

Report to Greenwood and Atlanta

Re: Hattiesburg

July 11, 1964

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Last week's calm proved to be misleading and both major and minor incidents increased this week. There was a general increase of cars--especially without licenses--driving up and down in front of the office and following canvassers. One of the cars carried a group of youths who threw an empty jar at volunteers standing on the steps of a church.

On Monday, six ten local Negroes--all juveniles but one--were picked up for disturbing the peace and malicious mischief after seeking service at a white bar on the outskirts of a Negro neighborhood. Three were roughed up by police. Charges against the juveniles were dropped the next day. The older youth (20) was convicted and paid a fine. A complaint has been filed with the Justice Dept. about the police brutality. A woman at the bar pulled a pistol on the youths when they tried to enter.

Robert Beach, co-director of the NCC Ministers Project, was picked up on Wednesday, July 8, on a bad check charge. He was released on \$2,000 cash bail the next day. He will go before the grand jury next week. He had deposited enough money to cover the check, but the bank had not yet checked the deposit out. He spoke to bank officials about it, but they had him arrested anyway. He is charged with obtaining property under false pretenses, a felony.

The incidence of volunteers' cars being stopped by police is rising. A couple have paid fines for traffic violations. When they are stopped, police check registration, drivers license and sometimes look in the trunk.

On Friday morning, July 10, David Owen and Lawrence Spears, volunteer voter registration workers, and Rabbi Arthur Jolyveld of the Ministers Project were beaten by two white men. They were in the company of two local Negro girls who had been canvassing with them. The two assailants were riding in a 1958 or 59 cream colored GMC pick up truck with a cattle rack. They apparently had come from the Hub City Stockyards. All three were beaten with metal implements, and Spears was pushed down an embankment, kicked and pumelled. The Rabbi received the worst injuries and was hospitalized for observation. Owen was hit in the head and had six seven stitches. All were treated at Methodist Hospital.

Coverage: Larry spoke to civil rights information service (Chicago), San Francisco Chronicle and Examiner, Palo Alto Times. Owen spoke to Cleveland Plain Dealer, Pasadena Independent, ABC in Los Angeles, KYW radio in Cleveland. Local police, highway patrol and FBI investigated. No arrests yet.

Several students from University of Southern Mississippi and a couple of interested white Southerners have dropped by the office to talk. A couple of the students are sympathetic and want to help us paint the community center.

Two buildings are now available for the community center. The library next to the office has shelves which have been stocked with books. Volunteers have been painting and cleaning the center in Palms Crossing.

Freedom Schools are doing well. The active enrollment is about 450, and there are about 30 teachers. Each of the six schools is "autonomous" with the faculty making its own decisions and programs. Folk singers spent two days here and were very popular at all schools. Some schools are beginning newspapers and other "extra curricular" activities.

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Voter registration is also going well. At least 20 persons have gone to the court house this week. Two have been informed that they have passed and two have failed.

Civil rights law testing at local lunch counters went quietly and successfully as local citizens, including those active in the movement, ministers and Mississippi Student union members, were served without incident. Walgreens lunch counter has been closed.