

WATS REPORTS Wednesday, February 10, 1965

SELMA, ALA. STUDENT ARRESTS AND BEATINGS FOLLOW COURTHOUSE DEMONSTRATIONS

This morning, about 300-400 students from the Keith HS in Orville, a small town ~~some 16~~ 16 miles outside Selma, and the Hazen-Harrell HS, also out in the county, were walking to Selma to participate in a march on the courthouse. Somewhere on the road outside of town, they were stopped by Sheriff Clark and his men. The kids ran away, through the house and barn, and through the fields belonging to a Mrs. Rosie Moore. The sheriff's men came up onto her porch and demanded to go into her house to search, threatening to use tear gas. She refused to let them enter, so they broke her door down without a search warrant and tore up the place. SNCC staff worker Frank Soracco from San Francisco came out to investigate. While he was talking to a posseman, the posseman sprayed tear gas at him. The gas got into his eyes, but he is all right now. The kids were told by the possemen to go back to school. One of the school kids said he overheard his principal calling up the sheriff that morning.

At 3 pm that afternoon, 175 students, some from Selma University, and some from the local high school, went to the courthouse. They were met there by Clark and his men, who told them to begin marching. They were taken in the direction of the jail, but before they reached it, they were turned off a side street, and started on a forced march out into the county. They were chased by possemen with billy clubs and cattle prods, made to run about three miles out into the county. If someone fell down, he was beaten and cattle-prodded. Finally the students managed to get onto private property, and the possemen left them. Local people and SNCC workers drove out into the country and brought back the kids. The wounded students were taken to Brown's Church, where they were treated by a doctor. About 14-15 kids are exhausted from being beaten and having run so far. Two girls are in very bad shape, with cuts and bruises all over their body. At least one person is in the hospital.

Newsmen who tried to follow the group into the county were stopped by possemen.

John Lewis issued the following statement:

"Sheriff Jim Clark proved today beyond the shadow of a doubt that he is no different from his Nazi counterparts.

He and his men broke up a peaceful, nonviolent gathering of Selma citizens.

Using cattle prods and billy clubs, they chased Negroes as far as three miles out of the city, beating those who fell to the ground, and preventing them from seeking aid.

This is but one more example of the inhuman treatment afforded to the Negro people of Selma, Alabama. The United States has always come to the aid of people in foreign lands who are gripped under a reign of tyranny. Can this nation do less now for the people of Selma?"

John Lewis, Chairman of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee.

This afternoon at 4:30, 200 more students went to the courthouse. They stood there for about half an hour, unmolested, and then left.

MARION, ALA. Mrs. Alnert Turner/Bab

In the morning, a group of people who marched to the courthouse were turned around. In the afternoon, 200-300 students and adults marched to the courthouse. City and county police stopped them, so they all knelt in prayer for 15 minutes, were led in the singing of "Amazing Grace" by a local preacher, and then, as a heavy rain began to fall, they left.