

NEWS RELEASE

STUDENT NONVIOLENT COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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FACT SHEET - GREENWOOD, LEFLORE
COUNTY, MISSISSIPPI

The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) began a voter registration drive in Greenwood, Mississippi in August, 1962.

AUGUST 26, 1962: Four SNCC staffers were forced to jump from a second story window to escape a mob of white men carrying chains and pipes.

OCTOBER, 1962: The Leflore County Board of Supervisors voted to drop a surplus food program which had helped sustain some 22,000 Negroes, most sharecroppers and seasonal workers.

FEBRUARY 20, 1963: Three Negro businesses near the SNCC office were burned to the ground. SNCC worker Samuel Block charged the fires were "an attempt to burn us out."

FEBRUARY 22, 1963: Block was arrested and charged with "making statements calculated to breach the peace."

FEBRUARY 28, 1963: SNCC worker James Travis was machine-gunned by two white men seven miles from Greenwood.

MARCH 5, 1963: Two white men were arrested and charged with the Travis shooting. Their trial has been continued three times.

MARCH 6, 1963: Three SNCC workers were shot at while sitting in a car outside the SNCC office. No one was injured.

MARCH 24, 1963: The SNCC office was set on fire.

MARCH 26, 1963: Two shotgun blasts were fired into a SNCC worker's home.

MARCH 27, 1963: Eight SNCC workers were arrested for "inciting to riot" while they were escorting 100 Negroes to the courthouse to register.

MARCH 30, 1963: The United States Department of Justice moved for a temporary restraining order, enjoining intimidation of voters and further detention and prosecution of those arrested March 27.

APRIL 2, 1963: Greenwood police arrested a SNCC worker and forcibly ejected Negro comedian Dick Gregory from the courthouse lawn.

APRIL 4, 1963: The Justice Department withdrew its request for a temporary restraining order and Greenwood officials released those in jail.

MAY 17, 1963: SNCC worker Milton Hancock was held under "technical arrest" and was beaten by a police officer.

JUNE 18, 1963: In nearby Itta Bena, 45 Negroes were arrested after a voter registration meeting in a church was smokebombed.

JUNE 25 & 26, 1963: 22 Negroes were arrested outside the Leflore County Courthouse as they tried to register to vote.

JULY 7, 1963: A tear gas bomb was thrown at a Negro cafe.

OCTOBER 25, 1963: Police arrested ten Negroes trying to register.

NOVEMBER 2, 1963: Five workers were arrested for "obstructing the side walk" after they set up a mock polling booth in Greenwood.

OCTOBER 29, 1963: SNCC worker Jane Stembridge was fined \$100 on two traffic charges.

FEBRUARY 7, 1964: The trial of Byron de la Beckwith, accused assassin of Medgar Evers, ends in a mistrial. Beckwith, a Greenwood native, was supported in his contention that he was in Greenwood the night of the murder by testimony from Greenwood policemen.

MARCH 24, 1963: Three crosses - one on the courthouse lawn, one a 100 yards from the SNCC office - were burned in Greenwood.

MARCH 25, 1964: Over 200 Negroes tried to register. Local people and ministers from the National Council of Churches picketed the courthouse. That afternoon a "chemical" substance was placed on courthouse radiators, exuding an odor which caused nausea and made eyes water. Two policemen stopped and questioned SNCC worker Dick Frey. Fewer than 60 took the test.

MARCH 26, 1964: Two vote workers were given traffic tickets. George Davis, 22, of Greenwood, was fired from his job after his employer said a picture of him picketing had been shown at a Citizens Council meeting.

MARCH 27, 1964: Two more traffic tickets were given to vote workers. As a policeman wrote one ticket, a white man slashed a tire on the ticketed car. Five students from Iowa State University were arrested, fingerprinted, photographed and questioned. A Leflore County sharecropper and mother of nine, Mrs. Betty Carter, was evicted because she had tried to register on March 4.

MARCH 30, 1964: A white worker was arrested and released. Chief of Police Lary told the group they could only picket the west side of the courthouse.

MARCH 31, 1964: 14 workers were arrested for "disorderly conduct." They have decided to remain in jail until the Justice Department secures their release. Picketing will continue.