

NEWS RELEASE
STUDENT NONVIOLENT COORDINATING COMMITTEE
6 Raymond Street, N.W.
Atlanta 14, Georgia
Tel: 688-0331

SW Ga
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
AUGUST, 1963

THREE SNCC FIELD WORKERS ARRESTED IN AMERICUS, GA.;
POLICE REFUSE TO STATE CHARGE: SHERIFF SHOOTS OVER CROWD

AMERICUS, GEORGIA, AUGUST 9 -- Three field secretaries for the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee were arrested here late last night with two local people after Sumter County Sheriff Chappell shot 15 times over the heads of Negroes to disperse a crowd of 300 persons.

SNCC workers in Atlanta called Sheriff Chappell this afternoon to find out on what charges Don Harris, Ralph Allen and John Perdew were being held. Informants had said the Sheriff arrested the trio with two local Americus citizens after a mass meeting here last night.

Sheriff Chappell told Atlanta SNCC workers that he didn't know anything about the case, and referred them to the city jail. City police officers were asked what the charges were, and said, "no comment." SNCC workers asked if there was any charge. The answer was, "no comment." SNCC workers asked if they were being held on "investigation." The answer: "no comment."

Julian Bond, SNCC administrative assistant, said the FBI was notified that the five "are obviously being held incognito." He wired a protest to Assistant Attorney General Burke Marshall in Washington, D.C.:

Three SNCC field secretaries were arrested last night in Americus, Georgia and one reportedly was beaten. We have tried to ascertain information on what charges they are being held from Sheriff Chappell and from city police officers. The Sheriff referred us to the city police who said "no comment" and that we might be able to know later this afternoon. Yet our information is that the Sheriff performed the arrest and shot over the heads of the crowd. We insist you investigate immediately...

Reports indicated that Don Harris was beaten by police officers after he went limp and fell to the ground. Ralph Allen was also, informants said, "slapped around."