

Nina Boal Reprise
Ellis Boal, March 28, 2026

Family who attended Nina's memorial on February 6, 2021 (her birthday), know of her interesting early life. Here is an update, based on new information which has come in since then.

Referred documents are attached, and listed below

In later years she never said much to us about her early activities unless you asked her, except for attending a couple of reunions of Mississippi volunteers. But since her death new information emerged which I thought I would share.

I was re-contacted last fall by Jim Campell, a history professor at Stanford. He is writing a book on the 1964 Neshoba County murders in Mississippi and their aftermath. Philadelphia, the Neshoba County seat – where Nina worked doing voter registration of blacks with the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (“MFDP”) and the Council of Federated Organizations (“COFO”) in 1966 – was at the center of the murderous group.

Campbell and I first corresponded in 2024, after he had chanced to run across my appreciation piece on the internet. He wrote:

I'm embarrassed to say that I was unaware of her passing. And I am even more embarrassed to say how surprised I was to learn of the full breadth of her interests and experiences, which I learned about from your piece and the various attachments. I had no idea. She was, as you say, an American original.

Last fall Campbell was working on a chapter about Clinton Collier, a social studies teacher and minister active in Neshoba in the civil rights work back then. Campbell had met Nina at one or two of the Neshoba reunions. He had also interviewed Collier, who has since died. Of Collier he wrote: “You won't find Collier's name in any history books, but he was a lion in the Neshoba movement, as I'm sure your sister told you.”

While reviewing his materials, I reached out to another academic with whom I had previous contact, Andrew Holter, now a PhD in History at Northwestern. Holter's thesis had a section about activities of “Red Squad” activists like Nina in Chicago, and their interactions with police leading up to and at the Democratic National Convention in August 1968.

(For a treatment of the origin and purposes of “Red Squads,” see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Red_Squad .)

Nina was never a leader in the civil rights struggles. She was just an apparatchik in the trenches, but a persistent one.

What follows is a summary of what the two sent me, in the form of documents and emails. They have granted permission to circulate, for which I thank them.

Campbell said of her last October 6: “I am pleased and more to add to Nina's remembrance. What she did was unfathomably brave.”

Chicago is first, though her activities there came after he time in Mississippi.

Chicago

Holter describes Nina as a “quintessential example of an activist photographer from this period.” One incident recounted is an occasion earlier in 1968 when she and other antiwar downtown demonstrators, locked in an unventilated police paddy wagon were maced by a cop.

Her 7-page Red Squad file was one of the documents Holter had uncovered. Police scribes had entered 54 incidents over four years documenting her presence at demonstrations, meetings, lectures, conferences, forums, rallies, court hearings, sit-ins, pickets, etc. She was arrested six times.

Here are two pictures of her on the same day in April 1968, one before a demonstration (taken by an unknown friend, found among her possessions after her death), and one a mugshot in the Red Squad file afterward:



Photo Neg. # S-B-50 Name BOAL, NINA
 Address _____
 AKA: _____
 Classification PROFESSIONAL DEMONSTRATOR
 Organization _____
 IR# 145477 FBI# _____
 DOB _____
 Physical Description: Sex (F) Race (W)
 Ht. 5'3" Wt. _____ Eyes _____
 Hair _____ Comp. _____
 Remarks:
Participates in any and all
radical demonstrations




Photo Taken _____
 Date: _____ Place: _____

The Red Squad file summarizes her as a “professional demonstrator,” and adds “participates in any and all radical demonstrations.”

The following is an excerpt from Holter's doctoral dissertation, with footnote sources deleted.

Nina Boal, Professional Demonstrator

“We hear so much of 'police brutality'—mistreatment is always the word,” lamented Kodak’s Harris Tuttle to a conference of the International Association for Identification in 1965. Newspaper photographs, Tuttle said, tend to suggest that a police officer “has, or is going to, hit the person involved” when the officer had no intention of doing so. “It has, therefore, become very important that we be able to make pictures of all types of subject material under all types of conditions.” This may well be an underestimated factor in the growth of police

surveillance photography in the United States: the need for police to get ahead of the problem of interpretation, of competing visual narratives of events as presented in the mass media. This consideration had little to do with the Red Squads' use of photography (and neither, for that matter, would it help to explain the development of surveillance photography at this time in, say, East Germany and other places without a "free press"). But following the perception of the former Red Squad detective "Pete Keer," it probably accounts for the CPD's [Chicago Police Department's] dramatic expansion of surveillance operations during the Convention Week. The CPD anticipated one set of conflicting stories about the Convention Week from the print and television media. Another set of accounts—more granular—came from the ACLU. Throughout the fall and winter of 1968, the Illinois Division of the ACLU collected prints and contact sheets from photographers like Tony Kelly and David Glenn Hoffman to reconstruct the chaotic events of the Convention Week, cross-referencing statements and matching faces, places, and times. "If your photographs are categorized, we can limit ourselves to those photographs that pertain to violence and could provide evidence in some of our cases," read a typical request to photographers and their employers. "If not, we would appreciate being able to look at all of the convention photographs." Subpoenas followed some of these requests, but in many cases photographers responded with enthusiasm. "I hope this material will be of some help," the photographer James C. Clark wrote to the ACLU. "If you wish any further information, please don't hesitate to call." Another photographer expressed his doubt "that any of these photos are of the quality to show some of the atrocities that took place during the Convention Week, but if you feel there may be a picture which will further your work, I will be most happy to print it for you." Photographers like these assisted the ACLU's efforts not just willingly but sometimes in active collaboration, providing interpretations of events beyond the frames of their photographs. Through back-and-forth exchanges with the attorneys in which they provided clarification and description, these photographers became the ACLU's informants in an investigative campaign against the CPD that would lay the groundwork for a sustained legal and political movement against the Chicago Red Squad and similar units across the country.

One of the ACLU's most cooperative photographers was 22-year-old Nina Boal, an art major at Roosevelt University who sometimes took pictures for the underground newspaper the *Chicago Seed*. An amateur photographer, a Cook County local, a woman, a lesbian, and a person who would now be called neurodivergent, Boal was a kind of inverse image of the McCarthy-era informant-photographer Angela Calomiris. She may be the quintessential example of an activist photographer from this period. Photography was never a vocation for

Boal; she was not, evidently, in the habit of taking pictures before her involvement in activist politics. Neither does photography appear to have been a significant part of her political life after the Sixties. Like other activist photographers, she took up photography in the context of her political commitment and experiences, which in her case were influenced considerably by interactions with police.

“Law enforcement photographers aren’t born—they’re made,” read a 1966 article in Kodak’s Law Enforcement Bulletin. Activist photographers, too. Among the novel initiatives of the Photo League of the Thirties was its seminars and lectures that offered amateurs the opportunity to learn about photography so that they could engage the social and political problems of the day with cameras themselves. (Before she joined the Office of War Information, and long before she went to Danville, Virginia, Marjory Collins became involved in the Photo League through this avenue.) That kind of educational infrastructure for politically-oriented photography was singular, though. The major photographic firms certainly weren’t interested: Kodak’s imperative to develop the market in “industrial photography” and to pursue its “manifest destiny” into commercial markets overseas was certainly unimpeded by questions of photography’s democratic, emancipatory potential. (So it was, in 1952, that Polaroid began its partnership with apartheid South Africa’s passbook agency, which it ended only in 1977 as the result of a campaign led by Black employees.) Before Kodak’s Law Enforcement Photography Division, police photographers were usually photographers first. Activist photographers were usually activists first, who found in photography a way to contribute to the movements to which they were already committed.

Nina Boal’s rap sheet and her Red Squad file were each quite long by the time of the 1968 Convention Week. Her first arrest, according to her Red Squad file, occurred in May 1964 during a sit-in at the offices of a real estate agency in Winnetka, Illinois—“my hometown,” she later explained to an interviewer. “It’s on the North Shore, which is a very famous, rich, segregated suburb. And it’s segregated because the realtors won’t let Negroes move in, ‘cept in Glencoe they’ll let ‘em live in a segregated section, and in Evanston they have certain segregated sections which Negroes can move in.” She went to Mississippi as a voter registration volunteer with COFO in the summers of 1965 and ‘66, when she walked with James Meredith and Martin Luther King, Jr. in the famous March Against Fear from Memphis to Jackson. Back in Chicago, she walked with King again during his turbulent Chicago campaign. “Dr. King said that Chicago was worse than Mississippi, and he was right,” she recalled.

In addition to her file, a photo card was created for Boal in the Chicago Red Squad's files. While many of the images used for these cards came from surveillance photographs, Boal's is a mugshot dated April 27, 1968—four months before the Convention Week, when she and over a dozen others were arrested at an antiwar protest at the Civic Center in downtown Chicago. Under "Classification" the card lists "Professional Demonstrator," and under "Remarks," "Participates in any and all radical demonstrations."

Despite the poor quality of photographic reproductions available from the archive, it is clear that in Boal's mugshot her face is bruised. The demonstration on 4/27/68 proved to be a rehearsal for the violent melee of the Convention Week. Several protesters were beaten before being thrown into police vans. In one case, officers sprayed mace into the interior of a van before shutting the door, causing one demonstrator to experience a severe allergic reaction. Boal herself, according to a lawsuit against the CPD filed soon after on the demonstrators' behalf, was "struck, dragged to the ground by her hair, thrown in the police van and MACED when she persisted in taking pictures of police beating a boy lying on the ground."

The CPD's sensitivity to photography extended beyond the event at the Civic Center. Two weeks after the demonstration, Kenneth Wegner, a 17-year-old boy from Niles, Illinois, who had attended the protest, was arrested along with a friend for an unrelated offense. In Wegner's car, the Niles police officer discovered and confiscated photographs of police beating protesters outside the Civic Center and informed the CPD. The CPD then dispatched a detective from the Red Squad "who represented himself as a forest ranger" to question Wegner and his friend. The Niles police then searched Wegner's house, where they discovered and confiscated more photographs to send to the CPD.

By the time of the Convention Week, then, Nina Boal understood better than most that a camera pointed at the police was enormously potent and dangerous. During the Convention Week, she relived the experience of the April protest but this time avoided arrest. Her testimony, written in ballpoint pen, describes not only how reflexively CPD officers moved to attack photographers but how indiscriminately they meted out punishment:

On Wells [Street], I saw 3 or 4 cops beating a black guy who was screaming. They were clubbing and kicking him. I photographed this incident. As soon as my flash went off, one of the cops said "get her, get the camera" and they turned towards me. They chased me across the street,

but I got away. Then one of the cops smashed somebody else's camera, and what looked like a TV camera, with his club. He also smashed one of the cameraman's glasses.

In the eyes of the CPD, any camera could stand for every camera. Boal concluded her testimony in bold lettering: "P.S. I will bring photographs at a later date next week."

The photographs of Boal's that interested the ACLU were fuzzy enlargements of hectic nighttime scenes: a boy being pulled down from atop a statue in Grant Park; a CPD officer with his nightstick upraised in a crowd; a group of CPD officers beating a journalist inside a police wagon. Unlike some photographers, Boal provided the ACLU with notes on the backs of her prints that provided key information and supplemented her written testimony: "A march going south was stopped at Division, cops chased demonstrators down Wells, beat several people + reporters etc.," reads her inscription on one. "Cops in this picture chased me after I took picture." On another, she directed the ACLU's attention to visual information that would help them establish a pattern of illegal activity: "8/28/68 Mich. + Balbo 7:00 - 8:00 PM (some cops on left have no nameplates)." By including the date, time, and location of the offense, Boal helped the attorneys in their efforts to build a chain of evidence against the CPD.



Figure 5.4. On the back of this print submitted by Nina Boal to the ACLU is an annotation in her handwriting: “8/28/68 Mich + Balbo 7:00-8:00 P.M. (some cops on left have no nameplates).” Photograph by Nina Boal, ACLU, Illinois Division Papers, Box 144, Folder 8.

Similarly, the photographer William Harlan wrote lengthy descriptions of events on the backs of his contact sheets and annotated the images themselves with arrows, circles, dates, and other markings, intervening in his own visual record to make it more comprehensible to the ACLU. In one episode Harlan witnessed, a man refused to comply with an order from National Guardsmen to vacate a sidewalk. A Guard officer then ordered his men to “knock the demonstrator to the ground and hold him for the police,” but the man ran off, was caught, and escaped a second time for good. A woman watching the scene “became nearly hysterical and verbally assaulted the National Guard troops for several minutes,” Harlan wrote. In green marker on the images themselves, Harlan identifies the actors in this drama: the man (indicated by an arrow in the leftmost frame) and the “hysterical woman,” whose location in the scene he traces across frames.



Staffers from the ACLU became careful readers and curators of the photographs they acquired, scrutinizing them through loupes and magnifying glasses for what might be useful in court, noting frames to order as prints, jotting down follow-up questions for photographers, and relying on visual markers like the presence of famous figures—from Allen Ginsberg and Bobby Seale to “Sonny (of Sonny and Cher)” —to assemble pieces of the Convention Week’s incomplete puzzle. From contact sheet 4C-7 of photographs by George Wilkinson, the ACLU’s Fred Budinger wrote: “Monday night Hilton Grant Park Downtown. We would want #s 21 (shows police officer with badge but without nametag) and possibly 13, 23 and 34 showing orderly march with police present.” By tracing the maneuverings of the CPD and National Guard, the ACLU and photographers worked together to make state power visible so that its abuses could be logged and, they hoped, redressed.

Other photographers offered the ACLU information about things just out-of-

frame, like what appeared to be a military “headquarters behind an inconspicuous sliding door” in the lobby of the Grant Park Hilton. Besides his contact sheets, James C. Clark offered his own specialized knowledge to the ACLU about a recent city-produced film: “The City of Chicago film on the Convention Week disorders was a farce from a film maker’s point of view.... I believe...that much of the sound was 'wild' — that is, it was not sound that was taking place at the same time and place as the events seen by the camera, but sound that was picked up here and there and God knows where during various demonstrations.” With the state-directed historical revision of the Convention Week violence already underway, Clark’s note about the doctored footage underscored what an enormous challenge it would be for an oppositional, activist-photography to impress itself.

One of Holter's footnote sources is cousin Phil Moore, later one of the many lawyers who defended myself and others for a separate demonstration at the 1968 convention.

One historical piece about Nina I still hope to uncover is the file of a suit, *Andich v Daley*, in which she and 69 others participated after the demonstration where she and others were maced inside the paddy wagon. The suit demanded damages for 17 of them including Nina. The *Andich* papers are among ACLU archives at the University of Chicago Library. I will be going to Chicago for a conference in June, and hope to have time to go to the Library for a look, including whatever the final disposition was for Nina (and whether she was awarded any money).

Finally about Chicago, as noted I too was arrested at the 1968 Convention, for participating in a march of 3000 led by Dick Gregory from downtown toward the convention site. Police stopped us after two miles at 18th and Michigan. They arrested several of us peacefully until the paddy wagons were filled. As we were driven away, the rest of the crowd was gassed.

A few of us decided to fight it. After a bench trial of several weeks the judge convicted us, which the Illinois Supreme Court upheld. The story of that is here, written a year later in my first year of law school:

<https://ellisboal.org/pages/theLawThePointOfViewOfaCrook.pdf> . The piece begins with my arraignment, where Nina played an unexpected part:

So I was not altogether surprised when at the end of the long afternoon of waiting in the courtroom, finally the clerk mistakenly called my number and case: “Number 378156-3, Nina Boal.”

“The name is Ellis Boal,” I said, approaching the bench.

”Ellis Boal,” he corrected himself. Then he looked up at me quizzically and said, “Are you related to Nina Boal?”

“Yes, she's my sister.”

He looked startled. “How do you like that, this is Nina's brother!” he exclaimed aloud.

The prosecutor was Richard J. Elrod, later one of the prosecutors in the trial. Having prosecuted Nina many times in various causes, he was just as surprised to meet me. He smiled. “You're really Nina's brother? Well how is Nina doing these days? We haven't seen her in a long time.”

“Oh, she's doing pretty good. She's at school at Roosevelt.”

“You mean she's decided to go to school now, and give up all this demonstrating?”

“Well she's been in school for a while now. She's studying art. But she's always been doing what she wants to do.”

The Judge interrupted our colloquy: “Nina's an old friend of ours. She's been up here a lot of times.” He knew her too.

“Be sure to say hello to her for us.” Elrod said, grinning.

“I'm sure she would want me to say the same to all of you.”

Elrod, a Democrat, later was elected sheriff of Cook County, whereupon he fired the non-civil service employees under him who were not Democrats. The Supreme Court overturned the discharges on free-speech grounds.

Mississippi

When Campbell and I got in touch last year year he had just returned from an Atlanta library where he had slogged through old court files from Mississippi. He found materials related to Nina's 1965-66 civil rights activities there, and passed them along. They included affidavits signed by Martin Luther King and her on the same day in the same office, about a Klan raid on an MFDP office in Neshoba in 1966. Separately, Nina was arrested and fined once for parking wrong and having a gun in her car. The car and

gun (a legal-length shotgun) were Collier's.

The back story is this, beginning in 1964 when cousin Phil was in Mississippi with MFDP and Nina was not yet there:

In 1964 James Chaney, Andrew Goodman, and Michael Schwerner, were volunteer civil rights workers in Meridian. Chaney was black and from there. Goodman and Schwerner were white and from New York. The three were lynched by a group of 18 led by Neshoba Deputy Sheriff Cecil Price. They were brought to a remote location, shot, and their bodies hidden in an earthen dam. As they were leaving Price praised the group and warned them against the story getting out. Via a paid informant, authorities found the bodies 44 days later. Chaney had been beaten, chain-whipped, and castrated. Autopsy evidence showed Goodman was alive when buried. After a trial most including Price were convicted of lesser charges. Price was let out after 4½ years. Later in life he repented, as seen below. A full account of the murders is here:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Murders_of_Chaney,_Goodman,_and_Schwerner .

Arriving in Jackson in 1965 for a large demonstration, Nina was jailed for three days. On her release she went for a week of COFO training in Hattiesburg. She started actual work in Clarke County, and lived in Stonewall with a family, canvassing for registration and desegregation. Later she was transferred to Meridian, and then Philadelphia.

<https://www.crmvet.org/vet/boaln.htm> .

In Meridian, in jail, a fellow prisoner beat her with a broken coke bottle. At the hospital inexplicably they gave her a VD exam (which proved negative). The beating caused permanent nerve damage. She wrote a poem of the event 2-3 days later – the only poem she ever wrote. (In my 2020 Appreciation I had the date of the Meridian jailing wrong.)

Her registration work was empowered by an act of Congress, the Voting Rights Act, passed a couple of months after she arrived. The Act resulted in a massive increase in voter registration and turnout among blacks. See

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Voting_Rights_Act_of_1965 .

The gun conviction

In a 1981 interview by Orley B. Caudill at the University of Southern Mississippi, Collier told the story of Nina's gun arrest. The gun was a cherished hammerless Remington with a long barrel, which Collier had in his car, visible through the window, unbreached. Nina borrowed the car. Price pulled her over and made an arrest.

Detail about the arrest is described in the *Guyot* complaint noted below:

On April 12, 1966, Nina Boal, a white volunteer worker for the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party, was arrested by defendant Cecil Price and special deputy Clyde Parker on charges of “improper parking” and “carrying a concealed weapon.” Miss Boal, driving Rev. Collier's car, was followed by Price and Parker from the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party headquarters in Philadelphia to a point off the side of Route 21 within Philadelphia, where she had left her own car with a flat tire. Officer Price parked behind the car with the flat tire. Miss Boal thereupon parked behind Officer Price. Rev. Collier's car had a “broken” unloaded shotgun with a 28” barrel resting behind the back seat, clearly visible from outside the car. Deputy Price saw it and arrested Miss Boal. On April 18, 1966, Miss Boal was convicted for possessing a concealed weapon by Justice of the Peace Leonard Warren, fined a total of \$225.00 and sentenced to thirty days in jail, despite evidence that § 2079, Miss. Code Ann. (1942) (the “concealed weapons” statute) proscribes only shotguns with barrels of eighteen inches or less and Miss Boal had followed Deputy Price's example in parking.)

Years later, around 1981, when Price was out of jail, Collier ran into him at a store on the Choctaw Reservation in Neshoba. Interestingly they had a chat. Collier asked about getting the gun back. Price said he didn't think Warren (the Justice of the Peace) had it but Rainey might know, and he would ask.

Campbell later uncovered more information about the matter. Nina's lawyer on the incident was Malcom Farmer. Campbell wrote me this on October 3:

I actually interviewed Farmer a couple years ago and he told me, quite unprompted, about your sister's case, which — believe it or not — was the first case he ever argued. An amazing story. According to Malcom, he arrived in Jackson and was immediately told he had to drive to Neshoba County to bail an activist who had been arrested for possession of a concealed weapon. He just had time to read the MS statute on concealed weapons, which specified that a gun's barrel had to be less than 18" to qualify as concealed. So he grabbed a tape measure and off he went. The “court” in question was a gas station, where he met with Cecil Price, the arresting officer, and Leonard Warren, the Beat 1 Justice of the Peace. (Warren was a central player in the murder of the three CR workers, though he was never prosecuted.) When Price produced the gun in question — a Remington shotgun — Malcom assumed he was home free. He produced the tape measure, asked Price to measure the barrel, and, after he reported the barrel length of 28”, moved to have the charges dismissed. At which point Price took the gun,

pressed the barrel to his chin, and said “Either she's guilty or you're dead.” JP Warren didn't even wait for a reply. He just said “Guilty as charged” and gave your sister a \$250 fine and thirty days. (Which I don't think she actually served. Instead the movement posted a bond — apparently over her vociferous objections.)

The ultimate fate of the gun was never learned.

The Neshoba offshoot of the Meredith march

In June 1966 James Meredith and others began a peaceful march from Memphis to Jackson MS. Early on, Meredith was wounded by a gunman and hospitalized. Others rallied and flooded the march, including Nina. It swelled to 15,000, and is widely documented. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/March_Against_Fear

At the time Nina was living at the Philadelphia MFDP office.

Some in the march including King and Collier decided to spin off a separate march in Philadelphia. As Campbell wrote me on October 2:

June 21 [was] the second anniversary of the murders of Goodman, Schwerner, and Chaney. [A] small contingent of marchers diverted to Neshoba County, where they participated in a march to the courthouse square. They were joined by a small number of local people and activists, including your sister. The result was complete mayhem — King later said it was the most frightening experience of his life. Having been routed, the marchers announced plans to return to Neshoba a few days later, which they did.

...

It was the last great march of the CR era, and also the march which saw the fracturing of the movement between older leaders like King, still committed to integration, and younger leaders like Stokely Carmichael, who increasingly hewed to Black Power (a slogan coined during the march).

On June 23, Nina swore to an affidavit saying this: About 125 marched in Philadelphia. There was a crowd of white onlookers. Price and other police were there, armed. She saw a truck swerve and hit one of the marchers. Other cars threatened the marchers. The marchers knelt and prayed. White onlookers sprayed them with water and jeered. A white man knocked a news photographer to the street. One threw soda pop on the

marchers. Another threatened them with a garden hose. Some threw firecrackers. “Price stood by grinning and laughing.” While they were leaving “Price grabbed Reverend Clint Collier and arrested him.” On the way back to the MFDP a city police truck pushed some of the marchers. In the evening at MFDP, a Ford with no license drove by twice. A shot was fired. “About one-half hour later a car drove by and I heard ten or fifteen shots fired at our building.” There were about 25 in the building.

King wrote his own affidavit, with less detail, the same day before the same notary, testifying to “numerous assaults.” as well as “profane heckling, throwing of 'cherry bombs,' physical attacks by mobs of white on-lookers,” all with no arrests.

The affidavits were filed with a federal class action also filed that day. *Guyot et al v Rainey et al.*, Civil Action # 1357 (Southern District of Mississippi, 6-23-66). The Plaintiffs were King, Collier, MFDP Chair Lawrence Guyot, Floyd McKissick, Stokely Carmichael, and Walter Fauntroy. The lawyers were Henry Aronson, Marian Wright, Alvin Bronstein, Malcom Farmer, Jack Greenberg, and James Nabrit. The defendants included Price and Rainey.

Incidents of the Complaint included Nina's arrest, concealed-weapon conviction, fine and jailtime (which she didn't serve) for the incident with Collier's shotgun, Rainey's threat to arrest her for carrying a sign critical of him and Price, and Rainey's subsequent arrest of her for carrying another sign. Another incident was of Collier's arrest while driving his daughter, being pulled from the car, thrown to the ground, and handcuffed.

They did not get the restraining order.

Interviews with Nina

At the time Stanford University conducted a series of interviews of the COFO volunteers. Nina's was in the Clarke County Seat, Quitman. She recounted the hate she experienced from whites, her belief in integration, her relations with local people both whites and blacks, Negro boys that she fended off, her thoughts about non-violence, Deacons for Defense, guns, the conflict between the radical MFDP and rival NAACP, the meaning of “freedom,” the compliments she received from colleagues about her work, volunteers who practice “free love,” Vietnam activists, people back in Winnetka, Mom and Dad there supporting what she was doing, her relation with Sarah Forby our maid, and her feeling of being more “at home” in Stonewall than in Winnetka and expectation to stay for awhile.

Other than the compliments of colleagues, what does not come through is the

effectiveness of her actual work, in terms of numbers of people she convinced or helped to register to vote or become active.

Later when she was living in Baltimore in 2011, she gave an interview with student Mona Kattan of St. Andrew's Episcopal School in Potomac Maryland. Included was this:

“I was faced in two different gun battles which means I diverged from the progressives and became a proponent of the second amendment, because the Ku Klux Klan came in with their guns blazing, this happened in Clarke County once and it happened in Neshoba County [in June 1966], during the Meredith March and our people were ready for them and fired back and drove them out and if they hadn't defended themselves then of course there would have been a massacre.”

In the Kattan interview Nina states she was locked up three times, but I am not clear if she meant three times in in Mississippi or three times just in Neshoba. As noted above, on her first day in Mississippi she was arrested and locked up at a large demonstration in Jackson, the state capital. Another was the time in Meridian when she was beaten by a prisoner.

In Neshoba she relates a time when she was going to pick up a pupil who was integrating a school. The reason for the arrest I don't know. At the Court for her trial she saw recruiting posters for the Ku Klux Klan. Her jailer was Rainey's wife who was nasty. She was released after a week.

A week later she was arrested again, along with Collier, and they were in cells across from each other. She said this of that time:

“[T]hen that night a bunch of you know Rainey and Price and some of the others came in, and they had a Ku Klux Klan party, and they were all just drinking and carrying on and making jokes both about civil rights workers and amazingly about the FBI, because they also hated the FBI, and I thought man this is it, this it, we're gonna become civil rights worker number 4 and 5, and I really thought Phil Ochs will really write some nice protest things about us, but the party ended and they went home and they left us in the cells, and a couple of days later we both got bailed out. . . .”

Of the Kattan interview, Campbell wrote me in September 2024:

“I knew that she and Collier were jailed together, but I'd never heard the story

about Price and Rainey (and the assorted Klan hangers on) having a party in the jail while they were incarcerated. Can you imagine how terrifying that must have been? “

In the interview she said she was visited by someone from the FBI. If so, there might be notation of that or a summary in FBI files, which would be publicly available. I have not requested that but I might, or someone else could.

The interview also covered her activism in Chicago. Kattan's summary relates the following:

“Throughout the interview Nina provided a vast amount of background information and tells of her childhood and day-to-day struggles as well as her interests and fondest memories. . . . [S]he really opened up during the interview and was not reluctant to withhold anything. Although Nina shares her opinions on various matters throughout the interview, I do not think she is biased in particular, however she is an avid supporter of human, gay, and animal rights. . . . This experience changed me as a historian because it gave me a new perspective of seeing a more personal side to history than usual.”

Collier interview at the Winter Institute

Campbell's materials included his transcript of an interview Collier gave in 2004 for the William Winter Institute at the University of Mississippi. By way of context, he was talking about the climate of terror that engulfed Neshoba County and prevented many local Black people from risking any involvement with the movement.

“The Nebo people, they participated. But the rest of those churches didn't have nothing to do with the civil rights movement. Not a one. Stevens Chapel. The holiness church Good Way... didn't have nothing to do with it. Mount Zion [had] some participation but it was only a few people.”

“There were 300 and something in that march [the marches with MLK on June 21 and June 24, 1966]. Both times. And you got 12,000 black people in Neshoba county... very few from the county [marched]... the most was Stallo... You got Dixon, you got Mount Zion, you got Stallo, and you got [Poplar?] Spring. Four communities. There were few from each one. None from Dixon, not a single one. A few from Mount Zion and a few from Stallo and Philadelphia itself... the city, they took a small part, very small.”

[Collier then contrasted his frustration with local people with his admiration for the civil rights workers who came south, especially Nina.]

“You remember Nina Boal? She was in it. She was a little girl from Chicago.”

“This is what shakes me apart [speaking w extraordinary emphasis]. I tell the Sunday school, I go to Sunday school... I often tell them, I say, you call yourself citizens, black women you call yourselves mothers, you call yourselves wives, and you call yourself a community of people. And I said when the civil rights was here the only thing that came in to help us with the problem was not black women it was white girls.”

[Goes on to mention Sandra Watt, “the Sullivan girl,” Haley Pridgett, and, again, Nina.]

“Let me tell you what happened to Nina Boal. Nina Boal came here she was 17. She worked down to Meridian where she started, and they got a hold of her down there and put her in jail in Meridian. And they gave some old drunk white gal a quart bottle of some liquor to drink and put her in there to beat up Nina Boal. And she beat Nina Boal unconscious. They had to take her to the hospital... to save her life.”

“So Nina Boal came to Philadelphia after that... and her mother stayed in communication with her all the time. You know that was some woman, who gave her daughter's life for our rights. How about that? Can you find a preacher better than that? That's what she did. Nina Boal was 17 years old. She stayed here two years.” “These things are upsetting to me. To think how poorly we had courage to stand ground for the betterment of our life and our community [sic]. We were so indoctrinated with white power, with white threat. We were so indoctrinated until we wouldn't know we were living or dead.”

Cecil Price

In his 1981 meeting with Price on the Choctaw Reservation, according to the Caudill interview, Collier ended it this way:

“Rev. Collier: Then I asked him a question, I says, 'How do you feel about this

situation, now since it's all over?'"

He says, 'Well, Clint, I don't feel good over it. I was brainwashed into this situation' - that's the word he used, brainwashed - 'and I got into it, but I'm sorry.'

I said, 'You repented that situation?'

'Yes.'

I said, 'You are telling your children about it?'

He said, 'Yes.'

I said, 'Well, that's enough. That's all you can do.'

Dr. Caudill: No, there's not [anything else]; you can't undo it, can you?

Rev. Collier: Yes, that's right. I said, 'You can't undo it, you are going to have to live with it and if you try to bring your children [up] in a better manner, good enough.'

He says, 'Yes, I'm doing that,' but he says, 'I was just brainwashed in doing what I did.'

I said, 'Well, let's use a word not so strong.' I said, 'Let's use the word conditioning - wrong term, word. Your life was a conditioning life and mine was, too. You are on the white side and I'm on the black and the conditioning [was] different, in a different way, and it brought conflicts, racial conflicts.' And I said, 'I believe I understand some of the things.'

But he says, 'I'm ashamed.'"

Dr. Caudill: Did he say that! That's [amazing].

Rev. Collier: Yes, he did.

Dr. Caudill: Did you part friends, or [not].

Rev. Collier: Yes, we parted friends, sure did.

Dr. Caudill: You couldn't have been friends before?

Rev. Collier: No, no. And I question the situation now [laughter].

Dr. Caudill: You don't have much reason to believe him, do you?

Rev. Collier: No.

Dr. Caudill: Did you get your gun?

Rev. Collier: No, I didn't get the gun. He said that he was going to ask Rainey, but I know that was just passing me up.

Dr. Caudill: Is Rainey still there?

Rev. Collier: No, Rainey has been down around Meridian for the last ten or twelve years, eight or ten years anyway. I don't know where he is. And whether he's still down there or not.

Dr. Caudill: Yes. You won't get your gun back, then.

Rev. Collier: No, no. No way.”

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Attachments:

Stanford interview, 1965

Nina, “Meridian jail”, December 1965

Guyot complaint, June 23, 1966

Nina affidavit, June 23, 1966

King affidavit, June 23, 1966

Collier Caudill, interview, July 28, 1981

Kattan interview and summary, February 14, 2012

Collier Winter Interview, 2024

Ellis appreciation, November 25, 2020

Other potential sources of information about Nina in Mississippi might be:

<https://kinginstitute.stanford.edu/mississippi-freedom-democratic-party-mfdp>

<https://www.bsu.edu/academics/libraries/visit-study>

[https://openlibrary.org/books/OL5202232M/Interviews_with_civil_rights_workers_from_the_Mississippi_Freedom_Democratic_Party_\(MFDP\)](https://openlibrary.org/books/OL5202232M/Interviews_with_civil_rights_workers_from_the_Mississippi_Freedom_Democratic_Party_(MFDP))