

STUDENT NONVIOLENT COORDINATING COMMITTEE
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Lowndes

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
December 31, 1965

TWO SHOOTINGS IN LOWNDES COUNTY THE
FIRST NIGHT OF TENT CITY; Injunction sought
for new elections.

TENT CITY, LOWNDES COUNTY, ALABAMA - Nightriders fired into the homes of two Negro families active in the newly formed Lowndes movement near this canvas city set up for Negroes evicted for trying to register to vote. No one was injured in either shooting.

The first shooting took place 10:30 when three whites and a Negro shot into the home of Mr. Mathew Jackson on County Road 23 just off Route 80 in Lowndes County. The attackers drove near the Jackson home in a red 1964 pickup truck, parked and walked toward the home with rifles cradled in their arms. "It was as though they were going hunting," Fay Belamy, SNCC worker reported. When they shot at the Jackson house, Mr. Jackson returned the fire. Mathew Jackson's son John ran from the house in pursuit of the assailants. John was unarmed. He feared his sister, Mrs. Henson, who lived a block away was in danger. He caught the nightriders after a chase in his car and asked them what they thought they were doing.

The men in the truck said, "what the hell you think, nigger," and started shooting. They shot out a headlight of Jackson's car. He returned home.

The second shooting took place at the Henson home, near the Jackson home and 100 yards from the freedom house. The Henson's, like the Johnson family, are in the Lowndes County Movement. At 10:30, Jim Wood and Mark Superia, SNCC workers, parked their '64 white plymouth near the freedom house. Shots were fired into the Henson home where Mrs. Henson, an Uncle and two children live. After the shots were fired, Mrs. Henson called to the SNCC people near the freedom house. Wood and Superia fell to the ground and lay there until the danger had passed. They saw whites rid pass on Route 23 in a red truck. No one was injured by any of the shots.

A dozen or more people were in tent city (Freedom City) talking and listening to a portable record player as they stood around a big bond fire to keep warm. One of the people in Freedom City was Mr. Isaiah Sellers who had come to Lowndes County to set up a radio network of eight radios. Guards posted at the camp site were alerted after the shooting.

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The first tent was erected yesterday at the camp site on Route 80, two miles west of Lowndesboro. The freedom city is being built on seven acres of land purchased by the Lowndes County Freedom Movement to house families evicted because of voter registration activity. The people are not leaving the County because they know there are no jobs in the big cities and they know if they leave, the strength of the voter registration campaign would diminish. Negroes, who form 81% of the county's population, are organizing to gain representation in government.

In a complaint filed in U. S. District court in Montgomery, Dec. 30, members of the Lowndes County Freedom organization, charge "the white population of that County (Lowndes), constituting a small minority of the total, by unlawful and unconstitutional means, has seized and retained all political power and has by such unlawful and unconstitutional means prevented the majority of the population, being the Negro people, from participating in any manner in the administration of County affairs or the selection of its government." The Lowndes County movement will seek an injunction requiring that a complete slate of county officials be elected in the general elections to be held November 8, 1966.