

NEWS RELEASE  
STUDENT NONVIOLENT COORDINATING COMMITTEE  
6 RAYMOND STREET, NW  
ATLANTA, GEORGIA

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MISSISSIPPI AID PROJECTS REPAIR CENTERS  
REBUILD BURNED CHURCH

HATTIESBURG, MISSISSIPPI - Christmas vacation aid projects staffed by Northern and Southern college students in three Mississippi towns have been completed despite almost daily harrassment.

34 white and Negro students from nine Southern states worked on service projects here and in Meridian. 38 volunteers workers - most from Oberlin College in Ohio - helped rebuild a Ripley, Mississippi church destroyed by arsonists last October 31.

The Hattiesburg and Meridian projects - staffed by student volunteers from the Southern Student Organizing Committee (SSOC) in cooperation with the Mississippi-wide Council of Federated Organizations (COFO) involved painting and remodeling the Dewey Street and Palmer's Crossing Community Centers in Hattiesburg and the COFO Center in Meridian.

The Ripley group rebuilt the Antioch Baptist Church from the ground up. The church was destroyed by fire after the Freedom Democratic Party sponsored a mass meeting there. Christmas services were held in the church December 25. Over 90 people attended, and heard Cleveland Sellers, project director in the area for the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), remind the audience that "Jesus was also a carpenter." The Oberlin group that aided the rebuilding called themselves "Carpenters For Christmas".

Students working in Ripley said they were fired on once. Explosives destroyed mailboxes at several Negro homes and the window of a car owned by a Negro minister here. In Hattiesburg, SNCC worker Ed Hamlett was beaten by a store owner while trying to buy supplies for the remodeling project.