

[Bobby Talbot]

March 30, 1963

We want to a man's home and he said that he did not have time to fill out the application because something else is on his mind.

Another lady said that she knows God is on her side, but she is home at night by herself and the white folk will do some of anything.

At the next home, the man said that he works on the cars of white people.

Monday

Went to church to help the people fill out the applications for registration. I also helped pick up people out in the city and in Itta Bena. I went out canvassing and talked to some people about the importance of going to register and what their vote can do.

Monday night mass meeting: This meeting consisted of about 500 people. The church was full and people were standing outside. The speaker was the NAACP of New York City. We sang songs and talked about the importance of going to register. The people were ready to go down.

Bobby Talbert

Tuesday

Went to the office at the church and had a meeting and everybody got on regular duty. I helped go over the form with the people that were going down to register. Afterwards, I went out canvassing at Itta Bena to see if I could get some people to go down. Ten people told me that they would go down the next day.

Came back to the church. After leaving the church I returned home and about 11:15 p.m. there was a 'phone call. Someone had shot into Mr. Dewey Greene's home. No one was hurt. We stayed until about 1:30 a.m. and then returned home.

Bobby Talbert

Wednesday

Went to the church and had a meeting. Then left and went to Itta Bena to pick up the people that were to go to register. On my first trip back, the people were singing freedom songs. Then I returned back to Itta Bena to get the rest of the people on my return back. I found that the other people had walked down to the court house and there had been violence and they were returning to the church. About 10 minutes later, the crowd of people arrived. The police came and started arresting the staff, but before I was arrested I was telling the people to get into different cars before they could go back to register. Then the police arrested me and took me to jail.

They did not have a charge on me nor did they know what to do, but they did lock me up.

In jail we were James Forman, Bob Moses, Lawrence Guyot, Curtis Hayes, Willie Peacock, Frank Smith, Laffayette Surney, Charles McLaurin, James Jones, and myself. We talked about what was to be done in the near future.

Bobby Talbert

Thursday

We held classes in jail. Lawrence Guyot taught biology and Jim Forman talked about the slaves of a long time ago and the underground railroad. Then they came to notify us about our trials. They were individual trials.

I won my case by telling the judge that I was not downtown when the people walked downtown. I was in Itta Bena. Then he dismissed my case and Curtis Hayes also won his case.

After they set us free I returned to the church where I helped run off the notice about the mass meeting. The meeting was very successful. James Forman spoke. After the meeting I returned home. At the meeting Wyley Branton, James Bevel, Aaron Henry, Dave Dennis and many other staff members were there.

Bobby Talbert

Friday

Came to the church and had a meeting about what to do and whether the people should walk or ride to the court house. Wyley Branton said that it was up to what the people themselves wanted to do. After the meeting I went over the form with some people and then went out canvassing.

Upon returning to the office there were 14 people who said that they would go down next week in the town of Greenwood.

There will be a mass meeting tonight and Charles McDew, the SNCC chairman, will speak. The meeting will be at 7:30.

Bobby Talbert

April 1, 1963

Went to the office; had a meeting. Then went out canvassing, and returned to run off some stencils for the mass meeting. I also ran off some slips asking the people to come and walk with us to the court house to register. Afterwards I went to put out the papers telling the people about the mass meeting. It took about 2 hours. I then returned to the office and went to see if I could find a truck before I could move the furniture out of the old office that was burned.

After finding the truck I moved the furniture over to the new office and then cleaned it out and This was a hard job for just one man (myself). It took me some time to load the furniture. Then I moved it to the new office where the staff helped me unload it. Then I cleaned the furniture off and then there was a meeting on canvassing. Mrs. Dianne Bevel was in charge. She told the students what to say and how to canvass and how to fill out the form.

After the meeting I went out canvassing, telling the people to come to the meeting, that there was nothing to be afraid of. The reason for this was that the white people have been telling everybody to stay off the streets--

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April 1, 1963, (cont.)

telling them not to attend the mass meeting nor to go and fill out the form for registration because we are going to give you food at the Community House.

By now the speaker of the mass meeting is here--Mr. Dick Gregory--and the newsmen are talking to him now. A man from the FBI is also here and he asked me a lot of questions about what happened on the Wednesday we were arrested. I talked with him about an hour and then cleaned up the front of the building and went to eat dinner.

There are a lot of newspeople here.

we are now getting a telephone connected in our office.

Bobby Talbert

Monday night:

Mass meeting started with a song. Then some of the ministers talked along with Dr. Aaron Henry and Medgar Evers. Mr. Dick Gregory also talked about the people in the community not cooperating with us on this registration form. He talked about the teachers, principals and all of the other people that were not cooperating. This meeting concerned about 1,000 people and was very successful. Afterwards there was a meeting of the staff, but I did not attend.

Tuesday, April 2, 1963

Went to the office and helped clean it. Then there was a meeting. The people are now coming in for us to go over the registration form with them.

The staff meeting began. It consisted of:

1. walk to the court house
2. Dick Gregory walking with the people
3. the whites depriving us of our right to register
4. whether local people should walk with the group
5. a person going to Milton, Miss., to work

After the meeting I went out canvassing on Percy St. where I contacted 10 people. Two of them will come by on Wednesday, April 3. I then returned to the office and at 2:30 we rode to the court house with the people that were going down to register. We stood on the outside of the courthouse, waiting until the people finished taking the test. After they finished, we formed a line and walked in twos, starting back to the SNCC office. But before we left there was the Chief of Police, telling us not to march. We continued on our journey back to the office and the police and white so-called citizens were watching us and walking along with us. The police tried to break us up, but we kept our line formation and kept walking.

Then the policeman told me that I was under arrest and I asked under what charges. He let me go free while the

walk went on. The police tried to turn the people around again and I kept telling them to go on and then he said I was under arrest again and told me to get into the car. I lay down and then the police picked me up and carried me to the car. Instead of arresting me, they brought me to the SNCC office and put me out. They did the same to Dick Gregory and some of the rest of the leaders.

By this time we reloaded in a car and returned to the others (The police car was just like a taxi--free of charge.).

After we returned we walked back to the office. There were quite a few reporters on the scene. The people that did not get a chance to register said that they will go again tomorrow.

Then I helped clean the office and straighten out the canvassing books and rearrange the office.

Tuesday night: Had a meeting at the house where we live. It lasted from 8:00 to 11:00. The meeting was concerned with what was to be done the next day and to organize different kinds of committees to be in charge of different things and position.

We are now trying to fix our new office up. We need quite a few things such as desks, chairs, benches, etc.

The FBI took pictures of Mr. Mathew Hughes where the dog bit him.

Bobby Talbert

Wednesday, April 3, 1963

Went to the office and had a staff meeting. Then I got the people ready and qualified for the test at the court house. The people were arrested and are now in the County Jail.

I went out canvassing, trying to get people to come to the office, leaving for the court house at 12:30. I returned to the office about 1:30 and went on three follow-ups to see if these people would go down. I returned with two of them. Then I went out canvassing again and returned to the court house to be with the people that were there taking the test.

After 4:30 I returned to the office and helped the students pass out the papers about the mass meeting that will be held to night. Rev. Luckie will be the speaker. This is the preacher that was bitten by a dog on the walk to the court house. There were about 500 people at this mass meeting. They were very cooperative. After the mass meeting, the staff had a meeting.

Bobby Talbert

Thursday, April 4, 1963

Went to a staff meeting at the office. Then I went out and had a discussion with the people that were going to walk down to the court house.

On the way to the court house, I was a group leader. After walking down the street for about five blocks we turned around because the police were taking pictures of the group. After returning to the office and meeting with Wyley Branton, we decided to take the people down in cars.

After the people left I went out canvassing and got two people to come over. Then I returned to the office and formed a meeting with the Greenwood Movement. Then I went out and passed out the leaflets about the mass meeting,, and went to the mass meeting myself. Dick Gregory was the speaker, along with the eight boys who were in jail.

Bobby Talbert

Friday, April 5, 1963

Staff meeting concerned with:

1. transportation
2. food
3. bills
4. activities more than voter registration (the staff to be in the dark)
5. getting people to the court house.
6. getting more work done
7. staff meeting at 7:00 a.m. tomorrow (Saturday)
8. the staff to stay out of the street after dark; cars in the alley

Bobby Talbert

Had a staff meeting and then went to Itta Bena to canvass and get people to come to Greenwood to register. While in Greenwood we canvassed from door to door and many of the people say that they have been thinking about it, others say that they are going down Monday, and some of the people did not let us into their houses; they say they don't want to have anything to do with this mess. So after staying in Itta Bena until 4:00 p.m. we covered most of the houses. Some of the people have already been down, but some of the people were very cooperative and were willing to register. I returned to the office.

There is supposed to be a staff meeting at 5:30 p.m. with the TV reporters. They will take pictures of the office and will talk to James Forman and some of the SNCC staff.

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April 5, 1963, (cont.)

There is supposed to be a mass meeting tonight at 7:30. The speaker will be Rev. C. T. Vivian. It will be held at Jennings Temple. The students are now painting our new office and I will not attend this mass meeting because I have agreed to paint the office tonight. We will start painting as soon as the staff meeting is over. This sure will makethe office look better.

Bobby Talbert

May 5, 1963

I, Geneva Brown, would like to tell you about Caroline and Bessie Johnson. I was down at Bennie Nunn's place and just as I went to walk out of the door, Bessie cut me on the left wrist. After she cut me she ran and her brother and Caroline started cursing me after Bessie ran. We had not had any arguments that night at all before she cut me.

When my lawful husband and I were together, they (Bessie and Caroline's sister) were going with my husband and were picking after me. I went on and did not say anything. My husband walked off and left me with four children and one on the way. He left with Earline, Caroline's sister.

When we went to court, after she cut me, to have the trial, they told me to be up there Monday at 1:00 o'clock. When I went up they put it off until the next day which was Tuesday. I went that day and they put it off until Wednesday. They did not let me tell it like everything was. They said I was drunk. But I was not because I had not had a drink.

I am the mother of five children and I do not want to get into trouble and leave them because of someone who does not mean anything to me. They came to my house twice, once with the police and once it was her and Caroline.

Hancock

May 8, 1963

Have been going to the court house every day from 8:00 until 4:30.

I arrived at the office at 5:00 p.m. after which I went over the registration from with some people and then answered some letters. I then attended a mass meeting in Itta Bena, Mississippi.

There were 20 people who attempted to register today.

Bobby Talbert

REPORT ON THE COURT HOUSE
May 13, 1963

- A.M.: Went to the Court House and the clerk would not take but 5 Negroes because of the white people there. They were not treating the Negroes right; she was fussing and hollering at the people. The clerk started taking the people at 9:00 and stopped at 10:00.
- P.M.: Back at 1:00 p.m. and the clerk said she was not taking anyone, and then returned to the office. Five staff members went and talked to the assistant and she told us that we had to talk to the sheriff. The sheriff talked nice, but the clerk was mean. She told us not to come back to the Court House and called one young lady a black ape.

Mary L. Boothe

May 13, 1963

Went out canvassing and contacted 20 people, went back to the office and went to Itta Bena where there were people waiting at the church to come to the court house. I talked to the people and went over the registration form with them. About 3:00 p.m. I went to the court house and the registrar would not take the people we brought to the court house. I went to the office and told what happened, and sent the people back to Itta Bena.

There was a little trouble at the court house. The staff talked to the sheriff and the registrar. At the office we ran off some stencils about the mass meeting that will be held tonight at the First Christian Church. I then had a conversation with some new students that were here at the office. I told them about the importance of the project and what they can do to help.

Bobby Talbert

Tuesday, May 14, 1963

Went to the office and talked to the members. Then started cleaning up the stairs where the clothes and shoes were. After boxing the shoes and clothes, I cleaned the place up and as soon as I cleaned up the upstairs, a truck load of clothes came in. I also helped unload 52 boxes of clothes. Then we transferred the clothes to the church (Wesley Methodist) where we have always kept them and after arriving I had to carry all those boxes by myself until I got two people off the street to help me. The boxes were heavy. Then I attended a meeting.

Bobby Talbert

May 15, 1963

Today while I was canvassing, I talked with about 200 people and tried to get them to register, but some of them said they were free and did not want to get into one of our messes, some of them slammed the door in my face. But I did not stop. I worked about two more blocks and came back and talked some of them into going to the court house to register. Some of them said that they will go tomorrow if someone will pick them up. They said someone told them last week to get ready and no one came to pick them up. That is why they changed their minds about going to register. I think I am doing a fine job so far. I had ten streets to contact, so if you son't think that I am doing a good job, let me know tomorrow.

Milton Hancock

p.s. One man has trouble with his eyes and he says that he will go down to register.

Wednesday, May 15, 1963

Went to the office and assigned myself to some street that needed to be canvassed. I took seven streets and went out canvassing. I contacted 36 people and most of them said that they would go down Friday.

I attended a meeting with Bob Moses, Chairman, and talked about how the office should be arranged.

Went to a mass meeting with a young man from Birmingham, Ala, who was the speaker. The meeting was real nice, except the part on Citizens' League. It kind of low-rated the SNCC organization.

I also went to the doctor because of a side injury that resulted from carrying the boxes yesterday.

Bobby Talbert

June 18, 1963

I wastold at the mass-meeting tonight that a policeman went into the home of Marie at 912 Howard on Sunday about 9:30 a.m. He took the screen from the window and entered into the house, while no one was home. He was watched from both sides of the street, but no one knew why he went in. The name of the officer is thought to be Murphy.

Willie Washington