown, Nancy Jervis, and Rev. Harry Bowie. Judge Mize in ordering the case of Willie Dillon back to Pike County declared, "There is no hostility by the general public in Pike County to the Negro race; the judges of the State of Mississippi are fair and honorable men,.....jurors are fair and honorable and Negroes do serve on juries in practically every county in the state if not in every county."
- Oct. 25, Briar Patch night club at Dixie Springs completely burned to ground. Previous attempt on May 3.
- Oct. 26, Twenty seven C.O.F.O. workers, N.C.C. ministers and local Negroes arrested at entrance to courthouse in Magnolia on charges of trespassing by loitering nad refusing to obey an officer. Malcolm Campbell and Joey Jeter were driven out of Gulf Service Station in Magnolia by two white men, while telephoning. Doug Jenkins and Malcolm Campbell driven off from Lawson's Drive Inn on Hwy. 24 by gun-wielding proprietor after ordering two ice creams.
- Oct. 27, Rev. Bowie spat on by white man at Western Union. Arson attempt made on station wagon belonging to John Beecher near court house in Magnolia. He is news correspondant for S.F. Chronicle. Thirteen persons arrested while crossing parking lot of court house in McComb and jailed on charges of trespassing by loitering and refusing to obey an officer. Klan Ledger copies dropped by air over Magnolia and Algiers and delivered by auto in Summit the previous Saturday.

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- Nov. 2, On Monday night on one crank call to C.O.F.O. headquarters only the sound of a gun being fired was heard from the other end of the line. Chief Guy of McComb police, was reported by the Enterprise-Journal editor in his column to have said that he, Guy, knew nothing of the arrests of the thirteen C.O.F.O. workers on the food handling charge October 23. In actual fact, Guy took part in the arrests.
- Nov. 3, Radio Station WHNY McComb repeatedly broadcasted a station editorial taking issue with the Enterprise Journal editorial of the previous day in which arrests of the C.O.F.O. workers on the food handling charge was termed harrassment arrest. Phillip Brady is a large shareholder in the radio station.
- Nov. 4, McComb Enterprise Journal prints election returns in which Goldwater receives 90% of the McComb vote. A search of a clandestine meeting place in Magnolia by F.B.I. and other officers the previous night revealed a list of names of members of the Society for the Preservation of the White Race and the Ku Klux Klan which led to the arrest of six white men in Magnolia who are charged with pointing and discharging firearms, assault with intent to kill and with conspiracy in connection with firing directly at Charles Hughes, as he was standing near a window of his house last Thursday, and of the firing into the home of G.T. Vacarella. Hughes is a native of England, is a foreman at Croft Industries and a victim of a cross burning on January 27. Vacarella is said to be proprietor of a chain of food stores and a victim of previous shootings and cross burnings. Weapons confiscated in Magnolia include pistols, shotguns, rifles, and a special type of whip believed to have been used on two other white men recently. Vacarella is said to have angered racists by refusing to contribute to the white citizen's council, and for employing Negroes in his stores. Sheriff Warren stated that with these arrests and arrests pending, "all acts of terrorism, violence, arson and bombing in Pike County have been solved." Chief Deputy Dunn said there were no racial implications in the "incident". The men were sentenced to one year imprisonment.
- Nov. 5, An action of the Board of Supervisors of Pike County condemned "C.O.F.O. workers....local and foreign, assigned to Pike County." In addition, the resolution unanimously adopted by the advisors stated, "C.O.F.O. workers and all other groups assigned to Pike County, local and foreign are con-

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demand as unnecessary and wrong and can only result in turmoil and strife, which Pike County abhors. Therefore said groups of workers are requested to peaceably withdraw from the county."

Nov. 8, At 2:00 a.m., the home of Mr. Johnny Q. Garner was bombed. Mr. Garners l ves in Walthal. The evening of the same day, shots were fired into the home of Negro families in Whitestown.

Nov. 9, A Negro's home between Baertown and Magnolia w s bombed. The owner was inside and suffered a slight heart attack.

FROM HERE ON, MOST ITEMIZED INCIDENTS ARE UNRECORDED, BUT THINGS DID
HAPPEN

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