

Excerpt from a 1967 letter from Bruce Hartford describing the outcome of the federal court jury-trial of men arrested for mobbing and brutally attacking Afro-American school children in Grenada MS on September 12, 1966.

be that as it may, i got some news today from the county that i was working in mississippi (Grenada) and i guess that i never will cease to be surprised about the reality of american justice. You would think that after all these years i would be prepared for anything but then they come up and top eventheir past perfomances. what happened was that they had the trial for some of the men that attacked and mobbed the Negro children that tried to attend the white school last sept. So they had (this was in a Federal Cout by the way) 5 or 10 of the kids take the stand and identify each of the defendants as some of the ones who had beaten them up. then they had a couple of white policemen identify the defendants as having been seen to beat up the children, then the principle of the white high school pointed and identified those who he had seen. most of them based thier defense on the claim that they were not the guilty ones, that they wern't even their that day, one of them, who was accused of kicking a little boy in the face had this to say as his defense----"the boy fell down at my feet and grabbed at my breeches---when the boy grabbed my leg, I fell backward and my leg went up." The prosecutor told the jury that if they aquited the defendants it would by giving all persons a license to floute the law. 30 minutes later they were a1l aquited. one of those who were ~~amptied~~ accused and then aquited was the local justice of;the peace who tried (and convicted) a lot of us, we also have many trials coming up before him. --"with liberty and justice for all."