

Thursday (3/22/65)
City Jail

Dear Family,

Sorry I haven't written in so long. Had planned to get a note off yesterday as to events here until I became part of the events.

Last Friday afternoon at our weekly strategy meeting (which I missed being in bed with another cold-now it's plain laryngitis) of the picket line, the people decided that not only would we march from the church out to the mill but we would vary the walk a bit each day by taking different routes - with the intent of encouraging more people to join us and to let the city know that we were still picketing. Monday, after taking our usual route just within two blocks of the mill, we crossed Union St. with the intent of going 1 block over, down Delta St. It just happens that Delta St. on the north side of Union is white neighborhood. We had already got into the intersection when the cops started to panic and push people. They picked out the nearest 4 COFO workers, altho there were local Negroes in front of them, put them in the wire truck and took them to jail. The whole picket line trooped on down to the jail to picket. Since court was in session, we were ordered to disperse - which we did - we went and sat up on the levee, a block from the jail and sang. When court was out we picketed again until the kids were released. Monday night a cross was burned on the levee. The first in Greenville in almost a year.

Tuesday the group elected to follow the same plan, but if the police wouldn't let us go down together we'd take off our signs and march down silently in pairs. When we reached Delta St. it was lined with white cops in steel helmets and carrying their clubs in the air, the wire truck and a P.D. rescue wagon. Before the people even had a chance to regroup, 4 more were caught up and put into the wire truck. Again we marched to the jailhouse and picketed until the 4 were released.

Wednesday a whole crowd of the picketers decided to get arrested - we were 18 in all. Everybody was released last night except 5 of us. Peg and I are together, but separated from everyone else (the jail is segregated). Our cell is charming - about 7'x10' with a bunk bed, steel sink and steel john. We aren't supposed to have paper and pencils, but got the former from our lawyers and the latter from a lady 2 cells down. I first tried leaning on the wall to write, but have changed to the bottom of a tin cup. We haven't eaten anything since we've been here (24 hrs.) but a candy bar and an orange. The food looks atrocious, so we're not very tempted anyhow. We sang until our voices gave out last night. Could just barely hear the other group through all the concrete. The other ladies on our hall are Negro, so we've had some grand chats about the city and

freedom. Am sleeping on the top bunk. The light is never turned off, which makes sleeping impossible. My eyes really hurt.

We had a group meeting with our lawyers. They persuaded Chief Burnley to let the picketers go down Delta today in small groups. There were no incidents. Our trial is next Wed., but the lawyers are trying to change it to federal court. Hopefully the rest of us will be out of here by tomorrow sometime. Am so hungry and tired. The rest of the staff has promised to send us some oranges and cookies. Here's hoping. We heard there were 70 people on the picket line today - almost twice as many as usual.

Guess Greenville has finally showed its true face - just like the rest of Mississippi. Chief Burnley is really rattled - so is the rest of the city. We're missing the mass meeting tonight- would really like to be there.

Got out at 7 p.m., just in time to lead the singing at the meeting. It was so good to talk to you all. Will try to write soon to let you know what is going on. Love, Pat

P.S. I was bonded [bailed?] out by the pennies, nickels and dimes of the people who came to the Wed. night meeting. The desk sergeant wasn't too pleased to have to count out all that change.