

Mar. -17 -65

Hello Freedom Fighting Friend,

I know that I have written you twice within a week telling you about myself and some of the activities that we are doing here. now I am going to attempt to write you a report of the thing that we have did since I been here ; well I arrived here last year in the Month of Nov. and the top priority were then freedom day; and the thing that were formed to help make the freedom day a successful one were the political educational classes were held every night in a week. in the classes we not only taught people how to fill out voter registration form, but we taught people about the government system of the United States as well as Mississippi, as I stated that the freedom was top priority at that time but there were other program going on such as freedom school was at it highest peak at that time. federal program committee was very active at time also, time was drawing close for freedom day and the people was not responding to well toward freedom day. and we needed something to put a spark in the people to make them move, so we slated out an plan hoping that it would draw in more people for the freedom day. and the plan were to sit in at the pinehurst coffee shop, we talked to about five school kids about sit in and explain why we were going to do it they agreed fully. we told them that we needed local people to sit in because if any of cofo workers were arrested the people would not care and would not do anything to show their discontent. so we had five kids to agree to sit in with us, but at the end only ~~three~~ one went through with it. so the day came around for the sit in and all the people that agreed to sit in came to the office; we left the office at 4 oclock pm heading for the coffee shop, we arrived there at 4.15 pm and promptly went inside and seated our self. we were there for about fifteen minites before anyone said anything to us; one of the waitress came over and said that she could not serve us and would please leave; and we said no; because we wanted to eat. she then walked away later a man came up to us saying that he was the attorney for this restraurant and if we didnt leave he would have us arrested. we again said no; later the storm troopers came I mean the police and told us if we did not leave he would carry us to jail. again we said no; and then he said you are under arrest get up and we said no; then they reached out and grabbed us and we all went limp. they had a time getting us up the stairs. when they final got us up the stairs they dropped me on the floor and the chief of police bited me in the left eye and throw the other people on top of me. they begin to pull off their jacket; and I thought that they were going to beat us. because the chief said that we were no longer in the public cite. but something happen and they didnt; beat us, they charged us with indecent conduct and the fine were two hunderds dollars eachs. so we got what we wanted; and the people that was left out begin to work on the people and they got about two hundereds people together to protest the arrest of us. but that soon ended when a lawyer came from the region office and so one asked him for his opinion on picketing the jail house and he told them that there is a anti picket law and the people could go to jail for six months. and the people begin to drip away when time came for the demonstration there were only thirty people left out of the two hundered but that did not change the people that remined in the demonstration; they went on with their plan. at this time we had been in jail for three days. and when we hearded the singing it gave us a feeling of never trun back if you know what I mean. the sing and the yelling of freedom soon came to an end, but the littel time that they were there it revilized the spirits of our. we begin to sang freedom songs and the others men that were in jail for drunk and other thing they soon joined us as the night pass ed we went to sleep with the feeling that our conrades did not let us down althrought they only stayed for a short time. the reason that we had--that they left so soon were because of the threat

C. Nelson



That the policemen made to them well the people didnt want to go to jail and they left, so on the fourth day they interogated us I was the third person that they called on. and they finger printed me first and later they took my picture with me holding a card broad with numbers. then they begin to asking me question about the movemnet such as what made me get in this mess? and I replied that no one I was borned in this mess; and then he said that some one should knock me in my head; and I replied that I had been knocked in my head and it wasnt doned by Negroes, he then got angry and told me to shut up and wipe that smile off of my face; iccidentally the guy that were interogating he was the same guy that told me to get out of Jones County, or he would fish me out of the river. that following morining we were bailed out of jail; and that is when I was tolded that that the lawyer from the region office put the damper on the whole plan, but it wasnt a totaly failur because we got more people involed in the movement here. freedom day was set for the 16th of January and it was the 10th of Dec. then so we begin to work with the new people that came into the picture; since the travel inn coffee shop were so sullen we decided to have another sit in there; and we did only this time there were only five staff in it and twenty one adults and kids; so we organized the twenty one people into groups and had them to go up twenty minities apart after each group were arrested at this time it was the twenty of Dec. so all the people that sit in were arrested. and charge with such charges as thes indecent conduct, drunk, disturbing the peace and others trumped up charges. and their fine were ranged for 100 dollars to 200 dollars eachs. so myself and several other people were out side spreading the news of the arrest. we went to night club beer tapen churches and to streets croner where people constantly gather to appeal to them for support but we got none. --at-- so the people had been in jail five days and we were constantly begging people to protest their arrest, but we still got no support from the people of Jones County, not even from the people relative that was in jail so it was chirstaas and the people were still in jail, you can see how let down with the-- by the people of Laurel, to many xmas were the time of joy but to us it was a black xmas and the people in jail also. so the bright day of xmas sliped away into darkness; by that time we were really disgust and sad for the ourself and the people that lived here. so about nine oclock a group of people came to the office to get information on the arrest so we gave it to them; and they cursed the white man and some walked away with a long face. the people that stayed I beganed to talk with them about going to the court house and protest the arrest of the people. so I talked them into going down to the jail house and picket at that time it was about thirty people, but when the chip fell as usally there were only half that numbers and they were only kid and I mean kids such as 13 and 14 trs of age. and then I tried to talk them out off it because I feared their life but they said that they want to go any way and we left the office about 11 pm walking to the city, as we went along the number begin to decrease gradually after we arrived at the county jail, there were only nine of the kids that left the office and three of us. as we lined up in singel file I gave the kids a Candle apiece and lite it so after all the candles were lite we begin to sang xmas song and later freedom songs and the people in jail beganed pitch in. I knowed what kind of feeling that had when they hearded us singing because I have had that feeling a many of time when I was in jail, so we marched about twenty min. or more before the cops came; when they first appeared they just stooded around and looked about five or ten min, later they approached us telling us to stop singing and marching and we did, and the head cop told us to sit down over on the-- a graud rail that part the parking lot of the civilian and the city official so we did. and they stood around us told us to stop singing once again; but that was impossible because the peoeple that were in jail kept singing peace on earth and good will to man and it sounded so beautyful that it just put me under a spell or something when the cop warned me again to stop singing I did and begin to humble the song that they were singing. at that time it was one min. after xmas and then I beganed to think there are kids of thes kids-- like thes kids at home in bed waiting for santa clause to bring there toys, but thes kids are here waiting for something that many men had died for and that is freedom.



and then a big white car drove up and erupty my thought; out of this car a big man came. he walked over to the other policemen that was standing near us and begin to talk with them. he talked with them about 15 min. and went back into his car pretending to be driving away but he quickly truned his big car in the direction that we were sitting in and headed it strait to us driving apprxomaly 40 or 50 mile per hour. he drew his car less then a few inces away from me and I were sitting on the ground I jumped up quickly want to move but seeh as ther were an a force of gravityholding me there looking him in the eyye as through t I was daring him to run us down. he then backed up his car and speeded twowrd us this time most of the kids rane except myself and two other cofo workers; we stooded there and the big sheriff jump on his brakes and the tires begin to sreening form fittion; after the car stoped he jumped out and begin to curse and swing his fist at us at this time I was the only one left standing there as I beganed to pick up my candle the big sheriff kicked in the hind part and strcked me backing of my head a few time as I was walking away slowly he kept following me curseing me he pushed me and I stumble a few feet and stooded still waiting for a strick that would bring me down, but it never came. we walked back to the office while we were walking back to the office A cab pull up beside of us it was carring one of our fellow worker he had been beaten and kicked by the cops even through t he was nt in the demonstration,, he was hurt pretty bad and he kept mutting that Gwen, were being attacked with several other news men that came to observe the protestors. well he was amagin thing half way because no one were beaten except-us him and myself, but they had been man handle by the cops and the reporter tape recorder were smashed up and camarns and Gwen our project director she locked her self up in the car which were parked near. and she said that the policemen told them if they didnt get the hell out of here they would trun them over to the KKK. and they left. this is what Gwen saw and felted that night; the cops that tried to force their way into the car where she were seeking rufuge. their eyes were shinging and strange they was nt the eyes of a human being but more like an vicious animal that sought out a prey. and the thing that she feared wasnt the beaten that she expected to get, but the evil that process man to trun to an demond. she did not hate those men but she pited them. because she could understand that they have been trapped into the stake that they now processes and it is some what like a ulcel and if you dont-take dare of it it would soon trun into an cancer and those men did not attempt to helded, and now maybe they want to get better and they can t. and it is the same way with me now; where I use to hate them it would have been easy for me to cut one of them down on an dark road with out any consideration at all, but now everytime we are on an denostratation or sit in or anything they call me all kind of name that would violate any man principal; it does nt make me angry any more it just make me angry at myself for not having anything to make this man understand that this society can not exist very long with the thing that going on now hatred and prejudice and bigots, so we went back to the office and begin to laugh about the scene at the jail house to make the weight lighter, but that did not cure any thing at all. at least not for me; the next day we begin to put out fliers about the brutality of the police; but that didnt do any good and the people had herad how we had been treated there so it was nt a ghost of a change to call another demonstration. not even the kids would go back; so we dropped the protesting scence and begin to work on getting the people out of jail, so xmas pasted and the people were still in jail, they want to stay in jail untile after xmas--- new year to see would any of there people get them out on propity bond.; but we saw that the people had been intimidated and they wasnt going to risk the change of losing their land, so we got the people out on cash bond; and the dispositio of the cases are they are being removed to higher court, the first sit in cases and the last one are both being appealed to higher court. that is all we know of the cases at this point; but later I hope to dig up some more information about it some where in the half burned files that was safeed



from the fire that gutted our office a Month ago, so the people was out of the jail house; and our next step were to be the freedom day; that is why we had all the sit in. so now time was drawing near for the pay off, so the freedom day came around and we had people to use their car to carry people to the court house to register to vote. on the first day that we proclaim freedom day every one went into the field to get more people to the court house to register; so altogether we got about 35 people to go down. later in the after noon a lady that is well known by most people of Laurel, and the FDP. members of out of town were arrested by the sheriff, because she would not sit on an stone floor when the people first arrived at the court house the sheriff had some convicts to remove all of the benches out of the building and they turned on the air condition in the milder of Jan. and the register would only register one person every two hour. any way it took him eight hours to register five people. so Mrs. Ruffin she kept up and down the hall to keep warm and the sheriff told her to sit down some where and she refuse to. and she kept walking up and down the hall, at this time sheriff Macinnis was red hot because not only were Mrs. Ruffin pacing the floor but she were reciting the Mississippi con and she told the sheriff that she felt sorry for him, this time the sheriff pushed her and begin to drag her off to jail by the heel of her feet. so we once spread the news around the city of Laurel again, but the people still did not move. the second day we went down to the court the registrar wasnt there he was away attending a funeral and he would not be back until later this after noon so we waited and waited but he never came. ~~se-ene-o----~~ that early morning a guy from New Orleans were there helping us carry people to the court house. he had to get back to his job in New Orleans. so he left out of the door the split min. that he left a ~~sw-~~ group of about ten or more red neck begin to run behind him, and I ran for the opposite door because I thought that he had his car parked on the street but instead he parked it in a parking lot. after I realized that Robert and myself ran out of the same door which Ed, had left out at this time there were more red neck going after Ed, Robert ran along side of the parked car attempting to evade the red neck, but a 54 Ford car came speeding down the street attempting to run Robert down. but Robert jumped out of it just in time. I was behind Robert, and we got to a cross street on the other side of the street there were Ed, were being beaten and kicked by six red neck. the traffic were so heavy that it took us a good while to get there to Ed, so in a wild dash Robert went across the street in front of the on coming cars, but he made it later I came over and the white guy were still beaten Ed, until and myself arrived on the scene and Robert, began to curse the red neck and hit one side of his head. and they backed up and ran. incidently Robert Stenson is the chairman of the Freedom Democratic Party of the fifth congressional District. so the police came over and begin to chase the men that attacked Ed, they caught two of the men and the others got away; they could have caught most of them if they wanted to, because while the police were chasing the red neck one white man standing on the corner yelled to the cops let those boys and they did. so they came over to us and said that all three of us ~~are-arrest--~~ are under arrest so he told us to go to the city hall. the charges were fighting in public and the only person were fighting were the red neck. so the FBI came over to the city hall and the police dropped the charges against Stenson and I; but Ed, and the two white men that beat him were held; so Ed, fine were twenty five dollars; but his bruises were worse his glasses were broken and his right eye was half closed. and the rest of the day were quite. until I went to get some information on Mrs. Ruffin. trial when we approached the jail and asked him when was the trial of Mrs. Ruffin were going to be he stated this let the dust hit your feet and then he picked up his gun and waded it at us and I asked him again and he said that he didnt have the information go to the city hall, and after we got there the desk sergeant said he did not have any information to give, then we left- this is all I have at this moment but later I hope to write more.

*E. Martin Stenson*



after we went back where the people suppose to register to vote; and continue to stand in the hall waiting for the registrar to come. Gwen Robinson, our project director saw one of the men that had attacked Ed Dubensky, earlier and went to tell the sheriff at first the door man would not let us in to talk with the sheriff. we stated our business and the man still refused to let us in to talk with the sheriff; and we went to another door where the sheriff was at the time we begin to approach the door the sheriff stepped out and asked us what did we want? and Gwen, began to tell him her story and the sheriff listened and then he told Gwen, to point out the guy that she saw hit Ed Dubensky, and she did. and the sheriff took the man into another room; and we never saw the man again not even in trial. which mean that the sheriff never arrested the man. so our freedom day continue without any more trouble; the time then was the 17th of January, and the freedom days were over. but we had drawn in more people and they took over the show. when the congressional hearing began in Mississippi, the fdp members began to work; work to get people to testify at the hearing and they did there were about twenty people that gave their testimony against the County registrar which is Lynard Baines, they told how he had treated them when they went to register; some told story dating back in 63 and how they were fired from their job because they wanted to vote. and the staff of cofo gave their testimony about the violent that had prevailed upon us and how was evicted from every building that we had rented last summer. and I gave my testimony about the threats that I have received and the beatings; I began with my arrival here the first time. it was the 12 of July, in 64 I was working with three other summer workers in a community which is called the K.C. when the car pulled up on the scene I was in a house talking with an elderly lady about the Government system; when two people of the community came and told me that a car containing two white men had stopped my friend; and I rushed out of the house walking toward the car. as I was approaching the car I heard some saying that here come my director you can talk to him; and the guy in the car replied you mean to tell me you let that nigger boss you; and Fred, said yes and I asked the guy in the car what was the trouble? and he said that Fred, was passing out fliers on the street. and Fred, then stated that the man had asked him for one of the flier; then I told the man what right did he have to stop some one from doing anything. and the man in the car replied that he is a county official; and I asked him to show me his credential? and he did; and then I stated that it isn't against the law to pass out flier door to door. he then asked me where was I from? and I told him that I was from Forrest County, which is Hattiesburg, and he then told me that I had better go back there or he would pull me out of that river down there; and I told him that I will go when I finish my job here; he then said that I might not finish my job. and told me to clear out of town in fifteen min. or he would take; and I told him that that would be his next job; he made a motion as though he was going to get out of his car; but some people came up that had been canvassing with me and he soon changed his mind; he then went away yelling that we had better be gone when he returned. so I called the office and got Gwen, advice about the situation and she told us to come on back to the office and we did, but we went back to the community within the next twenty or thirty min. because if we run every time Mr. Charlie S arrived on the scene we would never get anywhere. the guy that had threaten me I found out later his name is Bradford, better known as jailer Bradford, and my next testify was about the beating that I got last summer in Kresses store; for sitting at the lunch counter. my self and five others people went down to the 5 and 10 store to see what would happen if we should sit about the lunch counter; and I had two summer workers there to take pictures of the happen if there was going to be any. we arrived at the store at 12 noon and went direct to the lunch counter and asked for a coke and the waitress served us promptly; as we began to drink our cokes a elderly white woman came in the store at once she began to say look at those niggers; telling her two sons



to throw us out; and the two men came and stood up behind us while their mother encouraged them to throw us out. and one of the men told me to get up and replied that I will as soon as I finish drinking it; and then the smaller one told me that he advised me to get up; and again I replied my previous statement. as I went to look around to see if the other's guy had left a baseball bat came crashing down on my head half way knocking me off of the stoop; but I caught my footing and stood up rocking back and forward trying to keep from falling. at that time I couldn't see anything; but I felt more blows striking me across my back and poking me in my guts; some one kept repeating get out get out nigger but I stood my ground as long as I could; but the blows was too much to stand and I left and went and got the police that was standing on the corner at the time. and told him that I had just been assaulted by six white men with baseball bats, and he told me show him where and I did; we went back into the store and he talked with the manager and went to the back door which the men went out of, then I hearded a cry for help on the outside and that was Fred, some white guy had attacked him because he had a camera they knocked him down and took his camera. so the police caught two of the men and helded them for disorderly conduct; and the white lady that began the whole thing were charged with carrying an concealed weapon; this white lady had pulled a gun on a 12 yrs old kid holding him at bay to be beaten; all the proof that the police had the people that assaulted me and the other people got away scotch free. and my third testimony was about the attack on me and several other cofo workers by sixteen white men with gun and knife and chains this happened the latter part of summer at a lake at a friend house. I am not going to go into all of the details ; but there was one serious beaten there a white cofo worker name David Gelfand, he was cut across the back with a knife and broken wrist and several other bruises. but when the cop came we asked them to escort us back to the city limits and he replied that he did not escort us out here and he left, it took them about an hour to get where we were and it only five mile away; the cops caught some of the men and helded them for trial which were going to take place the following week on the Wednesday, in Ellisville, which is a small town about seven miles away from Laurel, the morning that the trial had suppose to had taken place we got a call from the sheriff he said that the trial had been postponed until later. but we didn't believe that story so we decided to go and see for our self, and that like to have been our last trip. because when we arrived there the court house yard were cover with red necks. despite of that we got out of the car and went to the sheriff office and asked him were there going to be a trial and he said no; at this time the red necks had came in the building standing in all the doors so tight that a needle couldn't slide through it. and the sheriff had only three men on hand at that time; but he stood his ground by telling the people that he was not going to have any trouble around here and he lift his gun and the crowd spreaded and let us by. we walked to the car and left the scene; with a string of car following us containing red necks. so we made it to safety; and the next thing that I testified were about the sit in that the chief of police hited me in my eye and about the xmas eve demonstration. and that was my testimony; so the hearing was over almost and the lawyers postponed the hearing for a day or so, because they had to go to another place where they were needed badly and they left. after the hearing were done with we went to work spreading the news to the people that was not there; the following weeks our office were burned gutted by fire that some one had set; it occurred when we moved into the freedom home which had just been repaired; that night we left the office that the night that the office were burned. the next morning the chief firemen came and asked all kind of crazy question such as was this place insurane or anything thing in it; which is absurd because who will give cofo a policy. the fire did not do all the damage; but some one stole four typewriter and tape recorder and destroyed our mimeograph machine with an axe I assume that it was the fire men or the arsonists,



I played cia agent for a day and came up with this information; a lady that live across the street from the office. said that she heard a car horn blowing on the high way which our office is located and she went to the front door and saw the fire in the office. and the car that was on the freeway came around to the office and began to knock on the door shout that they will burn to death; because the ladies was not aware that no one was in the office. and the lady across the street went over told them that no one was in there and the lady went and called the police and the fire station the two ladies were white and they saw the fire from the-street highway and begin to blow their horn. before the ladies left they asked if there was any thing that they could do? any the lady across the street replied no; at that time the fire truck were on it way to the fire. and the lady across the street went back into her house to observe from the widow; she said that the firemen went around to the left side of the house and begin to shoot water to the window; where the library later they cooled thing enough to go into the building. that is all she saw; but a small kids said that he saw the fire men take something out of the building, and the fire chief said that his men did not bring anything out of the building. so that is what give me the reason to believe that the fire men took the machines; not because of that one statement; but several others also. the FBI they are doing their job great, and they know who seted the fire already; they didn't say that they knowed but I have been seeing them in the area that the KKK hang out and they are some what aware of the happen, because they warned me a day before the office were burned that something was going to happen, and it did. now we are living in the freedom house and also it is our office by day and night and sleeping by night. and we have a unfinished community center hopefully that it will be ready for this summer that if we get enough materials to finish it and ocrouse we will need thing to go into it when we get it finish. but as of now thing look pretty bad; but we will make it. oh yes the man that owned the lake that we helded the going away party his house was fire bombed a few weeks ago. the reason that the KKK bombed his house were because one of the men of the place shot a KKK when they were attacking us. and the FBI also warned the man a few days before it happen. it obviously that the FBI know every move that they make, but why are not they doing any thing to prevent it; that is where where you come- come in you can make the FBI more active then they are; by writing them and tell them what you thing they should do to prevent some of this violent. and also you can write your congressman a letter. and senate and tell them of your believe and that you have been some what omitted the real issue of what this country all about and that suppose to be democracy which mean people rule, but that is a difference story here because we are living under a fascism government, here.

I look at the beautiful thing that nature has did; and then I look at the thing that man has did and it make me sick; because man has only bought hatred and blood. and as of now man is making a great effort to correct his mistakes; but one man can not do this so it would had to be the majority of the people and the believe of God, to fall this wall of hate; with out this we can not succeed so spread the word.

Charles H. Hontz