

W A T S L I N E D I G E S T

M King

July 21, 1964:

CLARKSDALE --- Summer volunteer arrested under new interpretation of red-light law which gives an arrest penalty if light turns yellow while car is in the intersection.

Three local girls, members of the newly organized Clarksdale Youth Action group who were arrested for trespass at a restaurant July 20, are being tried as adults. They are all age 16.

TUPELO --- Bomb threat received.

LEXINGTON --- Summer volunteer punched by a white man several times here while waiting in front of the courthouse for local people who were coming to register.

LAUREL --- Negro night club burned or bombed; nothing left standing.

Death threat attached to rock thrown through window of NAACP head; signed: K K K.

Laurel project loses its second office. Negro owner apparently intimidated.

MOSS POINT --- First newsletter published and distributed to community. 35 people canvassing, mostly local.

Staff worker Charles Glenn arrested for perjury.

McCOMB --- 75 students in the Freedom School -- just blocks from the burned churches.

HOLLY SPRINGS --- Arrest for no inspection sticker; \$200 bond.

GREENWOOD --- Summer volunteer's car parked near Freedom House had all windows broken or pushed in during the night; seems to have been done with a pipe or such.

NATCHEZ --- Chuck McDew (former SNCC Chairman) picked up ^{by} police within 45 minutes after he, George Greene and Dorie Ladner arrived in town on a failure to stop at stop sign charge. The police chief told Greene: "Oh you're back in business, huh George?" and told them they were "a little behind schedule" getting into town. The police chief said he would have men with the workers "every minute of the day." "We knew when you got in and knew when you were coming," he said. -- There is an office in Natchez now.

JACKSON --- A volunteer driving a pick-up truck full of project workers was arrested.

RUZEVILLE --- Fight people went to register.

SHAW --- A tape recorder was left running in the jail.

MERIDIAN --- A car carrying Preston Ponder and a local girl had an accident; Georgiana Dace, 18, received a bad cut on left cheek and small cuts under eye. Ponder was later arrested for reckless driving.

Summer volunteer arrested for no inspection sticker; official who gave him his plates told him earlier he did not need sticker immediately.

- ABERDEEN --- A home where summer volunteers can easily be seen from a nearby white community received a second threat. Man's voice said "those civil rights workers...better not be there tonight."
- HOLLY SPRINGS --- Summer volunteer arrested for six charges (imrproper turn, running stop sign, etc.) \$250 bond.
- CLARKSDALE --- Five white men with a gun on the back seat of their car sitting in front of the office. One of them was a meter reader at the office some days before.
- GREENWOOD --- Ninety-eight persons arrested here July 16 were released from jail on bond (\$100 for instate people; \$200 out-of-state.)

July 22, 1964: (Wednesday)

- JACKSON --- A summer volunteer walking with another white worker and a local Negro youth was accosted by two white men and beaten with billy sticks...in downtown Jackson.
- McCOMB --- The Mount Vernon Missionary Baptist Church was found burned to the ground. Time of burning was estimated at about 10 pm the night before. When project workers arrived at the church, about 6 miles East of Magnolia, they found the FBI, sheriff and police. One report indicated the lawmen seemed to be enjoying themselves as there were frequent intervals of laughter coming from that direction.)
- TCHULA --- The structure of a community center has been started here, financed by \$10,000 raised in Los Angeles by a designer and contractor who will help direct construction.
- A report was received that the assailant of a summer volunteer (July 21) was arrested by local law enforcement today. No further information; not verified.
- NATCHEZ --- A local Negro youth was held for "questioning" after he was seen walking with Chuck McDew and George Greene. At the time he was picked up he had been telling them of a man who was shot the night before - Greene reported there had been "a couple of shootings." Greene and McDew had a meeting with the Natchez Mayor.
- LELAND --- An 18-year-old local youth was arrested/forgerly while passing out voter registration leaflets with several other local Negro citizens. (from Greenville) He was released after questioning about his civil rights activity.
- CLARKSDALE --- ...reported two "highly successful" precinct meetings.
- GREENWOOD --- A K K K plane flew over the mass meeting and dropped leaflets.
- MOSS POINT --- Nine people went to courthouse to register. Charles Glenn transferred to county jail in Hattiesburg.
- NEW BETHEL --- (from Canton) Police picked up a 15-year-old Negro youth who had been involved in a scuffle with a white man.

July 23, 1964: (Thursday)

- HOLLY SPRINGS --- Reported that an old man brandishing a pistol told a project worker to stay off his plantation near Hudsonville.
- JACKSON --- SNCC staffer Hollis Watkins arrested for speeding; trial continued.
- "Victory in Mississippi" -- police court acquittal of three local youths on public drunk charges. They were arrested July 21 while in the company of a white summer volunteer at the Club 400. The volunteer was also picked up -- on improper tags charge.
- CANTON --- CORE staff member Joe Lee Watts, from Canton, was beaten by a white man who got out of a pick-up truck with no tags and struck him five times with a wooden cane. Watts had been canvassing with a white volunteer -- who was not hurt.
- MOSS POINT --- Volunteer worker arrested for improper turning. \$40 bond.
- DURANT --- (Holmes County) White summer volunteer beaten while canvassing. Two whites approached Steve Bingham, asked him what it would take to get him to leave town. Bingham replied, "I'm not quite ready to leave."
- GRENADA --- Willie Blue, SNCC, arrested for speeding.
- MOSS POINT --- At a mass meeting last night \$33 was collected for a woman who lost her job for housing summer project volunteers two weeks ago. Several people are pledged to give 50¢ a week indefinitely to help pay hospital expenses of Jessie May Stallworth who received back and side wounds when whites fired shots into a v r mass meeting here July 6. Miss Stallworth, 17, is still in the hospital.
- SHAW --- A local white woman told a Negro lady here she would watch mail coming in, and those Negroes who get mail from the "freedom riders" would "get hell after they (summer volunteers) leave." Mail is picked up at the post office.
- MERIDIAN --- The hearing for the omnibus suit filed against the K K K, Sheriff Rainey, Deputy Sheriff Price, the W C C and others in an attempt to enjoin acts on the part of both the defendants and the classes of officials they represent has been continued to Thursday, July 30.
- CARTHAGE --- Residents of the Harmony community here reported they would start construction of a permanent community center the following day. A three-man board of trustees (local) has obtained land, lumber, and hired a carpenter to direct the work of local residents. Original plans called for use of an abandoned school building. Local white school and law enforcement officials claim the school is county property and cannot be used. Negroes maintain the property, which was set aside for a school site by Negro landowners, can be used as they wish. Leaving the conflict unsettled, Negro citizens decided to take upon themselves the construction of a new building.
- WEST POINT --- Police did not enter a "successful" mass meeting here, attended by 200 persons. About 40 to 50 students in Freedom School.
- HATTIESBURG --- A clergyman was not admitted to see Charles Glenn.

SHAW --- A local woman housing two volunteers was warned her house might be burned if she continued to house them.

RULEVILLE - Volunteers overheard Ruleville police sitting outside a mass meeting here ask over a walkie-talkie: "What's going on in there; did we get one in?" The police had indeed gotten one in -- a Negro policeman from Indianola who later pulled a gun on a rabbi. When SNCC worker Charles McLaurin asked the rally if they wanted police inside and the audience responded No, the policeman drew his pistol, shouting: "I'll kill someone."

July 24, 1964: (Friday)

CLARKSDALE - Reported that the meter reader has daily threatened to kill SNCC worker Lafayette Surney.

HOLLY SPRINGS - Volunteer arrested for disturbing the peace and using profanity in the presence of more than two people. He had been repeating the words of police over a two-way radio set to the office ("move on, move on, goddamit, move on.") \$500 bond. Police also insisted 40-50 potential registrants walk one by one eight feet apart and accompanied each one to the registrar's office from the courthouse steps -- intimidating Negro citizens as they went. Workers say the presence of about 55 helmeted highway patrolmen and about 35 helmeted local police at the courthouse led them to cancel planned integrated picketing on this Freedom Day....The Justice Department filed suit against the Marshall County vote registrar.

BATESVILLE - A cross was reported burned two nights earlier at Crowder. Two volunteers went to see remains. No details.

CLARKSDALE - A summer volunteer, white, and local Negro girl were chased by a 55 Ford. The driver climbed out of the car and told the volunteer he would kill her because she was dirty; followed them to Aaron Henry's house and told them he would kill them if they gave license number to police. The driver tried to run them over, as he had tried to do with other workers last week.

RULEVILLE - Two white summer workers, one a rabbi, were "forcibly removed" from a meeting of the city attorney. The meeting, called by the mayor for an unspecified reason, brought together parents of juveniles detained before being released here July 15 when 23 persons were arrested after being forced to move from the site of a rally. When the two workers went to a gas station in Drew to make a phone call, the attendant asked if the call had anything to do with civil rights and pulled a psitol on them, telling them to leave.

VALLEY VIEW - The electric company man came for immediate payment on the bill, and claimed it was standard procedure for power to be cut off if payment was not immediate. His assignment sheet told him to collect from the "four white men and four Negro women in the house."

MOSS POINT - 10 people to courthouse; 3 passed. 1,790 Freedom Registration forms filled out as of today.

HATTIESBURG - Small bomb (?) in amonia bottle.

RULEVILLE - A Freedom School student was almost run down by a white man in a green 63 chevy. Reports said the effort was obviously aimed at hitting him.

"All but two" passengers riding a bus here walked off in protest to the rough treatment and ejection of a Negro woman who sat down next to a white man.

McCOMB - Rose Hill Church in Amite County, about five miles from other two burned churches on route #24, was reported burned last night. No details.

Owner of McComb Club - often frequented by project workers - beaten and arrested for "selling liquor after midnight." Later charge added: resisting arrest. Beaten with beer tray, pistol-whipped, hit with billy stick and leather strap. Bonded himself out with \$105. Legal status uncertain.

ABERDEEN - Will get office phone early next week.

ALABAMA, ARKANSAS and GEORGIA

WATS LINE DIGEST from Atlanta SNCC office:

AMERICUS, GA. - There will be a barbeque Sunday, July 25 to kick off organization of a maid's union which SNCC workers have been trying to get going. About 100 people are expected; all the maids in Americus have been approached. The SNCC project here was instrumental in getting a Manhattan Shirt Co. factory desegregated in employment in March.

SNCC worker John Perdew (white, held under death penalty here last fall under now-outlawed Georgia insurrection law) was beaten by a white man inside the courthouse after he passed the voter registration test July 24. Cut on eyelid. Georgia vote requirement: 6 mos. res.

HELENA, ARK. - (In the Arkansas Delta near Clarksdale) SNCC project plans to file suits against non-compliers with new civil rights law. They have been testing public accommodations for last week.

SOUTHWEST GEORGIA SNCC PROJECT as a whole (22 counties) 1,300 persons have been registered to vote in the week of July 13-17. Campaign of Attorney C.B. King (Negro) for democratic congressional nomination has been focus.

Cordele	-	475	(Crisp County)
Tifton	-	325	(Tift County)
Thomasville	-	300+	(Thomas County)
Albany	-	45-50	(Dougherty County)
Bainbridge	-	40+	(Decatur County)
Americus	-	24	(Sumter County)

SELMA, ALA. - Voter registration continuing here and surrounding counties.

Three SNCC suits are pending:

- a) Removal into federal court of over 50 arrest cases from vote drive in early July;
- b) Motion is being heard to enjoin Dallas County officials (and leaders of 300-500 man posse) from interfering with vote activity;
- c) Motion to quash injunction taken out against SNCC and project workers.