

The following statement was taken from lawyers notes working in Jackson:

Robert Gathan
age 32
11 Grove Street
Boston, Mass.

Arrested on Monday, June 11. Placed in a truck and driven to compound. When unloaded from the truck some of the prisoners sat down in the truck and locked arms. The cops pulled the prisoners off the truck and dragged them across the concrete (those who refused to walk). Gathan walked over to the group of prisoners. A cop approached him as he rushed into the crowd (Gathan) and hit him across the face with a billy club, drawing blood (several other people were struck during this time, drawing blood in each case).

The cops took all prisoners, men and women, into a large auditorium. They were all packed in solid and several children fainted. The adults were not permitted to take them, the children, to the periphery of the crowd to get fresh air. They were pushed back. The prisoners were booked then, separated into men and women.

They then marched out single file. Cops lined up on the right and beat the boys with billy clubs (running the gauntlet). A Negro began singing. A cop came up and hit him on the head with a billy club very hard. (Bruce Maxwell, Sharkey County COFO, also struck on the head drawing blood.) Berry Grieger, last person to run the gauntlet was hit with clubs on the head and back several times.

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Bernice Crosby
16 years
Hattiesburg, Miss.

Marching on Monday. Police officer told her to get out of line if she didn't want to be arrested for marching without a permit. She kept on marching and was told to march in one of the trucks which she did. Taken to the Fairgrounds and discharged from truck and began singing with the group. They took seats on the ground and joined hands.

Then a policeman came up and grabbed her by the neck and pulled her from the ground. Then he began choking her. She released the hands she had been holding and grabbed at the officers hand because he was hurting her. Then he threw her to the ground, grabbed her by the legs and dragged her from near the truck over to the grass about 20 feet away. Then let her go to get another one of the prisoners.

After all the trucks were unloaded, all of the prisoners were forced into the compound in close proximity. Since it was hot Bernice stepped apart from the group a slight distance so that she could breathe. A policeman told her to step back with the group, then struck her in the stomach with his billy club because she didn't move fast enough.

While there she saw a policeman beating a woman who had been lying on a mattress because she said she felt ill and didn't want to get up when ordered to. Also while at the Fairgrounds before going inside Bernice saw two white men and a white girl beaten on the head with billy clubs by police officers. One of the white men fell to the ground bleeding from a scalp laceration.