

REPORT FROM NICK HAMPTON

I started working for the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee on the 18th of March, 1963. I started to work in Greenwood, Mississippi. I was living on the Runnymede Plantation at the time. I was a day hand on the plantation. After I started working with the movement, I was asked to leave the plantation. I have a wife and a child. I did not stop working in the movement, because I felt the need to help my race and to better my conditions. I worked in Greenwood until the last of May, then I went to Itta Bena to work on Voter Registration with William Mcgee.

I was put on the staff by Bob Moses. I was making \$10 a week. I talked to people every day about going down to register to vote, and sometimes on into the night. I spoke at mass meetings and taught others how to vote. In 1963 we took many people down to register. On June 18th I was put in jail in Itta Bena for seeking police protection after the Hopewell Baptist was bombed with tear gas. I stayed in jail 58 days for nothing at all. I worked in the first Freedom Vote and was one of the first people to get arrested in the Delta. I was arrested in the city of Indianola along with William Mcgee, James Brown and another person from Danville, Virginia.

I know the history of Belzoni; I also was one of the people who went into Belzoni on the day of the first Freedom Vote. I saw Willie Shaw when he rode in the car with the dog. Willie and I got the bond money to get Shaw out of jail. The police also wanted to put the dog on me. That still did not stop me from working in the movement. I felt if I had to face dogs for my Freedom, that was a price that I had to pay.

After the Freedom Vote, I continued to work in Itta Bena getting people to go down and register to vote. I wanted people to become first class citizens. I tried to register several times myself and was unsuccessful in passing the test. Then about March, 1964, I was cut off the staff. I never knew the reason why my check was cut off. I felt that someone should have talked to me before putting me off the staff. It seems to me that if Bob Moses hired me, he should be the one to put me off the staff, because he is the Mississippi Project Director. I was put off the staff without a job and I feel that the movement should let me work on or give me some kind of support for my wife and child. I live here in Mississippi and I feel that there should be a change in the state; I want to work for that change and feel I could get closer to the people here than the people from the North. I have lived on plantations and I know the conditions of the people on the plantations. I have picked cotton for two dollars a hundred just like other people on plantations. I don't want my children picking and chopping for the same thing. That is one of the reasons that I want to work in the movement. I want to work with SNCC or COFO and no other group. I will promise to be a steady worker and organize people to register and not only the people I will go along with.