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Author: Forman

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User Information

Name: Crosby, Emilye

Username: crosby

Department: History (Faculty)

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resistance would continue to rise across the nation. There were no more demonstrations in Birmingham for the time being, but history would pick up the irreversible thrust of black people in other times and places.

CHAPTER 41

Selma: Diary of a Freedom Fighter

ASK YOURSELF THIS
IMPORTANT QUESTION:
WHAT HAVE I PERSONALLY DONE TO
MAINTAIN Segregation?

If the answer disturbs you, probe deeper and decide what you are willing to do to preserve racial harmony in Selma and Dallas County.

Is it worth four dollars to prevent a "Birmingham" here? That's what it costs to be a member of your Citizens' Council, whose efforts are not thwarted by courts which give sit-in demonstrators legal immunity, prevent school boards from expelling students who participate in mob activities and would place federal referees at the board of voter registrars.

Law enforcement can be called only after these things occur, but your Citizens' Council prevents them from happening.

Why else did only 350 Negroes attend a so-called mass voter registration meeting that outside agitators worked 60 days to organize in Selma?

Gov. Wallace told a state meeting of the council three weeks ago: "You are doing a wonderful job, but you should speak with the united voice of 100,000 persons. Go back home and get more members." Gov. Wallace stands in the University doorway next Tuesday facing possible ten years imprisonment for violating a federal injunction.

Is it worth four dollars to you to prevent sit-ins, mob marches and wholesale Negro voter registration efforts in Selma?

If so, prove your dedication by joining and supporting the work of the Dallas County Citizens' Council today. Six dollars will make both you and your wife members of an organization which has already given Selma nine years of Racial Harmony since "Black Monday."

Send Your Check to:
The Dallas County
Citizens' Council
Selma, Alabama

Your Membership is good for 12 months.

[From the *Selma Times Journal*, Sunday, June 9, 1963.]

Selma, Alabama. A name that would echo around the world in 1965, when black people would be brutally beaten by horseback riding police and Dr. Martin Luther King would lead a series of mass marches culminating in the one from Selma to Montgomery. But Selma, Alabama, in 1963 was a largely unknown little town. Whites kept blacks "in their place," with an iron hand. How did the change come about? The answer to that question lies in the dogged, day-to-day efforts of a handful of SNCC workers.

Many times people in this country and around the world have asked me exactly what it was like to be a SNCC field secretary in the South—what were the obstacles and how did we overcome them, what were our organizing techniques, what was the daily reality of the struggle. As executive secretary, I felt very strongly about the importance of field staff sending in frequent and detailed reports on their activities—so strongly that at one point, we in the Atlanta office took the position of "no field report, no subsistence check." The point was not to burden the already overworked field secretaries with another task but to strengthen our network of communication. At the same time, I felt that we were making history. Nothing that might be written in retrospect could capture the full reality of our work so well as on-the-spot recording.

One of the finest accounts of just what it meant to be a SNCC field worker was written by Rev. Bernard LaFayette in June of 1963 from Selma, Alabama. Bernard and his wife Colia, both twenty-two years old, had gone there in February to start a voter registration project. They went to Selma to make a frontal attack on one of the most vicious and oppressive places in the Deep South.

Dallas County, of which Selma is the seat, is one of several in a Black Belt area where blacks form the majority of the population. In Dallas, the ratio was 57.7 percent "nonwhites" to 42.3 percent (census figures for 1960). Of the blacks, 84 percent existed on less than three thousand dollars a year and 82 percent of those who worked held jobs as maids, janitors, farm and other kinds of laborers, truck drivers, and helpers. Of the blacks over twenty-five years old, 95 percent had less than a high school education, while 62 percent had completed six years or less of school. Among the whites on the other hand, 81 percent had incomes of three thousand dollars a year or more while 73 percent fell into the better-paid and more desirable job categories, and only 11 percent had six or less years of school.

In Dallas County, only 130 black people were registered to vote out of an eligible 15,115 according to a 1961 Civil Rights Commission Report. Adjoining Wilcox County had never had a black voter, although its population was 78 percent black. Lowndes County, which also borders Dallas and also has a huge black majority, had never had a registered black person either. That was the way things had been for almost seventy years

and that was the way whites intended them to stay. During the Civil War Selma had been one of the most important military depots in the lower states of the Confederacy. In 1963 it was the birthplace and stronghold of the White Citizens' Council, the authors of that advertisement in the *Selma Times Journal*. Nothing had changed.

Bernard and Colia LaFayette survived their first few months in Selma despite armed attacks by night riders and lesser forms of harassment. By May they felt that the black community was ready for a mass meeting. I was invited to speak and went.

Many people were on edge that day, for reports were coming back that the whites intended to break up the meeting. And they came: Shortly after the meeting had started, a crowd of armed whites gathered not far from the church. We immediately got in touch with our Atlanta office, which began to work with that fine line of contradiction between the federal and state powers. They telephoned around the country, asking people to apply pressure on their elected representatives and on the Justice Department to prevent violence from being inflicted upon the mass of people who had come to the voter registration meeting.

Inside the church we decided to stay until we felt that it was safe to have people leave the meeting. We remained until one o'clock in the morning, singing and talking freedom, until the crowds of whites had disappeared. It was, in retrospect, a mistake not to have been prepared with an armed self-defense group of our own that could fight against those who would attack us. But this type of consciousness would become widespread only later.

I left Selma shortly afterward. Bernard and Colia LaFayette went on with their work—quietly laying the foundations for events that would rock the world in the near future and make the name of Selma a byword like Birmingham. This is Bernard's account of how things went during the month after that first mass meeting:

A REPORT ON SELMA

By Rev. Bernard LaFayette

Introduction: In spite of the deep fears among the Negro community, we have been able to move along with some degree of success. We have been able to get very little cooperation from the Negro ministers and Church leaders, as a whole.

I feel that many people are afraid to identify with the Voter Registration Project, either out of fear or just plain apathy. Many people who would be active have lost hope because of other pressures put on those who failed in the past. The economic pressure put on those who signed a petition to integrate the schools in 1957; the harassment and intimidation of the members of the N.A.A.C.P. and final disbandment of the organization.

The White Citizens' Council is and has been the most powerful pressure group in this state. The Dallas County Branch is an agent of the county gov-

ernment and Dallas is the birthplace of the White Citizens' Council in the State of Alabama. It is also the Stronghold of the Ku Klux Klan.

June 1: June the first was a normal day for us, we passed out leaflets announcing the classes and also the fact that the coming Monday was a day when Negroes could go down and apply to the Board of Registrars for Registration. We emphasized the importance of going down. We talked to several people telling them about the different days that were available to them. We went to some night clubs and some bars and some taverns, telling the people about the meetings. We also went to a dance that was held at the Elk's Club and we also went to a place called the Chicken Shack, passing out leaflets and talking to people about going down to register to vote, and helping them with the program.

June 2: This was a normal day and also was a Sunday. We went to church and that morning we passed out leaflets in all of the churches telling the people about the first Monday in June, which was the next day. We worked that Sunday morning carrying leaflets around to the different churches to make sure that they were passed out. We didn't want them to get stopped in someone's hand that didn't want them passed out. The people who worked with us were young and were from 12 to 15 in number. . . .

June 3: This was a Monday and we went down to Mrs. Boynton's office helping the people fill out Voter Registration forms and we assisted them that day. This day certainly showed a great breakthrough ever since we had our last Mass Meeting. It is difficult to keep an accurate account of the people going down because some of the people go on their own without coming to the classes. In many cases they failed to report to us that they had gone down. We realized that there was a problem amounting and we wanted to do something about it. We came to a suggestion that on the next Monday the Registrar's Office would be open and we would have people go down there to get the names and addresses of people who were applying. . . .

We had a meeting of the Dallas County Voters League, which was called to be held at Brown Chapel A.M.E. Church, and there we discussed our progress. I gave a report of what we had been doing. We talked in terms of bringing younger people into our groups. . . .

June 4: This was the day when Alexander L. Brown came, a student from Birmingham, Alabama. He is sixteen years of age and he came to work as a volunteer.

He is one of the students that Colia, my wife, recruited when she was in Birmingham. He came in and we immediately got to work. We went over in East Selma and we went again canvassing and to see what the possibilities were of setting up a clinic in a little church that we discovered was over there. We're sort of shut-off from the rest of the community. . . . We talked to the people asking them would they like it if we set up a clinic in their neighborhood. We got very good response in that area, that evening.

June 5: We went to Beloit, Alabama and we met with Mr. D. L. Pope who was a man that had been referred to me as very interested in the program and a man who was militant and wanted to help in the movement. I understand that he has given us financial support in the past and he is a Registered Voter. He is also interested in getting others to register. He is a man of dignity . . . he was able to give us a list of 80 people. Mr. Pope agreed to do what he could to influence these people who he had listed.

June 7: This is the day we decided to go down to Wilcox County to attend the meeting that the Wilcox County Civic League was supposed to be having.

I thought that since we had such a hard time getting young people to the meetings, I decided to take the Freedom Trio to sing "Freedom Is 'A Coming and It Won't Be Long." This trio is made up of three attractive young ladies and we thought that it should draw some young people to the meeting. We took them but unfortunately, this night the meeting was postponed because of a regular monthly meeting that was to be held at the church. We decided to go to Mr. Roman Petteway's store, which is the hangout for most of the teenagers in that community, and we rounded up around thirty students. They helped us to get older people to become Registered Voters. We taught them Freedom Songs and talked about Freedom in general. We left Alexander Brown down in Wilcox County because he met some of his relatives that night and they agreed that he could stay over with them. He was going to work over in that area, for the purpose of setting up a Mass Meeting.

June 8: We were passing out leaflets announcing our Voter Registration Classes and letting the people know about the Board of Registrars being open on the first and third Monday in each month and that they were free to go down and register. We went to Lowndes County, which was the second time I have ever stopped in Lowndes County, although it is between Montgomery and Selma. We went to this Negro store that was out on the Highway, and we left some leaflets there. We know that the Negroes in Lowndes County are afraid, because when we start to talk about Voter Registration the people become fearful even though they were talking to us friendly at first. After we mentioned something about Voter Registration, some of them refused to talk at all.

When I came back home, I made a phone call to Reverend Meniffee, who is the pastor of Brown's Chapel, and told him that we were having a problem of a place to have our Mass Meeting and I asked him what were the possibilities of having one at his Church. . . . We realized that if our Mass Meetings died down then, our Voter Registration Program would also die down. He consented that the doors of his church would be open to let us have a Mass Meeting at his church. We discussed June 17 as the date. . . .

June 9: I visited Beliot, Alabama, and it was on a Sunday and I went to Sunday School at Mr. Pope's church. After being introduced in the Sunday School, I got a chance to stress the importance of Voter Registration and tell them something about the work that we have been doing in Dallas County and the need for others to join the program and help others to become registered voters. Most of the people were pleased with the talk that I gave, and I stayed to the service, and Rev. Thomas, who is pastor of this church and lives here in Selma, Alabama, gave me an opportunity to speak again, after the sermon. I made it very brief, telling who I was and what I was doing in the area.

I was asked to come to the 3:00 Program, which was the Pastor's Anniversary, and he consented that I make a speech there. . . . I went home to dinner with Mr. Lawrence Carter and returned and made a speech there. After the main message, I also met Rev. A. C. Burks who was a minister who gave the message for the Anniversary. He seemed to be very interested and enthused about the program. He told me about a committee of three white men who came to his home and told him to give them any information that he would have on these meetings that were taking place and this Voter Registration thing. And he responded (according to him) "I don't have anything to tell you because the meetings are not a secret and everyone knew about them and you will have to find out about them the very best way you can, and I don't have anything else to tell you and you will have to leave my house."

June 10: We passed out leaflets and went to Mr. Pritchett and had some leaflets made about the Mass Meeting that would be on the 17th June and we had secured James Bevel for our main speaker. We had his name printed on the program. In the later part of the day, I learned about a man that had been beaten and arrested at the Quik Check Store. The charge was "Trying to steal a piece of meat." He was beaten by five of the clerks. I tried to trace this rumor down to find out who the man was and check it out to see exactly what happened. I have learned that this man's name is Mr. L. C. Banks and he lives on Philpot Avenue in the 1500 block.

I went by his home but he was not there, and his wife told me that this thing had happened to him and that it was all true. I thought that I would talk with him to get the details and facts of the situation. I understand that he has a serious eye injury, as a result of this beating. Later on I learned that there was a boycott being launched by the beer companies against Mr. Robert Anderson, who is the owner of Bob's Cafe. This boycott was allegedly because he attended the Mass Meeting that was held some time back in May.

June 11: I talked to a man who was fired because he attended the Mass Meeting. I was concerned about this because I thought that this firing and intimidation would make people fearful about going down to register. We also wanted the people to know that we were definitely with them and we would make it public what they were going through and the suffering they were bearing, and we would try to do something about it. I finally traced this down and found out who he was and we had heard a lot of rumors and we went to get the facts of the situation. I found out that the man's name was Mr. Woodrow Foster, and he lives at 86 Small Avenue.

When I first went by his home, he was not at home. Then I went to a meeting at a clinic because this was a Tuesday night. It was held at Mrs. Boynton's office on Franklyn Street. After the meeting was over I went and found Mr. Foster at home. We talked about the situation and he explained that he had been coming to the Mass Meeting and that he had come to the last meeting that we had had. He thought that the man who fired him didn't really want to fire him but he had to fire him because of pressures that were being placed on him. Mr. Foster worked in the Dallas Glass factory.

When I got back home I parked in front of my house and noticed a two-tone '57 Chevrolet with a white top and a rose bottom parked on the other side of the road. A white man was under the hood as if to be fixing something and another was at the steering wheel. . . . I had a lot of books and papers and other things in the car and I had some leaflets in my hand. This man that was under the hood came over to my car and asked me how much would I charge for a push-off. It was about 11:00 that night and ordinarily I would be very leary about this but since the man had come all of the way to my car, and since it was so dark under the trees, I felt that if he wanted to do anything he could have done it then. I told him that I would not charge him anything to give him a push.

I pulled my car up and came behind him to match bumpers. This man who was under the hood let it down and went over to the right hand side of the driver's position and had a brief conversation with him. Then he jumped over the bumpers of the two cars, as if to check to see if they were matching. He looked doubtful about if they were matching. I asked him how did they look, and he said that maybe I should get out and see for myself, what I thought about it.

It was late, and I was getting sleepy, so I got out and took a quick glance at them and saw that they matched. But when I started to lift my head up,

this man had circled around me and had struck me on the forehead with a blunt instrument. That caused blood to fountain out of my head onto my shoes. I fell to the pavement and as I started to get up he hit me on my head two other times. I don't know how many times he hit me altogether, but when I began to stagger to the house and call my neighbor Mr. Mack Shannon, I called out "Mack," and at this time the man who hit me jumped into the car and sped away from the scene.

I came and knocked on Mack's door and told him to open quick, he did and they gave me temporary first-aid and washed the blood from my head and my face. They took me down to my apartment and I made a phone call to the police and told them what had happened and they said that they were on their way. I called the FBI of Selma but I couldn't get them so I called Mobile and they said that they had FBIs in Selma, Alabama, and they gave me their home number. Then I called the SNCC office and reported the incident.

Then I got in my car and drove to the Berwell Infirmary where we got in touch with Doctor Dinkin and he placed six stitches in my scalp. Then I got questioned by the police. . . . I got instructions from the nurse that I was to stay there overnight for observation and a friend of mine took some pictures of my wounds. . . . I was still in the hospital on the morning of June 12th and after the doctor came I asked permission to leave because I had so much work to do. . . . This was the day when the FBI came over to my house. . . . They got their fingerprinting equipment and since I had put my car in a safe place they were able to get a few smears but they did get a clear print of the man's palm (from the bumper).

June 13: I was still recuperating somewhat from the incident that happened to me three nights before. Alexander L. Brown came back from Wilcox County after he heard about the incident. We decided not to have the youth meetings at night, as they were usually held, this was because of the brutality that had started in Selma and we didn't want any of the students to get hurt.

June 14-16: I got a call from Ruby Doris [Robinson] that there was a SNCC meeting in Atlanta, Georgia, and they wanted me to attend it. On the 16th when I got in to Selma, Alabama, we went straight to bed. When I got up that morning, I went to Jesse Grimes's house to see if he had delivered the leaflets announcing the Mass Meeting. He mentioned something about the meeting being called off at Brown's Chapel A.M.E. Baptist Church.

I immediately went over to the Pastor's house, but I didn't say anything to him until I showed him the leaflets that I had had made to see what his reactions would be. He told me that he was having some difficulties with his trustees and as far as he was concerned the meeting was still on. The trustees were going to have a meeting after church to discuss it and it would be up to them to decide what they wanted to do.

Since the First Baptist Church was only about a block away, I went to the Pastor and asked him could we have a Mass Meeting at his church. . . . He said that it would be available and that the doors would be open for us to have the Mass Meeting there.

June 17: This was the day of the big Mass Meeting and it was the second one that we would have had. . . . Earlier that day, I was at Mrs. Boynton's office helping people coming by there to fill out forms before they went down to Register to Vote. We had gotten complaints from the people that were going down that they were pouring questions at them and in some instances they were raising their voices at the people and yelling "speak up, I can't hear

you," and this sort of thing, and trying to confuse them. I asked Alexander Brown and Bosie Reese to go down and check on the situation. . . . Alexander Brown came back. He was driving the car and he came in very hurriedly and excited and said "Bosie's in jail" and that "the sheriff had grabbed Bosie and with what seemed to him as a blow threw him into the sheriff's office." He also said that "An alarm started to ring all over the courthouse" when he was running away.

At this time I didn't know just what to do but I loaded my camera with film and got some bulbs and called the FBI before I went to the courthouse. They advised me to come by there before going to the courthouse to see what had happened to Bosie. Terry Shaw and I went to the Sheriff's office and asked to see the Sheriff. The receptionist got up and went where the Sheriff was and he came in and asked me what was it that I wanted. I told him "I want to know what happened to Bosie Reese." He asked me my name before answering the questions; I answered, then he asked me other questions and I answered them also. He told me that Bosie Reese was under arrest.

I asked him what the charges were and he said that they were at that time failure to obey an officer and resisting arrest. I asked him what was the bond set at, and he told me that he could give me no more information and that I would have to see Judge Mallory for more information. Then he started to pour questions at Terry Shaw, asking him what was his name and where he lived and at first he acted like he couldn't hear him and he yelled "Speak up" in a very angry manner. We both turned and walked out of the office and reported the situation.

The FBI agent said that he couldn't do anything about it and that he took his orders from Washington and that he had no jurisdiction here in Selma. Mrs. Boynton and I went up to the County Jail and (this was about 5:00) we asked if they had one Bosie Reese there. They did but when we asked to see him the jailer said that he couldn't let us go back there because they were cleaning up and everything and this thing was entirely out of his hands and we would have to see the Sheriff about seeing him and he didn't know what the charge meant or the situation that led to his arrest. He (the Sheriff) seemed to be quite puzzled and confused about the charges that were made, and he said that there had never been a charge made like this before that he knew. We asked him for the bond forms and he filled them in for us and gave them to Mrs. Boynton.

This night was the night of the Mass Meeting and we reported the incident. Rev. Bevel did a very good job at the Mass Meeting. The Mass Meeting was well attended and I estimated approximately 700 people although the local paper reported the next day that we had only 250 people. . . .

June 18: This was a normal day for me and I got out that morning to hear the results of the reactions to the Mass Meeting. You could see the new hope and smiles as they walked along the streets and talked about the Mass Meeting. They felt proud of themselves and Selma and they felt proud of the people who were helping them. I talked to several people that had not attended the Mass Meeting and although they were afraid to attend the Mass Meeting, they were happy to hear that the Mass Meeting was successful and some of them said that they were definitely going to be at the next Mass Meeting. I guess that some of the people had felt that the Mass Meetings had died down and would never be revived again.

I went to a Meeting and we went to a Clinic that was held at Mrs. Boynton's office, we had a late meeting but none of the people showed up for the classes.

Several of the workers and Voters League Members came later on and we discussed the last Mass Meeting and discussed plans for a future Mass Meeting. We also talked about getting some legal defense for Bosie and about another person to sign the bond so he would be able to get out . . . we thought to get Attorney Solomon Seay as another attorney for the defense of Bosie Reese. I called his home and tried to get in touch with him but he was not at home and I left a message for him that the trial would be coming up that Thursday and we needed him to be there.

After we left the meeting, I was driving Terry Shaw home and it was about 10:30 or about a quarter to eleven. As I was driving around the corner, I noticed that a police car was following Mr. Gildersleeve, who had pulled off earlier. (Mr. Gildersleeve is the vice-president of the Dallas County Voters League.) I turned down Washington Street and going North crossed Alabama Avenue toward Selma Avenue and just as I crossed the street, the Sheriff's car pulled up behind me and started flashing a light. I pulled over to the side of the road and the Deputy Sheriff got out of his car and walked over to my car and I got out of my car. The Deputy Sheriff, Chuck Webber, asked to see my driver's license. When I pulled out my wallet to show him my driver's license, he said that he had a warrant for my arrest. I asked him, under what charge? He said, "vagrancy." Mrs. Foster had been following us at the time. She saw the Sheriff pull me over and stopped. Mr. Shannon, who was attending the Voters League Meeting, also stopped. Terry got out of my car into Mrs. Foster's car and the other deputy sheriff drove my car back to the City Hall. My car was impounded and I was imprisoned.

I was booked, and they told me I would be fingerprinted and photographed the next morning; so I stayed in jail overnight. It sort of stirred in the community, and later that night I understood several citizens had gone to Attorney Chestnut's house and waited for him very late (about 12:00 P.M.) in order to do something about my arrest. I had been put into a dark cell by myself. It was a normal case because I had been arrested many times and it was no strange place for me; so I made myself at home and relaxed for the rest of the night.

June 19: When I woke up the next morning the cell doors were opened in order for all the prisoners to go into the day room and the first person that passed by my cell was Bosie Reese. He was so surprised to see me in jail with him that we had a brief conversation. I told him about the things happening on the outside and that we were working on his case. I told him that we had reported this case to the Justice Department.

Mrs. Foster and Mr. Henry Shannon signed the bond (for me) but they couldn't seem to locate the Sheriff. Finally, Attorney Chestnut located the Sheriff and he signed the bond, but I wasn't sure if I should get out of jail at this particular time. I finally made up my mind to sign the bond and get out, to see what I could do about getting Bosie out. Attorney Chestnut informed me that the Justice Department wanted to talk to me about the arrest and Bosie's case. I talked with them and they said they also wanted to talk to Bosie when we got him out of jail. It was almost impossible to get someone that owned that much property (\$1,500) to sign the bond for him but we continued to try.

June 20: This was the day for me to be tried for the vagrancy charge. Bosie's trial was to come up also. We went into the courtroom and Mr. Gildersleeve sat on the so-called white side. After conferring with the Judge, Deputy Sheriff Virgil Bates came over and asked him to move to the so-called colored side and he did so. . . . When they got to our cases, Bosie Reese and mine, our

lawyers asked for more time because they hadn't had much time to confer with us . . . but the Judge said that he wouldn't give a continuance; so both cases had to be that day. I was tried and the Sheriff testified as a witness for the prosecution of the State. . . . When I was put on the stand, and it was established that I did have visible means of support from the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee; that I get regular expenses from the organization, that my rent was paid in advance, and I had a house and food and twenty-seven dollars and seventy-five cents at the time of the arrest, the Judge decided that he would have to find me not guilty. . . .

The Judge saw fit at this time for a continuance of Bosie's case at the request of Attorney Seay and Attorney Chestnut. Attorney Seay offered a great deal of motions and this sort of thing, striking at the violations of Civil Rights in this case. He also complained about the excessive bond of fifteen hundred dollars on Bosie Reese's case and the Judge said that he would make it five hundred dollars on each charge and that would make the total bond one thousand dollars. . . .

We were still unable to get Bosie Reese out on bond because the Judge would not approve any bond until the tax assessor had found the property valued above six thousand dollars. . . . I continued to go around that day and the Rev. McDole drove me around to see if I could find someone to sign the bond. Finally that late afternoon, I was able to get the Rev. C. C. Brown, pastor of the Reformed Presbyterian Church here in Selma and Mr. Charles Moss, who is a contractor and also the owner of a motel and an amusement park here in Selma, to sign the bond. Then it was the problem of finding the Sheriff again to approve the bonds. After Attorney Chestnut finally found the Sheriff, he said that the tax assessor's office was closed. Even though the Sheriff knew that the people who signed the bonds were worth the bonds, he would make us go through the trouble of getting the tax assessment from the tax assessor the next day. We got Bosie Reese out that Friday on a thousand dollar bond and he was able to talk to the Justice Department. . . . I spent the rest of the day bringing myself up to date . . . and I also discovered that some more people had lost their jobs when they came to the Mass Meeting the past Monday.

June 22: It is Saturday and I spent the rest of the day gathering facts for the Justice Department . . . we also got out some leaflets and publicized the Mass Meeting which was to be June 24th . . . we got out letters to all of the ministers announcing the Mass Meeting.

June 23: This is Sunday. We spent most of the day talking to the Justice Department and getting our affidavit prepared, and going over and over again the facts and the case.

June 24: We got our final publicity out and we had our Mass Meeting. Miss Ella Baker spoke and over 500 people attended. It was a very educational meeting and we feel that this Mass Meeting was more enthusiastic than all the others we have had. It seems that every meeting gets better and better, and we are able to bring in new people. Many people who attended this Mass Meeting were people from the rural area, and it was the first time we had that many people from the rural area attending the Mass Meetings.

June 25: I learned that three beer companies had come to Bob on Monday the 24th and asked him if he wanted any beer, because they were able to sell him beer at this point. Bob told them that he would have to check with some of the people in the community to find out if it would be all right if he bought beer. June the 25th he bought beer from three of the companies that

had started boycotting him. When he asked them why had they started boycotting him they replied "Just let the past be the past."

We had a meeting of many of the Voters League members at the clinic in Mrs. Boynton's office and only one person showed up. We could see from the harassment, no doubt, or something, that the people were afraid to come downtown to the clinic. So we had this committee meeting and started making plans for the coming Mass Meeting which would be on July 1st. We discussed Bosie Reese's trial and the seating arrangement in the courtroom. We hope to have enough people there to fill up the Negro section and to spread over into all of the courtroom. We were discussing the possibilities of what might happen at this trial. I pointed out several possibilities. I thought they would ask all of the Negroes that were sitting in the white section to leave the courtroom or they might let them all sit together, because the Justice Department might be there, and they might change their policy and integrate the courtroom, or they might ask everyone to leave the courtroom and declare it a closed trial because of the seating arrangement. We will only be able to tell Thursday what they will do. . . .

So the days went for Bernard and Colia Lafayette, and a month like that must have seemed like a year. The fruits of his patience and hard work were beginning to show, and would become clearer later that year. For most people, Selma, Alabama, hardly existed before the marches of 1965. But people like the Lafayettes, of whom the world at large knows nothing, were there long before, turning the first stone, breaking the first earth, planting the first seed.

CHAPTER 42

Machine Guns in Danville

BLOOD GUSHED from lacerated scalps, people lay groaning in pain on emergency tables jammed into the corridors of Winslow Hospital, doctors and nurses worked at a frantic pace to keep up with the mounting stream of patients. Relatives of the injured watched anxiously. Everywhere, blood dripped on the floor. It looked like a war scene but it was only that the police of Danville, Virginia, had once again done their "duty" to protect white supremacy.

Leo Branton, Danny Lyon, and I had arrived in Danville just in time to see this mass of bleeding black people trying to get medical attention. It was Danny Lyon's first photographic assignment for SNCC. Leo, the brother of Wiley Branton, director of the Voter Education Project, was an attorney from Los Angeles who wanted to see some of the conditions