

STATE OF MISSISSIPPI  
COUNTY OF LEFLORE

Council of Federated Org.  
Affidavit of John Mathews

Mr. John Mathews, age 34, 725 Ave. E, Greenwood, Miss., GL 3-4698, being duly sworn, deposes and says, to-wit:

On Tuesday, March 31st, at about 12:30 p.m., I went up to the Leflore County Courthouse, went into the courthouse building. I am a citizenship teacher for the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, working in Greenwood. As part of my job I was checking on whether or not people were being allowed to register or not. Evidently all people were out to lunch. Upon leaving the courthouse building, two policemen came across the street, yanked or pulled an NAACP button from my jacket, twisted my arm behind me, carried me across the street, and threw me into a patrol car. At this time a policeman got my wallet out of my back pocket, took an ink pen from my hand, broke it in half and threw it to the ground. They then took me to the city jail and locked me up. One policeman was heavy, about 185 lb., light hair, blue uniform, white shirt, police cap, a Greenwood city police uniform. The other weighed about 160 lb., dark hair, same dress, no blue coat like the other wore. At the courthouse they said that I was disturbing the peace and also was guilty of disorderly conduct. They felt that I was drunk. I had had only one beer (which I admitted to the judge the following day at 1 p.m.). In the jail that first night, it was impossible to sleep; every half hour or so three or four policemen would come and open the door and holler "You marching niggers wake up. You was marching today, why not get up and march now? Wake up, you are not supposed to be sleeping." One policeman would stick his head in the door and say sarcastically, "I want my Freedom Now." Around 1 p.m. the next day they took me into a room for the trial. The judge said that I was charged with drunk and disorderly conduct. I pleaded not guilty. We had asked to be allowed to make a phone call that previous night and morning, and we had not been allowed. I was given no opportunity to get a lawyer. The judge did not tell us that we had a right to have a lawyer. The arresting officer could not be found in my trial, so the judge said case continued until today, Thursday. They took me back to my cell. Another cop came into the cell, took me out into the identification room located in a shack in back of the jail. They fingerprinted and took my picture. While this was occurring, they called from the courtroom and I came back. My mother and arresting officer had arrived. I was sworn for the first time; the judge asked again, "guilty or not guilty". I said not guilty. He asked at least five policemen what condition I was in at the arrest. They said that I was "acting strange". At least three of the policemen were not at the arrest scene, however. So \$15 fine. Back at the desk to claim my belongings, they gave me my door keys and cigarettes, but not my wallet, which I asked for several times. They had taken the stuff off me themselves, and I did not put anything into an envelope nor signed any envelope. They maintained that they did not have my wallet. It had my drivers' license and social security card, voter registration card from when I lived there in Illinois. No money. They constantly connected me with the marches (picketing at the courthouse for voter registration) although I was not. After I paid the fine a policeman (the 160-lb one who arrested me) said, "You are out now. But I will bring you right back when I catch you in a march."

original signed by John Mathews

I certify that a notary public is not available and that the above is true to the best of my ability, this 2nd day of April, 1964.

original signed by John Mathews