

Report to Civil Rights Commission  
Re: Hattiesburg Project, Summer 1964

NOTE: If this report or any portion thereof is made public, please delete the names of any residents of Hattiesburg who are mentioned in any connection, except for law enforcement officers or other public officials.

A superscript indicates the number of an attached document. An asterisk indicates that the documents are on file in the Jackson office of COFO.

#### I. NATURE OF THE PROJECT'S ACTIVITIES

In numbers of volunteers, the Hattiesburg project was the largest in the state. Although the number fluctuated constantly, there were generally around 60 volunteers working and living in Hattiesburg and in Palmers Crossing, a rural community about 3 miles away

Of the 60, from 25 to 30 worked in the freedom schools, 15 to 20 in voter registration, half a dozen at the community center, and about 5 in the office

The teachers conducted freedom school classes at six churches, with a total enrollment of about 600. The courses concentrated mainly on Negro history and political education. A music program was also offered. The students ranged in age from 8 to 82, and classes were held from 8 to 11 a. m. and 7:30 to 9:30 p. m.

A community center was established in Palmers Crossing offering day care for young children, recreation for older ones, a health program and literacy and sewing classes. Another community center is being cleaned and renovated in the downtown area.

Voter registration workers tried to encourage people to register, briefed them on the registration test, offered transportation to the court house and worked on the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party program. Four precincts were organized and precinct, county and district meetings were held here. Local delegates attended the state convention in Jackson.

Other volunteers worked on research, communications, photography, legal work and the music program.

Related activities were carried out by the National Council of Churches Ministers Project and the Mississippi Student Union (MSU). The Ministers Project, under the direction of Rev. Robert Beech and Rev. John E. Cameron, sponsors visits to Hattiesburg by ministers and laymen of all denominations. Visitors stay from a week to a month and generally assist COFO workers in voter registration and other activities. They also talk to people in the white community.

The MSU is an independent organization of high school students who work with COFO on voter registration. The local president is Robert F. Plump.

## II. HARASSMENT FROM PRIVATE PERSONS

SHOOTINGS: There were two incidents involving shooting. The first occurred early in the morning of June 29, when bullets were shot into the engines of cars owned by two summer volunteers on their way to projects on the Gulf Coast. The cars were parked facing the street next to Fairley's TV Repair, Mobile and Sixth Sts. They are owned by John Catalin, 22, of Cincinnati, Ohio (1961 white Anglia, Ohio plates TY997CC

x { and Barry Clemson, 23, of State College, Pa. (1961 blue Saab, Pa. license 72233Y).

Two witnesses, Jean Wilson, 17, of Palmers Crossing, and Barbara Ann Thomas, E. Seventh St., saw a red pick up truck with no license plate, drive past the two cars. They said there were two men in the cab and two in back, all with guns. One of the men shot at the two girls and then into the engines of the cars. Other witnesses are Isaiah Walker (Snow), a cab driver, and Billy Joe Samuel, 512 Mobile St.\*

At about 1 a. m. on July 21, two shots were fired at a restaurant owned by Mrs. Mamie Phillips, 306 S. Tipton St. A brick was also thrown through the window. Mrs. Phillips had housed some of the women who worked with the Ministers Project.

BEATINGS: On July 10, three voter registration workers were beaten while walking from the area where they were working to the area where they planned to have lunch. They are David Owen, white, 19, of Pasadena, Calif., Lawrence Spears, white, 21, of Palo Alto Calif., and Rabbi Arthur Lelyveld, white, 51, of Cleveland (with the Ministers Project). They were in the company of two teen-aged Negro girls, Marjorie Rose Hyatt, 231 E. Seventh St., and Janet Crosby, 1104 Elizabeth Ave. Their assailants were driving in a pickup truck with no license plates. They were attacked with an iron bar and another implement which they could not identify. Both the rabbi and Owen received head lacerations which required stitches. Spears had abrasions and contusions. The rabbi was hospitalized for 2½ hours.\*

On July 20 at 2 p. m. on Main St., Peter Werner, 24, white, of Flint, Mich., a freedom school teacher, was attacked from behind by Houston R. Hartfield. He was punched, knocked to the ground and kicked in the abdomen and face. Two other freedom school teachers, Miss Susan B.

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Patterson, white, and William D. Jones, Negro, witnessed the beating.

BOMBINGS: At 10 p. m. July 23 a home-made bomb exploded next to the home of Douglas Smith, assistant project director, and his sister, Mrs. Anne Taylor, who is a block captain. The address is 928 White St. There was no damage.

At 5 a. m. July 24 Mr. Richard Boyd discovered that a fire bomb had exploded on the porch of his home at 202 Ashford St. Mr. and Mrs. Boyd are active in voter registration work and the Freedom Democratic Party. The door, screen and frame were burned. The remains of a glass bottle were found on the porch.\*

Milder types of harassment are common. HATE LITERATURE was distributed throughout the city during the entire summer.<sup>1</sup> On June 25 two cars drove past the office distributing hate literature. One was a late model black Chevrolet carrying two white men; the other a white Corvair (license FD 3282) with three white men. ~~Complaint~~ leaflet that we were not able to get copies of reportedly said "BEWARE/ Good Negro Citizens/ When we come to get the agitators, stay away."

TELEPHONE CALLS are also common. At least once a week the office would receive repeated calls from someone who would hang up and apparently dial again. This generally went on for a couple of hours. Anonymous threatening calls were received by Marjorie Hyatt (July 11), Mrs. Helen Anderson, Palmers Crossing (July 15) and Leona Whigham, 606 Tipton St.<sup>2</sup> A new low in sick humor was reported by volunteer Richard Yanowitz who received two calls for James Chaney while spending the night of August 12 in the office.

CARS: Reports of harassment by whites in cars either following canvassers or driving up and down past the office were common. Cars in front of the office (sometimes without licenses and with guns) were reported on June 29 and 30, July 1, 3, 6 and August 6. Reports of canvassers being followed were received on June 21, 24, 26, July 1, 10 and August 1, 7 and 12.

On July 8, a jar was hurled at voter registration workers who had gathered at Mt. Zion Baptist Church to eat. Doug Smith, 928 White St., reported that it was thrown from a light blue Volkswagen with no license plates. On August 2 and 3, beer cans and pop bottles were thrown at canvassers and the community center in Palmers Crossing.

After the community center in Palmers Crossing was opened, more cars began to gather out there. Cars with no license plates driving up and down or parking outside to star were reported on July 18 and 23.

On July 24, Curtis Ducksworth, 13, of Palmers Crossing, a freedom school student and voter registration worker, reported that a car had attempted to run him down in front of the freedom school at St. John's Methodist Church. The incident occurred at 11:20 a. m.

On July 27, a car driven by Rev. Robert Beech of the Ministers Project, carrying volunteers, was followed by a 1958 Chevrolet (license number P14494). There were two white youths in the car and one had a gun. Passengers in Beech's car were Howard Mobley, Mary Sue Gellatly and Dick Yanowitz.

MISCELLANEOUS: On June 29, two MSU members who do voter registration work were threatened by customers at a drive-in restaurant where they worked. They are Michael Lofton, 411 Frederick St., and Tony Smith, Southern Ave. They were asked by white men if they had picketed the court house. When they said yes they were told that "we kill niggers who picket." Both quit their jobs the next day.<sup>3</sup>,<sup>4</sup>

On August 5 about midnight, the fence around the home of Mrs. Virginia Robinson, 71, of Rt. 6, Box 339, (Palms Crossing) was torn down and rocks were thrown at her house. Mrs. Robinson has picketed the court house, tried to register and houses voter registration workers.

### III. LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT

From the beginning of the project, local police have attempted to be courteous to volunteers, but have kept a close eye on them. Their treatment of local Negroes who support COFO has been considerably harsher.

Police cars often followed canvassers. Such incidents were reported on June 21, July 14, 16, 24, 25, August 1. On June 21 they were threatened with arrest for passing out leaflets. Doug Smith, assistant project director, called Herring and was told that unless they were posted on poles passing out leaflets is legal.

On July 16, Lawrence Spears and a 15-year-old local worker were stopped by local police officers (badges 5 and 25). Larry, who had been beaten recently, was warned that if "anything" happened to them while canvassing COFO would be responsible for any juveniles involved, even if they had parental permission.

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On July 25, police stopped two canvassers and took one copy each of their materials (copies of the voter registration form, brochures on the Freedom Democratic Party, etc.)

Workers in cars were stopped even more often than canvassers. Cars were stopped and the drivers questioned, usually obscenely and at length, on June 29, July 9 and August 11. On one occasion a worker was stopped by four police cars and his trunk was searched. Traffic tickets were given to workers or local sympathizers on July 11, 12, 16, 20, 27, 29 (two), August 1 and 8. (some of these dates are the date the fine was paid, rather than when the ticket was issued.) It is difficult to say if all of these tickets were deserved or not. But police hostility toward workers was obvious, and we feel sure that had they not been civil rights workers, they would not have gotten so many tickets or such high fines. An example is when Anthony Beaulieu, a voter registration worker, was taken to court (rather than being allowed to forfeit bond) on July 20. Two policemen testified against him on a charge of "aggravated reckless driving." Beaulieu claimed that he had indeed skidded around a corner, but insisted that he had not been guilty of the excesses claimed by the police officers. He was fined \$31.

ARRESTS: On June 29, Peter Stoner, a visiting SNCC worker, was picked up for reckless driving. He was held over night in the county jail and released the next day after paying about \$80.

On July 8, Rev. Robert Beech was arrested for writing a bad check and charged with obtaining money under false pretences. He was held in the county jail over night and released on payment of \$2,000 cash bond. Testimony was heard before the grand jury, but results are unknown.

On July 22, Charles Glenn was arrested in Moss Point and brought to Forrest County jail on charges of perjury based on an application to register to vote. A petition of removal has been filed.

On July 24, the night before his wife, Mrs. Victoria Gray was to appear on television to speak for the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party, Tony Gray was arrested in Palma Crossing for "drunkenness" and "resisting arrest." He spent two nights in jail and paid a \$30 fine.

On August 14, Sandra Adicks, white, of New York City, a freedom school teacher, was arrested for vagrancy after going with six of her students to the public library and two lunch counters. They sat in at the library when they were told they could not get cards, and took a booth at one of the lunch counters. The waitress said she would serve the Negroes but not Miss Adicks. Miss Adicks was charged with vagrancy and bail was set at \$100.

Summer law student Bennett Grahman was refused permission to visit two SNCC workers during visiting day at the county jail on June 23.

Police treatment of local Negroes who cooperate with COFO whom they suspect of cooperating with COFO was considerably less courteous than their treatment of volunteers.

On June 30 at about 11 p. m. James Smith, 14, of 1002 Dewey St., reported that he saw two white men force a Negro, Charles Brown ("Country") into a car at gunpoint on Mobile St. His statement was later corroborated by other witnesses who refused, however, to tell the police.

COFO contacted Smith and telephoned a complaint to the police department. They investigated and found Brown the next morning. He said the men who forced him into the car had been Negroes and it had been a "joke."

The next day, July 1, patrolmen came to Smith's house and took him and his mother, Mrs. Doris Lee Smith, to headquarters and questioned them extensively about the incident.

They asked Smith if COFO had "put him up to" saying the men were white. He stuck to his story. They warned Mrs. Smith that she might be taken off welfare if she sent her son to freedom school. Later that night a patrol car came by their house and the patrolman informed Mrs. Smith that she could file a complaint against COFO if she wished. She declined.

On July 6, 10 young Negroes were picked up by police after trying to enter a bar, the By Pass Inn, on the outskirts of ~~in~~ a Negro neighborhood. It had just taken down a sign reading "White Only" after the signing of the civil rights act. Police accused the young men of turning over a car and throwing bricks. They denied the accusation. Three of them were roughed up by the police station. All but one were juveniles and charges against them were dropped the next day. The other, Doug Gray, 20, 1108 Coit St., refused legal help from COFO (his parents were afraid), and, apparently, paid a fine. Kenneth McIntyre of the Justice Dept. filed a complaint against the police brutality. Nothing has been heard since.<sup>7,6</sup>

Freedom school students and their parents received a certain amount of harassment from local police. Seven students and two teachers at one school mailed letters to the chief of police protesting the fact that no affest had yet been made in the beating of the rabbi. On July 16, two patrolmen went to the home of Flora Hart, 13, of 608 McSwain St., and took her and her mother to headquarters. They said they could book Flora for "threatening" the police chief, but after some questioning let her go.

On July 23, it was reported that on the night before police stopped Mrs. Inevater King, 901 Fairley St., and her daughter, Lucille, 14, and questioned them about freedom school. Betting Gaddis, 15, of 1007 Flower St., reported that on the same day a policeman picked up her brother, Edwin, 5, and tried to question him about freedom school. Her mother, Betty Jean Townes, same address, came to get him when he began to cry and that night the police came to her home and, apparently, searched it without a warrant. Mrs. Mary Elizabeth Kirk, 910 Allen St., reported that the same thing happened to her son, Jeffery, 2.<sup>9</sup>

On July 30, William D. Jones, a freedom school teacher, reported that two Negro visitors from Birmingham, Ala., were taken to headquarters by police and questioned intensively about the Freedom Democratic Party and COFO. They are Marvin McKinstry (3801 Jefferson Ave., W) and James Butler (1840 Ethel Ave.) and have no connection with COFO. At the time they were taken in, their car was parked outside a house. Yet they were fined \$29 for "reckless driving."<sup>10</sup>

The rest of this section concerns the actions of one man, Constable Wilmer Kitchens, of Beat 3, who was legendary among the residents of Palmer's Crossing, a predominantly Negro community near Hattiesburg, long before the summer project.

The summer volunteers' first contact with Kitchens came on July 1, when at 11 p. m. he stopped a car (driven by Martin M. Mullvain, white, of Monticello, Ill.) carrying six volunteers--five white men and one Negro woman. He harangued and insulted them for several minutes in extremely obscene terms, ordered the woman out of the car (she did not get out), threatened to arrest them "at any time," slapped one of the men (Malcolm Zaretsky, white, of San Francisco) and followed them home. The next day a complaint was made to Sheriff Bud Gray who said that disciplinary measures would be taken.<sup>11</sup>

On July 17, Kitchens again approached the car driven by Mullvain. This time Mullvain was parked in front of the house where Sheila O'Connor, white, was staying. When he saw Kitchens turn around, they hurried onto the porch. Kitchens shone his spotlight on them, then followed them onto the porch. He threatened them and Miss O'Connor's hostess with imprisonment for "cohabitation," then drove to the house where Mullvain lives, apparently to wait for him. This time he was in the company of his partner, Constable Cotton.<sup>11</sup>

On July 23, Kitchens stopped a car driven by Douglas Smith, Negro, just after he had let out Phyllis Cunningham, white, of Chicago. All of the other occupants of the car were Negroes (Luther Seabrook, New York City; Isaac Cress, Chicago, and Howard Nobley, Hattiesburg). He questioned them at length, but was less obscene than usual.

On July 24, Kitchens stopped a canvasser in the Arledge Quarters area of Hattiesburg. He questioned him (Christopher Wilson, white, Long Beach, Calif.) and followed him to Mt. Zion Church where he questioned two others Jacob Blum, white, Roslyn Heights, N. Y., and David Hawk, white, Allentown, Pa.

On Saturday, August 8, Kitchens got into a fight with a resident of Palms Crossing and apparently got the worst of it. Tensions have been increasing since then. Kitchens is reported to have threatened numerous times to beat up all the men in the area and to rape some of the women.

#### IV. COMPLAINTS TO LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES

During the first week of the project, Chief Hugh Herring spoke to both Rev. Robert Beach of the Ministers Project and Terri Shaw, communications, about police protection. He told both he did not want any "bad publicity" for Hattiesburg, and promised not to interfere with the project if no mass demonstrations were held. He requested the names and local addresses of the workers. He was given several lists of names, but the addresses were withheld. From reliable sources we understand that the police were soon able to find out where all the volunteers were living.

Local police were notified and investigated the following incidents: shooting into cars, June 29; man forced into car, June 30; empty jar thrown at workers at Mt. Zion Church from car with no license; July 8; beating of rabbi, July 10; beating of Werner, July 20; shooting into Mrs. Phillips' restaurant, July 21; Smith bombing, July 23; Boyd bombing, July 24; Arrests were made in the two beatings only.

One week after the beating of Rabbi Lelyveld, Spaars and Owen, on July 17, Kilmer Estus Keys of Clifton turned himself in to local authorities. He and his uncle, Clifton Archie Keys, were charged with assault and battery with intent to maim. The grand jury heard testimony on August 3, but did not indict. On August 8, District Atty. James Finch charged the two with simple assault and battery. They pleaded nolo contendere and were sentenced \$500 and 90 days each by County Judge William Haralson. The time was suspended on condition of good behavior.

Immediately after Werner was beaten on July 20, both he and his assailant were charged with assault and battery. Testimony was heard in Hartfield's case the same day. On July 23, City Judge pro tempore Frank D. Montague Jr. found Hartfield guilty and fined him \$40 with \$20 suspended on condition of good behavior. City prosecutor Harold Patterson dropped the charges against Werner.

The city court room is segregated.<sup>13</sup>

Peace Justice Bradley in Palmers Crossing was called about the Curtis Ducksworth incident, July 24. The sheriff's office was called on August 5 about the harassment of Mrs. Robinson in Palmers Crossing. Inspector Ernie Ray of the Highway Patrol investigated the shooting of the cars on June 29 and the beating of three workers on July 10.

V. FBI AND JUSTICE DEPARTMENT

During the summer the FBI office in Hattiesburg grew by leaps and bounds. While previously it had apparently been manned by one or two agents, one of whom (Fortinberry) is a native of Hattiesburg and former deputy sheriff, during the summer we counted at least eight agents operating in this area. About half were from the South. The agents CGPO workers had contact with were Fortinberry, Quakenbush, Beck, Roy Innis, Dan Saunders, Harry Lant, Logan and Brett.

After receiving a complaint, agents generally came to the office or the scene of the incident within a few hours. The only time a complaint was refused was when Doug Smith called to report the bombing at his home on the evening of July 23. The agent who took the call said he could not investigate the incident. However, when Smith said he would call the New Orleans office, the agent said he would send someone to the scene and he did.

The FBI was called in the following cases: car shooting, June 29; Kitchens' assault on Zaretsky, July 2; beating of rabbi and two students, July 10; Mrs. Anderson's telephone threat, July 15; Werner beating, July 20; Smith bombing, July 23; Boyd bombing, July 24; Ducksworth incident, July 24 and harassment of Mrs. Robinson, August 8. They took statements in all of these cases. Arrests were made in the two beatings only.

Kenneth McIntyre of the Justice Dept. visited the office on June 26 and on July 30. A Mr. Harrington of the criminal division visited on July 10, the day the rabbi was beaten. He was in the office when the call came in, but said he was not interested unless a policeman had done it. McIntyre, of the civil rights division, said he filed a complaint against police brutality for Doug Gray. This is the only action we know of which has been taken

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VI. ECONOMIC REPRISALS, BUSES AND TESTING OF CIVIL RIGHTS ACT

We have not been very successful in gathering full information about economic reprisals, as people are afraid to tell us the details of the reports they give us. We believe that firings and threats of firings for registering to vote and other civil rights activity are far more common than this brief report would indicate.

Mrs. Annie Belle Armstrong, 929 Whitney, reported on June 24 that she was fired by Mrs. Ray R. (Sue) Updegraff, 608 Woodland Hills Dr., who had employed her as a maid, because she had registered to vote. She is afraid to sign a statement because Mrs. Updegraff got her husband a job at Forrest Farms Poultry farm when they were ordered to hire Negroes by the federal government.<sup>14</sup>

Voter registration workers reported on July 1 that two persons in Palmers Crossing had reported threats of firings. According to a Mr. Spencer, a janitor in the public schools, the superintendent of schools of Hattiesburg called a meeting of all janitors and said that if their names were in the paper (for trying to register) they would be fired. A Mr. Toker said his employer, Mr. Helger, manager of Holiday Inn, said he would lose his job if he mixed with "freedom riders."

Mrs. Helen Kelly, 1009 John St., told a canvasser that a Mr. Dumas, manager of the Grace Motel, Highway 49, and the Dumas Motel, told her that if she registered or associated with COFO workers she would be fired. She said a Jessie Mae Horn was fired from the Dumas Motel.

Threats of being cut off the welfare rolls were reported by Mrs. Daisy Harris, 216 Fredna Ave., for Mrs. Maggie Henry, 219 May Ave. and Mrs. Emma Tatum; Mrs. Doris Lee Smith; Mrs. Inevater King.<sup>15</sup>

The signing of the civil rights act had little effect on life in Hattiesburg. Two lunch counters were desegregated and one closed. Negroes have been refused service at the Owl Drug Store. They are Mrs. Jean Connor, 921 Mobile St.<sup>16</sup>; Mrs. Emma Lou Gould<sup>17</sup>, same address; Luther Collins,<sup>18</sup> Willie Wilson, 1019 Inez St.; Shirley White, 1007 Atlanta St.<sup>19</sup>, James Gray and Eddie Taylor). Four young men were refused tickets at the Rebel Theater and the "white" entrance of the Saenger (Luther Collins<sup>20</sup>,<sup>21</sup> Willie Wilson, James Gray and Eddie Taylor).

Segregation on the buses and the treatment of Negro passengers by bus drivers is particularly galling to Negroes in Hattiesburg. An example of this treatment occurred ~~when~~ when Theresa Clark of Palmers Crossing was put off a bus because she would not move back from a seat ~~which~~ near the front. The driver refused to return her fare.

On July 24 Mrs. Eddie Jean Taylor, 922 Mobile St., sat down next to a white man on a bus. The driver tried to remove her bodily from the bus without returning her fare. When she finally got off, all of the other passengers but ~~the~~ got off the bus.<sup>22</sup>,<sup>23</sup>

On August 11, Mrs. Dorethea Jackson, 506 Mobile St., was arrested after refusing to give up her seat to a white woman. She was charged with breach of peace, interfering with an officer and carrying a concealed weapon.<sup>24</sup> She claims that a knife was planted in her purse.

Civil rights workers have not had too much trouble transacting ordinary business in Hattiesburg, but William Jones, a Negro, a freedom school teacher, lost \$5 when he tried to buy a money order at the Citizens Bank. When the bank official saw that the money order was made out to the Robert E. Lee Hotel in Jackson, he hustled Jones out so fast that he failed to give him his money order. A letter of complaint from Jones was received at the bank, but never answered.

On June 25 the real estate firm of London, Stetteman & Kirkwood through its agent Don Ellis agreed to rent 407 Mobile St. to COFO for a community center. The next day Sam Miller, who identified himself as the owner of the building, called to cancel the agreement. No reason was given.

Robert F. Flump, MSU president, reported on June 30 that he had been unable to rent the Sixth St. Community Center, run by the city, for an MSU dance. He said it usually rents for \$5 a night to any organization. He said the woman who runs it refused to rent it to MSU at any time during the summer.

## HATTIESBURG ARRESTS

<u>Name</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Charge</u>	<u>Date Out</u>	<u>Disposition</u>
Peter Stoner	June 29	reckless driving	June 30	paid fine
Robert Beech (Ministers Project)	July 8	false pretenses	June 9	sickened???
Charles Glenn	July 22	perjury	.....	removed
Sandra Adickes	August 14	vagrancy	Aug. 14	out on \$100 bail