

WATS LINE DIGEST --JULY 2-- MORNING

10:30: Meridian: A white girl, 17, hurled a bottle into a group of Negroes and COFO workers standing outside the Pilgrim Progress Baptist Church after a mass meeting. The bottle cut the leg of a local Negro girl. The police were notified and picked up the bottle-thrower. Her hearing is today. Volunteer David Kotz will testify.

10:30: Canton: Scott Smith reports numerous harassment calls, and harassment by the local police: patrol cars circling the neighborhood, playing music and roaring their sirens, and flashing their lights. Smith also reported cars belonging to Citizen Council members circling during the day. These cars can be recognized by their long antennae and walkie talkie set-ups in the cars. Some whites were seen speaking into the microphones.

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Freedom Schools Begin: The first two Freedom Schools in the Summer Project opened July 2 in Clarksdale (30 students) and Vicksburg (30). Eight more schools will open Monday in Madison County, Hattiesburg, Greenville, Moss Point, and Greenwood. Total enrollment will top 700.

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Folk Singers Project: Five folk singers and the Freedom Singers will open the Mississippi Summer Caravan of Music, with programs in Vicksburg, Canton, Hattiesburg, Tougaloo and Hälmes County this week, Caravan Director Bob Cohen announced. The five singers are Jackie Washington, Len Chandler, Julius Lester, David Segal, and Dick Davy.

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Forman's Press Conference: Jim Forman held an impromptu press conference in the Jackson office after the staff meeting. He reported that no consideration had ever been given to call off the project in SW Mississippi. The question had always been a question of timing, and the timing is still an open question. He also reported that the Summer Project will participate or encourage no demonstrations to test public accommodations provisions of the new Civil Rights bill. However, this does not rule out Freedom Days, pickets at the court house, and other action related to voter registration.

Forman announced that in many communities the police have been asking volunteers to come and register at the police department. In many cases, to be photographed and fingerprinted. Such procedures are illegal, and can only be required of a person charged with a felony. But nevertheless, the decision of whether or not to cooperate with the police in this matter will be left up to the individual volunteer.

Forman reports that parents are rallying to support the Summer Project. Parents' groups are being formed in major cities across the country which parallel the Friends of SNCC groups. He also reported that progress has been made in the matter of police protection and law enforcement, especially in the Delta. There has been relatively little interference with voter registration work. The real question is how long this will last. Negroes are still disappearing, e.g. a recent disappearance in Quitman County, which we are now investigating.

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ADVERTISEMENT ON THE SOCIETY PAGE of the Jackson Clarion-Ledger, July 2:

"SPECIAL ATTENTION: Protect yourself with the TEAR GAS PENGUIN. Penguin Pocket Pen-gun is a protector for self defense, not a firearm... Discharges a blast of powerful tear gas that temporarily incapacitates man or beast... \$6.95... The Penguin Tear Gas Gun contains a Pen-gun, two tear gas cartridges, steel mounting bracket, pocket clip... all packed in an attractive clear plastic case. SPECIAL REFILLS: \$2.95 for package of three.

Same page, ad for PISTOLS & RIFLES, New & Used at war surplus store.

WATS LINE DIGEST 2-5 July, 1964

FREEDOM SCHOOLS START: Sunday, 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 and 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 the Harmony Community and dates back to Reconstruction. Before it became a public school the local community donated the land and the Rosewald 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 Kinderman and George Johnson were canvassing when a man in a red pick-up (tag C1659) stopped and began to threaten to whip their asses. Then the man got out of the truck and began to rough up Kinderman. Johnson then pulled him loose and the two 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 ever where 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 the house where many workers are living. Also there was 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 the 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, a reckless driving charge was added: total bond, \$122.

Greenwood: Two cars driving around the office without tags.

Memphis: Volunteer John Robin Greer, an English national, was attacked by three 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 motorcyclist. 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 and restaurants on Monday.

Mr. Bernstein, the manager of the Rose Seed Co., called the 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.

Announcement from Legal Department: Send details on all Negro teachers who have been fired (or not re-hired) because of voter registration activities at once to R. Hunter Morey, COFO, 1017 Lynch Street, Jackson, Miss. National Council of Churches wants to pressure the Justice Department to act and to inform the teachers "as to the legal rights which they have to recover damages in a breach of contract action."