

McComb, Mississippi, 1964

PART I

CIVIL RIGHTS INCIDENTS IN McCOMB

- April 29 C. C. Bryant barber shop in Baertown bombed with homemade bomb.
- May 7 Melvin Parker, 19, of Summit charged with a felony as a peeping Tom by Sheriff Warren.
- June 8 Louis Asekoff and Andre Martin, graduate students of Brandeis U., and Renee Jonas, a New York lawyer, were roadblocked off the road a few miles north of Summit and forced into the underbrush at gunpoint and beaten with brass knuckles by two other men for eight minutes.
- June 18 Wilbert Lewis, 46, of McComb, a mechanic, abducted at gunpoint and whipped with a leather strap in the Holmesville area.
- June 22 Freddie Bates home, 928 Summit St., bombed.
- June 22 Curtis Bryant home on Venable St. Extension, bombed.
- June 22 Corrine Andrews home, 528 Warren St., bombed.
- July 8 COFO headquarters 702 Wall St., bombed. Dennis Sweeney and Curtis Hayes slightly injured.
- July 8 Bernel Felder, policeman, and companion fired on on Summit St.
- July 17 Zion Hill Free Baptist Church near group camp road entrance to Percy Quin State Park, completely destroyed by fire.
- July 17 Albert Hefner house in McComb surrounded by vigilante committee of eight cars after visit by civil rights workers Dennis Sweeney and Rev. Don McCord.
- July 19 N. L. (Nat) McGehee home in Summit housing project bombed with bottle filled with kerosene.
- July 21 Mount Vernon Missionary Baptist Church on Hwy 24 seven miles west of McComb damaged by fire.
- July 18 Sweethome Baptist Missionary Church in Whitestown attempted arson.
- July 23 Rose Bower Missionary Baptist Church, on Hwy 24 seven miles west of McComb, damaged by fire.
- July 26 Charles Bryant home in Morgantown just east of McComb bombed and fired on.

- August 4 Robert Earl Bell, 14, son of Mamie Patterson, and James Thomas, Jr., 18, both of Burglund, were fined \$500 and costs and sentenced six months in county jail for making improper phone calls to whites, by Judge Clinton Frith at Summit.
- Aug. 6 Burglund Supermarket at Warren and Denwiddie St. damaged by bomb.
- Aug. 16 Chief Sheriff Guy Warren and 22 other officers raid COFO houses at 702 Wall St. and 126 Denwiddie St., ostensibly in search of illegal liquor.
- Aug. 16 Roy Lee, operator of Bates Service Station, arrested on charges of disturbing the peace after bombing of Burglund Supermarket. COFO worker, Clifton R. Hopson, arrested for "interfering with officers."
- Aug. 18 Arson attempt at home of Verna Brown on Wilson St.
- Aug. 18 Stink bomb clears Woolworth Store the day after negro served cup of coffee at cafeteria.
- Aug. 18 Curtis Hayes, Cofo worker, chased and threatened by a carload of white men while working on voter registration.
- Aug. 22 Vote registration worker, Percy McGhee, arrested for "loitering" inside the court house.
- Aug. 22 Gun pulled on Cephas Hughes, Cofo staff member, while he was unsuccessfully attempting to post bond for Percy McGhee.

July 24 Van Brock, owner of Mocambo No. 2 night club, beaten and then arrested by police who threatened to kill him.

July 27 Mondy Samstein, SNCC staff member, arrested for failing to "yeild right of way" while driving local youths for vote registration canvassing.

Aug. 23 Poor white man from Fernwood, who was friendly to negroes, was abducted for three hours by five hooded and armed white men.

Aug. 28 Bomb exploded on front lawn of Willie J. Dillon.

Aug. 28 Willie J. Dillon arrested and charged with "running an unlicensed garage and stealing electricity."

Aug. 28 Mrs. Dillon threatened by two police officers, one of whom was Highway Patrolman Felder, who warned of another bombing if whe did not stop cooperating with Cofo.

Aug. 29 Willie J. Dillon tried without lawyer four hours before trial scheduled and sentenced to jail plus \$1,500 fine, later raised to \$2,000.

Aug. 29 Police cars accompanied by cars with white hoodlums circled Freedom House from midnight to five A.M.

Sept. 2 Robert Stone, Cofo worker, thrown on ground and kicked by white man near Quin's Tire Shop in downtown McComb.

Sept. 2 Cofo workers Brian Peterson punched and Rev. Russel Bennett beaten up by several white men near Western Union Office.

Sept. 4 Albert Hefner home circled by vigilante cars while the Hefners entertain three out-of-state guests. The Hefners move to Jackson the following day.

Sept. 9 Attempted bombing at Mitchell Chapel AME church in Summit. Insurance agent in Summit cancelled insurance shortly before incident. Neighbor fired on during escape.

Sept. 8 Hugh Washington home in Summit bombed.

Sept. 8 Booker T. Gutter home, eight miles east of Summit, bombed.

Sept. 8 Prof. Allen Coney, principal of Eva Gordon School in Magnolia, has bomb exploded in his barbecue pit.

- Sept. 8 Chisholm Mission church in Smithdale bombed.
- Sept. 8 ~~Rev. James Baker home on Hwy 44, two miles east of Quin's bridge, bombed.~~
- Sept. 20 Home of Mrs. Alyene Quin, proprietor of South of Border restaurant, destroyed by bomb exploding on porch next to bedroom where her two youngest children were sleeping. Jackie and Anthony slightly injured.
- Sept. 20 Society Hill church, on Hwy. 51 Baertown, destroyed by bomb.
- Sept. 21 Johnnie Le Wilcher, baby sitter at Quin home and witness to bombing, and Carolyn Breckenridge, daughter of Mrs. Quin, arrested and asked to take lie detector test in Jackson.
- Sept. 21 Many negroes stopped and searched on highways and main streets and some arrested. Arms confiscated by police from negroes.
- Sept. 21 Six Cofo workers arrested while returning from rally at bombed Society Hill Church. They were Ursula Junk, Dennis Sweeney, Bill Powell, Jessie Harris, Cephas Hughes, and Roy Lee.
- Sept. 22 More negroes arrested on phony charges, some fined, some let go.
- Sept. 23 Dennis Sweeney, Cofo worker, arrested by Sheriffs Dept. and charged as accessory after the fact and possession of dynamite.
- Sept. 23 Twenty-four negroes in Burgland, mostly high school students, arrested on felony and charged with "criminal syndicalism" and assessed bonds ranging from \$1,000 to \$5,000.

- Sept. 23 "Criminal syndicalists" jailed are Ira Marsalis, Bobbye Joe Thomas, Shirley Ann Cotton, Elizabeth McGhee, Jessie Mae Martin, Kelly Todd, Melvie Bell, Lawrence Haynie, Willie Haynie, L. G. Allen, Sylvester Lewis, Harold Mallard, Eddie Anderson, Tom Tatum, Custer Knox, Jerry Hill, James Stone, Boots Ard, Willie Thomas James Ashley, Reuben Meacham, John Doe, Frank Seals and Robert Tatum,
- Sept. 23 Home of Artis Garner in Whitestown bombed. Garner and ex-negro policeman had testified before a civil rights commission in Greenville that day. His wife had evacuated the house with the help of Cofo workers that day.
- Sept. 23 Matthew Jackson home on Highway 48 near Percy Quin Park bombed.
- Sept. 23 Joe Decker Harrison arrested on highway north of Summit and held for hour on "suspicion."
- Sept. 24 Joe Decker Harrison arrested on Main St. on suspicion of causing trouble and held four and a half hours.
- Sept. 24 Joe Decker Harrison arrested for running red light in McComb; fined \$27.50.
- Sept. 24 Curtis Bryant arrested and released after questioning.
- Sept. 24 Rev. Ned Taylor arrested and taken to Jackson for lie detector test.
- Sept. 25 Cephas Hughes arrested on Summit St. for reckless driving, and Joe Decker Harrison arrested for not having proper bill of sale for his car.
- Sept. 29 Cephas Hughes arrested and fined \$25 for having faulty license plate light.
- Oct. 19 Mrs. Aylene Quin's beer license revoked by Sheriff Warren with the reason given being that she had paid a fine for unlawful possession of liquor at South of Border on Aug. 22. The liquor referred to was planted by police while conducting a search on the premises. On that occasion waitress Johnnie Lee Wilcher was arrested and bond posted at \$300. Fine was \$152.50.
- Oct. 23 Thirteen Cofo workers at 702 Wall St. jailed at the city jail and later the county jail on a charge of operating a food handling establishment without a permit. They are Karen Pate, E. Bishop, J. Harris, U. Junk, W. Powell, J. Wildinon, M. Ganz, D. Sweeney, J. Smith, L. Smith, C. Brown, N. Jervis, and Rev. H. Bowie.

- Oct. 23 Judge Mize, in ordering the case of Willie J. Dillon back to Pike County, declared, "There is no hostility by the general public in Pike County to the Negro race; the judges of the State of Mississippi are fair and honourable men....jurors are fair and honourable; Negroes do serve on juries in practically every county in the state if not in every county."
- Oct. 25 Briar Patch night club at Dixie Springs completely burned to ground. Previous attempt on May 3.
- Oct. 26 Twenty-seven Cofo workers, NCC ministers, and McComb negroes arrested at entrance to Court House in Magnolia on charges of trespassing by loitering and refusing to obey an officer. The Cofo workers were J. Samstein, C. Hughes, J. Harris and J. Jeeter. The McComb negroes were Alyene Quin, Rosa Bates, Althea Spinks, Rev. Daniel Ross, Lillie Ross, Evelyn Nelson, Essie Mae Reid, Louise Banks, Mattie Dillon, and Steve Haring. The NCC ministers were W. J. Mehl, F. M. Cornell, L. G. Kemmerle, T. B. Foster, R. L. Beech, K. E. Bell, C. B. Blackburn, D. D. Curtis, and Rabbi R. S. Sternberger. General White, Dolores Johnson and Robert McGhee, McComb negroes, were also arrested.
- Oct. 26 Joey Jeeter and Malcolm Campbell were driven out of a Gulf Station in Magnolia by two white men, while telephoning.
- Oct. 26 Malcolm Campbell and Douglas Jenkins, Cofo workers, driven off from Lawson's Drive Inn on Hwy 24 and threatened by the gun-wielding proprietor after ordering two ice cream cones.
- Oct. 27 Rev. Harry Bowie spat on by white man at Western Union office.
- Oct. 27 Arson attempt made on station wagon belonging to John Beecher, San Francisco Chronicle correspondent, near court house in Magnolia.
- Oct. 27 Thirteen persons arrested while crossing parking lot of court house in McComb and jailed on charges of trespassing by loitering and refusing to obey an officer. They were Cofo workers J. Harrison, D. Jenkins, J. Martin, E. Bishop, M. Ganz, D. Sweeney, M. Campbell, and H. Smith. McComb negroes Alyene Quin, Lewis Campbell and Teibert Coleman.

- Oct. 27 Klan Ledger copies dropped by air over Magnolia and Algiers, and delivered by auto in Summit the previous Saturday. The tracts advocate white supremacy and anti-semitism.
- Oct. 28 Three Cofo workers and two McComb residents jailed on the two previous days report mistreatment at the hands of State and County law authorities. Mrs. Althea Spinks was roughed up and had her dress torn; Mrs. Aylene Quin was bruised when a jail door was slammed shut on her arm; Malcolm Campbell was hit on the face causing cut gums, and kneed from behind by a State Highway Patrol Inspector whom John Beecher has observed in the company of FBI agent Stout; Marshall Ganz was manhandled, shoved and kicked; and Douglas Jenkins was given a bloody nose by a Highway Patrolman. Upon release from jail the State Highway Patrol Inspector refused to return to Malcolm Campbell his driver's license or the other belongings which had been confiscated.
- Nov. 2 On Monday night on one crank call to Cofo headquarters, only the sound of a gun being fired was heard from the other end of line.
- Nov. 2 Chief Guy of McComb police was reported by Enterprise-Journal editor Emmerich in his column to have said that he (Guy) knew nothing of the arrest of 13 Cofo workers on the food handling charge Oct. 23. In actual fact, Guy took part in the arrests. In a conversation with Rev. Bowie of Cofo, Chief Guy credited City Selectman Philip Brady with giving the orders for the arrests. Philip Brady was one of the speakers at a Klan rally May 16.
- Nov. 3 Radio Station SHNY McComb repeatedly broadcasts a station editorial taking issue with Enterprise Journal editorial of previous day in which arrest of Cofo workers on food handling charge was termed harrassment arrest. Philip Brady is a large shareholder in station WHNY. A Klan spokesman at the time of the May 16 rally, J. E. Thornhill, is the father of the head of the McComb auxillary police force.
- Nov. 4 McComb Enterprise Journal prints election returns, in which Barry Goldwater received 90% of the McComb vote, but refuses to print results of the Freedom Vote conducted among McComb negroes, in which President Johnson received 1,093 out of 1,094 votes cast. This represents more than three times the total number of negroes registered to vote in the entire County of Pike.

Nov. 4 A search of a clandestine meeting place in Magnolia by FBI and other officers the previous night revealed a list of names of members of the Society for the Preservation of the White Race and the Ku Klux Klan which led to the arrest of six white men in Magnolia who are charged with pointing, aiming, and discharging firearms, assault with intent to kill and with conspiracy, in connection with firing directly at Charles J. Hughes as he was standing near a window of his house last Thursday, and of the firing into the home of G. T. Vacarella. Hughes, a native of England, is a foreman at Croft Industries and a victim of a cross burning Jan. 27. Vacarella is proprietor of a chain of food stores and a victim of previous shootings and cross burnings. Weapons confiscated in Magnolia include pistols, shotguns, rifles, and a special type of whip believed to have been used on two other white men recently. Vacarella is said to have angered racists by refusing to contribute to the white citizens council and for employing negroes in his stores. Sheriff Warren stated that with these arrests and arrests pending, "all acts of terrorism, violence, arson and bombing in Pike County have been solved." Chief Deputy Donald Dunn said there were no racial implications in the "incident." Arrested are Luther Richmond, 33, Claude Holloway, 33, Howard Cooper, 31, and Clude Westmoreland, 22, of Magnolia; and Frank Starnes, 20, and William A. Cummings, 23, of McComb.

Nov. 5 An action of the Board of Supervisors of Pike County condemned "Cofc workerslocal and foreign, assigned to Pike County." In addition, a resolution unanimously adopted by the supervisors stated, "Cofc workers and all other groups, local and foreign, assigned to Pike County are condemned as unnecessary and wrong and can only result in turmoil and strife, which Pike County abhors. Therefore said groups of workers are requested to peaceably withdraw from the county."