

GREENVILLE MISS. cont.

The St. John's Baptist Church near Valwood, was burned a week ago. It has been used for FDP and mass meetings, and for a Headstart Program. Deputy Sheriff Earl Fisher said he thought it was hit by lightning, but people say the storm was over 4 hours before the church burned down. They are now using a tent for the Headstart program.

TCHULA, MISS. Mrs. J.J. Russell/Bab

The Bell's Chapel Missionary Baptist Church, pastored by Rev. Jesse James Russell, was burned between 3-4am Saturday morning, Aug. 14. It is in Cruger, near Tchula. The church itself was not used recently for cr activities (a long time ago SCLC classes were held there), but Mrs. Russell is quite active with the Movement. The church was totally destroyed.

YORK, SUMTER CO., ALA. Donald Hughes/Bab * *VR REPORT* *

Today was registration day. (The courthouse is open only the first and third Monday of each month--and it should be pointed out that the voting rights act says nothing about how often the registrar's office has to be open.) 350 people were there--the largest turnout since SNCC began working in the county. The registrar is still using all three parts of the Alabama test--constitutional interpretation included. Three workers went to see the head registrar to ask him about this. He threw them out of his office. So they then called John Doar of the JD in Washington. He was unavailable, as was David Norman, asst. in charge of Alabama, so they talked to Jonathan Sutin, Asst. to Mr. Norman. Sutin informed them that by a new ruling, the JD was no longer able to accept collect calls. If the person calls direct, the operator at the JD is supposed to ask the calling party if he is connected with a civil rights organization, and if so, which one, and then she sees if the person being called for is available.

The workers told Sutin that the Sumter Co. registrar was still giving the constitutional interpretation test. Sutin informed them that Sumter Co. was under a federal court order which said they could not use the c.int. test to grade applicants as to whether or not they were qualified; but this is interpreted by the JD to mean that they can still give the test, even if they don't use the results for anything. Don points out that they use to confuse and scare away people, and most important, to take up an awful amount of time with each applicant. (so that those waiting in line get hot and go home). Only 100-125 people actually got to take the test.

Sutin also explained that the court order precedes the voting bill. This means that the voting rights bill will not be in effect until the court order runs out. (See reports below, from Holly Springs and Hattiesburg.) Sutin also said that Doar, Katzenbach, etc. are now considering whether or not to cancel court orders in all the counties where they are now in effect, so that every county will come immediately under the voting rights act.

When the workers asked the registrar (before he threw them out) if he could open the courthouse more days, he said the JD would have to make a recommendation on that.

Also, last weekend the KKK had signs up all over York announcing a meeting tomorrow for nearby Eutaw. Workers tore down some of the signs, and local officials had a meeting with them about it. On Friday night, two cars and a pickup truck made a visit to the Freedom House, but there was no one there at the time.

It looks like the Klan is trying to expand its membership to include people from Sumter Co.

LOWNDES CO. ALA. Martha Prescod/Bab

Attorney Peter Hall is trying to get the cases of the people arrested in Ft. Deposit removed to Federal Court.

NEWTON, GA. via Albany/ Petitions for removal of the arrest cases in Newton during past week filed today for hearing in Federal District Ct. (over)
Middle District, Georgia.

Tuesday, August 17, 1965

McCOMB, MISS. Ossie Lee Barr/Bab

On Saturday, the strikers decided that instead of picketing, they would go into the Holiday Inn restaurant and try to talk to customers, and bring pressure off the management that way. They were rudely served. Today they went back again, and this time there were no incidents. They have decided to go back to eat during business hours, and also to continue picketing.

GREENWOOD, MISS. Oscar Broom/Bab

* *VR REPORT* *

About 350 people were registered by federal registrars today.

HATTIESBURG, MISS. Georgia Martin/Bab

* *VR REPORT* *

The registrar is still using a 17 question test which was instituted under a JD suit-court order two and a half months ago.

HOLLY SPRINGS, MISS. Archie Hunter/Bab

* *VR REPORT* *

The registrar is still using an 18-question test instituted under a JD suit-court order two and a half months ago.

JACKSON FDP, Monica Klein/Bab

* *VR REPORT* *

Today is the vote on the constitutional amendment which decides whether Mississippi's voting requirements will eliminate constitutional interpretation and good moral character. (There is also a provision in the proposed amendment which says that the state can put the constint. and the good moral character provision back at a later date.) The FDP is urging everyone to go down to the polls to try to vote ~~Yes~~. Yes, on the amendment.

Under the voting bill, People who have been registered by a federal registrar have to wait 45 days and pay one year's poll tax before they can vote in any election. If they are registered by local officials, they have to wait 4 months and pay two years poll tax before they can vote. This means that all the people who were just registered under the voting bill couldn't vote on the constitutional amendment,

EUTAW, ALA via Selma, from Ed Smith

8 pm Ala. time

Tonight, 33 carloads of Klansmen rode through here. They all had Confederate flags on their cars. The front car was decorated by a lighted cross that said "United Klansmen of America." Ed called it "an apparent show of strength."

DE SOTO CO, MISS. Eddie Collins/Bab

* *VR REPORT* *

About 1000 people were registered during the past four weeks. The county registrar Richard Davis is turning away people who can't read or write.

Tomorrow night, they are having a county wide meeting about voting, the Poverty Program, the Trip to Washington, school integration, and a biracial committee. The local white power structure asked the FDP to form the biracial committee.

The committee which will administer the Community Action Program (Pov. Progr) was chosen by the whites. It has 12 Negroes, 11 of whom are Toms, and 12 whites. FDP plans to complain to higher ups in the GEO. Thirty people will be attending the white schools (grades 1-4) this fall. The Co. FDP Chairman will meet with local Baptist Ministers Assoc. to try to raise money for the Trip.

INDIANOLA, MISS. McKinley Mack/Bab

RASH BREAKS OUT ON PEOPLE ARRESTED IN JACKSON

At least four people who were kept in the Fairgrounds back in June have broken out in rashes which they still have. McKinley thinks it was caused by a chemical that was sprayed on the floor and mattresses. (LET US KNOW IF ANYONE ELSE HAS THIS.)

ANYONE WHO KNOWS OF A VOLUNTEER NAMED ROBERT LANDAU, PLEASE CONTACT JEANNE BREAKER OR BARBARA BRANDT IN ATLANTA. HIS UNCLE IS WORRIED ABOUT HIM.