

WATS LINE DIGEST

2 - 5 July '64

25 TWO WAY RADIOS DONATED: Fred Gardner has raised \$5,000 to purchase equipment for twenty-five two-way car radios and 5 base stations. Also included are 16-foot base station antennas and whip car antennas, coaxial cable for installation and, we hope, instructions. The stations will be set up in five systems, with a base station and five cars in each system. Plans call for 3 of the systems to be set up in the Southwest.

FREEDOM SCHOOLS START: Thursday, July 2, was opening day for Freedom Schools in 5 places: Vicksburg, Holly Springs, Clarksdale, Moss Point and Carthage. There are 40 enthusiastic students in the Moss Point school and 25-30 students in the Clarksdale Freedom School, being held in Haven's Methodist Church. -- The Carthage FS opened with about 50 students. The local residents, however, were met by the sheriff & the Leake County Superintendent of Schools, who told them that they could not use the buildings (formerly a public Negro high school). A "No Trespassing" sign was posted on the school grounds.

To prevent Negroes from attending the FS, the County Superintendent suddenly called for a summer session for Negro schools in the county. It was indicated that in some cases this summer session might replace the fall session so that students who do not attend may be set back. This session is the first of its type in the memory of local residents and is clearly aimed at thwarting the FS.

The school being claimed by the county is located in Harmony community and dates back to Reconstruction. Before it became a public school the local community donated the land and the Rosenwald Foundation provided the funds for the school. In the 1930's the school was turned into a public school, but the Negroes continued to hold title to the land and to serve as the Board of Trustees. The school was closed down by the county in 1956 and has remained vacant ever since.

HARASSMENTS: - July 2

Gulfport: About 6:40 pm on Thursday, Gibbs Kindermand and George Johnson were canvassing when a man in a red pick-up (tag C1659) stopped & began to threaten to whip their asses. Then the man got out of the truck and began to rough Kindermand up. Johnson then pulled him loose and the 2 escaped. The sheriff and the FBI were notified.

Holmes County: The Miss. Highway Patrol put a 24 hour "guard" on Steve Bingham, saying they had had a request from Steve's father to protect him. (The elder Bingham says that he had a very unpleasant hour's talk with Eastland, but that the matter of such protection was not brought up). The HP men followed Steve everywhere he went, including checking a hotel room in Jackson before he went in, standing 3 feet away when Steve was making phone calls, following him into Negro business establishments carrying rifles, etc. After more than 24 hours one of the patrolmen informed Steve that the "guard" was terminated and they drove off.

Carthage: July 2 - A cross was burned on the main road in the Harmony community not far from the FS campus. Several pounds of large sized tacks were poured on roads throughout the Negro community. On July 3, police patrols circulated around, shining lights into windows of Negro homes.

Batesville: Sheriff Hubbard either picked up or arrested people who are housing workers. Then he spent most of the night in courtyard of house where many workers are living. Also general surveillance and name calling by whites.

July 3 -

Jackson: Lots of phone harassment by those who tap our lines. On Thursday both WATS lines went dead and then started RINGING, which is supposed to be impossible.

Columbus: Cops have impounded a car which Joe Harrison signed over to Bernard Wasow and John Buffington, saying the car is stolen, because transfer was not notarized.

Itta Bena: Sheriff questioned Willie McGee and John Paul about some thefts in the area where they had been canvassing saying they were the only ones who had been in that area. They were not charged. Rumors of bombing the mass meeting.

Meridian: Walter Hackman arrested for going through a red light (he didn't), after being involved in minor accident in which Ben Chaney, James Chaney's younger brother, got a broken arm. Later added charge of reckless driving; total bond, \$122.

Greenwood: Two cars driving around the office without tags.

Memphis: 3 workers picked up after they had bought a used car. Ralph Fellerstone, Larry Wright, and Peter Cummings were questioned and released being warned "not to fall into the Pearl River."

Moss Point: Cops and citizens are pressuring Negro cafe owner not to serve workers. Cop told the owner that white racist was roaming around town carrying a gun on hip, also a grenade in a satchel. Owner has not given in so far.

Jackson: Martha Wright, Grace Hawthorne, Hattie Palmer and Mary McGroarty were driving to Canton around 10:00 pm Friday night when they were chased by 2 cars, a black convertible with 2 white girls inside, tag: H 4369 or 34369 and a blue falcon with 5 white guys inside. The integrated car turned off at Tougaloo and kissed off the trip.

July 4 -

Memphis: Volunteer John Robin Greer, an English national, was attacked by 3 Negroes near the SNCC orientation office. The motive was clearly robbery, according to Greer. He was hospitalized over night.

Tifton, Ga.: A local Negro, who managed to get served at a drive-in was then beaten up by a white motorcyclists. In another part of Tifton, a group of several hundred whites gathered when a Negro ordered food at a white restaurant.

Clarksdale: The NAACP sent a letter to the Chamber of Commerce lifting the boycott on white businesses and announcing that they will test the stores, restaurants, on Monday. Mr. Bernstein, the manager of The Rose Seed Co. called its workers together and told them they would automatically lose their jobs if they went down to the courthouse. He said, "I have a large contract with the head of the Citizens Council and I'm not going to lose thousands of dollars for one of you."

Holly Springs: Local students have decided not to test the CR Bill. The Sheriff asked some of the volunteers for names and addresses. They refused to give them.